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Legacy

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Legacy
by Joe Escobar - Friday, November 25, 2016, 3:18 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Legacy topic.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, something that describes which legacy you have chosen. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Legacy

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Distrust is our Legacy
by Jimmy O'Neal - Wednesday, November 30, 2016, 2:29 PM

I would have to say that our biggest legacy that we received from the Vietnam war would be the distrust that civilians have developed for their own government. In the clip "*Legacy*" we see that one of the biggest problems with the Vietnam war was our own civil discourse. At first it would seem like we were divided evenly but then the liberal mindset began to outweigh the opinions and thoughts of the older generations. It got so far out of hand that students ended up getting shot by national guard and dying at Kent State, thus began a rift between civilians and government. This led to many young people questioning the authority of our government and openly protesting most actions that were taken in Vietnam. This wasn't helped when new presidents kept promising an end to the war but kept getting us further and further into it. (Legacy, Micheal Beschloss). This has persisted into our own time as well. We still have demonstrations and protests about whats going on in the middle east and people still question the legitimacy of why our government gets us involved in wars in the first place. I hope that his is something that will get better with time.

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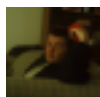
Re: Distrust is our Legacy

by Trevor Neal - Thursday, December 1, 2016, 10:30 PM

Hey Jimmy, I have to agree that the distrust between the civilians and the government was a legacy created during the Vietnam War era. A legacy that still remains to this day. I just wanted to add to your mention of the Kent State shootings that the Herring book also mentions two deaths from a similar shooting at Jackson State College on pg 301. Just as the speakers in the "War Protesters and Hard Hats" video said the military should not shoot its own civilians.

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Re: Distrust is our Legacy

by Jimmy O'Neal - Friday, December 2, 2016, 11:27 AM

Hi Trever, thanks for the additional information. Yes, the military shooting civilians was a major mistake that has created a rift that will never fully heal. This was a horrible thing and it was a shame that it had to happen at a time were we where divided. The big thing about the shootings is that the protesters got a little out of hand at some points. We see the protesters at Jackson State throwing rocks at motorists and overturning cars, while some of the protesters got drunk at Kent State and would throw their empty beer bottles at people. This didn't cause the shootings directly but it was what led the national guard to show up in the first place. What do you think about this? Do you think that the protesters got out of hand and called for the use of military might (not the shooting just the presence of authority)? Or do you think that people took it a little serious?

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Re: Distrust is our Legacy

by Trever Neal - Friday, December 2, 2016, 10:01 PM

Hi Jimmy, I agree that unnecessary delinquent behavior merits some use of force in order to control the situation and hopefully, end the violence. The protesters had a right to a peaceful protest but they didn't keep it that way. At the moment they started throwing rocks, bottles, and overturning cars it became more like a riot and the arrival of the National Guard became justified. I just think that the National Guard should have shown up with an alternative in addition to live ammunition, especially since the protesters did not have any "real" weapons. Had the protesters shown that they also had firearms, I think that the National Guard should have prepared to use theirs as well. There is the question of concealed weapons, but you can assume there weren't any due to what the protesters were using as their weapons. The N.G. could have brought tear gas, pepper spray, shields, etc. Deadly weapons can be necessary at a time where there is an equal amount of danger for both parties. The national guardsman from the video War Protesters and Hard Hats, Larry Shafer, mentioned that he heard to his right, a gunshot, so he thought that it was an appropriate time to begin firing. It is this negligence and lack of attention that shows the use of firearms shouldn't be involved in a protest unless the protesters have an equal amount of weaponry. Shafer said he was not sure if Joe Lewis was going to inflict harm upon him so he used what he had to stop him. Do you think that this fear is enough to warrant shooting Joe Lewis when it appears in the photograph (near the 9:40 mark of the video) that he was just, "standing still, giving him the finger" – Joe Lewis?

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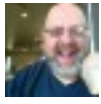


Re: Distrust is our Legacy

by Jimmy O'Neal - Saturday, December 3, 2016, 12:09 AM

Hi Trever, I do agree that the National Guard should have come better equipped for a civil confrontation. The use of firearms, even against minimal threat, is way overboard if the other side doesn't have any firearms in return. It also like you said, the lack of coordination was a big disaster. This was the main reason that people lost there lives in the first place. As for Shafer shooting Joe Lewis I do think that he should have just held out. If it didn't look like Joe was going to harm him then Shafer should have just looked the other way but if Joe would have made a move to attack him then I would say that it could be justified.

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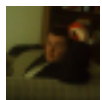
Re: Distrust is our Legacy

by Scott Woods - Friday, December 2, 2016, 1:12 PM

Hey Jimmy,

I agree with you. The Vietnam War's legacy would be that it opened our eyes to what our government was doing. However, from the way I read your post (and I could have read it wrong) I have to disagree with the idea that it's a bad thing. That 'opening of our eyes' is something that needs to be in our world, even today. The people should question what is going on with their government and act on it. They should be informed people so that they can make the right choice when electing officials. I think that the discourse in American is as important as what the War was about. It helps fuel the democracy that we built and we should never fully trust our government to do the right thing because they represent us as a whole and we need that to reflect on who we are as a people.

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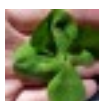


Re: Distrust is our Legacy

by Jimmy O'Neal - Saturday, December 3, 2016, 12:19 AM

Hi Scott, after rereading my original post I could see where you were getting at. I do agree completely that we should be much more aware of what our government is doing. We should act on what the government does, but only if it negatively impacts us as a whole, that was what I was trying to say. As we see now a days a lot of the things that people protest about can tear a whole household apart, this is something that I think needs to be fixed. While it is important to keep an eye on our government to make sure it is doing a good job we should also deal with the mistakes that it makes in a more civilized manner, because lately a lot of protests get out of hand and lead to open acts of civil disobedience. This is what I was trying to imply, sorry if it was unclear.

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Re: Distrust is our Legacy

by Jessica Fialho - Saturday, December 3, 2016, 12:48 PM

Thank you Jimmy. I was having issues finding the words for what else to say about "the people are much more skeptical" (14:35, Legacy News hour). I think you stated it perfectly and that "our biggest legacy that we received from the Vietnam war would be the distrust that civilians have developed for their own government."

I do agree that it is one of our biggest legacies from the Vietnam war and I hope in today's times we can learn from it. Especially with all the protests that had been going on after this last presidential election. I truly believe distrust can be a huge saving grace for us when used correctly. It can help us go that extra mile needed to gather the data we need to make informed decisions.

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Hey everyone,

by Treva Thompson-Moore - Sunday, December 4, 2016, 10:11 PM

I completely agree with both Jimmy and your views that excessive force against peaceful protests is completely unnecessary. We have come a long way in regards to what weaponry is used during peaceful protests. It is a blessing that our police force have alternatives, such as water cannons, rubber bullets, and pepper spray. Although I do not agree with any violence against protesters it is reassuring that we do not have men with loaded firearms on the front line any more. The protests of Vietnam definitely gave America a lesson on how to deal with homefront conflict against the government. Even with this “eye opening” lesson having a silver lining like Scott Woods stated it is still very unacceptable to continue to have these problems today and we should have found a more civilized manner to deal with these ever occurring conflicts by now.

I just have to bring up how devastating this must have been for the american population at this time. To have to realize how separated the common people and the government/police force could become had to be scary. This was a nation that once was completely comfortable trusting in their government and didn't have the common skepticism we have. In a quote by author Stanley Karnow he says, ““Those were the days when people didn't ask questions, people had confidence in the government...”(Video, 6:43) If only it was a good thing to be able to trust our government and have a form of communication that did make us all feel understood. But now I'm just really shooting for the stars.

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News Hour: Legacy

by Scott Woods - Wednesday, November 30, 2016, 2:37 PM

After listening to the video and what we have learned in the past 10 weeks of this class one thing shined as a bright star through the haze that is the subject of the Vietnam War. Doris Kearns Goodwin said two things that really stuck out to me. The first was that, “No foreign war can succeed without that large domestic support.”

For me it comes down to the protests, looking and talking about the spitting on soldiers as they came home, and the fact that Americans were not told everything at that time that really shows how messed up this war was.

The other thing Goodwin says is, "You just think about the emotional response to McNamara's book when he finally came out and said 'We were wrong. We misestimated the situation in the north. We overestimated the strength of the South. We should have got out in '63 or '64.' Imagine what the parent of those soldiers felt at the thought of their kids dying in vain, without a reason." She also states that Nixon's election would have gone different if people had not thought that he was going to end the war quickly but instead he expanded the bombing campaign. These disconnects, assumptions, and terrible thinking on how the war should have gone are the biggest cogs for me in the watch that is the Vietnam War.

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Re: News Hour: Legacy

by Jimmy O'Neal - Saturday, December 3, 2016, 12:29 PM

Hi Scott, I agree that the support of the public is a large part of winning any battle. If these men were already fighting a battle that they didn't want and the people at home were calling the fight "pointless" and "worthless" then it just adds to the demoralization factor. Then when they come home they get spit on and feel like they are forced to throw away any military attire that they had from Vietnam. This would definitely lead to many soldiers that are already messed up from the war to gain a whole new type of mental trauma. If you want to keep your soldiers rearing and ready for combat then having their friends and family, heck even their countrymen, supporting them then it will feel like they at least have something to fight for rather than just blindly going out with the possibility of dying and knowing that no one even wants you there in the first place.

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Television Wars

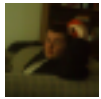
by Timothy Lucas - Wednesday, November 30, 2016, 2:54 PM

A significant legacy of the War in Vietnam has been the influence it has had on policy concerning international conflict and the impact television media has on public opinion. As someone who was in his teens during the 90's I frequently would hear a person on the news saying something about how some international event was going to cause another Vietnam experience for the United States. I particularly remember in 1993 when the bodies of US troops were being drug through the streets in Somalia and the decision to withdraw that resulted and as I was turning 18 the United States was in a prolonged bombing campaign in Serbia. We see in the Vietnam Legacy

video at about 13:07 Norton Smith calls Vietnam ‘a television war,’ and that our policy has been largely ‘governed’ by what we see on television. He then asks us to imagine the United States sending a large force into long term combat...of which Norton Smith and Gwen Ifell both scoff at the idea as nearly unthinkable. We should remember this video was produced in 1998.

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Re: Televison Wars

by Jimmy O'Neal - Friday, December 2, 2016, 11:52 AM

Hi Timothy, this is so true. The fact that this was the first televised war really did open the eyes of a lot of people, which is what led to so many protests about what was going on. We can still see this today when we turn on the news and see what is going on in the Middle East, which is just the thing that Norton and Gwen both scoffed at. Although the wars that we have televised lately haven't rallied as much attention as the Vietnam war it is still something that will stick with us in the long run.

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Re: Televison Wars

by Andrew Dellinger - Sunday, December 4, 2016, 5:58 PM

I'm glad you brought up that Vietnam was the first television war, because I also found it really interesting and believe it had a major influence on public opinion. I can see how turning on the television every night and seeing the horrors of war could turn the public against it, especially when its the first time in history that this happened. Do you think the cause of the opposition to the war could have been partly due to civilians, who would have never seen the reality of war otherwise, were now watching it on the nightly news? I believe that it played a major psychological factor on the home front, and partially could have caused the antiwar movement. Today we deal with the same issues in our current conflicts over seas, however I think its apparent that society has become quite accustomed to it. The moment when Norton Smith and Gwen Ifell both scoff at the idea of sending a large force into long term combat was very eerie to me, almost like a chilling reality check.

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Division in the US

by Trevor Neal - Wednesday, November 30, 2016, 9:48 PM

The most significant legacy to me was the divide the Vietnam War created in the United States between the antiwar protesters and the “hard hats”. Many people were against the war and protested it and veterans returning home from the war were treated badly. Just after the 18 minute mark of the Legacy video clip, historian Doris Kearns Goodwin says one of the most humiliating and horrible memories of the war was how the soldiers returning home were treated. Many of them were forced to go to the war by the draft and risked their lives for the United States. We talked earlier in this class about whether or not veterans were spit on when they returned home, which I believe was pretty evident from the information provided.

Another example of the divide is in the War Protesters and Hard Hats video, the Kent State shooting is described. Students protesting the war at Kent State are met with the National Guard telling them to disperse, and end up opening fire on them. This shooting led to the deaths of four students and only intensified the divide. In Herring’s, *America’s Longest War*, he states, “The shooting at Kent State following the invasion of Cambodia sparked massive protests at colleges and universities across the country.” P 302

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Just a legality

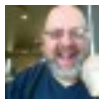
by Treva Thompson-Moore - Wednesday, November 30, 2016, 10:51 PM

I will exclaim that the “peace” agreements of 1973 was the most significant legacy of the war in Vietnam for the U.S. This legality helps with the final understanding that the war between the North and South regions of Vietnam was going to continue until one of them succeeded whether or not we were there. It was never America’s choice to “END” the war because it was not one that we had started, just took part in. The importance of getting our own men to our country’s land took priority over whether or not indigenous lives were lost or not. In the Herring Novel he states, “The “peace” agreement of 1973 was designed more to get the United States out of Vietnam than to end the fighting among the Vietnamese.” (*America’s Longest War*; Herring, pg. 350) This is why I believe that if our governmental advisors and officials during that time had better wisdom to offer to such a conflict in Vietnam rather than violence and army force we could have offered more of a productive intervention. From the beginning of our contact with Vietnam back in the 1940’s we should not have had to withdraw our military to save face in our own nation because it had gotten so far out of hand. It should not take over 20 years for such a successful nation to understand another nation’s destiny. As citizens of the United states I believe knowing why the Peace agreement was made and how it was handled will help you understand the importance of withdrawing our troops. I understand this didn’t actually mean all american’s immediately left Vietnam. That is part of the importance of fully knowing the legality behind the title. In the video presidential advisor Doris Kearns says, “Somehow the country got this feeling that with each new endeavor in Vietnam it was going to be over soon and that there was light at the end of the tunnel instead of

being told that it was going to be a long war and what the reasons for that war were..." proving that it was a common understanding that our nation still had no clear reasoning for America's involvement in the Vietnam War. (Legacy, 9:55) Her understanding of why American citizens felt a need to have a solid reasoning for this war really stood out to me. She related to the families of the soldiers that returned or passed while on tour and pointed out why it was important for them to know they died for good reason. At the same time she was willing to relay the bad news that American government did foolishly maneuver America into a war without entirely explaining why to the people. That is something that just can not be denied when it comes to the technicalities of this war.

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Re: Just a legality

by Scott Woods - Friday, December 2, 2016, 1:23 PM

Treva, I totally agree that the peace accords were a clearing of the mind for the US officials to realize that it was time to get out of the war and let it end with both states dealing with their own conflict. I said at the beginning of this class that we should have never really be involved in the first place. The blight and though that communism was going to take over the world is what drove us to fight these nations, but in reality if we would have just let them deal with it themselves we might have been better off and saved American lives.

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Re: Just a legality

by Jimmy O'Neal - Saturday, December 3, 2016, 12:07 PM

Hi Treva, I think that not having a clear goal in the war was a very big downfall for our soldiers. They had no purpose in the war, at least no personal purpose, unlike the wars that were fought before. The only thing they knew was that they were there to fight off Communism, but that's it. There was no other reason than to fight off Communism in a land that wasn't even our own. This was a big downer for anyone that had to be drafted to fight in a war they thought was senseless. As for the Peace agreements, I agree that they were merely the final step in showing us that we didn't have to be in the war any more. We could have pulled our men out and instead offered help in the way of military strategies or supplies rather than sending in more troops. The war did get way to far out of hand and we should have just left, even if it would have made us look bad.

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Jimmy and Scott.

by Treva Thompson-Moore - Saturday, December 3, 2016, 8:08 PM

The dissapointing factor that our government would make a big deal about a legal decision and not actually abide by it can cause quite the stir among our citizens. I agree that the conflict with understanding our governments intentions in this war created a downfall for our soldiers. This in fact could have affected the performance of our overall military. I also wonder how well the leadership on the front line communicated during the year of 181973. Considering this agreement was literally only a cease fire on paper and was not enfrced on the battleground. (Herring, pg 333.) I know we were able to get our POW'S back but the ground and air war did not end immediately like it should have.

I couldn't believe how long it took for a final agreement to be made. At the same time I can only imagine all the hurdles to get over for everyone involved before a decision was made.

Appy stated, "The North Vietnamese and their NLF allies were steadfast in seeking eventual control of a unified Vietnam while the United States insisted on the necessity of maintaining a permanent non-Communist South Vietnam. In addition, both sides were deeply skeptical of diplomacy, Hanoi because of its bitter memories of how the Geneva Accords of 1954 failed to bring national unification, and Washington because of its Cold War assumption that Communists could not be trusted to honor any agreement."(Appy, pg 461) This really clarified exactly why it was taking so long for an agreement to be made and why we couldn't exactly stop it from getting out of hand.

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Protesting, Just One of Many Legacies

by Jessica Fialho - Saturday, December 3, 2016, 11:57 AM

A single most significant legacy of Vietnam war? How is this even possible to answer? The war in its entirety is a legacy. I have to say this is our most difficult topic this term, and it is suiting that it is one of our last discussion topics. The truth is though, I cannot answer this question because I cannot choose. With the entire war being a Legacy, I will touch on protests for this post.

The buddhist protests are a huge moment in the war. It is fitting that in the Legacy-News Hour video clip they show one of the photos (1:26). I am grateful that even in a short 20 minute clip they were sure to touch on this. I believe this was a huge legacy in the protest world. The emotional pictures still touch us today. Where the buddhists protests were held in Vietnam against Diem's political moves, later in the war protesting was a huge part in America and it is mentioned a few times throughout the Legacy-News Hour video clip. Protesting is held throughout America against the war and Doris Kearns Goodwin brings up that "No foreign war can succeed without that large domestic support" (9:35). Throughout the war, and repeated through several

varies speeches done by some of America's leaders it is mentioned that America needed to be united to help the Vietnam war. America was obviously ununited about the war and this was a factor that affected the war's outcome. Protesting throughout the Vietnam war is a large legacy that should never be forgotten.

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Becoming involved

by Jessica Fialho - Saturday, December 3, 2016, 12:40 PM

Richard Norton Smith makes an excellent point in Legacy-News hour video clip when he states, "Culture war continued after the military war ended, in fact it can be argued it's still going on" (12:20). The reason this is so important is because a culture war is still going on today. We see it everyday, but in different degrees. Some of it is still carried on from the Vietnam war, and some of it is a newer development because our culture is always changing. The important part is that the people have changed since Vietnam and are still starting to stand up and use their voices and involve themselves. The lesson carried on from Vietnam or as Stanley Karnow states, "kind of a silver lining, which is people are much more skeptical." (14:35) With this he is referring to the people being skeptical of the government and making an effort to involve themselves more. So, another Legacy from the Vietnam war is that Americans now try to be more involved. At least in the patterns I have seen.

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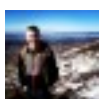
Re: Becoming involved

by Scott Woods - Sunday, December 4, 2016, 2:37 PM

Jessica, even in today's world we do have people getting more involved. Yes this is caused by the change of culture during the Vietnam War. However, not enough people are engaging in the process unfortunately. Last election was one of the worst turn out and to top that with a nice red cherry most people don't make an educated vote. They typically vote for a name that looks familiar, heard just a bit of what they liked about the candidate or law, and just tick off the check box.

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Distrust of the Government

by Andrew Dellinger - Saturday, December 3, 2016, 7:22 PM

After studying the events of the Vietnam War, and watching the “News Hour” clip, I think one of the most significant legacies of Vietnam is what it did to the public’s opinion of government officials. The lack of information given to the public during the war made people distrust those appointed to lead them. I agree with Michael Beschloss that a major factor was that multiple presidents made the public believe the war would be over soon, and this caused Americans to become weary of the war sooner (News Hour clip 7:50). I think JFK’s, and later LBJ’s, middle ground policy had a lot to do with the prolonging of the war that they never really openly declared until the Gulf of Tonkin incident. The implications can be seen today in politics, and the general feeling most people have towards our leaders. Jonathan Holloway says that Americans first step in evaluating a political figure now is one of cynicism and skepticism due to the politics of Vietnam (12:00). I agree with him that it is a good thing, and I believe that it made people realize that we should be more informed. Most importantly I support Doris Kearns Goodwin that the most positive legacy of Vietnam is that we have learned from the poor treatment of our veterans after the war. From personal experience I think America has definitely learned its lesson in that regard.

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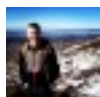
Re: Distrust of the Government

by Timothy Lucas - Sunday, December 4, 2016, 3:22 PM

Distrust is certainly a legacy from the Vietnam experience for many Americans. As you said, many political leaders told one story of Vietnam and the nightly news would tell another. The Gulf of Tonkin incident, the legitimacy of which many have questioned, was enough to give a president the ability to make war without an official declaration. If people were more informed and were told a more complete truth at the time there might not have been enough support for a war effort. Instead, veterans of Vietnam would be the ones many people blamed for the war. The irony of course is that there was a draft that not everyone could avoid and those that volunteered did so because they believed they were doing was right. We may have learned, especially in today's all volunteer armed forces, to respect soldiers but I think we still have a long way to go in terms of proper care for veterans and our means of staying informed.

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Re: Distrust of the Government

by Andrew Dellinger - Sunday, December 4, 2016, 4:43 PM

You're right Timothy, we do have a long way to go in terms of care for veterans when they return home, but the fact that we learned from the lack of respect for Vietnam vets is huge. In regards to the Gulf of Tonkin incident I realize that I phrased my words wrong. I meant to say more along the lines of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was the first major "authorization" of military action against aggressors in Vietnam. The irony is that it was also a major political tool for Johnson to show that he "could be firm in defending American interests" (herring pg:149). Although the second attack on August 4th is certainly questionable, I think the people were mad enough already from the first attack to approve the resolution. Remember only 2 Congressman disapproved of it (herring 150). However, you are right that the misinformation given to congress, and the public, could have swayed the vote.

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