

Week 8 Forum

Article & Survey

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Article & Survey

by Joe Escobar – Saturday, May 14, 2016, 10:21 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Article & Survey 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 question(s) you are addressing . Do NOT simply leave it RE: Article & Survey

Sum of ratings: –

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Re: Article & Survey

by Robert Taylor – Wednesday, May 18, 2016, 9:29 AM

Max Frankel’s criticism of former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara’s book is completely understandable. The most major issue that Mr. Frankel brought up is Mr. McNamara’s reluctance to fully accept his faults in the war. In his article Mr. McNamara states that “But he took refuge -- and takes it even now -- in opinion polls that recorded support from the majority of Americans who, as he well knew, had been misinformed and denied vital information at every major turn.” This reminds me of the same kind of reflection that was done in the AIM documentary we viewed earlier in the class. In the AIM documentary they point out that their were demonstrations with many more people in support of the war than against it, as if that is some kind of proof that the war was justified. Yet as Mr. McNamara states, and as we saw in the the documentary released by our government in the early sixties, the people were misinformed about the war.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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It's very hard to judge without walking in their shoes

by David Leavitt – Wednesday, May 18, 2016, 11:33 PM

It is really tough, and risky to pass judgment on decisions made by people in the past. Especially at the level these decisions were made, there are so many different things that the people deciding were taking into account, it’s almost not fair to judge them. We can get somewhat of a picture through the memoirs of McNamara and other sources, but we’ll never have the full picture. With this said, I think that some of the criticisms made by Frankel were justified, while others I feel like he didn’t have enough information to make. He says that “Mr.McNamara’s unwillingness to explore the human tragedies and political legacies of this longest American war” is very disappointing. For one, we will never know what it’s like to make decisions, and have thousands of lifes taken as a result, and the toll that takes on your mind. But we also don’t really know that he didn’t!

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: It's very hard to judge without walking in their shoes

by [Robert Taylor](#) – Friday, May 20, 2016, 9:30 AM

We absolutely don't know if Mr. McNamara ever explored the human tragedies and political legacies. In the clips we saw from the documentary he was reluctant to speak of these things, but in no way did it seem like he hadn't of thought of them. Its like the narrator said "damned if you do, damned if you don't" I am sure that no matter how he speaks of the human tragedies, someone will be upset with him. I do believe that we should critically investigate all decisions made in the war, if only to learn from the mistakes, but that does not mean demonizing anyone involved. Sadly some people in the United States apparently feel justified in say horrible things to people involved in this war, even if they don't fully understand what actually happened.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: It's very hard to judge without walking in their shoes

by [David Leavitt](#) – Saturday, May 21, 2016, 9:41 AM

For sure. I think people tend to see peoples mistakes and decisions that backfired, and immediately think that they are incompetent. The Frankel is one of these people, which is why he said that he hadn't thought of these things. I totally agree that we need to think critically about every aspect of the war, and the people behind it. Just as George Santayana said, "Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it". We learn from history so that we don't make the same mistakes that they made.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Missed Deadline

by [Mikayla Cervantes](#) – Thursday, May 19, 2016, 2:17 AM

Missed deadline for initial post.

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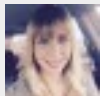
Historical truth from McNamara

by [Robert Taylor](#) – Saturday, May 21, 2016, 10:54 AM

I think we are getting the historical truth from Former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara in the same way we get historical truth from any biased source. From my limited understanding of the war he did not tell any lies in the clips we viewed. He did possibly leave out important damning information, as well as plainly refuse to talk about certain subjects. Although none of this is exactly lying, it benefits him by painting a specific picture, where he doesn't look so bad. I would be very interested in finding our exactly how much he did know about agent orange, instead of his answer which was essentially "I don't remember" and "it wasn't illegal to use Agent Orange at the time."

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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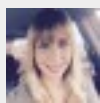


Re: Historical truth from McNamara

by [Delynne Frank](#) – Sunday, May 22, 2016, 6:32 PM

Regardless of the accounts that we're hearing, whether it's from Robert McNamara or anyone else involved in the war, I agree that information is often left out. However, I'm a bit torn when it comes to the question of if we are getting the historical truth from McNamara. I dont necessarily think that we have gotten the most accurate historical truth from him.I say this because he has openly said that he will not talk about certain things and other things that he has told us about the war seem to be lacking all of the details.

For example, I dont think that McNamara's recollection of authorizing Agent Orange was "foggy". I think that he does remember what his decision was– but that he has chosen not to share it with the public.



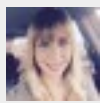
Criticisms by Max Frankel

by [Delynne Frank](#) – Sunday, May 22, 2016, 5:36 PM

Max Frankel's criticisms of Robert McNamara's book, "In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam" seemed to be filled with disappointment. Disappointment about McNamara's lack of reflection regarding his own actions and mental state during the war.

Frankel asks the question: "So why speak out now?" The answer that McNamara gives doesnt really seem to answer the question truthfully. In his response to Frankel's question, he seems to be annoyed with how Americans have viewed our country's leaders, but can he blame Americans for feeling that way when they were never getting the whole truth about the war? McNamara says that he has "grown sick at heart witnessing the cynicism and even contempt" with which so many Americans view their institutions and leaders.

Tying this in with what learned in the "Fog of War" video, I feel that McNamara's response to Frankel may not have been the most honest? It seems that a more honest answer to "why speak out now" would have been about the regrets he has about decisions that he helped make with the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.



Class Influence on Survey Responses

by [Delynne Frank](#) – Sunday, May 22, 2016, 8:13 PM

My knowledge and understanding of the topics that were asked about in the survey are a bit limited. Exposure to the material in this class influenced my response to the following statements from the survey:

1.) Our resources should be focused on addressing poverty, crime, and budget deficits at home.

I strongly support this statement because our first priority should be to address the most damaging issues of our country. Poverty, crime, budget deficits are all huge issues in the U.S. right now and have been for many years.

2.) The United States will drain its resources trying to solve other countries' problems. The United States will lose access to oil and other key resources abroad.

I chose this statement as one of my 3 answers to the "What most concerns you" question. Learning about the amount of money that the U.S. spent on the Vietnam war, as well as the resources used to help South Vietnam influenced this choice. Although, the Vietnam war ended 40 years ago, this statement made me think about the possibility of future wars and/or our involvement in helping other countries'. With the trillions of dollars that the U.S. is already indebted, I just dont see how we can justify spending more money to help other countries.

3.) Using our economic and military power around the world creates more enemies than friends.

My response to this statement was influenced by what we have learned about the U.S. entering the war in Vietnam and how the Vietnamese people viewed the U.S. I think that the U.S. went into the war with good intentions to give advice and to provide the soldiers with intelligence and weapons. But after the destruction of villages and the increasing amount of innocent lives taken, I think that the Vietnamese people began to see us an enemy. In episode 4 of the PBS series, it is said that Americans could not always distinguish whether a Vietnamese person was the enemy or not. They lived by the saying, "Shoot first, ask questions later." The Vietnamese people that the U.S. was being brutal, but the U.S. felt that they were doing what they had to do.

