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Assignment 1

Part 1

The Dang Vu Hiep interview really caught my attention because it explained something about the war that I was interested in knowing. And that was how in the world did these people (the Vietnamese) even begin to be able to fight against our military. We are far more technologically inclined than they are and it seemed that our military was simply far more advanced than theirs. It was amazing to see how they were able to react to the advances we had over them. Such as the helicopters and the air bombings. And being able to deal with the problems caused by "leapfrogging". This showed me how smart they were and why it really isn't that surprising that they were able to fight us off.

I trust what Hiep is saying. Mostly because of his regards to the story of why they attacked at Pleiku on February 7, 1965. It's obvious that this is his side to a two sided story. Which should make the question of reliability questionable. A lot of what I have read in this book so far has been each side believing what they believe. Whether that is believing in the south Vietnamese side or the north. This has made it extremely difficult for me to decide which side was right. Both sides having done horrible things and having faults with their reasoning. Also both sides having, to some extent, valid arguments. Having all this in mind, when I read Hieps side of the story regarding the Pleiku attack, I didn't find myself questioning his reliability. I think that's because I didn't feel he was trying to convince me that his side of the story was right. Rather he says that is was simply a normal ole' battle. That they had no idea that Bundy or Kosygin was around. That he only found that out years later. Somewhere in his ignorance as to what was going on I find, what ultimately seems to be, the truth. His truth.

Part 2

The biggest issue that disappointed me in part two of the Appy book was the passage "History is not made with ifs". What I'm disappointed in is the way the U.S. decided to get involved with Vietnam after WWII. In Ho Chi Minh's declaration of independence on September 2 he quoted OUR declaration of independence. He was in favor of being friends with the United States. But because of our unreasonable hatred towards anything communist, and our need for french allegiance we didn't even think to consider cooperating with Ho Chi Minh. I wouldn't be surprised if he were perhaps open to some kind of compromise. His main interest was Vietnamese independence. The U.S. should have understood this best, having had the same issue just 200 years before, themselves. But no, instead we underestimate the Vietnamese and think we can control them into doing what we want them to do. And I'm not saying that we had to let them go on being communist. But the least we could have done was talked first. The second part that upset me was the fact that we didn't come through with the agreement to have the nation wide election that would make Vietnam whole again. Because of this, the two sides still to this day hate each other. A problem that could be getting solved all this time, had they become a whole nation again those many years ago.

Despite the disappointment I found in that passage, I found many things that showed perhaps some good to come from this. Such as the respect that I now feel for the Vietnamese that is being shown throughout books like this one. In that these are people just like us that want to be a free nation. They are dedicated in finding a government that works for them. That may not be Democracy. It may not be Communism. It is simply a government that doesn't allow there people to starve to death, or be executed for having apposing ideas. They have not yet found this government, but the accounts in this book show that they are a determined people and I believe one day, they will have the freedom they deserve.

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