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Brock Berg

Hist. 195

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Part I

The story that I chose out of part one was the story written by, "Dang Vu Hiep." The story comes from the Vietnamese point of view, which to me seemed a little more interesting as I have not heard this side of any Vietnam 'War Story.' I read this story with a keen eye, trying to investigate the truths, or fallacies.

There were many parts in this story that raise awareness. I am unsure how credible this story is; however, the story told tells us that with or without an attack on Pleiku, the Americans had already put an airstrike into effect named 'OPLAN 37'. Which according to Hiep, Lyndon Johnson wrote in his memoir that the operation had been planned in April, 1964. If this is true it would mean that the attack on Pleiku, which killed nine Americans and injured one hundred and twenty six Americans, was insignificant our own governments 'plan.' To hear the 'enemy' of the time stating that their awareness of the American troops was unknown at the time is a bit disheartening. Being an American, and a patriotic American at that, it is hard to hear that so many American lives were affected by this casual battle during a 'long-term dry season.' I believe the statements made by Hiep were true to his knowledge; however, I do not believe that their intelligence was unaware of Americans in Pleiku. The story was very factual, with little subjectivity; however, there are conclusions drawn from incidents occurring or not occurring. For example: Hiep concluded that even if the attack on Pleiku had not happened, then the bombings would still have occurred. In my sight, I see that there was an operation named 'OPLAN 37' which had been planned for over a year, prior to the U.S. bombings in North Vietnam. But what I do not see is how is it that this operation was not carried out for one year, until the attacks in Pleiku? To me I see a direct correlation between being attacked, and going on the offensive. Because we had this plan in place, does not mean that we would have used it regardless. It is better to be prepared, than to not.

Part II

For part II of this assignment, I chose to use only one story from, "Henry Prunier."

I was most disappointed with the ending of this story. It was very

disheartening to hear the taboo of the time being plagued upon innocent individuals for speaking their mind. Prunier embellished a memory of cause and effect that took effect not on him directly, but on his family. For simply stating in an article that 'he believed Ho Chi Minh had the genuine support of the Vietnamese people' was blasphemy. Classmates of his daughters began persecuting their father, claiming him to be "Communist." At this time in history, communism was the largest taboo of America. Communism was to democracy as Hitler was to the Jews. There was no room for socialism in, or around allied countries. The fear of the spread of Communism could be compared to that of a Leper. For a Leper knows no ally, only struggles for the continuous survival of itself. As I read on I couldn't help coming back to this story, and seeing how, for this particular man, humbling his experience must have been. The story had been written prior to our conflict with the North, and prior to our disapproval of Minh. For Prunier, the experience must have been exhilarating. To be welcomed into another country by proud nationalists who seek nothing more than independence and nirvana. The feeling you get from Prunier, is that Minh was a very peaceful man; a man who's love for his country goes far beyond political views. As they reach Hanoi, Minh made it clear that these American Soldiers were always welcome in his country, as well as always welcome to Minh personally. That to me shows great respect, and gratitude from Minh. It is very unfortunate we did not get to see Minh bring his country to peace.

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