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Legacies & Issues
by [Joe Escobar](#) - Saturday, 27 November 2010, 11:44 PM

The questions you will address are found in three parts, [located here](#).

With three different subjects, this should be the easiest forum week in which to earn the maximum credit for posts and replies. **Just be sure that you do NOT attempt to answer the questions for all three parts in a single post.**

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

When addressing the questions in parts 1, 2, and 3, put something descriptive like "Conservative Revisionist", "Register Guard as history", or "Legacy is ..." in the subject line of your post. DO NOT leave the subject line of your posts unchanged.

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Conservative Revisionist
by [Spencer Smith](#) - Monday, 29 November 2010, 07:20 PM

I would consider myself a conservative revisionist. I'm not one of those conspiracy junkies that think the Gulf of Tonkin incident never even happened, or that "The Pentagon Papers" is the coolest thing to happen since the invention of the light bulb. I believe that the failure in Vietnam occurred because U.S. policy makers flat out tied our troops hands behind their back, and didn't prepare young draftees for the wretched conditions of Guerilla warfare in South East Asia. I believe that the objectives that our leaders had were not realistic for the type of war they thought they were willing to fight. I think the U.S. has somewhat learned a lesson from what happened, (this is the part where people bring up a completely different war in Iraq and Afghanistan) however, it won't bring back all the lives lost over that 13 year period. People care more about terrorism now than they do about communism. I believe at the time "domino theory" was something taken a lot more seriously, even though now it seems like a joke to people. Sometimes a basic show of force does make countries think a little bit harder about what they do militarily, so there was certain benefits that are invisible. All in all, our military and civilian leaders, media and rioters back home failed the men getting killed.

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Re: Conservative Revisionist
by [Jolene Powell](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 10:43 AM

Well put Spencer. You have a fabulous way with words. I agree.

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Re: Conservative Revisionist
by [Deanna Middlestetter](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 08:46 PM

I agree. I do not think our government prepared these young men for the war in Vietnam and the results were tragic.

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Re: Conservative Revisionist
by [Eileen Haxby](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 09:02 PM

Nice job! I think I am a new leftist, but I can see where you are coming from in this post. It made me rethink my opinion.

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The Register Gaurd Went Over the Line

by [Spencer Smith](#) - Monday, 29 November 2010, 07:38 PM

Anybody that does a very minimal amount of research will find that Vietnam Veterans not only got spit on, but also faced other hardships when they returned home. This article is a typical example of a radical left wing idea that went over the line. Saying that Vietnam Veterans never got spat on is ok if your having a beer with friends and family, and want to stir the pot a little, but it doesn't belong in a news paper. Articles like this devalue the role of the media. Extremism on either end of the political spectrum doesn't belong in the media. Fox news is guilty of the same thing, just on the opposite side. What ever happened to accurate reporting and fair objective perspectives? Has that ever existed in the media? Maybe some one older that was around and coherent in past decades could answer that.

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Re: The Register Gaurd Went Over the Line

by [Jared Hall](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 07:38 PM

Completely agree with you. It seems like everyone is trying to convince each other that they're right and a rational discussion goes out the window.

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A Good Article Overlooked

by [Tony Francisco](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 01:12 AM

I think the series of letters in The Register Guard is a fantastic example of why it is never safe to just trust one person's opinion. It is that person's opinion. Everyone has different experiences and that shapes their perceptions. I found Michael Rooke-Ley's excerpt to be very engaging and actually found the rest of his article(http://demopedia.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=view_all&address=103x258324) to be very nicely written. I read up more on him and found him to be a professor of law at the University of Oregon(<http://polisci.uoregon.edu/syllabi/archive/PS200s/PS275/PS275F02.html>) and as the combative Tom Preuss infers, he is indeed a member of the ACLU. What I think is most fascinating out of all of these letters is how quickly a law professor's well written article about his dissillusionment with America turns into a print version of a "flame war"([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flaming_\(Internet\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flaming_(Internet))).

What's important to see here, is that we as Americans are more interested in arguing over, I'm not going to say trivial, but smaller matters in context with the depth and gravity of the actual war, smaller matters like a soldier being spit upon. Vietnam was a scandalous era for America and we have people arguing about this?! Thousands of soldiers came back from the war and I'm sure some of them were spit on. How many? Who knows? 100,000? Not a chance. 10,000? Probably not. 10? Who cares? Focus on something more important than just the act of getting spit on. Robert Shaw opens up a part of his life where he was spurned by America through his association with the war, a war in which he was DRAFTED into. I think it is much more important to focus on that than Tom Preuss' hyperbole filled rant, which is basically the theme of every successive letter in that chain.

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Re: A Good Article Overlooked

by [Donald Ebel](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 03:00 PM

Good job on bringing flaming into it! (I quite enjoyed that you linked to it as well.) I was just talking to one of my roommates about this assignment, and I made the comment that those compiled letters greatly resembled forums on the internet. There was quite a bit of trolling and flaming on both sides; almost as much in volume as the actual arguments! For shame! Children flame. But if you have a place where you can voice your unrestrained opinion and be relatively anonymous, that's just a recipe for flaming (disaster). We both agreed that people these days do not understand how to have rational, collected and well thought out conversations based on facts about issues that remain respectful and don't devolve into insulting drivel. Be intelligent about it. The point of an argument is not to scream your (insert: misguided or uninformed) opinion at someone and then take off. It's to build on each other and share opinions in a way that is constructive and respectful (I sound like an old man, haha). Who knows? If you present your case well, you may even sway others to your way of thinking. Insulting someone never got anything done. Actually, it's kind of ironic in the direction that the letters took was similar to the act of spitting on someone. Hm.

Next discussion topic: bumper stickers.

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Re: A Good Article Overlooked

by [Jared Hall](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 07:44 PM

It reminds me of a lot of on-line articles written today to be controversial in order to get more views.

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Re: A Good Article Overlooked

by [Ellen Haxby](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 09:06 PM

I thought about this as well. It is so sad to me when people are more interested in having thier five minutes of fame instead of writing truth and expressing things as they are, they write what people want to hear, dumbing it down so to say.

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Re: A Good Article Overlooked

by [Tony Francisco](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 07:57 PM

I totally agree with everything you said. I feel like listening to both sides of an argument and coming to an informed decision is the best way to have an argument, sadly too many people do not agree with me.

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Re: A Good Article Overlooked

by [Deanna Middlestetter](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 09:00 PM

Well put! Self restraint is a must when discussing anything controversial, not to mention gathering as many facts as possible. The point of a discussion isn't necessarily to win the other person to your point of view but to share points of view and gain another perspective.

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Liberal Realist

by [Kristin Maurer](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:29 AM

It's very hard to "label" how I think and interpret this war. If I have to label my thinking, I would say I am a Liberal Realist. As the article states, Liberal realists "take a basic point of departure the notion that the Vietnam conflict was a tragic misadventure that could have been avoided had American leaders only been wiser, more prudent, and less wedded to the assumptions of the past." This goes to what I have stated in previous forums, I think that if the US government communicated a little more in the beginning of this whole mess, this war may have been avoidable. On the other hand, I agree with the conservative revisionism. Since we were in the war, we didn't have a great plan to help our troops. In the movie, we were soldiers, it shows Colonel Moore stating, "they aren't ready." I feel like we just threw them out there thinking we would have no problem winning this war, we were obviously wrong. I feel so bad for all those who fought in Vietnam and had no recognition when they came home. They were just doing their job and actually survived.

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Re: Liberal Realist

by [Molly Graham](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 09:51 PM

I agree with what you said in this and am really glad you brought up the quote that you did from *We Were Soldiers*. It stood out to me, too, when I watched it. I think it is so true that our men really were not prepared to go into war. What I also got from that movie is that most people did not have any personal reason to fight the North Vietnamese, as opposed to the case in World War II when many soldiers felt strong emotions against the Nazis. Our men were not set up to be triumphant in Vietnam. It is a shame that like you said "since we were in the war, we didn't have a great plan to help our troops". Even if retrospect makes things clearer and maybe we should not have gotten involved in the first place, still we were there and we should have taken care of our soldiers.

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Re: Liberal Realist

by [Jared Hall](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 07:52 PM

My interpretation of the war is a lot like yours, however it's difficult to choose only one, I see valid points in every one. I agree that we let the troops down. It's really depressing watching documentaries with veterans telling of their experiences coming back from the Vietnam war.

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Re: Liberal Realist

by [Kristin Maurer](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 09:28 PM

Thanks jared,

I totally agree with your statement. There are so many different aspects to look at when it comes to war. I agree with most everyone's statements on a certain level.

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Register Guard

by [Kristin Maurer](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:43 AM

The Register Guard article just goes to show you how bitter people still are over the Vietnam War. There are still questions unanswered, or people still have not dealt with what happened to this day. I think that this also shows that the media can take from what was said and put it in their own words to show to the public. Is this to get a "rise" out of the public? The more people involve themselves in responding, the more that newscaster is known maybe. This happens a lot with the media. Just like the televised Vietnam war. They picked what they wanted the public to see. It just goes to show you, that you can't take just one person's view over the war. There will always be conflict, after all it was a war.

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Re: Register Guard

by [Ellen Haxby](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 08:57 PM

I agree. Very good job on this post. I'm not sure people are bitter, but more just embarrassed. Which could result in bitterness. Again, nice job.

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Conservative Revisionist

by [Jolene Powell](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 10:40 AM

I guess a big part of me would say I am a conservative Revisionist, even though that's a bit iffy. I believe wholeheartedly we let our men down without a doubt. They needed more skills, training, knowledge, more of everything they did not get. Our men should have come before the war. We needed to protect our own, they were fighting for our country in a war that was of no real benefit to us. Instead we shipped them out like they had no value and told them to defend and survive. I see all the aspects and agree with a little from each one. Our presidents were very political and did not have enough forethought. There was everything from a lack of communication, to knowing when to pull out or push hard. There is a time and a place for everything. I do believe as well that we should throw the "American Hammer" down when we need to, such as with Osama Bin Laden. I say that with some reservation as well, depending on circumstances, sometimes "America" needs to mind its own business. I also believe we were "exerting our power" a little, we had no idea a tiny little hole in the wall was going to rock our big powerful country. With all that said, there is no doubt we let our soldiers down.

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Re: Conservative Revisionist

by [Jared Hall](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 08:12 PM

I do agree that we let our men down, but I'm not sure if we would ever have been able to prepare them for the Vietnam war. That way of fighting was so foreign to us. I think the military would be extremely different today without the lessons we had to learn in the Vietnam War.

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Re: Conservative Revisionist

by [Ellen Haxby](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 08:58 PM

That is so true. It's hard to prepare people for a war that is very different than the one's we had previously fought in.

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Liberal Revisionist

by [Donald Ebel](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 01:52 PM

I'm pretty sure that I'd call myself a liberal revisionist, but I think the liberal and the conservative views go hand-in-hand. I think that the Vietnam War could have been avoided from the beginning, or at least taken care of earlier than it was. The domino theory was the main school of thought during the Cold War, and this carried over to Vietnam. I think that the American policy makers were scared of Communism! It was this irrational fear that drove the Americans into Vietnam to try to help the French control their business (the liberal revisionist side). I think that the root of that fear is what kept the U.S. from making correct decisions on how to fight the Vietnamese effectively because we jumped in so quickly and without much effective thought (the conservative revisionist side). We could have taken the time to bother ourselves with Vietnamese history. We could have read some of their books to understand what they're all about and what's important to them. If we had, we hopefully would have pulled out earlier or not gone in at all. And if we did decided to go in, we could have had more effective ways to combat the North and better ways to handle South. But we wanted a quick and easy victory, and the policy makers thought we could do it because the U.S. was bigger and better than Vietnam, and we had lots of money to throw at it. The one of the main reasons why the Vietnamese lasted as long as they did was because of their near-unfailing national pride. They just would not give up. And that is why we lost. Being driven by an irrational fear of the spread of Communism caused us to jump in without taking a good look at the consequences or the reasons why, and their national pride outlasted the American public's patience.

I do, however, believe that we could have won the war if we had lasted another year or two. Or three. The North Vietnamese could only throw themselves at us for so long. They were starting having trouble recruiting people for the war near the end, and a lot of people deserted. However, with the way the U.S. had its knickers in a twist, I don't think that that outcome would ever be possible. Reporters would go and report whatever they wanted, and people would read it and believe it. No matter how misguided our policies were, we were excellent at killing. And America was less tolerant with killing than the Vietnamese were for dying.

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Register Guard as History

by [Donald Ebel](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 02:43 PM

What I got from reading the collection of letters from a historical perspective was that some people got spit on, others did not. It was good that near the end, an actual article surfaced that said that spitting had happened at one point. But the biggest thing that I think this tells us is that people are still very angry about what happened. I don't think that spitting on someone is ever warranted, and as a few of the letter-writers admitted, it could most certainly lead to a physical confrontation. That shows the depth of the outright hatred of the war. But spitting on a veteran is misguided, and if you hate something that intensely, then there has got to be something amiss in your thinking. People who know how to think and argue rationally rarely get emotional to the point of flagrant disrespect against a third party about something unless it is truthfully unjust, wrong and evil in every respect. Now, I'm not saying that the Vietnam War wasn't wrong or unjust or that it was right, I'm simply saying that there are better ways to deal with it than giving one of the ultimate signs of disrespect to someone who went and risked their life for their country despite the viability of reasons for being there. Plus, a lot of the soldiers were drafted! That means that they HAVE to go, no matter what they thought about the war. And by all historical accounts, quite a few of the veterans thought the same way as the protesters did. To go out of your way and spit on someone without any kind of ration conversation is just asking for a confrontation.

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Re: Register Guard as History

by [Jared Hall](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 08:22 PM

A lot about this war wasn't very rational. The line that got me was from the one of the episodes. I can't recall which episode or the exact quote but I'll paraphrase it. The protester told the person being interviewed that he was okay with the pilots being tortured because they volunteered.

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Re: Register Guard as History

by [Ellen Haxby](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 09:08 PM

That is a very good point to bring up! It shows how they were extremely against America being there in Vietnam. I don't think such a hate went both ways until much later on in the war.

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New Leftist

by [Colin Gabrielson](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 05:21 PM

I would consider myself a New Leftist. I think either the scare of WWII or just the thirst for power and dominance drove America to secure their seat as the global superpower. America continued to wanted to win in Vietnam because the thought that a group of those less powerful holding off one of the most powerful countries in the world sickened those in power. Also even though the Vietcong and Stalin were not really tied together we wanted to show all countries that we were a real force to be reckoned with. The egos of those in power got the best of them while they continued at the risk of countless other lives. When a machine grows beyond its resources, and the machine still has a lust for more, it will do whatever it can to achieve what it thirsts.

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Re: New Leftist

by [Jolene Powell](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 07:32 AM

Colin, I agree. I am on the fence about where to categorize myself, I do think we thought we could "push" them around and got a real rude awakening and it cost us so many lives and we continued out of pride and the unwillingness to concede. Politics took over.

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Re: New Leftist

by [Ellen Haxby](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 08:59 PM

I would consider myself a new leftist as well. Nice job on this post.

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Register Guard as history

by [Colin Gabrielson](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 05:43 PM

These accounts say a couple things. First of all there is a lot of misunderstanding between people. I think Bob Thompson was misguided by his information, I do not think he had intent to harm or disrespect Vietnam veterans by saying what he did. Its clear that there is still a lot of opposing views that tend to be on the edge of hostility. I am sure when Vietnam Vets who read Mr Thompson's letter were very angry that someone was making these statements about something he never went through and using limited sources.

I think the problem is there is a lot of frustration about the war from both sides. It was wrong for those to spit on returning soldiers. The American people don't start wars and it is misguided to place blame on them.

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Liberal Realist

by [Molly Graham](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 06:23 PM

I would probably fall under the category that the article labeled liberal realist. I believe that we should not have become involved in Vietnam in the first place. I believe we were scared and acted foolishly without fully thinking through the possible consequences of not only our initial involvement but also our escalation of it. We went into it as if our resources were endless and as if our influence could end any war in no time. We thought too highly of our capabilities. However, I also believe that we fought for our own personal issues (to stop the spread of communism) and cared little about how that affected the Vietnamese on both sides. It did not matter that they were in the midst of a civil war. That meant nothing to us because it did not involve us. We fought the war in order to look tough in the eyes of Russia and China and continued just to prove to these outside countries that we could not be defeated. In that way, I could probably be seen as a new leftist as well.

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Re: Liberal Realist

by [Colin Gabrielson](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 08:25 PM

I felt the same way. I could have gone either with Liberal Realist or New Leftist. They both seem to be part of a bigger picture in my opinion.

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Re: Legacies & Issues

by [Justin Powell](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 06:24 PM

I think i would concider myself a Conservative Revisionist. I believe we threw our young men into a war without the proper preperation they needed to not only win the war, but to survive the conditions of the Guerilla forces. It is sad because a lot of our men died in this war trying to defend our country that really had no reason to be there. What where our soulders really defending besides there own life. Hopefully after all the miss communication that our leaders had, along with all the other mistakes, we have learned what not do do if a war like this ever came again.

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Re: Legacies & Issues

by [Deanna Middlestetter](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 09:10 PM

I agree with you hopefully they have learned what not to do next time and it is very sad that we had to learn such a lesson at the expense of people's lives.

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Register Guard/Mini Book of Stories

by [Jared Hall](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 07:46 PM

These stories tell us that the truth is often subjective. Some people were spit on, however to people who never experienced or read about it never happened.

These stories also show that these small details of history can be lost or distorted over time. The "don't ask don't tell" treatment that Mr. Shaw experienced after the war could result in many facts being hid away in memory and lost to generations to come.

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Register Guard as History

by [Molly Graham](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:13 PM

As is evident from this collection of letters to the editor, we cannot take any one story as a whole truth. That was the problem with Thompson's proclamations that nobody who was returning from Vietnam was ever spat upon. It seems ridiculous to make such a blanket statement about an event that could be so entirely different for different people returning at different points in different areas of the United States. At the same time, when we read an account such as Gordon's we must also remember that he was spat at but that it does not mean that every returning soldier was also. In the same way, just as Shaw was not spat upon, others were. Also, even though Shaw had difficulty finding a job, it does not mean that other returning vets did. We have to take each account as a unique individual's experience. When we read a collection of these accounts it becomes apparent where certain similarities are which can help us arrive at a conclusion. In this case, that conclusion is, yes, some vets were spat upon when they returned to the United States. Not all experienced this. Perhaps it was more common in California. But the event did happen to some.

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Conservative Revisionist

by [Spencer Little](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:35 PM

I would definitely consider myself a Conservative Revisionist. The war became a display of the United States newly advanced war chest. Consider things like all the bombing missions with no important military targets and the f4 phantoms that had no machine guns because the Senators thought the days of dog fighting were over. Trough out the war the United states seemed like a kid showing off his new toy rather than an army trying to win a war. The strategy of war of attrition was a two edged sword that not only devastating enemy troops but also american morale. It just seemed like the Americans steered away from the successful strategies that won them previous wars.

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Register Guard

by [Spencer Little](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:50 PM

In the book we learn to to completely trust what we read. In the chain of comments, Bob Thompson said that the writer should of goggled spit on veterans. The point the original writer was trying to point out was of protesters mis treating veterans that he tries to discredit by a lack of media covering spitting. The letters following from the veterans proves that the people who experience events can be more telling then the media covering it. The media is usually trying to push an agenda while the people there are just trying to survive the circumstance.

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Re: Register Guard

by [Colin Gabrielson](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 08:31 PM

Good point. It shows why its important that we read both the Appy and the Herring book.

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Re: Register Guard

by [Ellen Haxby](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 09:03 PM

That is so true! I had never thought of it that way before. It seems a little extreme, but well put. Nice job.

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Conservative Revisionist

by [Jared Hall](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:55 PM

I find myself leaning towards the conservative revisionist view of the war. I think there was a chance, though a small one, to win the war if it wasn't for the many mistakes in policy both military and civilian that was made. It's also a very attractive way of thinking because it difficult to view the Vietnam War as doomed from the start with the amount of people who died.

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Legacy is the Public's Level of Trust in the Government

by [Molly Graham](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 08:57 PM

I was unable to open the video but found what I think to be it in transcript form. Here is what I found in case others are having the same problem, though I cannot be sure if this is for the same video: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/asia/jan-june00/vietnam_4-5.html

I think the biggest legacy that the Vietnam War leaves to the Americans of today is the fact that many do not feel that they can entirely trust their government. After being fooled by our leaders during the war, in the very least having many "secrets" kept from the nation, it brings skepticism about events occurring in present times. The video talks about how it would have at least been better had the administration not kept Americans in the dark, thinking that the "end of the tunnel" was in sight. At least being truthful with the public that the war could continue on for quite some time might have at first raised some opposition, but prepared them for what was to come and perhaps prevent a lot of the public distrust. I think it is also important to point out both the negative as well as the positive aspects of this legacy. For one, it obviously can be troublesome to have a public which has no faith in its leadership. We saw this basically with Nixon. However, it also keeps the government in check when it is not so much blatant distrust on the part of the citizens as much as it is simply the public questioning the government and expecting to see results and to be kept in the loop. Like most things, this legacy can be a positive one if it is kept somewhat moderate. It is not healthy for a nation to not give the leaders a chance and slash every initiative that they take. At the same time, we cannot follow blindly. Hopefully, this "legacy" will not be lost and the sacrifices worth nothing and that we will learn from our history and remember to stay informed about our nation and its involvement in current events.

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Re: Legacy is the Public's Level of Trust in the Government

by [Kristin Maurer](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 09:01 PM

I as well was unable to open video. I did the same thing as you molly, but there are far too many videos. Thanks for posting that.. and I agree with your post as well

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Re: Legacy is the Public's Level of Trust in the Government

by [Molly Graham](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 09:43 PM

Good! I felt like a jerk posting that right before the deadline but had just found it myself. Glad it helped.

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Re: Legacy is the Public's Level of Trust in the Government

by [Kristin Maurer](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 10:01 PM

No jerking here! I posted after you anyway lol. Thanks Molly.

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Re: Legacy is the Public's Level of Trust in the Government

by [Donald Ebel](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 03:38 PM

I like what you say about moderate trust, especially when you say, "It is not healthy for a nation to not give the leaders a chance and slash every initiative that they take. At the same time we cannot follow blindly." We can see a lot of the after-effects of the Vietnam War in today's politics. A lot of people who were growing up during the late Vietnam War era are now in politics (i.e. John McCain). Think about what they learned while growing up in that era that affects politics today. Think about the big stink everyone made about the new health care bill Obama wanted pass. They went up and down calling it socialism and being all, "We can't do it because of this reason, blah, blah, blah, etc.," when a lot of those reasons could be classified as irrelevant, such as an irrational fear of socialism/communism. So, WE should vote against this bill because YOU are afraid of becoming a socialist country? That doesn't make sense.

Furthermore, it seems these days that people who make the biggest stink have the biggest impact. For another example, Obama recently proposed a plan to drill for oil off the east coast. It essentially got totally struck down (postponed to 2015 when they can revote in five years and shoot it down again) because of the "lessons we learned from the BP oil spill" (from a random newscast I walked in on, which I can't cite explicitly, shame on me), which in my opinion, is a lame excuse. I feel that a lot of the heat against the drilling was driven by an irrational fear of another oil spill. I also think that a lot of those people who voted against it are simply against Obama for one reason or another (and, let's face it, there are a lot of dumb reasons why people are against Obama, such as race, religion, partisan issues, etc.). What issues were learned from the spill that will prevent us from safely implementing oil drilling off our coast? Sure, there's always a risk of a spill, but isn't there a risk of falling when you walk? If procedures and regulations are followed correctly, equipment is kept up to date and running correctly and corporate dudes don't take shortcuts, then the environment will have a much greater chance of be kept oil-free. As long as we're dependent on oil (car manufacturers and oil barons, I'm looking at you), there will be a risk of oil spills.

Also, an interesting thing to think about is how many million barrels of oil are transported without issue every day to fill our gas tanks of the cars that are clogging the parking lots of LCC? Hmmm...

What would happen if we trusted in some of these bigger changes that Obama is trying to implement? As far as we know, he only has the country's best interest at heart. We elected him to the presidential office. Why don't we give him some wiggle room? But as you said, at the same time, we can't just follow him like sheep. If his policies make sense, why not give them a shot? If they don't, then that's what check and balances are for.

Disclaimer: This post is all OPINION, and I am not the most well-informed politically anyways, so it is entirely likely that I could be totally wrong, which is okay with me. Sway me.

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Re: Legacy is the Public's Level of Trust in the Government

by [Molly Graham](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 05:05 PM

I agree with you here when you are talking about people who make the most noise having the most sway, regardless of whether they even make any sense or have any grounds to stand on. May I just say the Tea Party and Sarah Palin. Opposition to the health care bill in particular really was absurd in my opinion as well because it sounded to me like most of the people opposing it did not even know what they were fighting against. They had the vaguest inkling that perhaps it was related to socialism and oh my god, run for the hills. Sure, I will live off of my welfare but god forbid we provide health care to people when they are sick!! I will stop myself there on that issue...

I think what you are getting at with the total mistrust of Obama is in fact a legacy of the Vietnam War. I like what you said here: "We elected him to the presidential office. Why don't we give him some wiggle room?" My opinion exactly. We need to keep him in check but it seems like we won't let him do anything! He inherited an awful economy and a war. He needs to be able to take some actions to turn us around. People protest the actions and then complain that he hasn't done anything! It is like he is damned if he does, damned if he doesn't. I think maybe this is an example of the legacy of distrust in an extreme.

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Re: Legacy is the Public's Level of Trust in the Government

by [Donald Ebel](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 06:22 PM

Yeah, that's exactly what I'm saying! I noticed that I didn't elaborate on my point that the mistrust of Obama (and the whole presidential office, for that matter) is a continuing legacy of the Vietnam War right after the deadline for editing my post passed. Bummer. But I'm glad you fished it out. It's kinda funny how everybody was all gung-ho about him being elected, and now that he won the election, nobody really talks about it anymore. It's amazing how many Obama stickers and pins disappeared after the election. People were putting all their hope in him for a better future, only to see him get squashed in Congress and by almost everybody else, preventing him from doing much of anything, and leaving the young people who put so much hope in him wondering what happened. And then everyone complains that he's doing nothing. It's a hard time for America, and in times like these, only change and new ways of doing things will help.

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Legacy

by [Kristin Maurer](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 09:05 PM

I had was unable to open video....

I think a big legacy was how this war impacted society. It was the largest, most televised war in history thus far. It was reflected through the media and their thoughts. The Society was able to see first hand what was happening there (through the media goggles.) It was the largest protested war throughout America. It led to scandles, forced resignations of presidents, and just absolute distrust with our government.

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Legacy of Vietnam

by [Jared Hall](#) - Wednesday, 1 December 2010, 09:15 PM

I think the most significant legacy of the War in Vietnam for the USA is to support our troops. This may seem like a small thing to come from a war that that spanned 19 years however to me, being born after the war ended, it's the main thing.

As the Vietnam War gets further in the pass, we're learning more about the Veterans themselves. We're learning more about what they went through during the war, returning from the war and their struggles of coping with the war. From documentaries like "Vietnam: Homecoming" disorders like Post-traumatic Stress Disorder are becoming more accepted. Also it's now looked down on to protest soldiers because of what they went through coming back from Vietnam.

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Legacy of Limits

by [Spencer Smith](#) - Thursday, 2 December 2010, 10:10 AM

Vietnam will be remembered as the war in which the U.S. found out that there are limitations to what you can accomplish through military action. Throughout the herring book i was amazed how much money and resources went into the war. After all that money was spent, not a whole lot changed. Money and force doesn't always work militarily. Theres more to war than just

dropping thousands of tons of bombs, and deploying 3 million troops. In the end it wasn't our war. We could only fight another countries' war for so long. I wouldn't say we lost the war, because I don't believe it was our war to win or lose. It was the South Vietnamese who lost. If it was on our soil we would have done more severe things to the North that we didn't do fighting another countries war.

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Re: Legacy of Limits

by [Ellen Haxby](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 09:04 PM

I was so astonished at the mass amounts of money our government spent on a war so far away from home. Nice job.

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Liberal Realist

by [Kyle Hutton](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 09:46 PM

For me, it is very hard to categorize what I would be, because I have different views on different subjects of the war. But i guess i would be a Liberal Realist because I think we could have avoided the whole war aspect of it altogether, and we really shouldn't have went to war in Vietnam in the first place. However, i feel that once we had committed to the war, we needed to get in, and get it done. We dragged the war out for years, and that was our mistake, correction, it was the governments mistake. We would move in for some bombing strikes/move forces in, then pull them back out because we decided we wanted to sit down for peace talks. Because of this, the war drug out for years. I think once we commit to the war, we need to get in there, and give it all out. Get it all out in one giant force, finish it off within a few months. When wars get drug out, that's when you know it is a mistake. You may agree/disagree with me on that, but that's just how I view how we should handle it when we commit to war.

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Register Guard

by [Kyle Hutton](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 09:56 PM

After reading some of the stories, Ive decided that we cannot take any one story as completely truthful. Certain stories will have certain parts that are truthful, and certain parts that may not be 100% true. However, I am not saying that they are flat out lying about it. Stories change through time, and through people recounting the stories. So in THEIR minds, they honestly believe it is the truth, but in reality it may not be. Does that make them untrustworthy? No, you just need to take all the stories with a grain of salt, and realize, that yes there will be some truthful things, but not everything you hear from peoples letters/recounts/news media will always be the truth. That being said, in my opinion I would be more likely to sway for someones first hand account, than something I saw on the news, because believe the news can be biased at times.

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Legacy through Time

by [Kyle Hutton](#) - Friday, 3 December 2010, 10:04 PM

I feel that Vietnam will be remembered as a lesson that the longer you drag out a war, the worse it gets. The longer it lasted, the more casualties we took. Whether it be the civilians in Vietnam, or our soldiers. The other thing that took a beating with time was our image. Towards the end of the war, the image of what we were doing in Vietnam, and how people felt about us, turned very nasty. In the end, we turned out to be the villains, and that may be the case, but towards the beginning of the war, we had support, towards the end, it dwindled away. We need to get wars done quickly, or not go to war at all. When they drag out, nothing good can come of it. This can be applied to other wars as well, Korea? Iraq? Nothing good comes from wars that last for years.

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Legacy

by [Spencer Smith](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 08:59 AM

One legacy that people don't like to admit, is that Nixon ended the whole mess in Vietnam. He ended the war. People want to talk about watgate, christmas bombings, secrecy, and lies but he in the end he will go down as the man responsible for getting U.S. troops out of Vietnam. JFK is responsible for starting Vietnam, Nixon is responsible for ending it.

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Re: Legacy

by [Spencer Little](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 07:37 PM

I agree with you that everyone overlooks the fact that JFK got us started in those whole mess. In reality, he got pardoned in this whole mess cause he got killed before it got ugly. Take away Nixon's domestic issues, he was the William T Sherman of this war with the policy that war is hell and ugly; and the only way to end it is with more hell and ugliness.

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SPIT

by [Shellea Montgomery](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 01:52 PM

I think these mini stories are personal experiences, they are heartfelt truthful accounts of a very personal experience. Everyone has their own story and I think they all contribute to my ever growing knowledge of the Vietnam War. I think this article also proves a good point about researching your subject more thoroughly before making a statement about it.

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Re: SPIT

by [Ellen Haxby](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 09:00 PM

Yes, the are definitely very personal. I think it's good to see the personal side of things when there is a war, because people's emotions can get lost behind all the politics.

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One Legacy Is Distrust

by [Donald Ebel](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 03:04 PM

I think one of the biggest legacies of the Vietnam War was the American public's mistrust of their government. After a 30-year war, Americans weren't seeing much progress, and there were more and more discrepancies that where being uncovered in what they were being told against what they found out themselves. When ex-secretary of defense Robert McNamara released his book admitting that what they thought was wrong, what did that mean for Americans who paid the price for their mistakes? In the video, Doris Kerns Goodwin says, "Imagine what the parent of those soldiers who died felt at the thought that their kids had died in vain, without a reason." How can we trust our government if they send our children to die without a reason?

After Johnson announced that he would not run for president again, Americans decided that they would rather get out of Vietnam rather than stay and try to salvage whatever they had left. A lot of people voted for Nixon because they believed that he would try to get out of the war quickly. But it turned out that he expanded the war by bombing Cambodia. In the video, Michael Beschloss sums it up nicely when he says, "When you go through an experience like that, you begin to think that the votes you cast may not have very much connection to the kinds of policies America follows."

After the further expansion of the war, the Watergate scandal was uncovered, and Nixon resigned. That was a major blow to the public's trust in the government. Nixon ordered wiretapping? The Plumbers broke into Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office? That's illegal and an invasion of privacy! The president isn't allowed to do that!

If you think about it, you don't run into very many people today that fully trust the government. How many people do you know that are fully behind everything Obama is doing in office? The president's power has been sapped because nobody trusts the office like they used to. It is a shame that we can't seem to do that.

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Re: One Legacy Is Distrust

by [Spencer Little](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 07:32 PM

I agree that Nixon was the straw that broke the governments credibility. The people thought they had all they could handle with Johnson, which they probably were right, and here comes this guy that won their trust and made promises of peace. Then he goes on to spread more bombing and and spy on Americans. When the people were looking for a savior, they got a used car salesman.

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Re: One Legacy Is Distrust

by [Tony Francisco](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 08:53 PM

Distrust is a major legacy of the Vietnam war. But has our distrust for the government really carried through and gotten us anywhere? Look at Guantanamo Bay or the Patriot Act. We saw Nixon do everything that he did and Bush was still able to get away with this? He made what Nixon was doing LEGAL. It's pure lunacy.

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Legacy is

by [Spencer Little](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 07:28 PM

I think the legacy the Vietnam war left was the mistrust of the American People felt towards their government. I think part of this was the war, the government and the press coverage by the United States media. I compare the Gulf of Tonkin to the destroyed USS Maine that started the Spanish War. The Maine was really shady but the coverage of it fueled the fire of war against the Spanish, even though it looks like they really had nothing to do with it. On the other hand the Gulf of Tonkin seemed more legit but there were many doubts on its validity from many Americans. The US people stopped taking the government at face value and it shows up today with a large group that believes the 9/11 attacks were staged. I think the Vietnam war stole the innocence of the American people regarding international policy and their own government.

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Liberal realism

by [Tony Francisco](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 08:22 PM

I feel that I would probably lean towards the liberal realist side of this argument. America is one of the most arrogant countries in the world, and while yes we may be a superpower and that might give us a little reason to be cocky, it doesn't make us kings of the world.

America was coming off of the heels of WWII and the communist scare was everywhere during this era. People were terrified and in the beginning, I feel that this terror strongly influenced the American people and government. It's what really made Vietnam seem so important to America during this whole ordeal. When you look back at the war, you're kind of just amazed, and can only think "What did we get out of this?" I feel that the liberal realists best exemplify the way I feel about the war.

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Pain and destruction

by [Tony Francisco](#) - Saturday, 4 December 2010, 08:47 PM

I feel like the biggest legacy of the Vietnam war is Pain and destruction. When you look at all of the deaths of all of the people fighting in this war, the barbaric methods used to fight the enemy, the divisive sentiment at home, the disillusioned soldiers, the insane amount of drug abuse during the war, all you can see everywhere is hurt and emotional turmoil. The idea of pain is implicit in the idea of destruction, look at the Norman Morrison story we read in Patriots. This man would rather end his life in an attempt to stop the war than support his. His act of suicide is I think pivotal to the idea of America's self-destruction. How far have the mighty fallen when an average working class man does something like this to try and make a difference. In FOG It seems like that act really shook McNamara to the core of his beliefs in and for the war.

In the news hour clip, Stanley Karnow talks about how he thinks that there is a silver lining that comes from Vietnam and that is that people will question the government more. I'm all down for questioning the government, checks and balances and all of that, but are the scars from Vietnam going to forever be with us. Will we always have to be questioning the secretive acts that are government is partaking in? It seems to me that the pain of our government lying to us is still with us. Our government has changed so much since Vietnam, but they're still lying to us.

These two topics are intertwined and just resonated highly for me. I mean when somebody mentions the Vietnam war in conversation you immediately sense a negative connotation with it. Pain and destruction, It's the biggest legacy we were left with.

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