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History of the Vietnam War

10/7/12

Assignment 1

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Paying the Price by Ta Quang Thinh is the essay I chose to write about. The instant I read it, it took me back to some memories of my time overseas. And for a story to have such an intimate connection to such a real experience gives it much credibility in my book. I have a very open minded and objective view on my own wartime experiences; so the authors writing also seem very objective and factual. After all, he was an educated man, being a doctor. A man's writing reflects his very thoughts. I found his writing to be very well done, reflecting that of an educated man. All of the facts point to him being an absolutely reliable source. Unlike government and high ranking military officials, whose opinions are purely what they are only allowed to say. Everyone knows that the government tends to hide and ensure that the facts remain undercover; as we have seen in the videos, readings, and supplemental materials, many of the stories, political, military, and civilian, have many contradictions to what actually occurred. This doctor seems to be very honest and forthcoming the events that he incurred, he has no call to lie. But to tell of what really struck me in this story, how alike it is to those on the other side of the war. Americans and Vietnamese alike, both suffering great pains, both wanting the war to end, yet their governments and generals are the ones who keep them in agony. No man enjoys war. For none who endure it come home unscarred.

For my second essay I chose Paradise Island by John Singlaub. It mainly has to do with what seems to be the Communists vs. Imperials on who could spread the most propaganda and try to fool as many indigenous people as possible with empty promises of freedom, prosperity, peace, and hope. Well what lied behind these promises were tyrannical desires of political power and greed. Nothing good came from this. I am going to quote paragraph 3, page 97:

"Many commandos were affected by Communist propaganda. When they were captured they acknowledged that they had fought because they needed the money and they agreed that the Americans were invaders who came to dominate our country. They remembered the U.S. officers who had told them that they were working for the Americans. If the commandos had been told that they were fighting for their own country and their own people, then they might have stayed loyal when they were in the hands of the enemy. But the U.S. destroyed their patriotism, turning them into disloyal people, disloyal even the Americans."

I am truly disappointed that the United States did not bolster the national pride of the Vietnamese people, especially the ARVN fighting alongside our G.I.'s. During my service overseas, our job when we were training Iraqi Soldiers, it was to build their skills and build their pride of fighting for the love of their country. To win a war, you must win their hearts and souls. I think America has lost sight of that true tactic of winning over a people. But then again, why Vietnam?

What good came out of this paper is that we must learn to be truthful about our intentions. Honestly, love, respect, truthfulness, and loyalty are the good traits we can pull from this story. But these are lessons that each individual must learn for himself.

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