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Legacy - News Hour

by Joe Escobar - Sunday, June 2, 2013, 5:06 PM

This forum thread is for Legacy - News Hour posts and replies.

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Re: Legacy - News Hour

by Brendan MacDonald - Wednesday, June 5, 2013, 6:08 PM

I think that most people would hope that the legacy they leave behind after they are no longer around is a good one. It is difficult to know if the legacy that a war leaves behind is a good one or not. And especially the Vietnam War being one that left behind a lot of questions and controversy long after it was finally over and even today. I would say that in my opinion the most significant legacy that the Vietnam War left behind was unfortunately a lot of doubt and question in the minds of the citizens of America. I think the emotional devastation of the war is what had the greatest impact on not only the families that lost loved ones who fought and died, but also on surviving soldiers, and politicians who made all of the decisions during the war. In the video clip *Legacy*, Dorris Goodwin states that years after the war ended, Secretary Robert McNamara wrote in a book that they made wrong decisions and miss-calculated certain situations. If I were a family member of a soldier who had been drafted or called in by the government against their will, and they had ended up losing their life in battle and then years later be told by a high-ranking government official that there were things that could have been done differently, it would definitely pain me and infuriate me to hear that person speak those words because knowing that there was different action that might have been able to take to prevent the loss

of lives would be very disheartening. But I guess the good part (if such a thing can be found) is that it teaches a valuable lesson on how to act differently in future wars. Goodwin also points out that the lesson to be learned is that you have to be level with the country and supply them with a legitimate reason as to why they are paying the price that they are. So there were lessons that the war did teach and to have the ability to look back on the Vietnam War and say "this decision was made then which resulted in this" is beneficial to making wiser choices in future wars.

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Re: Legacy - News Hour

by Melissa Booth - Sunday, June 9, 2013, 8:44 PM

In my opinion, there is never a good outcome to war. Sure someone wins, but what are the results of that. People still end up dying. When family members find out that there were mistakes that occurred that could have been prevented, yeah, I would be pretty pissed off and want some answers. I would want to know why they didn't think of those in the first place. In fact, that would make me question later in the future on whether what we are doing is really the right thing to do. When an outcome like this occurs, it leaves a bad taste. It may be harder to gain support for future issues because of what occurred during this war. The lack of trust is what I think was the only thing the war passed on to future generations.

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The Legacy of the Vietnam "War"

by John Howland - Wednesday, June 5, 2013, 6:20 PM

The dictionary defines "Legacy" as "anything handed down from the past, as from an ancestor or predecessor." One legacy could be that the President of the United States can invade a country, without declaring war, with nothing more than a deliberately provoked "attack" on the U. S. A. Another legacy could be the health problems suffered, by both the Vietnamese and the US Soldiers, because of Agent Orange. Additionally, we can add the knowledge that the POTUS can and will harbor secrets as shown by Nixon's abuse of power during his term of office. A good legacy that should have been remembered is that we are not the world police force and we shouldn't get involved in other countries problems. We must also remember that just because people have a different ideology doesn't make them evil.

Every book that comes out, every article that comes out, talks about how -- while it may have been a "mistake" or an "unwise effort" -- the United States was defending South Vietnam from North Vietnamese aggression. And they portray those who opposed the war as apologists for North Vietnam. The purpose is obvious: to obscure the fact that the United States did attack South Vietnam and the major war was fought against South Vietnam. The real invasion of South Vietnam which was

directed largely against the rural society began directly in 1962 after many years of working through mercenaries and client groups. And that fact simply does not exist in official American history. There is no such event in American history as the attack on South Vietnam. The South was devastated. But now anyone who opposed this atrocity is regarded as having defended North Vietnam. And that's part of the effort to present the war as if it were a war between South Vietnam and North Vietnam with the United States helping the South. (CHOMSKY) So maybe our legacy to South Vietnam is the total destruction of their country.

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Re: Legacy - News Hour

by David Hartness - Wednesday, June 5, 2013, 6:55 PM

The Vietnam War may of been one of the hardest wars American's had to endure as a nation. It's the first war that was televised for the open public to view and was also the first American war that was met with opposition with protest from the American public. It's hard to see wall of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. being the only bit of legacy left from the war in the modern age. The abolishment of the draft within the United States is a more obvious affect from the Vietnam war. People who were drafted into the war had no choice whether they wanted to go or not. As well as making military service voluntary, the legal voting age was turned to 18 from 21, so that people wouldn't have to be forced into a conflict they felt they had no choice in. It was certainly a good outcome to change the age of military service and the age of voting to the same.

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Re: Legacy - News Hour

by Jon-wesley McLeod - Saturday, June 8, 2013, 4:33 PM

Nice point about the televised aspect of the war. Technology was definitely playing a major role in the development of Vietnam. New advancements in weapons, chemicals, and helicopters compounded the destruction but broadcasting by multi-media outlets increased America's communication and comprehension of the war that later became protest which shaped policy.

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Re: Legacy - News Hour

by Patrick Haider - Sunday, June 9, 2013, 8:40 PM

Those are some great points. The abolishment of the draft, and the lowering of the voting age were certainly a few good outcomes of the war. It is sad that it

had to come at such a great loss.

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Re: Legacy - News Hour

by Athena Miller - Wednesday, June 5, 2013, 8:07 PM

It is difficult to pick a single significant legacy of the War in Vietnam for the United States. I may not be interpreting the choices of this question correctly, but if I had to pick one I would say the government. I chose the government for a couple different reasons. The government learned some valuable lessons during and after the Vietnam conflict. It realized that the American people will not tolerate the government conducting certain acts of aggression without allowing them to know what is going on and the validity of reasons for the aggression. It also brought to home that the United States government is not omnipotent and allowed for significant change in foreign policy. But the main lesson I believe that the United States government learned is to be more cautious of the situations that it embroils itself in.

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Re: Legacy - News Hour

by David Hartness - Saturday, June 8, 2013, 7:27 PM

It's true that the government faced a war unlike any other it faced during its history. The United States up to that point had never lost a war on foreign soil. I still kinda think the people were the biggest legacy of the war, as the average person became more aware of the acts of war with media and television, it's was a war that ended the valorization and glory of war.

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Re: Legacy - News Hour

by John Howland - Sunday, June 9, 2013, 12:12 PM

That would be nice if our government actually learned that lesson but recent history proves that our government either ignores the past or just don't care. We have GWB's unjust war with Iraq, telling the people of the US numerous lies about "yellow cake" and WMDs.. I think what the US government learned was to control the media by preventing the showing of the dead soldiers caskets returning home. This was one of the things that led to the people tiring of the Vietnam Conflict. The US also learned to try and control what was coming out of the war zone in Iraq by controlling the media.

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Re: Legacy - News Hour

by Athena Miller - Sunday, June 9, 2013, 4:40 PM

The government should control what is on the media to a certain extent. If our opponents knew our next move that would greatly hinder our success in any military expedition. I'm not saying that we as the public shouldn't have an idea of what is going on, but the military and government need to keep some pertinent information from public knowledge to protect our soldiers that are fighting. If the government let the public know every little detail of what was going on in a war, all the enemy had to do was listen to our TV broadcasts, and our military soldiers would be sitting ducks. Also, the media can skew images and statements to change the initial meaning of what was really being said or meant. So, who is to judge how much media content about a war should or shouldn't be released? There is a fine line between giving the public the information about what we are doing and what information to hold back to not jeopardize the lives of our soldiers and still allow the US government to have wiggle room in negotiations.

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Re: Legacy - News Hour

by Patrick Haider - Sunday, June 9, 2013, 8:38 PM

Sadly I don't think that our government learned all that much from the events of Vietnam. Looking at what happened in Iraq years later, it is very similar to the events of Vietnam. If anything I think our government may have learned that while the people may make a big scene with large scale protests, there really isn't anything they are going to do about the choices that the government makes. They mostly just ignore the protests and what the majority of the public wants done, and they continue down the path they have chosen.

With that said, your text actually points more towards the changes made within the American public.

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Legacy - News Hour

by Patrick Haider - Wednesday, June 5, 2013, 8:43 PM

I believe that the legacy of Vietnam lies with that of the American people as a whole. This includes the soldiers that fought the war, and the citizens who protested the war. I come to this conclusion because I believe that the legacy of Vietnam is one that shows that Americans are not willing to sit idly by while our country takes part in

a war that we do not agree with.

Throughout the war and for years after citizens stood their ground against their country and were not afraid to say "this is not okay". Men would leave the country in order to avoid taking part in actions that they did not agree with, and soldiers would return home and protest in an effort to bring to light the horrors that had taken place. It is a testament to the resolve of this country that many years later we look back at a politically divided war and question what we were doing there, and why our leaders felt that our goals were worth the lives of so many Americans.

Vietnam is a war with a legacy of the free, American people.

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Re: Legacy - News Hour

by David Hartness - Saturday, June 8, 2013, 7:30 PM

It's amazing how people of the Vietnam war changed their opinions of war upon being witnesses of it in their home. It's really amazing how other large recent conflicts prior to Vietnam and the Korean war had such different views by the American people. I can say I agree with you, the biggest legacy of the Vietnam war is certainly the people.

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Re: Legacy - News Hour

by Jon-wesley McLeod - Wednesday, June 5, 2013, 11:27 PM

In my opinion, the single most significant legacy of the Vietnam War for the USA (government) was the eventual distrust from the American public, including the soldiers. It took longer than it should but the will of the people was finally expressed, Nixon was investigated and impeached for conspiring against his adversaries, the "credibility gap" was becoming more apparent as intentionally misleading from soldiers telling of their experiences in Vietnam and reporters filming, and an increasing amount of young people were less willing to be drafted for a cause they didn't believe. Eventually America removed all troops from Vietnam, abolished the draft, and dropped the voting age to eighteen. (A court case that involves the state of Oregon) Elected politicians had to now serve the people's interest, which was more analytical because of the rightful suspicion that the government had its own agenda.

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Re: Legacy - News Hour

by Brendan MacDonald - Thursday, June 6, 2013, 9:33 AM

Yes I agree with your point, and I think it kind of reinforces what I was saying about the legacy of the war being that of question and doubt for many Americans. Many things during the course of the war and even after the war remained very shady. Certain decisions made were challenged and protested by the American people. And then later when Robert McNamara's book *In Retrospect* was read by everyone; it gave them further reason to distrust how the government responded to the war in Vietnam.

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Re: Legacy - News Hour

by Melissa Booth - Wednesday, June 5, 2013, 11:48 PM

The most significant legacy of the Vietnam war is whether or not we can trust the government or presidents when it comes to war. I think that it is getting harder for the people to decide if what politicians are telling us is really the truth or not. The Vietnam war is what I think brought on that skepticism. In the video clip, *Legacy-News Hour*, Michael Beschloss, who is a presidential historian that spoke, talked about how we do not have much confidence anymore in our political figures. He also mentioned that the presidents did not mention much about the war and their plans when being elected, or even just talking to the public. Beschloss mentioned that when the elections of LBJ vs Goldwater happened, the Vietnam War was not discussed very openly. It is hard for someone to want to fight for their country and risk their life when they do not even know what they are risking their life for. Also, the fact that so many men were being sent off year after year made it hard to want to join. Another problem was the fact that it is hard to move forward when you do not have the support of the people. Doris Kerns Goodwin in the video clip was talking about how hard it was to continue a foreign war when there is no support. She said, "It was like a parade behind you and no one was following you." This information ties us back to the fact that there was no trust in the politicians because of the lack of honesty being displayed. Overall, I think that the lack of trust in the government is the significant legacy that the Vietnam War.

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Re: Legacy - News Hour

by Athena Miller - Saturday, June 8, 2013, 1:39 PM

I believe skepticism of our government and really about anything you hear, read or believe in is healthy. Also being open to other viewpoints and realizing it isn't as black and white as most people want to believe. In most controversial issues each faction has their valid points but many people on the opposite sides don't wish to acknowledge those points.

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Re: Legacy - News Hour

by David Hartness - Sunday, June 9, 2013, 9:33 PM

Yes, I can see why it's hard to support a government when you have lost faith in understanding its reasons and loss of truth. It makes me wonder what the Vietnam war would of been like if it happened in today's modern age of information. Or could we call the Iraq war a more modern occurance of war?

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Most Important Legacy of the War

by Jacob Hutchins - Sunday, June 9, 2013, 9:37 PM

The single most enduring legacy of the war, in my opinion, is the sense of defeat our country came away with. We had never really tasted defeat (or at least couldn't remember it) until the tangled mess that was Vietnam, and moving forward from the conflict I think the importance of this cannot be fully measured, if fully understood. How it has shaped our country's decision making processes is a matter of debate... but it strikes me as very large, indeed.

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