

# 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: Problems for peace

by John Moran - Tuesday, May 27, 2014, 4:17 PM

The first obstacle that Nixon, himself caused, was using Madame Anna Chennault as a go between with Thieu to sabotage the opening of peace talks with North Vietnam under Johnson and that he and South Vietnam would fare better with Nixon, as described in Herring text pages 263 thru 266.

Nixon's belief that he could get peace by threatening Hanoi was another block to getting Hanoi to the peace-table, his incursion into Cambodia drew a boycott of the official talks and stalled the secret talks for months. Then there was the American support for Thieu, the North wanted him out and Nixon continued to back his government.

I once read an article on war that advocated the only way to win an outright

victory was to continue to wreck destruction on the enemy and its people until the people told the government to surrender, although this design is not discussed in any of our material to study, I find that the North Vietnam's strategy of "negotiate while continuing to fight" much the same. While there was no harm done to our cities or civilian population, the continued loss of American lives and huge expenditures were very destructive to the morale of our citizens, congressional leaders, military leaders and the American press. The North Vietnams watched these developments with great satisfaction and steadfast, by continually rejecting each new proposal for peace they were able to continue wrecking destruction on our people.

Although the Christmas bombings brought both parties back to the table, I think that Nixon was hurt more then North Vietnam was, as we know the North got most of everything they had wanted as far back as 1968 with Johnson. I might add, that there also was the lingering problems Nixon had with Watergate and his efforts to cover it up. The poor man was fighting two unwinnable fights

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#### Re: Problems for peace

by Danielle Medina - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 4:43 PM

I agree that the North Vietnamese knew that if they were to keep fighting and if American soldiers kept getting killed that the American people would eventually step in and push to end the war however I think that they rejected each new proposal for peace because it was not what they wanted. I also think that even if the American people stood behind each president and supported the war wholeheartedly the North Vietnamese would have still fought in the war until they won and received exactly what they wanted. They knew that what they were fighting for was right for their country and they knew that eventually the American people would see it the same way and would push to end the war but I also think that they were prepared to fight for their country for as long as it would take and no matter who opposed them.

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#### Re: Troop Withdrawals

by John Moran - Tuesday, May 27, 2014, 7:12 PM

#### Troop Withdrawals

Although Nixon continued to receive conflicting reports on South Vietnam's ability to carry on the war on their own, and knowing that announcing troop withdrawals played into North Vietnam's waiting game at the peace talks, he had painted himself into a corner by announcing in the Nov. 1969 speech that he

intended to continue troop withdrawals. He had to continue withdrawing troops in an effort to appease his distractors in the Congress and the anti-war movements.

As it turned out many of the ARVN victories came with heavy air and naval support from American forces. I do believe that Nixon's continued removal of American combat troops, without dependence on the ARVN's improvement finally drove home the point that South Vietnam would not survive on their own and America needed to get the best deal they could get, with or without Thieu's approval.

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### **What stopped the ending of the war**

by Katherine Frank - Wednesday, May 28, 2014, 3:03 PM

There were many problems that hampered efforts to conclude the war with dignity. There were the negotiations that turned into a farce when it took a year to decide the shape of the table. There was the Congress's use of the budget to cut funding for the war, the Anti-war protesters, who gave North Vietnam an incentive to continue to fight to "wait us out". There was Watergate that weakened Nixon and also gave the North the ammunition they needed to call our negotiators liars "just like Watergate" and there was the South Vietnamese Governments refusal to accept a treaty in which they had no say.

During the Johnson Administration there were other countries that tried to negotiate with the North Vietnamese but the U.S. would conduct bombing raids as the delegates were beginning talks which put an end to the talks.

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### **Re: What stopped the ending of the war**

by Dylan Ornas - Wednesday, May 28, 2014, 11:33 PM

I cant help but agree with you. The war was so far beyond the point at which it could be salvaged when Nixon took office. The a large portion of the country was against the war at this point and there had been no measurable progress in years. I really think that the growing tenacity of the North Vietnamese and the very clear decision by them to "wait out" the US really was the biggest hamper to concluding the war.

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### **Re: What stopped the ending of the war**

by Chen Ling - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 9:44 PM

Yes, ending the war with dignity is very difficult for U.S. at the situation because U.S. troops underestimated North Vietnam army. At that moment, North Vietnam army were dominate at that time, therefore, U.S. army would not be able to honorably end the war at all.

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### Re: What stopped the ending of the war

by Ryan Ronning - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 9:02 PM

Katherine,

I agree with everything you wrote, I also believe that Nixon found himself in a so called whirl wind effect and it was just spiraling out of control. There were so many aspects to the war and so many things going wrong in the Nixon administration that not many people could take them seriously, much less an enemy of war.

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### Nixons' Delema

by Katherine Frank - Wednesday, May 28, 2014, 3:12 PM

Was Nixon right in de-coupling Vietnamization and the withdrawal of American troops from negotiations? Yes, negotiations including the South Vietnam government would have gone on for an undetermined length of time and the American public, nor Congress was going to wait. Vietnamization of the South, while negotiating with the North should have brought the North closer to a settlement, but coupled with troop withdrawals actually brought on a large scale attack in 1972. A cease fire was achieved in 1973 after a heavy bombing of the North. Had we slowly withdrawn our troops and continued to support Vietnamization we would have had to leave more personell in Vietnam. There would have been more monetary aid needed to support that process and more casualties of the personnel we left behind. The North would have had no reason to settle and who knows when if ever it all would have ended.

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### Re: Nixons' Delema

by Chen Ling - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 10:26 PM

I think the reason of why U.S. cannot end the war honorably is because they misanalysis the battle situation, they thought they were dominate in the war, however, the real situation was North Vietnam's advantage in the war, and they will not make a concession during the peace conference.

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### Re: Nixons' Delema

by Dylan Ornas - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 11:30 PM

I cannot agree with you more. The U.S totally underestimated the North Vietnamese, and not just militarily. They SEVERELY underestimated the Norths will for a unified nation. The Vietnamese had been fighting foreign invaders for thousands of years by the time the french colonized it. They were fighting for their homes. We were fighting for a tiny country half way around the world that US personnel had very little vested interest in the conflict, and the US government learned that too little too late.

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### Was Nixon Right?

by Justyn Dockery - Wednesday, May 28, 2014, 10:06 PM

From everything I have read and viewed throughout this course, I would conclude that Nixon's choice to not group the Vietnamization and American troops withdrawal together on the bargaining table in peace talks. Although these two strategies to achieve peace are interrelated and complementary to one another, I believe that putting both of these strategies on the table would have a devastating impact on the division within our own nation, and North Vietnam would likely view the US as pure cowards. Furthermore, Nixon and his cabinet members seem to be in consensus that America needed to withdrawal from Vietnam, but I would argue if the Vietnamese military officials in northern Vietnam had learned of the US strategies to withdrawal troops and the Vietnamization of the war, the US would have likely faced more casualties. Or minimally, the North Vietnamese Army would likely increase their attacks on south Vietnam, because the complete withdraw of US troops and allowing the Southern Vietnamese people to take complete responsibility for the man power to fight the war would weaken their defense. Lastly, with the large divide between Americans at home regarding the war, Nixon did not need any policy or plan of action to be made completely unhidden and public as it would likely only further divide our nation.

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### Re: Was Nixon Right?

by Chen Ling - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 7:54 PM

Hi Justyn, I think at that time, North Vietnam was more clearly knowing the situation than U.S army. North Vietnam knew that they were dominate and they should keep going to fight for their biggest advantage from the war. And U.S. was seeking for peacefully ending the war, even honorably, North Vietnam would never reach an agreement with U.S. government, therefore, I think Nixon was wrong due to he did not know they are losing the war.

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### Re: Was Nixon Right?

by Dylan Ornas - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 10:53 PM

Hi Justyn, I just wanted to say that I really agree with your view on the de-coupling. To

allow an enemy to know that you are considering a withdrawal as well as a transfer of combat duties to a much more ill trained force would have been devastating and I believe we would have seen an even bloodier end to the war than we did. It would have been in the North's best interest at that point to launch a major offensive.

It reminded me of the speech Nixon gave, where he promised all withdrawals with the condition that enemy activity didn't escalate.

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### "Honorably" ending the war

by Danielle Medina - Wednesday, May 28, 2014, 11:24 PM

According to Nixon's speech given on November 3, 1969 to the American public "The obstacle is the other side's absolute refusal to show the least willingness to join us in seeking a just peace. And it will not do so while it is convinced that all it has to do is to wait for our next concession, and our next concession after that one, until it gets everything it wants. According to The Herring Book however, some of the problems that surfaced that hampered efforts to conclude the war included the Nixon Administration's need to end the war "honorably". Ending the war "honorably" included Nixon ordering the bombing attacks on Cambodia to threaten Hanoi into negotiating on his terms (pg. 276). It also included his speech given on November 3rd which was a political tactic that identified a "silent majority" and helped mobilize a bloc of support where none had existed (pg. 282). It doesn't really make too much sense how one can end a war "honorably" by using such tactics as coercion and threats, that seems to be the exact opposite from honorable.

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### Re: "Honorably" ending the war

by Katherine Frank - Thursday, May 29, 2014, 1:37 PM

Although Vietnamization seemed to be working, it was because of massive infusions of military hardware and money. The South Vietnamese army seemed to be holding it's own and the area of South Vietnam seemed safer to travel in, however, according to the Herring book "the government had not yet succeeded in mobilizing the will and energies of the people against the enemy and in support of national programs". As we know from experience, without the will and support of the people a government policy cannot succeed. Add to that the problems here in the U.S., that the North was quite aware of, the anti-war groups and Watergate and Nixon may have felt that bombings were the only way to bring Hanoi to the negotiating table in earnest. Nixon's definition of "honorable" was always something different from what you and I might define it as.

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### Re: "Honorably" ending the war

by Justyn Dockery - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 12:19 PM

Katherine,

I believe you bring up an extremely important point regarding why Vietnamization seemed to be working when you stated, "it was because of massive infusions of military hardware and money." I could not agree with this claim anymore than I do, because without the massive amounts of military implements as well as money, the entire Vietnamization approach would have failed miserably. Furthermore, if the Vietnamization efforts had not gotten military hardware and money to South Vietnam, America would have been forced to increase the number of US troops on the ground. Lastly, I have one question regarding your final statement of, "Nixon's definition of "honorable" was always something different from what you and I might define it as." Although on the surface I feel this statement is accurate, but what makes you believe Nixon's definition of honorable is clearly different than what you or I would define honor as?

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### Re: "Honorably" ending the war

by Danielle Medina - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 4:16 PM

Justyn,

Honor is defined in the dictionary as honesty fairness, or integrity in one's beliefs and actions. For me I agree with the definition in the dictionary. Based on his actions in the war and the choices he made I believe that Nixon didn't have a clue what honorable meant. He wanted us to win the war "honorably" which if using the dictionaries definition is with fairness or integrity. I do not see how it is fair to try to threaten a country into negotiations. I also do not see any integrity in using lies to try to convince the American people that what we were doing was right. If what we were doing was right in the first place then there is no need to lie about it. Also Nixon's definition of "honorable" had a clear idea of saving face and making sure that the war did not make the United States look weak. To me being honorable is about doing the right thing not worrying about how it will make you look.

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### They cannot "Honorably" ending the war at all

by Chen Ling - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 2:08 PM

Vietnamization was very successful because North Vietnam was very clear that they were dominate, but U.S. government was not that clear about their real situation. on the contrary, U.S. government thought about "peacefully" and "honorably" end the war was the right method to end the way, after they tried, in fact, the war was still continued. That caused not Americanization, that caused Vietnamization.

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### Re: "Honorably" ending the war



by Jessica Mitchell - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 6:30 PM

Katherine, you do bring up a good point that the appearance of Vietnamization was working was in thanks to massive infusions of hardware and money. And that any government policy that wants to be successful needs the support of the people to succeed. I couldn't agree more with your assessments. But I have to ask, how you think Nixon defined honorable? I got the impression from the speech that his definition included a withdrawal of forces in a dignified manner, over time, after and during negotiations that were meant to leave the south Vietnamize in a position to devine their own future through democracy. His methods may not have been universally considered correct, but can we really say he had a misconstrued idea of honor?

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### Re: "Honorably" ending the war



by Dylan Ornas - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 10:42 PM

While I don't necessarily agree with Katherine's view, I can see a bit where she is coming from. Throughout the whole speech we saw Nixon promising things and then shortly after giving a slightly lengthy explanation on things that would delay the promises. To me it gave off a bit of a tongue in cheek feel.

"Two factors on which we will base our withdrawal decisions are the level of enemy activity and the progress of the training programs of the South Vietnamese forces. And I am glad to be able to report tonight progress on both of these fronts has been greater than we anticipated when we started the program in June for withdrawal."

He then goes on to say;

"Along with this optimistic estimate, I must—in all candor—leave one note of caution.

If the level of enemy activity significantly increases we might have to adjust our timetable accordingly."

This essentially allows an open end to the question of withdrawal while wrapping it in shiny paper. Whether or not this was intentional or not I dont really know.

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### Re: "Honorably" ending the war





by Chen Ling - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 7:48 PM

I agree with you. what U.S. government did for ending the war honorably was terrible and inefficient at all. I think the reason was they did not clearly know what was the situation of themselves in the war, they always thought they were the "best" force over the world, so taht they can force others to follow their plan and help them to reach their own goal. In fact, North Vietnam was absolutely dominate at that time, U.S. won't be able to end the war honorably.

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### Re: "Honorably" ending the war

by Ryan Ronning - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 9:55 PM

Danielle,

I agree with you and everything you wrote. It is hard to claim that one is ending the war honorably when they are using such tactics as bombing, coercion, and threats to end the war. If Nixon truly wanted a honorable end to the war he would have never bombed Cambodia as a tactic to threaten Hanoi into the negotiatons he wanted. Sadly these are the tactics many of the worlds "leaders" take in order to get the results they desire.

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### Complications

by Zoe Valentine - Friday, May 30, 2014, 12:30 PM

I think there were many problems going on which hampered the effort to conclude the war in a way that Nixon wished it to. First of all, the North Vietnamese could not agree on any negotiations at the Paris Peace Accords. Next, there was a growing war-weariness at home in the States, and protests had changed from just a minority of radicals to everyday Americans and Veterans. And finally, Nixon's paranoia and the uncovering of the Watergate scandal destroyed the American people's confidence in their president. Perhaps without these problems, the idea of Vietnamization might have worked in the way Nixon had outlined it.

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### Re: Complications

by Eryne Grant - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 8:49 PM

I agree with you that protests were a major problem in ending the war. It became so much more than it started as! I feel like the growing of power of the people became a major threat and something that the US wasn't used and had never experienced before. New things are scary, and protesters and protests in general supported that

idea. When you have Veterans protesting the war, controversies pop up. I think that this totally changed the aspect of war at the time.

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### Re: Complications

by Zoe Valentine - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 9:15 PM

It really did change everything! In every other war the US was involved in before Vietnam, such as WWII, there really was little to no protesting. The majority was in agreement with the cause, it seemed noble and good. Vietnam was the first time a massive amount of Americans disagreed with what the government was doing. And I feel like a whole new element was added into the mix when the Veterans started protesting. I think the fact that there was so much opposition to the Vietnam War really changed the face of American culture.

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### How to get peace with honor

by Zoe Valentine - Friday, May 30, 2014, 12:37 PM

Despite Nixon's flaws, I believe he was on the right track to ending the war. As stated in my last post, I think without the problems at home and abroad, the idea of Vietnamization may have succeeded. Some people may say that American cannot possibly expect to be involved in every conflict abroad, but, as Nixon said in his speech, "The defense of freedom is everybody's business – not just America's business." I think in this respect he was definitely right. He also points out the fact that even though we may agree to help other countries, we shouldn't become their crutch. Nixon was very insightful with his idea of Vietnamization.

I think Nixon was very right in keeping the details of his Vietnamization plan out of negotiations with the Vietnamese. He even said in his speech that he could not share his plans of when and how to withdraw troops, because "an announcement of a fixed timetable for our withdrawal would completely remove any incentive for the enemy to negotiate an agreement."

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### No Americanization

by Chen Ling - Saturday, May 31, 2014, 9:03 PM

LBJ cannot end the war by his left, Tet is a disaster of South Vietnam and U.S. troops. according to the situation and environment recorded in our books, U.S. citizens thought that the war is not going to win and government should end the war right away, therefore, there were less and less people support LBJ to be elected again. Thus, President Johnson stopped the bombing, then he said he won't run for reelection. However, even though President Johnson started a peace talk with North Vietnam and seeking to end the war, and

the war was still continued.

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### Re: Vietnamization of the War



by Danielle Medina - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 4:31 PM

If I were to put myself in Nixon's shoes I think that he was right for not including Vietnamization and American troop withdrawals from negotiations because if he had told them his plans it could have given the North Vietnamese a reason to attack the South harder to try to weaken them. I think that Nixon was thinking of what he would have done if he was the North Vietnamese and his adversary told him that they were withdrawing troops and implementing the tactic of Vietnamization. If Nixon had thought that giving the North Vietnamese that information during negotiations would have helped end the war more quickly then I believe he would have done so.

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### Re: Vietnamization of the War



by Jessica Mitchell - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 6:33 PM

I agree Danielle, had he brought these things to the negotiation table he would have been showing his hand completely to the enemy and in doing so provided that enemy with the motivation to apply more pressure with it's fighting force and more incentive to wait it all out.

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### Re: Vietnamization of the War



by Zoe Valentine - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 9:18 PM

Danielle -

I totally agree with you. I think people discredit Nixon a lot because of the Watergate Scandal and other things, but I think we have to at least give him credit for being the first president to "put himself in the shoes" of the North Vietnamese, by thinking of what would they do, and what we could do to prevent something worse happening.

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### Dropping Out



by Eryne Grant - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 8:45 PM

Problems that surfaced that hampered the efforts to conclude the war included the fear that if America dropped out of the war, terror would take over the world. As Nixon said, " the first

defeat in our Nation's history would result in a collapse of confidence in American leadership, not only in Asia but throughout the world." Concluding the war could be seen as a defeat on our side, and America would not let that happen. Our allied countries would be put in jeopardy and show a weakness in our nation. America, being the patriotic and proud country that we are, would not stand for that. But, ending the war could possibly show a crack in the country that people either loved or fear. Maintaining power meant staying in the war, even if not everyone loved that idea.

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### Re: Dropping Out



by Ryan Ronning - Sunday, June 1, 2014, 10:03 PM

There was a definite fear that if the United States dropped out of the war there would be a take over of terror, and Nixon sure didn't want to be the first president in the History of the United States to loose a war. However looking back on that from today it is clear that we lost the war and North Korea is a major power that looking to do nothing other that create unrest across the world. As was stated in the films this week, "hindsight is 20/20."

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