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The story in Part 1 of the Patriots book that caught my attention was the story told by 'Deidre English'. I selected this story because in 1966 I was a sophomore in high school and didn't have a clue where Vietnam was. I knew Americans were there fighting and losing their lives, but didn't know why. Deirdre tells of being in Chicago and witnessing a small anti-war demonstration put on by the University of Chicago, of reading the signs and the myriad of questions that flooded her. "How can my country be at war and I don't know about it...". These are questions I asked of myself during this time period. I remember sitting in a restaurant in Eugene with friends and the manager came in dressed in his National Guard uniform, he seemed to be in a state of excitement, when we asked him what was going on he stated that he and his unit were going to the University of Oregon campus to bust the heads of those 'hippie protesters'. The bloodlust in his eyes scared to death, it was not just his anger and excitement, but suddenly this whole Vietnam 'thing' was in my face and I didn't know what to do about it. I think Deidre's story tells of the experience of many people during that time of turmoil and confusion and I think that she stated her circumstances perfectly. She chose action instead of continued confusion and I find that admirable.

In Part 2, the story told by Paul Kattenburg, disappointed me a lot. Not the speaker or his attitude, but the events that he tells about. Kattenburg was a Vietnam specialist in the 1950s and headed the State Department's Vietnam Task Force in 1963 and although our government appointed him to this position, they certainly didn't trust his judgment. When he went to the National Security Council meeting and saw "the abysmal ignorance around the table of the particular facts of Vietnam" and realized that no one had an actual plan for Vietnam, just a reused plan that had been tried in other areas of the world. He saw that although some of the old plans may have been successful in completely different historical experiences they would not be successful in Vietnam. When he told the Council that "it would be better if we just left with honor", he was rebuked by some American government officials. Then he returned from Vietnam, and he wrote a report predicting South Vietnam would lose the war within 2 years, that the Vietnamese never wanted to fight, and they just wanted to be left alone. After he wrote this (in his opinion) honest and upfront report he was kicked out of the Bureau of East Asian Affairs and sent to where you put people who

are really off base. It's disappointing that instead of using the information from someone that had lived in the area for quite awhile and knew the people, knew some of the history and seemed pretty aware of the political climate, they shuffled him off to somewhere as a punishment and based on his last paragraph, it seems like they kind of broke his spirit. He says in 1965 he thought about resigning altogether and making a statement about Vietnam, but didn't think it would make any difference, so kept quiet.

Both of the stories I selected taught me that if I want to know what's truly going on outside my small personal world, I have to be the one to dig and find the truth. And if I want something to change I have to be willing to take the steps I believe are right to make that change. Taking action and trying to make a difference is sometimes scary, but sitting around waiting for someone else to make things right is scarier.

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