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To me, the most disappointing aspect of the chapter 2 readings is the reoccurring theme of missed opportunities. The essay from the former O.S.S. man showed just how differently history could have turned out had the United States supported the anti-colonial movement in Indochina at the conclusion of WWII. Instead, the Truman administration allowed the French back into their colonial possession and then the subsequent Eisenhower administration bankrolled the French effort as the conflict drug into the 1950's.

The other missed opportunity that seems to stand out from the readings in "Patriots" is the American support for the Diem regime. The essays from the reporter, Brown, and his Vietnamese wife highlight the brutality and ineptness of the of the Saigon government. The reading from the helicopter pilot, Richard Olsen, about his experiences in 1962 illustrates the Army of the Republic of Vietnam's (ARVN) utter lack of professionalism and resolve.

The positive elements of the essays revolve mostly around the youthful exuberance of the various American authors and going to an exotic land full of excitement and high adventure. Their optimism seemed to lack a realistic assessment of the facts on the ground. To their credit, most of the authors wrote that on looking back they recognize how flawed the American effort was from the outset. There is, however, one truly optimistic voice in the readings of Part 2; that of Gen. Giap. Seems rather logical considering his side won the war. I guess it pays to be a winner ...

(to the instructor. Seeing as how this is my first journal entry I would greatly appreciate any guidance you have about what is expected in the journals. Thank you for your time.)

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