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ASSIGNMENT 1

PART 1

The story that caught my attention is the first story in the textbook. I have read the first two stories. One, by Bernard Trainor, and the other by Dang Vu Hiep. It would have more interesting to me, if I had been asked to draw a comparison between the two leaders. I am therefore going to concentrate my efforts to answering the posed questions.

The story of General Bernard Trainor caught my attention right away. Besides serving as a general, Trainor was a military correspondent for the New York times, a lecturer at the Kennedy school of government, makes commentary on occasion as a military analyst, but also an accomplished author. These tasks require tactics, an ability to be an effective communicator, a clear and balanced approach to be objective and subjective in the interpretation of events. That is mainly why I chose his story.

I find General Bernard Trainor to be trustworthy, reliable, and believable. Besides the fact that I trust what he has to say, the war has been over for a long time now, which makes senseless to lie about. My trust of the General wouldn't have been the same if the war was ongoing at the time of publication of his story. At times of war, military strategists, the likes of General Bernard Trainor, make a habit of sending out mixed messages when making media appearances. This is because the intention is to protect the security of those in the battlefield, not because they are untrustworthy.

Just because they were there at that specific time does not make them less credible. They are speaking from firsthand experience. That is not to say there won't be a disparity in the unfolding and interpretation of events. For the most part, I find him to be a credible man. The two stories I have read so far, are objective but probably not all together factual. Since the military acts on a command line, and field officers are required to carry out orders without questioning them, General Trainor's interpretation of orders from his superiors may not be all together factual. First hand experiences for the most part, live with us humans for most if not all of our lives. The library of congress also has records of the events during the war. I therefore don't believe time is a factor in

this case.

PART 2

After reading "the emperor has no clothes", I will comment on my disappointment by the events in the story.

As a nation, we Americans believe, by no fault of our own, that we are the best at everything. Common sense tells me, in order to have prevailed in South Vietnam and eventually North Vietnam, we had to have paid close attention to those of us who understood the culture, history and politics of the region long before we deployed. As McNamara wrote in his memoir, he attributed much of America's failure in Vietnam to lack of intelligence. My disappointment is in the fact that, we had the intelligence all along and never made use of it. Men like Paul Kattenburg who featured in the story, and makes a contribution to the story had first hand knowledge of the region. Unfortunately, when he forcibly made a contribution to the national security council (NSC), his views were rapidly shot down.

The bottom line is, the Vietnam War was a conflict between the super power, fought on the third world stage.

PART 2 SECOND HALF.

There is a very old African proverb, "when two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers". There is however, some good news that came out of this. We learned that despite their looks, the Vietnamese are just human like the rest of us. A majority of those who immigrated to the United States have turned out to be productive members in their communities.

Another lesson we learned from this conflict is that, in times of conflict, in foreign lands especially, an understanding of their culture, politics of the region, and their history plays a significant role as to who prevails. I have no proof as to whether these lessons have been learned from or put into use, but common sense tells me that it is the right path to take.

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