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The History of Vietnam

Assignment #1

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1) Tran Thi Gung "I was stuck in a tunnel for seven days."

Most of the stories in this book really made an impact on me. It has been a long time since I studied war. To hear first hand from people that fought in it is mind-boggling. Tran Thi Gung's story keeps running through my mind. I believe her story to be very true. This little, tiny girl needed no training, just her heart.

She did not care about politics until her father died fighting for what he thought was right. She now knew she must continue and take revenge, that is all the training needed. She went on, fought so hard, and took so many lives that she was awarded a medal for killing many Americans in just one battle. In addition, she would sneak into enemy's bases to gain knowledge for her team (most men were not even that brave.) She succeeded many times in sneaking in, knew the base so well she could draw maps. This woman has not forgotten a thing except that she fought for so long and so many fights, she could not possibly remember them all. What surprised me the most was even years later after the war ended; she still has no regrets for taking lives. She said she would feel bad if she was on American soil, but because they were on her soil, they deserved it. I can understand and feel for what she is saying, but I will never understand her not feeling bad for taking lives. I was not there, so I just cannot fathom that. One of the main things I got out of this story is that the Vietnamese fought with their hearts. The Americans fought because it was their job. Big, big difference.

2) Ngo Vinn Long "If they are making maps, they're preparing for war."

Plenty of these stories just aggravated me. Why wouldn't our government listen to the numerous warnings? From this story, I can really say that we let Mr. Long's boyhood dream of a beautiful America fall through the cracks, and why? His father taught him to highly admire and respect the U.S. He admired America so much that he made every effort, went to great lengths to learn English. When the U.S came to Vietnam, he was excited at the fact that they were there to

help Vietnam's independence. When really the U.S was there to make sure communists were nonexistent. Mr. Long refused to believe that the U.S was there destroying everything in there path. He volunteered to help the U.S out by traveling the countryside to draw maps. As he traveled the countryside, he started to notice all the bad that was happening such as starvation and killing of innocent people. All his beliefs about the U.S. were being reversed. From then on, with all beliefs gone, he resigned and began to protest against the U.S and Saigon. He burned documents and became a rebel to south Vietnam. Many times, he tried to explain to the U.S that they were going about their plan all wrong and by this creating more communists. The U.S said to him that he was naïve and turned their heads. Mr. Long was just one out the many who were warning us and no one listened. Well, we all know what happened next, a war.

The positive I got out of this is not much. I can say that Mr. Long's testimony moved me and made me think. His preconceived ideas of another culture were put to the test when he met the American government face to face in his own county. Yet after he could see what was happening to his countrymen, he chose to come to America where he got a Harvard education. From there, he was able to preach his beliefs so he could try to go about making some positive changes by teaching people about the ill-conceived ideas of what was happening in Vietnam. As America learned more and more about what was really happening in Vietnam, the more protestors got involved in the movement to stop the war.

So many people were trying to warn the government that they were going about things the wrong way. The government ignored it. On a positive note, I am glad now (at least) that these people are finally heard even though it is too late.

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