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Patriots and PBS

by Joe Escobar – Saturday, April 2, 2016, 9:22 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Patriots and PBS topic.
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Patriots Commanders and PBS Ep. 2

by Zachary Sielicky – Wednesday, April 6, 2016, 12:47 PM

The first story in the Patriots book by Bernard Trainor went in depth about the roll America played in the early years of the Vietnam war as advisors. In the second episode the of the PBS 11 part series, "Vietnam a Television Television History," talks about a very similar aspect of America's roll in Vietnam. In the story Trainor talks about a mission that he sent Vietnamese on to take down a possible Viet Cong recuperation center that turned out to actually be a leper hospital. Many innocent Vietnamese people were killed and America lost a lot of intelligence credibility from the South Vietnamese. Episode 2 discusses the feelings a lot of Southern Vietnamese people had towards American's and their advisory in taking down the Viet Cong. They viewed Americans as, "[Clueless] big brothers."

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Re: Patriots Commanders and PBS Ep. 2

by Philip Highwood – Sunday, April 10, 2016, 3:15 PM

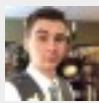
When discussing intelligence in combat, the outcome can be extremely negative. For instance, taking out a leper hospital, juxtaposed an enemy base. In war time situations like this happen more often then not. Intelligence is often not correct, as normally we are using an interpreter, which can lead to misunderstanding or misleading facts. The interesting fact here, is that even though General Trainer received intelligence that turned out to be bad, the South Vietnamese who were timid and annihilation was not in their culture, still went in and shot up the hospital and patients.The sad fact is that in every war innocent civilians, children and warriors will die and that makes war,"hell"!

With that said and hind–sight 2020; would you support our troops being sent overseas? Do you beleive that we (Americans), should "bear any burden and pay any price for liberty". (Christian, G)

Christian G, A. *Patriots*. New York, New York: Penguin.

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Re: Patriots Commanders and PBS Ep. 2

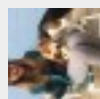
by [David Leavitt](#) – Sunday, April 10, 2016, 10:37 PM

I also found that very interesting. Like in the case of the leper hospital, How they took their “foreign” intelligence from men who didn’t know the area, and held it higher then the people that lived in that very area. Although this is understandable when you put it in context. As Traninor says on page 7 of the Appy book, there was double agents (as there are in any war). But knowing this had to have put in suspicions in the minds of the solders when Vietnamese told them something different then their “trustworthy” intelligence. Another reason to doubt them would be the fact that the Americans had to be with the south Vietnamese, because they many times gave the enemy a chance to escape. (Appy page 4) All this to say, It’s very difficult to understand what the men making decisions had to go through, and how hard those decisions really were to make. This is something important to keep in mind as we learn about this war.

David Leavitt

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Relationship between the North and South Vietnamese

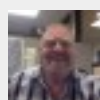
by [Brittany Aldinger](#) – Wednesday, April 6, 2016, 7:15 PM

As a student who, coming into this class, has almost no insight as to what happened in the Vietnam war I am learning lots of information on how the war began and why. I have read several stories from the United States soldier point of view. It is crazy to think about how many young men were drafted without any idea of our country even being at war with Vietnam, as George Watkins states in his interview, “I didn’t really pay a whole lot of mind to it. I just knowed that we was fighting over there against Communism, so-called” (22). I imagine this was quite the shock to those men who were unaware, especially those who were just getting home to their sweethearts from WWII.

While the North Vietnamese were determined to convert the South to their customs made by their benevolent “uncle” Ho Chi Minh, and gain control over the rice and rubber farming. In the film *Why Vietnam?* at 10 minutes and 18 seconds, the narrator tells the audience a quote from the North Vietnamese, stating, “A grain of rice is worth a drop of blood.” While the North were intent on violent actions to get the uniform country they sought, the South Vietnamese spent their days dreading the war and wishing for it to just end. In the book *Patriots*, a South Vietnamese man named Phan Xuan Sinh, drafted by the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), continually infers his desire to live peacefully amongst fellow Vietnamese. He would rather live under North Viet Minh rule, than to continue the killing. As Mr. Sinh is documented expressing, “People like me didn’t hate the other side. We were forced to bear arms and saw no compelling reason to fight. We just hoped to find a way to live together with our brothers” (26).

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Re: Patriots and PBS

by [Philip Highwood](#) – Wednesday, April 6, 2016, 7:18 PM

So, clearly we all can agree that the Vietnam war was, well a disaster. However, for discussion I want to discus the original deployment of troops to South Vietnam. In the early 60’s the teams of American Soldiers were acting as advisors, training the people of the South on combat tactics, use of weapons, and providing logistical support. We were in Vietnam to protect the Sovereignty of the people of South Vietnam; in hope that the South would have supreme power and the right to choose their leader; not being forced to imminent dictatorship and communism. America then, and still today we fight for the little guy, we believe that we can be World Police and bring peace to other nations.

When comparing “Patriots” from Christian G Appy. and PBS “Vietnam” A Television History. The differences are

amazing, as I love to read, and in doing so I can create my own visions of the memories from each individual story. For instance, when reading about Jo Collins,the Playboy Playmate, and her asking where was Vietnam? This hit home to me as my daughter was nine years of age, when I got the call to go to Iraq (2003). Meaghan (my daughter), and I did some research just so she knew where I was going. We looked at the weather, and we talked about why her father, like other fathers were being asked to go fight. My answer to her was to set the people of Iraq free, to protect their Sovereignty and their freedoms of choice. Getting back on point, I looked at Jo as being a young child not a sexy woman featured in Playboy. While watching PBS the vision that I have created, is now diminished and now I see the way the media and of-course from pictures visions become recreated.

Furthermore, for discussion, I want to visit “Henery Prunier” his thoughts and accounts of Ho Chi Minh, was that of a skinny, kind, and wise man (Christian G). Where as in “PBS” we are giving the thoughts that Ho Chi Minh is an animal and wants nothing but the death of every individual who looks his way. On page 37 we read about times during WW II, where seven cables were sent to Washington from Ho Chi Minh urging the United States to recognize Vietnams right to self-determination. Ho Chi Minh’ communications were never acknowledged (Christian G).

Interesting enough, politically speaking we (Americans) never learned from our mistakes; although the President does not have power to initiate war; he can initiate crisis, which looks and smells like war.

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Why we went in to vietnam in the first place.

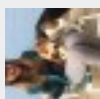
by [David Leavitt](#) – Wednesday, April 6, 2016, 8:04 PM

The most important correlation between the two for me, is why we went in. I saw this in a new light after reading the first story in the first part of Appy’s book. Where Bernard Trainor says “We viewed communism as a monolithic dragon which controlled all of the Eurasian land mass... We had seen the communist attempt to take over Korea, we had seen what they tried to do in the Philippines with the Huks, a communist-led insurgency, we saw what they were trying to do in Indonesia with the PKI (the Indonesian Communist Party), and now we saw their attempt to take over Indochina.” Not only this, but the country with the largest land mass (Russia) had turned communist a little over 40 years earlier, and the country with the largest population (China) had turned communist just around 20 years before. So in the minds of government officials, all those smaller countries could easily be persuaded and taken over by the communist. In the first episode of Vietnam: a Television History (Right in the introduction, about 2:40), J.F.K. States that “If we withdrew from Vietnam, the communist would control Vietnam. Pretty soon Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia would go...” This to me explains why we were there. To stop the spread of communism. They viewed it as a turning point in history. To them, there was a lot at stake. In their eyes, if they could stomp out communism here, it would save the rest of Asia, and much of the rest of the world. But if they failed, communism could spread to many other countries, gaining strength and eventually, world peace would be threatened. It was a case of National Security.

David Leavitt

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Responding to David Leavitt. I don't find a clear reason.

by [Brittany Aldinger](#) – Friday, April 8, 2016, 7:10 PM

It does seem from the American point of view that we went into the war with the intentions to stop communism and endorse peace throughout Vietnam. Of course, we Americans believe that we had good intentions, but as I read it seems to me that while our citizens were meant to believe this, our government had separate intensions. On page 66 and 67, American reporter Malcom Browne tells us that, while American troops were initially in Vietnam strictly as "advisors," he shockingly witnessed a "T-28 taking off with racks full of bombs. When they returned, I could see that their racks were empty and there were smoke stains behind the guns" (67). Browne was throated with expulsion for reporting this incident. Why would that be such a secret, if they are shot at first they have the right to return fire and come back to camp unloaded. But this was a bigger issue. One that couldn't be broadcasted or explained. Even if they had been shot at first while out flying, would it take all of the bombs and ammunition to return fire and retreat back to the military

field? I can't imagine it would.

Another alarming deception brought on by the U.S. was the shootings that happened at Kent State. What was the government so adamant to be at war for, that they felt they needed to shoot down their own youth when they opposed the war. Deirde English was there on May 4th, 1970, and she began to question the intentions of our government as that day unravelled. In her interview Ms. English expressed, "We began to wonder if the government was not only as war with the Vietnamese, but would go to war with America's own youth" (31).

While young American voters, along with struggling South Vietnamese, worried about the death rate and overall reasoning to be at war, our government kept full board ahead and ignored the cries for peace.

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Re: Responding to David Leavitt. I don't find a clear reason.
by David Leavitt – Sunday, April 10, 2016, 10:45 PM

That's an excellent point. I missed that the first time reading through. I certainly think there were other reasons that we were going in, many of which we may never know off. And what I said may have just been propaganda spread by America to justify the war, to draw our attention away from the real reason. So I may have been totally wrong with my reasoning. But I do think that was at least one of the reasons.

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Re: Why we went in to vietnam in the first place.
by Mikayla Cervantes – Saturday, April 9, 2016, 11:31 PM

While I agree that we entered the war because of the need to stop the spread of communism that is not the only reason. Based on the movies and books, it could be assumed that we entered the way for many other reasons than stated. The books states that Americans wanted to assist the South Vietnamese so that they would give information about the Japans movement and plans if they knew anything. It is also said that while communism was a main reason, American's wanted to avoid China and Russia from gaining the assistance of the Vietnamese because it could lead to another issue of supreme take over of countries. Americans did not want another war to be fought over controlling a country, they wanted countries to have their own freedom. The reason as to why we went to assist in the Vietnam war is not fully known, because there is multiple other reasons why our government wanted to assist in another country. The people of Vietnam wanted assistance, needed it even, but Americans began to try to change the Vietnamese way of living.

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Re: Why we went in to vietnam in the first place.
by David Leavitt – Sunday, April 10, 2016, 10:47 PM

I totally agree. I don't think there was one reason. Like most wars, the reasons for the Vietnam war are many and very complicated. I think this was one of the big ones, but your right, it isn't the only one.

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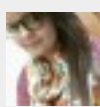


Ragtag Farmers
by Aaron Ashenfelter – Wednesday, April 6, 2016, 8:35 PM

In one of Ho Chi Min’s quotes he states that the United States once beat the British's most powerful army with just a small number of “ragtag farmers”. In Henery Prunier says that “These were not ragtag farmers, and it would be ridiculous to assume that our training and weapons had anything to do with their eventual victories over the French and then the United States.” I Find it very interesting how Ho Chi Min compared the US to rag tag farmers at one point and stated that if we could beat the British then they could quite easily beat the french.

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Monk on Fire for Protest



Part two of the Appy book under “kick the tires and light the fires” there is a story about a journalist named Malcolm Browne. He was the journalist who reported on the scene of the Buddhist monk burning himself alive during the protest on the anti-Buddhist policies that South Vietnam had. I think it is the most significantly related event towards episode 2 because it shows a different perspective of what occurred during the leadership of President Ngo Dinh Diem. Browne reported on the Buddhist monk that burned himself alive. “I don’t think that intelligence services or the government understood the depth of the anti-Diem sentiment in the South...” (Appy, pg. 67). On Buddha’s birthday a massive demonstration occurred that protested Diem’s prohibition against flying the Buddhist flag. Many Buddhist monks were killed but it didn’t end that day, a ritual suicide would occur. The monk that had burned himself alive had become a martyr. Diem’s sister in law suggested that Browne had bribed the monks to produce a martyr because of his friendship with many monks. After she accused Browne, the police would beat him up and his colleagues whenever they saw him. Seeing as “An impressive number of journalists were killed or wounded and the danger added a certain spice to life” (Appy, pg. 65). Not very many journalists would enter a country of unknown danger and have a joy time there unlike Browne. He spent more time with the South Vietnamese than he did with the fellow Americans in the country and had a different perspective on how the people were. Browne’s connection was that he was able to connect with the Vietnamese people, monks and civilians alike on a personal level, he had no hatred nor did not change his view because of what they were going through. Most Americans in Vietnam did not interact with the Vietnamese on a personal level.

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