

# HST 195: History of the Vietnam War Sp14 (Escobar Meta 42384)

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## Forum 4

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### Vietnamization of the War

by Joe Escobar - Thursday, May 22, 2014, 8:34 AM

This forum thread is for the Vietnamization of the War discussion.

After studying the required materials, address the questions in your posts.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post.

To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post. Do NOT simply leave it

RE: Vietnamization of the War

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### Re: Vietnamization of the War

by Name Withheld-3161 - Tuesday, June 3, 2014, 8:18 AM

Many Americans believed at that time involvement in the Vietnam War did was a mistake .Nixon's national security adviser, Henry Kissinger believes the way Americans could fight for the best interests from the South Vietnamese government was to choose a decent compromise in the withdrawal of U.S. troops and the final victory of the Communist Party.

Nixon's problem was how to get out of the way as soon as possible and not to surrender at the same time before the domestic anti-war sentiment deteriorated.

With no hope to win, Nixon determined decent withdrawal to end the Vietnam War to achieve an the overall goal of "honorable peace". To fight for peace and to seek decent way to get out was regarded as suboptimal choice for a last resort in the United States in the Vietnam dilemma. In order to ensure the achievement of the overall objectives, the Nixon administration developed Vietnamization and the Paris peace talks, " two-track " policy for its escort.

Vietnamization means United States gradually withdrew troops, trained and equipped South Vietnamese army, provided air support, so American casualties could be reduced, thereby reducing the country's anti-war public opinion. At the same time, Nixon hoped through Paris peace talks the U.S. and North Vietnam withdrawal from South Vietnam together, and the North Vietnam could stop penetration into the South, which could keep the South Vietnamese regime.

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### Re: Vietnamization of the War



by Name Withheld-3161 - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 7:40 PM

Nixon is a complete realist. He took into account national interests and personal political future when formulating policy. One of the characteristics of his presidency was to give priority to foreign affairs and always put the power to make foreign policy firmly in their own hands. Vietnam is one of the major foreign affairs Nixon faced, although Nixon always adhered to anti-communist stance, but as a realist, he was also able to compare objectively the changes in the international and domestic situation and to adjust attitude. From the active support of the Vietnam War to ease the relationship and finally personally signed the armistice agreement, it could be said Nixon and the Vietnam War were closely related.

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### Vietnamization flaws



by Bryan Sanders - Wednesday, May 28, 2014, 5:56 PM

One of the questions posed to us was what problems surfaced that hindered efforts to conclude the war. The first, and perhaps the most important, problem was twofold. It involved Nixon's reluctance to allow the NVA and NLF to stay in the South after negotiations, and the NLF and NVA's reluctance to allow Thieu to remain in power after the negotiations as well. Neither side wanted to concede. Our textbook by Herring says at page 275 that Nixon, like his predecessors, underestimated his enemies in Vietnam. Taken together, it shows a clear contrast in aims that were not easily reconciled.

The president relied on Vietnamization and troop withdrawal to help bring 'peace with honor'. Decoupling them from negotiation was risky, as we saw in page 283. Keeping the South Vietnamese out of the loop didn't help to foster cooperation either, even though Nixon was by nature secretive.

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### Re: Vietnamization flaws



by Kye Ruddell - Friday, May 30, 2014, 12:49 PM

Bryan- Do you think, given Nixon's penchant for secrecy in most aspects of his presidency, that he even gave a thought to the negative ramifications of this

decoupling and his keeping the South out of the loop? I am not sure that it really was an issue for him, given his closed way of proceeding in many situations during his presidency, but I agree that it was a problem and was wondering what your take on this is?

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### Re: Vietnamization flaws



by Bryan Sanders - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 1:23 AM

I know from page 273 of the Herring book that Nixon saw his ability to get the U.S. out of Vietnam as a way to "affect his place in history and his political future." From my understanding of the chapter 7 material, he's willing to do it by any means. Page 272 says that both he and Kissinger were "flexible and pragmatic" in their approaches to foreign policy. Look at the course of the events in the chapter. It gets to a point where Nixon is willing to make concessions to the enemy, as page 319 shows. His allowing the NVA to stay in the South and recognition of the PRG were big concessions.

The point is Nixon was willing to do whatever it took to save his political fortunes. I still can't say whether the negative ramifications came to his mind. But if they did, they would have likely been outweighed by the benefit to him.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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### Re: Vietnamization flaws



by Kye Ruddell - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 10:37 AM

I agree with your take on Nixon's motivations. I see the idea that he and Kissinger were "flexible and pragmatic" to mostly mean that this flexibility and pragmatism were with regard to getting the best possible outcome for themselves and their "legacies." Someone as driven as Nixon was going to do whatever takes, and the idea that there may be something negative he would have to deal with as a result would either not have occurred to him or maybe been seen as just collateral damage in the wake of getting what he wanted.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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### Re: Vietnamization flaws



by Name Withheld-3161 - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 7:27 PM

The policy finally failed in effect. The Vietnam War was a significant failure in American diplomatic history. After Nixon took office in January 1969, Nixon administration had to end the unpopular War, and took the soft and hard dual tactics, trying to achieve the so-called honorable peace through the threat of force and the escalation of War. However, it fell into the dilemma. Finally it had to move to

the negotiation table again and attained the armistice by peaceful means. Nixon administration's Vietnam policy once again proved the limits of force threat.

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### Re: Vietnamization flaws

by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 9:03 PM

This is a good point. Although it was needed, The sides just didn't want to concede. Had this happened, things may have turned out differently in the end. We severely underestimated the enemies in Vietnam. It seems some of our leaders thought we were just going to be able to walk in there and take care of business without a fight.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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### Vietnamization if Necessary

by Debra Moran - Wednesday, May 28, 2014, 10:34 PM

The South Vietnamese reliance on the United States and its own corruption were major contributors to the problems hampering the end of the war, that and the secrecy and distrust that was running rampant in our own government. Other problems were with the bombing of Cambodia , Nixon's expansion of the war into Laos, the continuous breakdown of peace talks all of this hindered the ending of the war. Nixon and Kissinger's need for "peace with honor" translating into we are not going to lose all of this were factor that delayed the ending of the war.

I think for Vietnamization to work we would have American troops needed to withdraw and let them make it or break it on their own. As to whether Nixon was right or wrong I believe it was wrong but hind sight and all that there was a lot wrong with this war.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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### Vietnamization and the challenges

by Bryan Sanders - Thursday, May 29, 2014, 7:04 PM

What you just illustrated regarding the United States was a lack of confidence in the U.S. government. It didn't matter whether a Democrat or Republican was in charge. Domestic pressure from within the United States was one of the greatest hindrances in concluding the war on favorable terms. Our Herring textbook says at page 238 that Vietnamization in practice wouldn't work, but as we've seen people didn't want to be in an endless stalemate. This isn't to say that corruption within the U.S. government hampered the process. It did, along with the unwillingness to compromise on the negotiations by both parties.

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### Re: Vietnamization and the challenges



by Kye Ruddell - Friday, May 30, 2014, 12:56 PM

I was wondering if, even though Herring stated that the idea of Vietnamization wouldn't have worked with regard to the end of the war, would it have worked with regard to the American people gaining some degree of confidence in our government? And then the question remains as to how the government should have balanced the public's interest in ending the stalemate against the inability of South Vietnam to handle the war (that we had a large part in facilitating) without our support?

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

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### Re: Vietnamization and the challenges



by Bryan Sanders - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 8:54 PM

To answer your first question, I would say yes. Chapter 7 of the Herring textbook shows that even though there were weaknesses in Nixon's Vietnamization, he nonetheless was able to get the American people to support him. This helped him in 1972, when he ran for reelection.

Regarding the second question, the answer was in securing Laos. If you remember the end of Chapter 2, you'll know that Eisenhower was convinced that Laos was the "cork in the bottle" in that region. Securing it would be vital to containing Communism, especially since most of the Ho Chi Minh trail ran through Laos. Kennedy disagreed ultimately and put the focus on Vietnam itself over Laos.

Had both Laos and South Vietnam been secured, North Vietnam would have been contained. Since that didn't happen, Nixon was left with a difficult situation. By that point I'm uncertain we could have ended the war and left Vietnam with a strong South Vietnamese army.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

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### Re: Vietnamization and the challenges



by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 9:08 PM

Pressure from within the United States was definitely an issue. So many people wanted to see the war ended in a victory. And on favorable terms as you mentioned. Compromises were something that needed to happen. Yet it didn't because of stubbornness and the inability to negotiate.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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### Re: Vietnamization if Necessary





by Kye Ruddell - Friday, May 30, 2014, 12:58 PM

Debra- when you say that the troops needed to withdraw for the South to "make it or break it on their own"... do you think it should have been an all at once immediate withdrawal, or just something with a quicker timeframe than the year that Nixon was proposing in his speech?

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### Re: Vietnamization if Necessary



by Kyle Poirier - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 7:35 PM

I have a hard time believing Vietnamization would have worked. Especially by making and breaking it with every one going out. The north seemed to want it more, they actually had a nationalistic view that May people were behind. The south had less passion and support for what they were fighting for and it showed.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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### Re: Vietnamization if Necessary



by Name Withheld-3161 - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 7:48 PM

In some sense, the policy could be right. U.S. national interests were the fundamental basis of Nixon's Vietnamese policy, but some of his more personal factors also played an important role. As a complete realist, Nixon was fully aware the Vietnam War caused a huge U.S. military casualties and economic losses. With the changes in the international environment, he had to face reality and adjust the relationship with China, the Soviet Union, which inevitably involved the Vietnam problem. More importantly, the massive anti-war movement and division within the ruling class interest groups and political parties, to win the election, he had to reconcile the two extremes attitude of the Vietnam War, take the middle road to get voter support.

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### Nixon's decoupled terminology



by Kye Ruddell - Friday, May 30, 2014, 5:12 PM

It stands to reason that Nixon would decide to de-couple the ideas of Vietnamization and the removal of US troops from Vietnam. To continue the talk of war in any way at the time was to risk inciting Americans who were tired of the war and wanted it ended. It is not reasonable, however, to believe that you could easily have one without the other. In order to withdraw the troops at that time (or even a year out from the date of his speech), with the level of fighting and crisis still upon Vietnam, could be considered immoral, leaving all those in South Vietnam who had fought the North as possible sitting ducks. When Nixon recited

this speech, he was looking to improve the American public's view of the presidency, and to give a deadline for troop withdrawal without the stipulation of the South being able to carry on the effort without the troops was to attempt to appease the American people at that moment in time.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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### Re: Nixon's decoupled terminology



by Kyle Poirier - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 7:30 PM

I agree it was definitely a political move by Nixon. He was trying to get the support of the people for his presidency. I can't really believe Nixon cared that much about the people rather than their perceptions of him.

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### Re: Nixon's decoupled terminology



by Lauren Grant - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 5:18 PM

I definitely agree with you that it Vietnamization and the removal of American troops were something that would be unreasonable to believe could happen without the other. I didn't think about how leaving South Vietnam at the time would have been immoral but the more I thought about it I found that I agreed. Leaving them as you called them "sitting ducks" would have decreased confidence and moral leaving the nation weak in there own eyes and in the eyes of the rest of the world. Nixon was definitely using this speech to help smooth out the public's opinions and worries. I agree that his deadline for troops and the speech itself was to appease the public at a time where the public was getting restless and war weary.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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### Re: Nixon's decoupled terminology



by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 9:14 PM

This definitely seemed like a political move by Nixon. He was interested in his popularity at home and his approval rating at the time. He seemed less worried about what was actually going on and therefore needed to happen instead of focusing on the issues. He wanted improve the perception of his presidency. Removal of the troops and the finishing of the war wasn't the most important thing on his mind.

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### Re: Nixon's decoupled terminology



by Kyle Poirier - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 10:57 PM

I agree it is hard to think any differently when we know Nixon's ability for deceiving calculated moves through the watergate scandal.

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### Surfacing Problems



by Lauren Grant - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 11:23 PM

What I saw as one of the greatest problems that hampered efforts to conclude the war was the fact that South Vietnam was almost entirely reliant on us as a nation. They were built on our money and if we began to take away that economic help then their economy would have crashed. They were built on the dollar as the PBS video put it. Their military was also reliant on American troops for training, weapons, and troops themselves. Another problem that surfaced was the fact that neither the South Vietnamese government nor the American government wanted to concede, which definitely hampered any progress to help end the war sooner.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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### Re: Surfacing Problems



by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 9:17 PM

This is a great point. South Vietnam was very dependent on us. Including the dollar as you stated. Without that they would have crashed and had major problems. Conceding was something that needed to happen, Yet neither side could do it. It would have saved so many lives and an enormous amount of money and time.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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### Re: Surfacing Problems



by Kyle Poirier - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 10:52 PM

I agree Keeler. The Vietnamese became reliant on the U.S. And u feel that is what happens when the U.S. comes In and imposes their ways on the people, Americanizatiin happens. This often times has negative effects I don't believe it's usually the healthiest for societies. This is what we also did in Iraq which is frustrating for many in these countries.

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### Re: Surfacing Problems



by Kyle Poirier - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 11:03 PM

Sometimes intervention is a good thing such as through the world wars, when help is needed. And if the culture of countries mesh together and view points as

well. That is a result of both countries people being together and I would say it's a good thing overall. The difference between these circumstances that are good and the ones that are bad is the level of need I feel. Intervention was needed for the World Wars and wasn't needed for Vietnam or Iraq.

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