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Longest War and Government Documentaries

by [Joe Escobar](#) – Saturday, April 2, 2016, 9:23 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Longest War and Government Documentaries 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: Longest War and Government Documentaries

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Re: Longest War and Government Documentaries

by [Mathew Bohman](#) – Tuesday, April 5, 2016, 9:15 PM

I find this a hard question to answer since, as stated, we know the outcome of history. I think we are also aware of all the moving parts that were going on and so trying to pick one single event is really a challenge. Since that however is the assignment I will have to say Dien Bien Phu is a significant event between the videos and the book. All three of them touched on the event. The book covered it in most detail. I believe all of them agree on what this battle meant to the Vietminh and to the French. For the Vietminh it showed their resolve and belief in wanting nationalism and their own government away from the French. For the French I believe it revealed their time in Southeast Asia was coming to an end. For the United States the battle was significant because the United States was trying to stop the spread of communism. The United States was willing to spend large amounts of money to help stop the spread of communism but with the French defeat the United States felt like communism was going to take hold in Southeast Asia and the United States couldn't allow that with the Cold War happening. It set a tone for all future decisions the United States would make regarding their involvement in Southeast Asia specifically Vietnam.

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Enough Blame to Go Around

by [Trevor Kaye](#) – Thursday, April 7, 2016, 1:38 AM

The topic of blame involving war crimes arose in both the *Why Vietnam?* video and chapter two of *America's Longest War* by George C. Herring. *Why Vietnam?* frames the North Vietnamese as ruthless animals, akin to modern day terrorists. The video references "acts of terror and subversion to disrupt the legitimate government" carried out by the North Vietnamese, continuing to describe their guerilla methods as "furtive and remorseless" and "aimed at subjugating the people." It shows corpses littering the streets of what appears to be a town in South Vietnam, stating that these methods were elements of a "war of liberation" for the North Vietnamese.

It is shocking and somewhat ironic that the video presents the North Vietnamese this way, especially considering that American military and political tactics resulted in numerous atrocities. Through anti-communist campaigns in South Vietnam, according to *America's Longest War*, "more than 2,000 suspected communists" were executed, "some by the guillotine." (82) The shift of popular belief between 1965 and today is interesting when discussing the topic of war crimes and particularly horrific events in war history. In 1965, as evidenced by the aforementioned examples in the video, blame seemed to fall solely on the enemy. Today, however, many people jump to the conclusion that acts of barbarism were committed only by American soldiers, and that our country was wholly to blame for all horrific events in the war. However, neither of these notions are true. All sides were responsible for acts of abhorrent cruelty during the war. While the government of South Vietnam was responsible for killing 2,000 suspected communists, the government of North Vietnam was responsible for executing "as many as 15,000 dissidents" in a "campaign to eradicate capitalist influence in the cities." (82) In this case, I believe *America's Longest War* over *Why Vietnam?* because the book presents issues on both sides and provides a less biased recount of events than the video.

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Re: Enough Blame to Go Around
by [Mathew Bohman](#) – Sunday, April 10, 2016, 7:54 PM

Trevor, If I am understanding what you are saying then overall I agree with you that the book was less biased than the videos. One thing I believe the video was spot on about is the fact that Vietnam was the first televised war and that there was a large amount of Americans who opposed the governments involvement in Vietnam. Even back then Americans at least were blaming the government for what was going on in Vietnam and disagreed with our involvement. I think that when people today talk about Vietnam they are quick to blame America out of some misplaced guilt, forgetting what North Vietnam did to Americans. In the end both sides did horrific things to each other and need to share the blame.

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Washington Ignores facts on the ground
by [Dustin Brown](#) – Saturday, April 9, 2016, 6:37 PM

In the Why Vietnam video President Johnson explains that if south Vietnam were to fall, Ho Chi Minh who was a puppet of his Russian and Chinese masters would sweep in and communism would engulf the entire region. In chapter 1 of the Herring book the U.S Deer team that initially worked with Ho Chi Minh relayed to Washington that yes he was a communist, however he was a nationalist first and was not beholden to either China nor Russia. I believe that President Johnson had to sell the war to the American people and the world so he as well as Eisenhower and Kennedy disregarded information that would not perpetuate their goal. I believe that Ho Chi Minh was a ruthless leader that would sacrifice his own countrymen and women to achieve his goals. I also believe that Ho Chi Minh was an opportunist and if America would have embraced him as we did the South, Ho Chi Minh would have not sought a relationship with the Russians or Chinese.

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