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Continuing the discussion

by Joe Escobar - Sunday, April 19, 2015, 1:06 PM

After reading the NYT article and watching the second half of the AIM program, discuss specific examples of conflicting information you have encountered in the provided class sources (from the Herring book, PBS series, and AIM program). More importantly, which source gets your "vote", **on that specific issue**, as having the more correct/accurate/truthful interpretation or reinterpretation?

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South Vietnamese

by Paul Turner - Wednesday, April 22, 2015, 1:34 PM

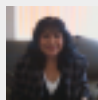
The second half of the AIM program brought to light a significant fault in the PBS series. The North Vietnamese are portrayed as savage revolutionaries while the South Vietnamese were portrayed as passive puppets (AIM 0:35). It took North Vietnam over 30 years to defeat the South, so they obviously put up a respectable fight. The PBS series makes it seem like the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) were unwilling to fight. "The soldiers who were our allies, the ARVN, they wouldn't fight" (PBS 9:20). These are the same people yet one side seems to be chicken and the other fights in the face of overwhelming disadvantages (PBS 10:00).

Even the Herring book portrays the ARVN as lesser soldiers. "Westmoreland had called for American forces because he doubted the battle-worthiness of the ARVN. Once he had them, he relied primarily on them. During the period of U.S. military preponderance, the ARVN was largely shunted aside, relegated to lesser operations and population control, chores its officers considered demeaning and took on with considerable reluctance" (Herring p. 198). "

I think the PBS series seriously undermines the South Vietnamese. I agree with the AIM video's views on the South Vietnamese forces. The North Vietnamese would have easily defeated the South if they were truly passive and unwilling to fight. However, I do believe that the Northern Forces (NLF and Guerrillas) were more aggressive and motivated than the South. And when the Americans came to aid, the South Vietnamese began to rely heavily on them. During 1965-1967 the ARVN became more than ever dependent on the United States (Herring p. 198). Although there was some truth in what they showed, I think the PBS series failed to display South Vietnam in a respectable manner.

Sum of ratings: 3 (1) 3

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Susan Santana - Wednesday, April 22, 2015, 1:45 PM

Between the PBS videos, AIM videos, the New York Times article, our books by Appy and Herring we have an enormous amount of resources to sift through in order to determine what is accurate and what is not in regards to the Vietnam War. It appears that they all claim to have the "real history of Vietnam" According to the article by John Corry, it appears that both PBS and Aim have their own ideological viewpoints and political views attached to these videos. Aim is supposedly conservative and PBS is supposedly in the middle but leans more to the left in viewpoints. Aim claims that the reason PBS did not report accurately the history of Vietnam was that they received funding from National Endowment of Humanities and PBS had to make promises in order to receive that funding. According to the video by Aim, one example of this is when PBS promised the National Endowment of Humanities that the series would provide information for historical record. According to Douglas Pike-Indochina Archive, University of California, Berkeley PBS fell short of reaching this promise. He claimed that they just showed a "kaleidoscope of images, some accurate, some inaccurate." According to America's Longest War by

George Herring has on the back that it is the most thoroughly researched book about the Vietnam war that as been written, however, after reading about the controversy over the PBS video and then reading the NYT article, I am reluctant to be confident that everything we are reading or watching is true and accurate. It was mentioned in Forum 1 by another student and I may have this incorrect, that if at least three resources state the same incident with the same facts then it has validity. I'm not sure if this is correct or not but as students and society we need to be able to find the truth in what we see, hear and read.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion
by [Dylan Kohn](#) - Friday, April 24, 2015, 7:39 PM

I agree with you that there has to be a sense of skepticism while reading or viewing anything that claims its knowledge of the "real history". I appreciate that you focused on the information of where PBS receives its funding. Being public domain, they have to report their contributors, and yes, I am sure that they approached the information with their investors in mind, as did the AIM video. It is why I have been using the Herring book as sort of the middle ground between the two videos to attempt to find what is exaggeration and what could actually be factual.

The one aspect that I don't necessarily agree with is the complaint in the AIM video in regards to which footage was used and where, when AIM was just as guilty of using the medium to portray images not necessarily accurate but emotionally engaging and influencing. An example of this in Part 2 is at the 18 minute mark where William Stearman discusses the modern day holocaust that occurred in Indochina, cutting away to brutal footage in another nearby country taken 5 years after the U.S. was no longer in Vietnam. The images are meant to shock and disturb, yet they don't necessarily correlate to the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. But I would love to hear your thoughts on some of the other aspects of all the material we have been reading that isn't quite in line with how you interpret the most feasible truths.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Soldiers, In or Out of it?
by [Daniel Lopez](#) - Wednesday, April 22, 2015, 3:18 PM

A specific conflict of information that I encountered as I watched the AIM video and the PBS series is whether, or not, U.S. soldiers knew why they were in Vietnam. I think this is important because public opinion will usually sway to the same side. Nobody would of wanted to say, "Keep our soldiers in Vietnam" if our soldiers were saying that they didn't know why they were there. From my personal learning experience I've always gotten the impression that Americans did not support Vietnam in any major way. So it came as a shock to me when the AIM video mentioned the parade (AIM 10:40) on May 13, 1967 in New York City. This parade was a clear demonstration of America’s support of the troops and I'm sure few others have heard about it as well. The PBS episode of this week featured the story of the draftee, Charlie Sabatier (PBS 42:48), of "I don't know why I'm here." Stories like these are presented in lieu of testimonies like that of Kenneth Moorefield (AIM 6:26) and because of this our view on the soldiers who served in Vietnam is distorted. As it comes to this conflicting information I would side with the AIM as having the more correct interpretation. I find it dishonest by PBS to have withheld stories like this therefore, discrediting their work and intentions.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Soldiers, In or Out of it?
by [Laura Stewart](#) - Friday, April 24, 2015, 6:48 PM

Daniel,

I am slightly confused why you sided with PBS as having withheld soldiers’ stories because the majority of the quotes you used were of soldiers’ stories in the PBS episode. If anything, I would say PBS had more of a first-hand representation of soldiers than the AIM video. Even though PBS displayed more soldier interviews, the majority of information in the episode favored the Vietnamese.

Through Private Jack Hill’s statements about attacking the Vietnamese as if they were almost inhuman, he swayed the viewers to dislike the American troops. He had little sympathy for killing Vietnamese citizens, “the way I seen it, it was war.” The AIM series did a better job of viewing the overall construction of war and omitting most of the personal stories of war. For instance, the AIM episode concentrates on the Geneva Conference, Ho Chi Minh an international communist, and the motivations behind Vietnamese fleeing North Vietnam. By presenting solely facts, the AIM series

becomes more credible than the PBS series. Information gets distorted in sentimentality. However, having a balance between personal stories and solid facts is what makes history convincing.

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Re: Soldiers, In or Out of it?
by [Daniel Lopez](#) - Saturday, April 25, 2015, 9:53 PM

Laura,

I did not side that PBS withheld soldiers' stories because that would be completely false. My impression from PBS is that they withheld testimonies, specifically, from soldiers who were happy to be fighting for the United States in Vietnam. In doing so, like you said, it favored Vietnam and situations like this, when information is withheld or omitted, causes false impressions to the American people. It's true that PBS had more first-hand representations than the AIM video but that's just due to the fact that the AIM video is solo and the PBS is a series. But I agree that the AIM video painted the "the overall construction of war" very well with facts, making it more credible.

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In the end, something to consider...
by [Daniel Hovet](#) - Saturday, April 25, 2015, 11:48 PM

December 5th, 1969.

"Several years ago during the height of the troop build-up in Vietnam a company of paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division (Screaming Eagles) was lined up at the San Francisco International Airport waiting to embark on their great adventure. Something had gone wrong with the plane and while it was waiting to be fixed the paratroopers stood rigid for hours in the hot sun. Towards the end of this two local war protestors decided to pass out pamphlets to the boys and see if they could encourage anyone to change their minds. They moved down the rows of soldiers offering peace, love, and papers. Nobody showed any sign of interest. As they reached the end of the line a young paratrooper from Texas smiled- The hippie stopped and smiled back, at which point the Texan took off his steel helmet and bashed the long haired youth over the head causing a dull metallic clang. His comrade dragged him away screaming injustice and brutality. A sergeant stepped out and yelled, "Which one of you bastards hit this boy?" To which the entire company yelled "I did--sir." This stunning show of *esprit de corps* did not impress the injured hippie who said, "Animals, just a bunch of animals." His friend looked at them in awe and replied, "Just think what they'll be like when they come back."

Believe it or not, that was the Author's Note on the First Draft of the screenplay for ***Apocalypse Now***, amazingly.

Let me make it clear right off the bat: I have no idea if this is a real account. All things considered, it has an air of embellishment about it. Also, keep in mind, if it is true, the paratroopers hadn't yet experienced just what kind of an "adventure" Vietnam really was. Anyhow...

Here, a dramatically different P.O.V. comes into play in this anecdote then the ones seen in most of our sources. The point is not whether or not one agrees with the potentially shocking attitude and demeanor of this anecdote; the point is that it exists, and many others like it; the sentiments resound in places like the sign you may have seen on the back of a Vietnam veteran's car- "VIETNAM- WE WERE WINNING WHEN I LEFT". It serves the point Daniel Lopez makes, in an odd sort of way- some soldiers who fought in Vietnam hold astonishingly different views on this whole subject than most of us may realize.

Do many hold wildly different views than this? Absolutely. Which views are valid? Not my place to say. Simply something to reflect on.

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Re: Soldiers, In or Out of it?
by [Laura Stewart](#) - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 4:24 PM

Daniel,

PBS included people like Private Jack Hill and Leslie Gelb who were greatly involved in the war and were extremely patriotic. Hill would kill any Vietnamese in sight if it meant saving one of his fellow soldiers. This passion stems from his yearning to protect his country or in your words being “happy to be fighting for the United States in Vietnam”. In other words, there were soldiers featured in the PBS series who were supportive of the war. This first-hand experience is biased. There is no way to separate something as tragic and graphic as the battlefield. Therefore, their stories cannot be seen as the most trustworthy. This is why taking the AIM video’s approach is more logical because they feature the overall happenings of war instead of being caught up in personal stories. A balance of both is required, but as far as being historically accurate it is hard to keep personal biased out of autobiographies.

Sum of ratings:3 (1) 3

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Re: Soldiers, In or Out of it?
by [Susan Santana](#) - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 12:07 PM

Daniel,

If we are going to discredit all of PBS what is the point of our instructor having us watch it? Between the video and our two books, we should be able to tell what is truth and what is fiction. Appy's book goes into more detail about events but PBS also mention's some of them. They both mention that the OSS agents worked with Ho Chi Minh and thought he was more of a nationalist than a communist at the time. The OSS gave them small arms and provided military training, which both Appy mentions and the video talk about (Appy pg. 11).

Sum of ratings:2 (1) 2

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Re: Soldiers, In or Out of it?
by [Daniel Lopez](#) - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 6:19 PM

Susan,

When I said that that PBS' work is discredited I did not mean completely because obviously there has to be some truths in their work or else our instructor for lecture purposes would not of used it. I merely meant to assert that PBS' work lost my trust in their reliability. But you posed a good question and to that I answer that these discussions are all centered on whether or not the PBS series and other media outlets can be trusted for historical purposes. You did present a good situation where both the Appy book and the PBS series are in agreement; the OSS agents and Ho Chi Minh. There we can credit the PBS series in getting the story right.

Sum of ratings:2 (1) 2

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Re: Soldiers, In or Out of it?
by [Susan Santana](#) - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 8:39 PM

Daniel,

I hope that we will find other similarities during our course work. I would be greatly disappointed if PBS was that unreliable. I also felt because it is a public broadcasting system and they are funded by the public and grants that it is their duty so to speak to make sure there documentaries or series are providing accurate information.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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Re: Continuing the discussion
by [Daniel Hovet](#) - Wednesday, April 22, 2015, 4:49 PM

When I first watched the AIM video and posted on the forums, I was at odds with the AIM video's position on Ngo Dinh Diem's corruption, his government's repression, and particularly the general tone of the video. There were many of us who challenged the AIM video over seeming to be more about how the PBS series was bad rather than about the history of the war.

I had not yet watched part 4 of the PBS series, *America Takes Charge*. After having seen it, I have serious doubts about claims of neutrality on PBS's part. I recalled the AIM video mentioning that the PBS series "paints a pretty dark picture of the American military in Vietnam". Here is at least one aspect where the AIM video seems to have hit the mark.

Virtually the entire episode consists of floating from account to account of Americans killing civilians, Americans burning villages and indiscriminately killing civilians, and soldiers reflecting on how they had no clue what the war was about, or how one soldier wished to desert. This portrayal seems highly unfair when considering the following...

There were crimes committed by the U.S forces on Vietnam, but they were most certainly not to scale with the NVA's acts of cruelty; My Lai was the exception, not the rule. Also, for instance, the AIM video points out, American mistreatment of Vietnamese prisoners was rare, and was not systematic, as the NVA's often was.

The PBS episode gives no context to the American's actions, and never mentions the actions of the NVA. The largest mentions given to the NVA are a comment from a U.S. soldier being interviewed about how brave they must be, and a reflection on the tenacity of the 22nd NVA Regiment for repeatedly returning after being destroyed by U.S. forces. The American soldiers interviewed are all of one mind; they knew nothing about the war, hated it, and saw rampant crimes committed by Americans during it. Their accounts are undoubtedly true, but have obviously been selected by PBS to highlight the episode's narrative. The PBS series mentions in one episode that over 2.5 million soldiers served in Southeast Asia over the course of the war. While the AIM video is not representative of all those men's views and actions, I believe that Episode 4 is even less representative of those 2.5 million men's views and actions.

By framing the events this way, the PBS episode fails to either memorialize the victims of the mentioned American crimes, or to properly portray those who weren't involved.

Kenneth Moorefield, an officer who served in Vietnam, is interviewed in the AIM video. He seemed to me as honest and sincere as any of those interviewed in the PBS episode, particularly when he reflects upon the following:

"I couldn't have received more support from my men...they were brave, they were young; they showed initiative and courage...every quality you could possibly hope to have from a soldier in combat. And they died; they died with dignity and honor, from my point of view".

I have not seen the entire series, and do not know what comes next; but right now, on the point of PBS improperly portraying the U.S. forces, I really feel the AIM video gets it right.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion
by [Susan Santana](#) - Thursday, April 23, 2015, 3:34 PM

Daniel,

I think that the soldiers didn't know why they were over there because they were told a lie in the first place in order for them to go and fight communism. I thought it was enlightening when I heard about the parade in 1967 in New York. I was always under the impression that Vietnam soldiers did not get a parade and it was mentioned in Appy's book the story by Helen Tennant Hegelheimer, "Every time we arrived at Travis Air Force Base I was disappointed. I had grown up with World War II movies and everybody had a band or something to welcome them home. At Travis there was absolutely nothing. It was just me at the bottom of the ramp. An ungrateful nation let some twenty-three year old stewardess welcome these guys home" (pg. 110). So you can imagine my surprise when that was shared on the AIM video. How do we know if this information is accurate?

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion
by [Daniel Lopez](#) - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 6:39 PM

Daniel,

Your questioning of PBS' neutrality in its series is warranted, especially after viewing the picture it paints of the U.S. Military in Vietnam. The AIM video sought to point out the PBS' series heavy pro Ho Chi Minh as a nationalist stance. The NVA's role in the series is very diluted and only brought up when it fought against U.S. or S. Vietnamese soldiers. No one can say that either side is innocent of abuse because war is war. But the fact, which you highlighted, that PBS presented stories of murderous American forces and low-morale soldiers as the face of our role there fails to

memorialize the Americans who gallantly fought and those who were subject to NVA's systematic cruelty.

Sum of ratings:2 (1) 2

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Discrepancies between sources

by Dylan Kohn - Wednesday, April 22, 2015, 6:43 PM

After watching the second part of the video, there were two aspects that we have not read about as of yet in the Herring book that intrigue me and I will be very curious as to their treatment, being the decisions of January 1973 and the Tet Offensive as being an American victory. Those seem like very different viewpoints from what is generally understood, so it'll be interesting to get all sides of the story. However, there are a few discrepancies between the book and the two films that I noticed and am unsure as to which is the definitive truth.

The first is in regards to the coup plot of Diem and his eventual assassination. The Vietnam A Television Series states briefly that the United States had no information as to when the coup was to take place, as the generals involved wanted to avoid leaks, however, the Herring book talks of many conversations that Lodge had during the coup planning and implementation. The on-again, off-again planning was not mentioned during the viewing.

Some of the possible reasons for this lack of explanation could simply be that the program was shortened to fit in the allotted time period of its time slot. A book doesn't generally have a word count associated with it, it doesn't need to be succinct in its explanations, and it doesn't have only a short amount of time to present its argument. It is this reason that I often am more likely to believe a book over a movie. As is the case with the AIM video, the usage of footage and music to strengthen their viewpoint can often times be theatrical, not factual. Slow motion film footage of Jane Fonda laughing and goofing off with soldiers is a perfect example of how AIM and television media uses its medium to get a reaction as opposed to simply stating facts and figures.

The NY Times article somewhat touches on this with its take on how there is rarely options for rebuttal in television, showing that the difference between the two mediums can often times be the difference between facts and opinions. And while Herring's book may still be full of opinions, using public record information certainly helps strengthen their viewpoint.

Sum of ratings:3 (1) 3

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Re: Discrepancies between sources

by Paul Turner - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 9:41 PM

Dylan,

I really like your post. It made me think a lot...

The Tet Offensive is a prime example of how the media can shape popular belief. The attack on the U.S. embassy was a major military victory for the Americans however, it was portrayed as a defeat by journalists (Herring p. 233). I'm assuming that many news stories of the Vietnam War must have been skewed to please the popular anti-war culture that was popular at the time. I think instances like this are what (inevitably) form conflicting information.

Sum of ratings:2 (1) 2

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Matthew Maffioli - Wednesday, April 22, 2015, 10:22 PM

I started this thought in forum 1 and am coninuing it in this. I don't think we will ever know the real truth. I think it was a war, and no one really won and we intervened and a lot of people died. There is a lot we learned as a country from it like, how cool drafts are, and maybe not stepping in on wars, but parts we learned from, the draft, and parts we didn't, everything else. There is a lot I still don't know about what happened to really have a viewpoint. I didn't know the Russians were involved until I played a Call of Duty video game some 6 years ago. But I think, from what I know that I don't believe any of these sources are going to tell the whole truth. Specifically I was always under the impression that we were a ragtag group, that no one wanted to be there. In the movie they say this is misrepresented. that they went out of their way to "misrepresent American soldiers performance" which is what I always understood to be the case. but that is not true, and I had no idea. The picture that gets painted is one of men in their 20s being drafted and just wanting to go home. The media followed this I had no idea there were any parades in support. I had never heard of the parade that "never was" PBS repeated the fact that so many people were against the war, none that were for our troops. In the same vein everything I had ever heard about the Tet Offensive was that it was a giant mess. In high school we aren't taught that the Viet Cong never recovered from that.

Which leads me to question most all of these sources.

Sum of ratings:3 (1) 3

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Re: Continuing the discussion
by [Susan Santana](#) - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 11:47 AM

Matthew,

I'm not sure the thousands of young men that were drafted thought the draft was cool, in fact it was anything but cool. Men went to Canada to avoid the draft, some went to college if they had enough money. I hope that with all the resources, videos and books that we can piece together the truth or least as close as we can get to the truth of the war. I have hope that after this week we start talking about the war and we will start sifting through the resources to help us decide what is truth and what is rhetoric or someone's point of view.

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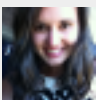


Re: Continuing the discussion
by [Matthew Maffioli](#) - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 9:22 PM

Oh, I should probably have made that more apparent I meant that VERY sarcastically. Sorry about that. That was one of the first things I personally learned about Vietnam was the great lengths that people went to avoid the drafts.I was 18 when 9/11 happened and I vividly remember thinking I was going to get drafted, that they didn't learn from last time and would bring back he draft. Luckily that didn't happen. I, again am really sorry i may have misrepresented my opinion.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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International Communist?
by [Laura Stewart](#) - Wednesday, April 22, 2015, 10:50 PM

Taking into account all of the resources provided and their point-of-view, it is difficult to say that one provides the ultimate truth. Complications even in defining the leadership position of Ho Chi Minh is emphasized in AIM and New York Time’s critique of the PBS series. According to the New York Times’s writer John Corry, PBS displayed Ho Chi Minh as a “nationalist rather than a Communist; it ignores the role of the South Vietnamese Army; it minimizes the brutal treatment of American prisoners of war; it slights the actual conduct of military operations.” AIM would support Corry’s point of view that Ho was an international communist. Having two sources agree mutually validates their material. Just in this one case alone, I find myself doubting PBS’s material.

Even though the PBS series displays both sides of the war, it is extremely biased towards the Vietnamese. The American soldiers displayed were seen as ignorant, heartless murderers. In fact when a soldier commented on the invasion and killing of South Vietnamese civilians in a village he recalled, “The way I seen it, it was war.” He did not deny the fact that many people were killed without a second thought. There was a consensus within the military that all Vietnamese were enemies. Unfortunately, I am sure not all soldiers felt the same as he did. Yet, this is the only view we have from PBS.

From these conclusions and the evidence presented in the AIM video, I would support the AIM series. It is evident through the way Ho Chi Minh ruled that he was an International Communist. An example of the extent of information they provide is displayed when communicating the effects of the Communist rule. Communists assassinated all non-communist leaders. According to AIM, it is believed 10,000 people were killed in 12 months in the years 1945-1946. These significant facts were not included in the PBS series.

Sum of ratings:3 (1) 3

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Re: International Communist?
by [Daniel Hovet](#) - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 9:39 PM

Good points, and that reminded me of something that the Appy book mentions on pages 46-47: around the 1950's "In the north, the Communist Party that ran the Democratic Republic of Vietnam used the time to consolidate its rule and build a socialist state. At the heart of that effort was a radical land reform campaign. In the name of equality, land was confiscated not only from large landholders but also from many modest property owners and those deemed enemies of

the revolution. "Reactionary" targets of the campaign were not only stripped of their property and vilified in public denunciations, but an estimated eight thousand were executed."

This week, I've been kind of dogging on the PBS series in my posts, and I don't want to deny the PBS series credit where credit is due; but I'm starting to get more and more of an impression of an agenda on the makers part in some places, usually through omission of certain information and context.

For all my issues with the AIM video, at least they wore their agenda somewhat on their sleeve.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: International Communist?
by [Bradley O'Connor](#) - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 10:13 PM

Very good points being brought up in this. I also prefer the AIM movie because of the facts involved. I feel with facts, we can get a better realization on the true story. I also realized how the PBS series were very biased with the Vietnamese. It is quite frustrating to hear that american troops were seen as ignorant and heartless murderers, although maybe some were seen that way. It's hard to believe our own americans at the time could be heartless murders but we have no idea on what was actually going on. Maybe they were being heartless, and ignorant thinking about only the americans who they fight with and for. This is why the Appy book comes in handy to hear the different perspectives behind everybody's thoughts who were involved. Yes, I agree with you when it comes to the AIM video and the PBS series. The AIM video, I felt, was much more informing and knowledgable. The PBS series was also very knowledgable but in different ways. Good solid points being stated in your passage.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion
by [Bradley O'Connor](#) - Wednesday, April 22, 2015, 10:52 PM

Between the various different sources of information we are given, we have seen multiple different viewpoints of the Vietnam War. The second part of the AIM video immediately brings out the flaws of the PBS series. As Ngyuen Ngoc Bich states, it's a double standard, the northern vietnamese were always portrayed as very dedicated and the south vietnamese were very passive. He seemed to be in shock that this was stated in the PBS series due to it taking 30 years for the Northern Vietnamese to defeat the South, meaning that it couldn't have been that easy to defeat them if it took 30 years to do so. The South had to of put of a fight or else it would've been much quicker. (AIM 0:28) The PBS series portrays the Republic of Vietnam to be lesser fighters, as well as the herring book. "Westmoreland had called for American forces because he doubted the battle-worthiness of the ARVN." This being stated shows you what they had thought of the Republic of Vietnam as well. So that gives us two sources telling us that the ARVN were lesser more laid back fighters.

I do believe that the PBS series had underestimated the South entirely. They obviously were respectable fighters as they lasted 30 years at war with the North. If they weren't in comparison with the North than they would've been defeated in a much lesser time then the 30 years it took. I agree with the AIM due to that. As I gain knowledge from the many sources available, I do come to realization that the Northern Vietnamese were definitely more aggressive with fighting. The PBS series did no justice to what the South had earned credibility for. They gave no credit to the South and made them sound as they were not looked at respectably. In regards to that, I believe that the South were very underestimated and not given the respect they should've been given.

Out of the multiple sources given, I would give my vote to the AIM video as it seems to be much more accurate with the history of the Vietnam war. I find myself believing more into what was stated in this video much more than what I have seen so far in the PBS series.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion
by [Matthew Maffioli](#) - Thursday, April 23, 2015, 6:48 PM

I don't believe anyone underestimated the South Vietnamese. I think what was being told my the media was slanting what they were capable of. And in the movie they do not hesitate to talk about the contempt the North had for the South. Taking it further, as I said, we were even told that most of the people fighting on our side were “not the equal" to the North. Though in the one interview, and I didn't write his name down, the guy who said that was quick to say how the

men who fought with them were as brave as any he had fought with.

But you do have a good point that it can't take 30 years to defeat someone who was supposedly not as comparable to the other side.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Susan Santana - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 12:23 PM

Bradley,

I don't think that it was PBS that underestimated the South, it was the French, and the United States. I am curious as to what you mean by the South not given the respect they deserve and were underestimated. The North Vietnamese had more men and got more every day. The recruited children from the youth corps to dig the Ho Chi Minh trail and they also fought. Vu Thi Vinh story from part 3, "After one bombing strike we discovered a big bomb unexploded in a small stream next to a bridge. there was a danger that a truck passing over the bridge might set if off. Our leader selected a "dare to die" team to defuse the bomb (pg. 104). This young person was only 17 but my point is they had people younger than her and older people that were fighting for the North, people that the United States do not have in their military therefore they had a lot more people than we did.

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Re: Continuing the discussion

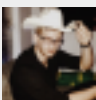
by Bradley O'Connor - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 10:19 PM

Susan,

I think I may have stated it incorrectly in my passage. I don't mean to make it sound as if they didn't get the respect they deserved. They said that the South were more laid back fighters which may have been, but they were still good fighters as they proved to the North, taking 30 years to defeat them. That is a good point you bring up with the younger groups being involved fighting for the North and how that made them bigger than the United States military. You are right, it wasn't necessarily the PBS who underestimated them.

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Credible sources

by James McCray - Wednesday, April 22, 2015, 11:10 PM

There was a lot of differnet stories about the same stuff in every article or story about the Vietnam war because so many different people have different interpretations of the war itself. Specifically in these sources the one that jumped out to me was the stance on how each American felt about this war and if they supported it or not. I believe each story is going to have different writers so they're going to go in more detail about what they want to talk about, but the AIM video I believe could've shed more light on how Americans really truly felt about the war. The PBS series did a good job having more detail about this with providing examples on events that happened that shows Americans supporting our troops. I believe this to be a big issue with news and these kind of videos or articles because most of the time they only show the public what they want to show them rather than what they really should be hearing about.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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Re: Credible sources

by Dylan Kohn - Friday, April 24, 2015, 8:32 PM

I think AIM kept their validity by not having a great deal of people talking about the war, because in general, the percentages of supporters were on par with those opposed and interviewing more could shed doubt and negativity on their claims throughout the video. I think because the PBS special is 13 episodes that is does have the ability to take more time to go into great detail on certain aspects that AIM decided to leave out.

I think with media you have a lot that report the news in ways that encourage people to follow the news more closely, to get viewers, hits on their websites, and more subscribers. During the war, however, the ability to televise and cover up to the minute encounters for the first time changed the way the information was presented to U.S. citizens. And while yes, there is a lot of pacification done as far as telling viewers only what they want to hear or believe they should hear, it's important to figure out what aspects of truth are actually within these videos and readings and where you feel there is significant gaps to what could have really happened.

I know that the Herring book at times is dry, but I'm curious as to how you relate that to the videos as either strengthening or disproving each side.

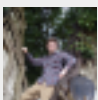
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Re: Credible sources
by [James McCray](#) - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 11:10 PM

I agree that each news network or website will have their own agenda usually when talking about certain aspects of the war. I just noticed in some circumstances that their are conflicting stories with aim and the pbs videos. The Herring book i think strengthened most of the main ideas in each source and didn't do much contradicting. But like you said it can get a little dry at times.

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Re: Credible sources
by [Austin Helfrich](#) - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 11:26 PM

The AIM and PBS stories both had viable information of the subject of the Vietnam War. Yes networks can have a bias but that's what comes with having different viewpoints and research done. To leave information out is a bias, to add or overpower certain information is too. When comparing the PBS and AIM stories to the Herring book and even accounts of the Appy book there lies contradicting but also in my cases of comparison similar and overlapping info. Each side does it their own way but to hear it from so many different sources gives you a whole greater perspective on the subject than just hearing or seeing it from just one source.

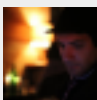
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Re: Credible sources
by [Bradley O'Connor](#) - Friday, April 24, 2015, 8:40 PM

I agree with what James has to say. I also think that the the AIM video could've informed more about how the americans felt towards the war. The best knowledge we are receiving from one on one experiences of the war are from the Appy book. It is nice to hear from the people who were involved.

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Re: Credible sources
by [Matthew Maffioli](#) - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 9:28 PM

The AIM article did mention that there were people who supported the troops. They reiterated that PBS never showed any of the support for the troops, which in my limited knowledge there was none. So it was great to see that some people out there were supporting them and holding demonstrations. I always felt the information we were given was very one sided. That it was all people who said we should get out of Vietnam. I would love to hear something from someone who was for us being there and their viewpoints.

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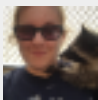


Re: Credible sources
by [Bradley O'Connor](#) - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 10:03 PM

I myself would also love to hear something from someone who was on our side and their viewpoints. It does feel like the information we are getting is one sided, which is unfortunate because with every story comes several different viewpoints. That is truly what is so nice about the Appy book, as we see multiple different viewpoints. Always good to see people supporting the troops, as we all should. Couldn't imagine being in the positions they were in at this time.

Sum of ratings: (1) 0

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Re: Credible sources
by [Veronica Sandow](#) - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 11:28 PM

This definitely one of the areas I feel the AIM program failed. In all honesty, I feel that it is part of a larger problem with that series. They seem to make a lot statements without providing detail or examples, whereas the PBS series excelled in providing such sources to back up claims. I'm not sure it was AIM providing the public as much as the lack of supported claims merely serving their agenda.

That being said, shedding light on how Americans felt about the war would be tricky. It's easy to find people from both sides that will defend their stance and believe it is the only right one. I think showing some Americans with both pro-war and anti-war perspectives would have been a nice touch for AIM in establishing credibility.

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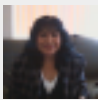
Nationalism vs Communism
by [Veronica Sandow](#) - Wednesday, April 22, 2015, 11:24 PM

Watching the first few episodes of the PBS series, it struck me as odd that Ho Chi Minh was presented as a nationalist instead of a communist. The PBS series depicted him as some sort of hero of the people. The AIM videos do address this in a manner that appears credible and is supported by evidence.

I am inclined to believe the AIM program over the PBS series, in this instance, partly due to the agreement from the New York Times article. They called the points of Ho Chi Minh's communism an "intelligent criticism". The support of a critical source does add credibility to the claims. I must stress that it is the claims of PBS not correctly portraying Minh's communism and not a generalization of the AIM program's claims as a whole because other claims are left wholly unsupported.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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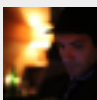
Re: Nationalism vs Communism
by [Susan Santana](#) - Thursday, April 23, 2015, 3:39 PM

Veronica,

While reading the NY times article John Corry mentioned that there is another program on the Vietnam war by "current." It is called Vietnam Rewritten but they also mentioned reinterpreted. That is the keyword here in my opinion, reinterpreted by who's perspective? Well AIM did point out inaccuracy in the PBS series I think I am more inclined to believe our book by Herring and Appy before I believe any of these two series. I also found another utube channel on the Vietnam war. There is a lot to sift through to see which is telling us the true facts or not.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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Re: Nationalism vs Communism
by [Matthew Maffioli](#) - Thursday, April 23, 2015, 6:43 PM

I agree with your opinion on believing the books before the movies made about the wars. I think that the stories may be a little clouded by the years that have passed but I want to believe that the people who were on the ground experiencing the war are going to have a much better viewpoint on what was happening because they were actually there. The movie did call out that other movie, but didn't say much else about it if memory serves I took pretty detailed notes at the time but don't have them to look back on. The AIM movie was quick to point out what everyone else was getting wrong, but they have opinions and they are going to be slanting things too to go their direction and frame the PBS movie how they see fit. This is way I go back to the books to really get a feel of what life was like on

the ground during the war, not an aerial fly by shot of what people 50 years later who weren't there think about what happened.

What is the name of that Youtube channel?

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Nationalism vs Communism
by [Bradley O'Connor](#) - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 9:57 PM

Matthew,

I completely agree with your statement. Obviously with the AIM movie trying to make themselves "sound better," they are going to take as many shots towards the PBS series as they can to prove they are right. The PBS series in no way is wrong either. The AIM movie just had a quick trigger on calling them out. I also go back to the books to get that feel because these were people actually experiencing the war. They were there. These people are the only ones I truly want to take seriously as they have been there. Although, obviously the videos we are assigned to watch are not wrong, I just get a better realization on the true feel from the ones who experienced it first hand. It almost feels like I'm sitting down with a veteran and just sitting back and listening to their story. It's very interesting.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Nationalism vs Communism
by [Bradley O'Connor](#) - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 9:59 PM

Susan,

That is awesome that you found a youtube series to help find the true facts. Do you mind sharing? I am very interested in checking this channel out.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Nationalism vs Communism
by [Austin Helfrich](#) - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 11:19 PM

Many people believe that Communism leads to oppression and suffering but does it really? One economic system if never better than an other simply because very few economic systems are pure. There is always distort in all of them and the creators of that system had inended for the system to go exactly that way not predicting the flaws and twists that come in to play with the actual implemation of that system. Nationalists do not always have it better than communists or socialists. The sense of freedom can be achieved through Nationalism, Communism, Socialism, Traditionalism, Capitalism or even Imperialism. Pride can come from the people of any system as can economic growth, military advancement and industrialism. There are varying aspects of both systems and similarites.

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Re: Nationalism vs Communism
by [Veronica Sandow](#) - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 10:01 PM

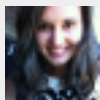
I definitely agree on perspective changes and the possibility of rewriting history through such means. Memories can warp over time via outside influences and our own minds not using said memories in a sort of “if you don’t use it, you lose it” instance.

It does appear that the Herring book supports the PBS series’ idea of Ho Chi Minh as a nationalist first and a communist second. “He was willing to accept help from the major Communist powers, but he was not prepared to subordinate Vietnamese independence to them.” (Herring p24) Admittedly, the addition of the Herring text in support of the PBS series does make me rethink my position. To me, this proves how subjective perceived fact can be.



American POWs
by [Paul Turner](#) - Thursday, April 23, 2015, 10:48 PM

In part two of the Accuracy in Media video John McCain, former navy flyer during the Vietnam War, talks about how the PBS series did not give the attention to the treatment of American prisoners of war. McCain spent six years as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam after being shot down in flight. He states that North Vietnamese had a "calculated program of mistreatment, psychological and physical, in order to exploit the POWs for propaganda purposes" (AIM 3:47). The New York Times article mentions that both the rebuttals done by AIM and "Inside Story" say that the PBS series "minimizes the brutal treatment of American prisoners of war" (NYT p. 2). The PBS did not display the differences in American POWs compared to Vietnamese POWs. McCain says that the treatment of American POWs should have been expressed in fairness to the American government and the South Vietnamese government. I believe the PBS series failed once again to display an important aspect of the war. The PBS series gives me an anti-American feeling and I think that is very disappointing.



Re: American POWs
by [Laura Stewart](#) - Friday, April 24, 2015, 5:19 PM

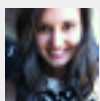
Paul,
I would agree with your statement that the PBS series did not validate the Accuracy in Media and New York Times article in recognizing the maltreatment of American soldiers in the war. Instead of viewing this as a cruelty to the Americans, we should instead question why both sides of the story are not being equally shared in all of the sources. The Vietnamese citizens' viewpoint was centralized in the PBS series but not in the other two resources. In the PBS series, Li Thi Ton shares her story of American invasion. She remembers US military soldiers laughing at her when she greeted them at her door step. Along with her greeting, she turned to meet a grenade thrown into her house. She was the only one of her family to survive the explosion. Testimonies like South Vietnamese Li Thi Ton need to be validated and remembered along with ones of American prisoners of war. These stories should be equally shared in all historical records. We need to withdraw our cultural bias and weigh the amount of information provided and confirmed in both the American and Vietnamese point of view.



Re: American POWs
by [Paul Turner](#) - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 1:34 PM

Laura,

I think I understand what you mean here. It is important to view the Vietnam war from all angles. It would be a lousy representation of the war if everything was told with American bias. However, the point I was trying to make in my post was that the treatment of American prisoners at war were not only tortured but they were used for propaganda purposes. I'm not sure how much that affected the war, but it's something worth mentioning. You're right by saying stories need to be validated, at least in some way. Stories like Li Thi Thon's and John McCain's are great sources of information but it's hard to know if they are entirely true. I realize the PBS series is not telling the story from the American point of view, but I still think they should have explained the role that American POWs played in the war.



Re: American POWs
by [Laura Stewart](#) - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 4:11 PM

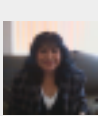
Paul,

Including information about American POWs is important. This imperative facet influences bias in the war. We

are able to sympathize more with the Vietnamese if this information was not shared. Like you said, there is little information (including Li Thi Thon and John McCain’s stories) that is confirmed through multiple sources. Therefore being neutral when determining which information should be stricken from history or used as solid proof is difficult. This includes the information about American POWs. If this information aids in the representation of the war, is confirmed through multiple sources, and is significant in the process of the war, then it should be included in the historical record.

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Re: American POWs
by Susan Santana - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 8:46 PM

Paul,

Just because PBS choose not to show the treatment of the POW's does not mean that everything in the videos are inaccurate. Yes, it is unfortunate that PBS did not honor the POW's as they should have but I am sure that if we wrote them and asked them why they didn't give them enough attention they would give us several reasons why. Maybe that should be a class project, write to PBS and ask them questions regarding the differences that the AIM videos present and ask why the discrepancies. That is disappointing to hear that the series gives you an anti-American feeling, I'm sure that wasn't there intention nor our instructors when he asked us to view them. Hopefully as time goes on that feeling will change.

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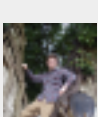
Re: American POWs
by Paul Turner - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 9:59 PM

Susan,

I wasn't trying to say that "everything in the videos are inaccurate." I am aware that PBS could not have possibly included everything they wanted to. I did sound a little negative towards the PBS series, however I do think the series is a great success as a whole. I don't think any network would be able to cover the Vietnam War without being bashed. The war was just so long and complex and, as we have found out in the last few weeks, there is so much conflicting information. I think a big reason why many Americans find in the PBS series distasteful is because not told with a pro-American bias. Things that Americans, and veterans especially, may have felt deeply about (i.e. American POWs) may not have been as significant to the war in its entirety as they personally believed it to be. Now that I think about it, the PBS series does not give me an anti-American feeling but it simply does not promote a pro-American feeling that is so common in most American documentaries.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: American POWs
by Austin Helfrich - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 11:09 PM

PBS does it's best to create the most accurate coverage and establish truthful accounts of the past. Sometimes facts can be distorted through time and lack of research and prior knowledge but as a whole I believe PBS did a fairly decent job TRYING to get the facts as accurate and correct as they could. With information from all sides of the spectrum pre-during and postwar information can be clashed together with different details. Some POWs may have believed what they thought was a "game changer" was really a small skirmish with liitle impact on the actual war. Documentaries will always have irregularities regardless of the maker. Even some facts that may be considered to be a solid & undisputable may have cracks in it than can be argued from a different account. To tell a historical tale with a bias is simply wrong but happens. Some say it should be that way to express a nations pride but really all the facts lead toward one side and that causes other facts to possibly be left out.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: American POWs
by Neil Pena - Sunday, April 26, 2015, 11:18 PM

I believe accuracy is best shown by showing both sides of the story. The PBS series shows a lot of the side of the Americans but lack to show the views of the Vietnamese. I think that it would be better for the series to not promote a pro-American feeling for that fact that some of the facts they state could be overlooked as a bias and any conclusions drawn from those facts could be seen as irrelevant. I do agree that the Vietnam war is a tricky subject to talk about without being bashed as you said for the fact that there are a lot of behind the scenes actions that are controversial and hard to put explanation behind it.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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