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Continuing the discussion

by Joe Escobar - Monday, April 22, 2013, 8:10 AM

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?

Sum of ratings: -

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Jennifer Larson - Wednesday, April 24, 2013, 7:57 PM

The most glaring example of conflicting information between the AIM program, the PBS series and the Herring book is the discussion of the Geneva Accords and the refusal of Vietnam to hold the elections. In the AIM program, it is stated that the United States wasn't bound by the Geneva Accord and therefore they did not break any agreement by agreeing with Diem to not hold the elections as agreed upon. However, in both the PBS series and the Herring book, it is stated that the United States backed Diem in not holding the elections even though they were bound by the accords and had agreed to it.

On page 66 of the Herring book, it says "With firm American backing, Diem also blocked the elections called for by the Geneva Accords" and "Even Diem's most uncritical supporters realized, however, that Ho Chi Minh's reputation as a nationalist leader made elections risky and that, in any event, the more populous north - operating under iron Communist discipline - was "mathematically certain" of winning." This supports what was presented in the PBS series as well.

Also, this quote shows that Ho Chi Minh had a reputation as a nationalist but that the north was under Communist discipline. When someone has a reputation, it doesn't mean that is in fact the truth about them, just what people see or choose to believe. Just because Minh was viewed as a nationalist doesn't mean he was - in truth he was a communist. The AIM video liked to point out that he was a communist and felt

that PBS felt he was a nationalist, but in truth, it was his reputation as a nationalist that they discussed, not that he was ONLY a nationalist.

On the issue of the Geneva Accord, I believe the PBS series and the Herring book have the most correct information. The AIM video wanted so badly to discredit everything about the PBS series and not say a bad word about America, that they went so far as to try to say that America didn't do anything incorrectly where the Geneva Accords was concerned. However, the PBS series and the Herring book (along with stories in the Appy book) all support that the United States did go against the accords by encouraging Diem to not hold the elections for fear of Ho Chi Minh getting elected.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Melissa Booth - Thursday, April 25, 2013, 9:56 PM

There are many instances where the AIM video says one thing and the videos/books in our class say another. For example, going back to the first part of the AIM video, they are talking about how Diem was liked by everyone in South Vietnam and well known. I find that hard to believe when one; the Buddhists are protesting in the streets, and two; there are plans of a coup to the Diem administration. How can Diem be so well liked when his country is falling apart? "The disarray in South Vietnam was reaching a point where both factions in the administration may have been right-the country could not be stabilized with or without Diem." (Herring page 120) This is one instance where I find it hard to believe what the AIM video is portraying.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by David Hartness - Wednesday, April 24, 2013, 9:13 PM

The Vietnam war was rather unique for being the first televised war in America, kinda a transitional period from then to the information age that we live in now. Unlike during the time when the AIM program was filmed we have access as the public to many more sources of information and have more room to interpret without hopefully as much bias.

"On the other hand, it does suggest that Vietnam history will not be so much rewritten as it will be reinterpreted." (NYT article)

What really was interesting in the AIM video was the discussion of the depiction of

American soldiers in the war. Dan Cragg heavily criticized PBS of showing American soldiers as drug addicts, racial bigots, and murderers of their own men without hesitation. During the viewing of the PBS series I saw relatively little negative depiction of soldiers besides being men who had to do what they felt was necessary to handle the stress of this complicated conflict. The Herring book is rather unreliable for the perspective of soldiers and battles of Vietnam as it seems to only engage the upper elite running the show. If you want a perspective on individuals of the war and to understand that it was full of diverse people that happened to be there the Appy book is most suitable.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Celese Mauser - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 6:31 PM

I hadn't thought about the time frame when the AIM program was filmed, until you mentioned it. But you're right, at that time there was very little access to different sources of information as far as the media was concerned. Now, I believe we have an even harder task of trying to decipher the real information from the propaganda. I wonder what AIM would have to say about the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and how they were portrayed in the mainstream media vs. the completely different information that is available online?

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Jennifer Larson - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 7:32 PM

I really have felt like the AIM video picked apart certain aspects of the PBS series, things that they had enough information they felt they could focus on those areas. Cragg's criticism of PBS showing the American soldiers for what they are - human, with flaws and all - was just more evidence to me that the AIM video was just out to discredit the PBS series (and I'm not saying the series was 100% accurate, but at least it was more credible than the AIM video to me).

It would be interesting to see how the Vietnam war would be viewed if it took place now with the information age we have now.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Hao Qiu - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 9:38 PM

The Appy book, in some way, is most reliable source than the AIM video and

the PBS series. Because the AIM videos have biased on the PBS series and took some part of it as its own source, and the PBS series was trying to get some truthful information so people would trust it more than the AIM video, but no one knows if it is trustworthy or not. The PBS used some opposite points to show the inaccuracy of the AIM video.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Travis Jones - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 10:32 PM

The Appy book has to be taken with a big grain of salt in some of these accounts, these firsthand accounts are so greatly affected by personal biases it's hard to say that it's the most reliable of all the tools for this class. As for the trustworthiness of the PBS series and AIM videos one has to take their own thoughts into account to decide which they believe.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Jungmin Um - Wednesday, April 24, 2013, 10:09 PM

Most shocking idea written in the article was that the only reason to broadcast the rebuttal is "to show people what bad propaganda is like." Later, John Corry, the writer, of the article insists that the rebuttal is not bad propaganda (Corry 2). I agree with him because every word and sentence can be exaggerated, but cannot be made up of nothing. In addition, everyone has different perspective and that is why we have to work together because we want to persuade/understand diverse people when we do some work for others (i.e., business). Even with one scene two people can say about it in different way. In Appy's book, *Patriots*, some writers described the South Vietnamese in a good and pleasing way; however, according to the second half of the AIM program, a man said that South Vietnamese were described as passive people.

I totally think that each person has different idea, but none of those are wrong. Therefore, it is hard to vote for one or the other. Nevertheless, I can say for sure that it is very important to hear from many other people especially when the event is significant like a historical event. Again, I would vote for any books and videos that are made/written together by many different people.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Nathaniel Hahn - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 11:07 AM

I agree that rebuttal is not bad propaganda, it is important to hear and take in many opinions about a subject, especially as one as controversial as the Vietnam War, and whether we agree with the other opinions or not, to try to fully comprehend what had happened. The AIM video obviously felt that the PBS video was inaccurate in its reporting and therefore probably felt like the PBS was bad propaganda itself, so which one is right? Getting more than one account of a subject is never a bad thing.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Hao Qiu - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 9:30 PM

I agree with you that we should vote for any books or videos that are made by different people. Nobody is totally right or wrong, so different opinion or stories should be told by different person. The AIM and the PBS they have biased on each other, but on the other hand, they agree with the other's points. People can get trustworthy information from that.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by David Hartness - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 10:16 PM

Is there really any good type of propaganda? All propaganda does is try to control your opinions on a subject. I'd say the best approach is to divide yourself from any side and pick something unbiased to learn about the subject, such as the Hering book.

I can understand the thought of describing the South Vietnamese of being a more passive people. Maybe it's because I've read more about them being raided by the NLF at hamlets and such. Thoughts?

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Nathaniel Hahn - Wednesday, April 24, 2013, 10:13 PM

In reading through and watching our class materials I have noticed that the discrepancies between them is not necessarily in conflicting facts, but in the different interpretation of these facts and events, and the opinions formed by the parties thereafter.

The AMI video does not seem to go into great detail for its rebuttal. It brings

up a couple points that the PBS video made, offers an interview that is in contrast to that of the PBS program and that pretty much seems it. Were the South Vietnamese government and its army puppets of the U.S. like PBS portrayed? Were they too lazy and cared not for fighting but rather let the U.S. do the fighting for them? Did PBS portray our all our soldiers as drug addicts and bigots? Did it portray our soldiers as being unequal and inaccurately trained and equipped for jungle warfare? Was Ho Chi Minh a Nationalist or Communist? These are some of the points of emphasis for the Ami video and their rebuttal.

Although I find it interesting to hear another point of view, they do not offer much in the way of proof other than a few interviews with somebody disagreeing with PBS. I am not saying PBS is more accurate than the Ami video, but I would like to see more substance to their claims.

It is difficult to decide which version of the war is more accurate. When the conflicting sides are adamant in each of their "accurate" account and details, we are just dealing with beliefs and interpretations of events, and at that point, no one side is more "accurate." Because of the questions we are dealing with and the lack of definite answers, they both feel they are right, therefore, they both are. I myself prefer the Appy book, mostly because I appreciate that it offers accounts from people that were involved in all aspects of the war. From some of the decision makers, to the people on the front lines, even to entertainers on all sides of the war, the Appy book offers a wide range of perspective.

It seems the argument lies in the why and how of the war, which is a very subjective question. It comes down to our individual belief systems, was America right and justified for going to war, or was it an unjust war and we were in the wrong? That seems to depend on who you ask.

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Jennifer Larson - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 5:19 PM

I like how you said that the discrepancies were not so much in facts, but in different interpretation of the facts. That is such a great way to look at this, because it does seem that there are facts no one disputes, but the cause and reason for those actions are what people dispute. I also found that the AIM didn't seem to have a lot of material to back up their claims, but were more just out to disprove the PBS program without a lot of concrete evidence.

It does seem subjective in who to believe and I don't think everyone is going to come to a consensus about the war.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by David Hartness - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 7:42 PM

From my experienced view point I find that the South Vietnam government wasn't a puppet, but was somewhat heavily regulated by American presence. It's rather hard for a country to decide everything itself, especially with the history of with heavy foreign occupation in Vietnam. It can be seen in Herrings book (p115) that Diem didn't agree with American views all the time especially during the Buddhist Crisis. I'd say calling him a puppet is unfair, but can see where one might come up with the idea as he is under lots of US pressure.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Celese Mauser - Wednesday, April 24, 2013, 10:38 PM

The AIM series was so obviously biased towards the PBS series, that it invalidated many of their arguments. Much of what was said was just a flat out lie. For example, the AIM series stated, "The enemy was able to use our free media in order to obtain their own objectives, and yet that lesson was completely ignored by the PBS series." In fact, PBS agreed with AIM that their media was a tool for the Vietminh. In reference to the sacrificial Buddhist monks: "The Buddhists bit, tasted a little political blood, bit harder, tasted more political blood, and then finally began to use American television"... "every time they planned a demonstration or a Buddhist burned himself to death, they would call up the American press and they would appear. So they learned to use the American press media for political purposes." (PBS 36:58) This fact is also confirmed in the Appy book (pg 150) in "The Ultimate Protest" which is the story of Norman Morrison who sacrificed himself by burning himself in protest at The Pentagon, while his infant daughter was safely nearby. Morrison's wife knew that his death was used politically by the Vietminh. "They widely publicized the news of his sacrifice and even printed a postage stamp with his picture on it." Why would the AIM series blatantly conduct the same "inaccurate history" and "demeaning portrayals" it accused another program of. It's ironic.

AIM also accused PBS of "portraying a grim portrait of the post-war life for our Vietnam veterans." It cut to an actual clip of the PBS program, episode 13. PBS: "of the 2.5 million who served in SouthEast Asia, a substantial number, some estimate ¾ of a million, are still haunted by the experience." This statement is apparently considered to be controversial, which really surprised me. William Jayne who is the director of The Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program was interviewed by AIM and said that his daily interactions with Vietnam veterans refuted those statistics. Jayne went on to accuse PBS of portraying the image of the veteran as the stereotype of a loser or a victim. He said "veterans are not only well adjusted, and productive members of society, but many veterans are now assuming leadership roles in society." I have not witnessed PBS portraying all American soldiers in this way. I have also not heard PBS say that all veterans are psychologically damaged, and therefore, not productive members of society. AIM is not effective at all, nor are they

convincing at using one man's opinion to discuss the psychological problems of all the troops who fought in the war. The idea that one man could summarize the condition of all men who fought is simply arrogant. Appy's book shows this by discussing The Vietnam War with many different perspectives. Many that he interviewed make mention that they will never forget Vietnam. It is a re-occurring theme that the war will stay with them, "haunt" them, if you will, for the rest of their lives.

I can see some truth to AIM's claims about PBS portraying the South Vietnamese army as weak and passive puppets. But the fact that they were so defensive in their approach, and twisted the words of PBS, discounted much of their argument.

I still believe that the Appy book is the most accurate source of information because of the diversity in the interviewees.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Nathaniel Hahn - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 10:48 AM

I, like you, have a couple problems with what I feel to be inaccuracies of the AIM video. While I always support the idea of questioning truth and accuracy in media, I feel that the AIM video has a certain agenda they were trying to get across, rather than reporting actual inaccuracies that the PBS video might have had. I also agree with you that because of this apparent agenda, I feel it took away any credibility they might have had in a valid argument

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Jennifer Larson - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 7:39 PM

There do seem to be a lot of inaccuracies in the AIM video. I also found it interesting how Jayne accused PBS of stereotyping veterans of the war, especially when there is a lot of evidence that even today, those veterans do remember and a lot of them are permanently emotionally, physically and psychologically damaged. How could one not be after seeing the horrors so many saw? I know people who were in Vietnam and they refuse to talk about it to this day. While it is true that many veterans are well adjusted and productive members of society, AIM seems to try to say that PBS portrayed the veterans as ALL damaged and I haven't seen that. Therein lies the biggest problem with the AIM video - the all or nothing view. There doesn't seem to be any gray area for this video, it is that PBS was wrong, they are right, and that is all there is to it. Sadly this is a narrow viewpoint and had they broadened their view a bit, their video may have been more credible in my eyes.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by David Hartness - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 11:49 PM

That's the hard part, trying to distinguish on what we ourselves consider accurate. The Appy book is great because it's those peoples experiences and that's what they consider to be real as they had lived it. I still like the Herring book as it talks about events without the real bias of sides, just events as they seemed to have happened.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Rebuttal, rewrite or reinterpretation?

by Jacob Hutchins - Wednesday, April 24, 2013, 11:08 PM

My number one problem with the AIM video is that I find educational media to be much more effective if it makes it's own case, rather than being obviously provoked by some other source. What I mean is, the AIM video is clearly conceived in RESPONSE to the PBS series, but I think that if they could have presented their case without seeming to target the credibility of the PBS series it would be less divisive. I know this seems like a small distinction but I think personally that it's crucial. What I think about when I watch something like the AIM video is how much one "side" has a problem with the other, and this tarnishes the educational value. It's hard to take something seriously when you know that you are dealing with two sides that want to be right and the truth is probably somewhere in the middle. One thing the author of the NY Times article said that I agreed with was his question of "how is the media supposed to criticize itself?". The bitterness lingering from Vietnam still, I would wager, makes this issue so emotional that his question as it relates to this topic is very difficult.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Rebuttal, rewrite or reinterpretation?

by Jungmin Um - Saturday, April 27, 2013, 9:54 PM

I sort of agree with your opinion about AIM's number one problem that the video was using information from other sources. Nevertheless, I disagree with you at the same time because sometimes mixture of the information from other trustworthy sources can make an awesome educational source for people.

But, I think it is still true that the source is hard to be serious when they deal two different sides of something. Those kinds of sources can be used to make one's perspective wide, in my opinion

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Rebuttal, rewrite or reinterpretation?



by Jacob Hutchins - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 10:00 PM

I see where you are coming from, and I agree that we need multiple view points and sources for/from our media. Let me give a better example of why I find fault with the AIM video. I can see that some would take issue with how the PBS series portrayed the nature of the struggle- everyone is entitle to their own opinions and interpretations of the events that led to/fueled the war, and even if that weren't the case it would happen anyway. HOWEVER, at one point during the AIM response Charleton Heston says: "...two ways of life, one based on freedom and one based on communism were struggling for the future of Indochina". It's exactly this sort of false dightomy that de-legitimizes an argument! You cannot refute points with logic fallacies. I see what he was getting at, but at the same time what he is saying is simply a logic fallacy. To paint with such a broad brush is not at all an academic or scholarly way to present material to an audience. That isn't to say there are no examples of this type of thing in the PBS series- I just feel that if you are going to rebutt a point you need to have sound logic yourself.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Rebuttal, rewrite or reinterpretation?



by Travis Jones - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 10:28 PM

Ok, I can agree that the AIM video was directly going after the PBS series and its massive inaccuracies. However I must say that your argument for it having less educational value because of its posturing and delivery is a bit different from my own. The AIM video had to go after the PBS series in order to get its point across, and in such conflicts, the second side will obviously be the aggressor publicly because it's not a face to face dispute. The NYT article as well does just what the AIM video does so in all would you have to put it in the same category as you did the AIM video and how it attacked the PBS series? The media criticizes itself by having these types of conflicts, all the majors now do this with Fox news, MSNBC, etc... they are nearly cut throat when it comes to disputes and garnering correct information.

But overall an interesting argument.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion



by Billy Crum - Wednesday, April 24, 2013, 11:41 PM

With this war being televised it really had a negative affect on the war. It was not the people in the jungle calling the shots it was someone sitting behind a desk here in the states. They was looking to see how the public would react to the "shots" they called and then if the public didn't like it well we better change it, but lets not worry about the troops. Look at how the media messed up and said that a battle was a defeat when in all actuality it was a victory, but the news was already out about the loss so we can't change it now. How would the public react to that. They worried more about looking bad then the soildes they sent over there. This war was fought here and the decisions were made in the states when it should have been left up to the ones actually fighting.

After watching even the first AIM clip i now look at PBS as a totally unreliable source. They had all the information to correctly interpet the information especially since the show was done several years after the war ended, but once again PBS didn't want to look bad well its to late for that now.

My vote goes towards the Herring book. It seems to have a lot of details about things that you might not really think about, but after it is brought to your attention it totally makes sense. This book also seems to have several sources for its information and covers a varity of topics.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Melissa Booth - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 6:36 PM

There was a few times where the ones sitting behind the desk were waiting to see how the United States citizens reacted. The Tonkin Gulf was one incident that used the American citizens for their advantage. When the Maddox was attacked for the second time, or so it was said that they were, the President was going to respond with attacking North Vietnam. When they finally did retaliate, the citizens in America were pleased with his decision and voted for him in the election. See, they were having trouble coming up with evidence so, it was hard to tell whether they were really attacked or not. But, Johnson used this incident to help him get more support and win the elections. (Herring page 141-147)

I too find the Herring book to have a lot of reliable information. They seem to cover a lot of the incidents that occurred during the war, not caring whether it would make the Americans look good or bad. I think that is an important factor when giving information about something.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Celese Mauser - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 6:45 PM

I agree with you that the war was being determined by those who were so far removed from the war, that they didn't even seem to think twice about sacrificing their young soldiers. In fact, they didn't even have to sacrifice their children to the war. With the loopholes that money or education provided, it unfortunately made it hard for them to put a face on the death toll that they were creating. For that reason, I disagree with you that the televised war had a negative impact. Because it was the first war to be filmed and broadcasted to the citizens in The States, it was un-edited, raw footage for the most part. This made it possible for those remaining in the states to have a visual image for what war really meant. I think without the involvement of the media, the war could have continued for much longer than it already did. The images of the torn countryside in Vietnam, and the horrible shots of children's bodies being stacked on top of each other, really made it possible for the anti-war movement to create momentum. I agree with you that the media often mixed up information, but I think at this point it is evident that no one on the battlefield really seemed to know what their objective was and the route of which to obtain it. I would think it would be hard to formulate an accurate report when those are the circumstances surrounding you.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by David Hartness - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 7:28 PM

Sure I can understand problems with portrays in the media being false. An example would be mistaking the Tet Offensive as a loss to the US and South, when In reality it was a tactical victory. See here http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tet_Offensive

Sure I agree with you that the Herring book is the best source of information, as it shows it all in an unbiased historical view. But what makes PBS wrong? That it showed the US actions in a negative light?

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Hao Qiu - Wednesday, April 24, 2013, 11:43 PM

The AIM videos were obviously against with the PBS series. In the AIM series was stating that the United States was not against any agreements or policy principles to support the South Vietnam. But, Diem was attracted him to some American luminaries, "While in the United States he lectured widely, and his fervent appeals for an independent, non-Communist Vietnam attracted him to such luminaries as

Francis Cardinal Spellman and Democratic Senators John F. Kennedy and Mike Mansfield.” (Herring, page 59) This pushed him to the American government and got helped form them. The AIM videos stated some points that the PBS made. John McCain said : “ The PBS had a very judgemental point on the treatment of America.”(AIM video) And also, Dan Cragg was criticized American soldiers such as drug addicts and murders. On the other hand, in the PBS series, the soldiers described that they have to do anything that they thought were helpful to help them get out of stress and keep clam.

At this point I believe that the PBS series and the Herring book have more correct answers and truth, but they might also have something that biased. The AIM videos was badly disagreed to the PBS and tried to prove some evidences which were good for the American government. So the AIM videos have less accurate information about the war.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Travis Jones - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 10:20 PM

I'm a bit surprised that you sided with the PBS series over the Aim video. Your comment about how the AIM video disagreed with the PBS series, that was the point of its creation, to set the record straight about how badly inaccurate the PBS series is, and to use such experts to prove this argument. I'm just a bit amazed to hear you say the Aim video has less accurate information, and have to ask in what way? Pretty sure as I stated before in a post that Jane Fonda was grossly false in the comments about the POW situation, and how the AIM used McCain to correct this point. And furthermore the PBS series undermines the south involvement in the ENTIRE war!

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Melissa Booth - Thursday, April 25, 2013, 9:30 PM

One of the things from this video that I thought to be interesting was when the video mentioned that there are veterans now assuming leadership roles in society after serving in Vietnam. I find that interesting because I feel like I hear about how U.S. veterans are homeless and on the street. Also, that they are in suffering illnesses that are not being treated. Keep in mind that these ideas are what I have heard from family and friends.

The whole point of this video, in my opinion, was to point out that the PBS series was not portraying the United States fairly, that they were making the United States look like the bad guys. This immediately brought a certain topic to my mind, the Tonkin Gulf incident. In the Herring book (starting page 141), and in the PBS series (episode

3) it talks about how one of the U.S destroyers, the *Maddox*, was being fired at and that they had to respond. There were two incidents that occurred. The second incident was one that caused some controversy. Because of this incident, the U.S. moved forward to begin bombing North Vietnam. There were some issues on whether the Maddox was actually being fired at, or if the U.S. just said that they were being attacked to move forward and begin the bombings. This incident brings forward the question on how reliable the U.S. information really is on incidents that occur. The AIM video, in my opinion, would not be happy about this portrayal, because of the fact that it is questioning the U.S. information on that night of the second attack.

Lastly, the AIM video says that media shapes what we think. Well, the fact that they made this whole video in response to the PBS video, makes me think that they want us to think that they're answers are the only right ones. I personally think that the PBS videos and the books we are reading in class are more reliable. They are giving you the information that they know about the topic for you to learn from. The AIM video is giving you information, based on the fact that they feel provoked by some other source, to make you believe there way is the right way. Therefore, I feel confident that what I am learning from the books from class and PBS videos are reliable.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Celese Mauser - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 6:54 PM

I found the statement made by AIM about veterans "assuming leadership roles in society after serving Vietnam" to be interesting as well. I too, have heard many tragic stories of veterans after the war who are dealing with the psychological and substance abuse problems that the war created for them. I don't doubt that many veterans did find success in leadership roles, but I find the general assumption that all are well, to be completely ignorant. It invalidates the real problems that these men and women are dealing with on a day to day basis. What a way to treat people, many of which who were forced into the war by the draft. It's just really sad. We need to provide better services for our veterans.

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Billy Crum - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 10:54 PM

When they mentioned that the veterans came back and assumed roles in society it makes it sound like the other veterans for the other wars was not capable of doing that. When in fact every war has veterans that suffer from PTSD and have a hard time functioning back in the states and others are able

to come back and go about their daily routine. My dad came back from Vietnam and had a few rough spot, but retired as a concrete finisher.

The thing that is most messed up in my eyes was how the veterans were treated when they came home after fighting over there. How bad would that suck to be risking your life over in some strange land and you fellow countrymen are back home protesting against you and are not backing you. As a soilder you go and do things that you are told to do with no questions asked.

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Re: Continuing the discussion

by Jacob Hutchins - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 10:59 PM

"One of the things from this video that I thought to be interesting was when the video mentioned that there are veterans now assuming leadership roles in society after serving in Vietnam. I find that interesting because I feel like I hear about how U.S. veterans are homeless and on the street. Also, that they are in suffering illnesses that are not being treated. Keep in mind that these ideas are what I have heard from family and friends"

I posted briefly below about PTSD rate in Vietnam vets; the statistic (depending on your source) seems to hover around 25-30% for the lifetime rate. Here is the link I used in my previous post: <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/pages/vietnam-vets-study.asp>.

"Well, the fact that they made this whole video in response to the PBS video, makes me think that they want us to think that they're answers are the only right ones. I personally think that the PBS videos and the books we are reading in class are more reliable. They are giving you the information that they know about the topic for you to learn from. The AIM video is giving you information, based on the fact that they feel provoked by some other source, to make you believe there way is the right way. Therefore, I feel confident that what I am learning from the books from class and PBS videos are reliable"

Sorry for the long quote there but I just wanted to say that I really think you hit the nail on the head. I tried describing this in one of my posts and I think you did a better job in less words. I feel the sense of "provokation", specifically, undercuts the academic credibility of the AIM video.

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Vote goes to AIM

by Travis Jones - Friday, April 26, 2013, 1:38 PM

My vote has to side in favor of the AIM video. The reason being is that the AIM video

specifically targets the inaccuracies of the PBS program, and the their portrayal of the war, the reference AIM made with how the show played it off as the US alone fought against the NVA and only brought in the South Vietnamese in the negotiations in Paris is evident of that. The US fought with the South Vietnamese against the common enemy of the NVA and the spread of communistic dictatorship of the era. To play it off as the US against the NVA alone and that the US just let the south in in negotiations of the ceasefire is preposterous.

I feel that because of the AIM videos greater use of key participants IE John McCain, that it provides legitimacy to the arguments brought against the PBS series. I mean really! Jane Fonda as an observer of how POW's were treated? John McCain-Jane Fonda not much to compare when it comes to POW's and the treatment of them. They tried to play the idea of the NVA and Us treatment of POW's as the same, that's like trying to call black and white the same color. In no way could you justify the Hanoi Hilton as proper treatment of POW's anymore then you could the Nazi's and the holocausts treatment of Jews. The exploitation by the NVA of POW's as use of propaganda against the US is drastically different than how we treated POW's. Yes there are instances where mistreatment happens behind the scenes, but overall there is a canyons depth of difference between the two. And when McCain says that needs to be displayed he is in my opinion 100% correct.

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Re: Vote goes to AIM

by David Hartness - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 4:26 PM

I can agree with you in certain aspects, as with the POW's and John McCain was a good example about being a prisoner. It is quite evident that prisoner's of war of the North had quite harsh living conditions. The accounts of Luyen Nguyen (Appy p.94) really did show how harsh coniditions of the North were for prisoners, even to their own Vietnamese people. It's hard for me to see the USA treating prisoners so badly that they have shackles growing into their legs. So far I've yet to see such cruelty to prisoners from the southern side and can agree with the portion of the AIM segment.

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Re: Vote goes to AIM

by Travis Jones - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 10:13 PM

As a person whom was in the US army and understanding its stance of proper treatment of POW's I can understand your reservations on how you have a hard time picturing cruelty of prisoners in the same breath as the NVA. We on whole took far better care of ours then they had, but as McCain said there were isolated unrelated incidents of mistreatment, but those are again isolated and in no way reflect that of the US as a whole.

We didn't exploit the POW's for propaganda purposes the way the north did, It's a mental tactic to spark fear into the minds of the US and south Vietnamese fighting with us.

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Re: Vote goes to AIM

by Jennifer Larson - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 7:46 PM

The use of John McCain as someone to speak to POW treatment definitely led to more credibility for that subject only. Do you think that aside from the POW subject, the rest of the video had the same credibility? I feel the AIM video tried using people like Charlton Heston as the narrator to create credibility when it wasn't really there. I would have liked them to use more facts to prove their side than to discredit the information that PBS used.

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Re: Vote goes to AIM

by Travis Jones - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 10:08 PM

I understand what you are saying regarding how the Aim video uses Charlton Heston to try and create a sense of credibility, but the PBS series used the same idea with the voice they provided, I believe it being from dateline? But the information the Aim video used was experts in the subject matter to contradict that of the PBS series, both are almost similar in the way they are presented. It's a platform to appeal to audiences first and foremost.

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Re: Vote goes to AIM

by Jacob Hutchins - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 10:42 PM

I think that part of the problem here is that people feel compelled to even take "sides". This war was an ugly, ugly mess. It is quite possible to find information regarding acts of brutality from both "sides" of the war. That is not to say both the North and the South/Americans were somehow equal in all parts- I personally agree with you that history shows us the North was much more brutal specifically with regards to POW's- but to take one example of more extreme action by the North and make it a referendum for choosing sides does a disservice to the tangled nature of the whole conflict. I have Vietnam vets in my family/friends that have spoken of raking fire down on innocent civilians. I guess what i'm trying to say, now that i'm rambling, is that taking a side in the broader

sense might interfere with the objectivity needed for historical analysis.

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Re: Vote goes to AIM

by Billy Crum - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 11:11 PM

The part of the video showing Jane Fonda having a great time on her tour of how the POWs were treated was stomach turning. How can you go over there and see people from your country being treated the way they were and act like there was nothing going on, but look down on them for killing the enemy? Then she comes back to the states to say they are treated fairly and good. That is a stab in the heart of America's military. The people she is looking at in disgust are fighting for her right to open her stupid mouth. Thats gratitude there. All it did for her going over there was help the north because she cam back and flapped her lips and turned more Americans against other Americans.

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AIM video and PTSD discussion

by Jacob Hutchins - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 10:27 PM

One thing that really caught my eye during the AIM video was the point in which they discuss the portion of the PBS series that discusses those that served and yet reman "haunted" by the war. The PBS series is indeed murky at this point, and no matter how you look at their "statistics", which weren't really statistics, you can't come up with numbers that accuratly represent something. Part of this is because they chose the descriptive word "haunted", which could mean basically anything. I can't imagine serving in a war and killing people without being at least somewhat haunted. I feel this is an example of where the PBS series was justly taken to task by the AIM video. HOWEVER.... I have some issues with the AIM video here as well. I feel that they too are a bit distortive here. Charleton Heston and William Jayne speak of those veterans that were able to readjust from the war. I feel tthat they omitted a major part of the Vietnam veterans readjustment to society, and that is the issue of a PTSD rate in the region of 30% (<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/pages/vietnam-vets-study.asp>). Now, it's true that Mr. Jayne did NOT have access to lifetime statistics- the point i'm making here is that I feel the AIM video is sorta kinda doing the same thing they are having issue with the PBS series over. That is, they are painting with a broad brush. I know several Vietnam vets personally (most people do, i'd wager) and most of them are just fine in their day to day lives. But this is not to say that those that served in the war are not still "haunted" by it, and it does not take int account those that still suffer from PTSD (many of whom sleep on the streets).

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Re: AIM video and PTSD discussion

by Travis Jones - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 10:40 PM

Just beyond the PTSD side of the argument of the readjustment of Vietnam vets, its not like a lot of the American public made it easy for them to return calling them baby killers and such. Also, PTSD was not as major in the minds of the public as it is now, they just called its shell shocked and thought some to be not as mentally tough as others. The fact is and I can attest to this first hands when the idea of killing another human in combat some can just deal with it and others are "haunted" by it. Its callous to say that one can just shrug it off but sometimes you have too.

The PBS and AIM video are hypocrites I will agree with you because they are guilty of the same tactics as the other. Your broad brush comment is very just I think.

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Re: AIM video and PTSD discussion

by Jacob Hutchins - Sunday, April 28, 2013, 10:48 PM

"Just beyond the PTSD side of the argument of the readjustment of Vietnam vets, its not like a lot of the American public made it easy for them to return calling them baby killers and such"

Well said. I think that kind of treatment of veterans was among the more shameful aspects of our involvement. One thing that deserves some note, I think, is that it wasn't just those we think of as on the "left" that gave vets a hard time when they came back from Vietnam. My stepfather, for example, came from a small, conservative rural town and was basically shunned by everyone for being a "loser". I suspect, and all I can do is speculate here becasue I was not there, that the shame our people felt after Vietnam was projected onto the veterans from a lot of kinds of people. I think this probably came more from the "left" but definitely the "right" as well.

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