

HST 195: History of Vietnam War Sp18 (Escobar 41945)

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Determining the Truth

by [Joe Escobar](#) - Sunday, April 15, 2018, 9:33 AM

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Misleading Portrayals

by [Emilee Russell](#) - Monday, April 16, 2018, 12:11 AM

To me, the most glaring inaccuracy that it seemed most historians in the AIM video took issue with is how Ho Chi Minh was portrayed in the series. First, the historians attempt to clear up the misconception that perhaps Ho Chi Minh was more of a nationalist than a Communist. One of the first pieces of evidence that points to him being primarily a Communist is a series of betrayals that he committed when he had brought Vietnamese to China to teach them more about Communism. If they remained nationalist and did not subscribe to Communist ideas after this, he betrayed them to the French authorities, even allowing his greatest mentor to be arrested by the French. (AIM historian Droge)

One argument I found compelling was that Archemides Patti claims that in speaking to Ho Chi Minh in 1945, Ho explained that the USSR "was in no position to help him." He goes on to explain that that was a missed opportunity for the US, and that at that time we could have "had him on a silver platter." Another historian says that in fact, Ho was taking advantage of a young Patti when he invited him to several public ceremonies. He explains that this gave the impression to the Vietnamese public that the US was supportive of Ho Chi Minh. (AIM historian Morris)

One AIM historian speculates that this distortion of Ho Chi Minh's actions and motivations may have been, on PBS's part, just an effort to create a more compelling narrative by making things perhaps too black-and-white, distorting things to make Ho more clearly the "hero" and the US and South Vietnam "the villain." This is further accomplished by glossing over the specifics of the Geneva Conference and being unclear on the US's position on an election in Vietnam. It is depicted as the US trying to renegotiate the terms of the election when in fact, it was stated in the agreement that the US would not support an election that was not supervised by the United Nations. (AIM historian Loeb)

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

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Re: Misleading Portrayals

by [Jonathan Haskell](#) - Friday, April 20, 2018, 3:12 PM

"To me, the most glaring inaccuracy that it seemed most historians in the AIM video took issue with is how Ho Chi Minh was portrayed in the series. First, the historians attempt to clear up the misconception that perhaps Ho Chi Minh was more of a nationalist than a Communist. One of the first pieces of evidence that points to him being primarily a Communist is a series of betrayals that he committed when he had

brought Vietnamese to China to teach them more about Communism. If they remained nationalist and did not subscribe to Communist ideas after this, he betrayed them to the French authorities, even allowing his greatest mentor to be arrested by the French. (AIM Droge)”

I agree with what you say here, Despite his underdoubted desire to unite Vietnam and have it control its own destiny and be willing to fight for it which sounds like the life of a nationalist, his action continuously show he was dedicated to the communist ideal. His betrayal of the “George Washington” of Vietnam as they called it to the Chinese then staging a protest for his release, and his becoming a Soviet citizen prove his dedication to the cause first.

“One argument I found compelling was that Archemides Patti claims that in speaking to Ho Chi Minh in 1945, Ho explained that the USSR "was in no position to help him." He goes on to explain that that was a missed opportunity for the US, and that at that time we could have "had him on a silver platter." Another historian says that in fact, Ho was taking advantage of a young Patti when he invited him to several public ceremonies. He explains that this gave the impression to the Vietnamese public that the US was supportive of Ho Chi Minh. (AIM historian Morris)”

Yes the USSR was in no position to help anyone. The Nazi's completely ravaged the nation. We expected his support against the Japanese when we needed him as it was a foreign invader, and when he needed us to help diplomatically to keep another invader the French again out we basically had to choose between allies we had in the last war. That said as communism had already long been chosen as the next evil, our choice was obvious in regard to our world opinion.

"One AIM historian speculates that this distortion of Ho Chi Minh's actions and motivations may have been, on PBS's part, just an effort to create a more compelling narrative by making things perhaps too black-and-white, distorting things to make Ho more clearly the 'hero' and the US and South Vietnam 'the villain.'" This is further accomplished by glossing over the specifics of the Geneva Conference and being unclear on the US's position on an election in Vietnam. It is depicted as the US trying to renegotiate the terms of the election when in fact, it was stated

trying to renegotiate the terms of the election when in fact, it was stated in the agreement that the US would not support an election that was not supervised by the United Nations. (AIM historian Loeb's)"

I can see how all that could be very true. PBS had to stay on guidelines given by the people paying for the show, and as a show it makes sense to keep interest and keep the drama intense it makes sense that there be a good guy or team and a bad guy and/or team.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

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Doubts on information.

by [Maria Cecilia Contreras Sanchez](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 1:53 PM

I would like to start by saying that this video has left me with some doubts regarding the PBS videos. First of all, the Television's Vietnam: The Real History video tells us that PBS has not revealed all the necessary information about Vietnam war. According to this video, PBS showed us some unnecessary information that also contributes to a misunderstanding of history in Vietnam. For example, in the video it is said that PBS labels South Vietnam as the bad guys in the story when they just look for they independency and democracy. It supposes that the information presented is not entirely true. The video says and emphasizes that Ho Chi Minh wanted Vietnam to be Free, democratic and have its own rules rather than French rules (15:22). This information agrees with what was I read in the first chapter of Herring's book. The book said, "When Ho Chi Minh proclaimed the independence of Vietnam from French rule on September 2, 1945" (p.1).

Another important point that coincides with Television's Vietnam: The Real History video (10:25), Herring's book (p.11) and Patriots (p.36) is about the date of 1945 where Ho Chi Minh contacted OSS and gave the information about the Japanese troops training and weapons.

It is hard to know for sure which one is the best to believe, however by comparing all my sources it seems to be more clear. I like much more this video because it gives professional references with a good explanation as well the books do it.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

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Re: Doubts on information.

by [Parker Mann](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 2:05 PM

Maria,

I am wondering why it is the PBS video that left you with doubts about it being accurate unbiased information? Is it not at all apparent that the *Television's Vietnam: The Real History* video is just biased based on how every source presented in the series is American, and that is the only point of view. Is that not a red flag for you? I will admit that there are a few small inconsistencies in the PBS series but based on the intersecting opinions of stories in both books and the PBS series, do you really think Ho Chi Ming was as the *Television's Vietnam: The Real History* presented him?

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

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Re: Doubts on information.

by [Maria Cecilia Contreras Sanchez](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 7:33 PM

What I mean was that the information presented was a Little bit contradictory. That is, the AIM offers us the different information in purchases with PBS. I understand that supposedly one of these videos has bias. But when I started watching the AIM video, I was also asked if the information I was presenting was really effective and truthful? Maybe my problem was to think too much about the information that I was looking for! But I think you're partly right, I watch the video a few times more so that I could have a clearer concept. But I will take your comment into account and thank you.

Sum of ratings: 0 (1)

0

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Re: Doubts on information.

by [Andrea Kuipers](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 11:41 PM

The part that gave it away to me was how exaggerated and overbearing all of the "facts" were in the "Television's Vietnam: The Real History." The information was contradictory because it definitely had a different viewpoint than the PBS series, which tried to stay neutral between viewpoints and give historical data. The topic of Ho Chi Minh was one of the most controversial points between the videos because the PBS video was showing the leader side of him and what he was fighting for, while the "Television's Vietnam: The Real History" video just attacked him and talked about how much of a communist he was. I can see how you can question the credibility of both videos by watching the beginning of the "Television's Vietnam: The Real History" video.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1) 1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Doubts on information.**by [Jacob Fagan](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 11:54 PM

The point of the AIM video was to show the pattern of poor information to improve their own positions on the matter. PBS's producers showed that they were more interested in leaving a good taste in Americans' mouths about the war instead of telling how it actually went down. It's concerning how many news companies do this nowadays and the point of the class is to find the truth through research and constant skepticism, so it's a good thing you are skeptical about AIM's video.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1) 1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Ho Chi Minh Wants**by [Houston Schmutz](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 8:01 PM

"The video says and emphasizes that Ho Chi Minh wanted Vietnam to be Free, democratic and have its own rules rather than French rules."

I would argue that Ho Chi Minh wanted Vietnam to be something special. They piggy-backed off of China's success so much that they started copying how they did things. The Vietnamese absorbed China's language and culture. Even though they were in such strong connection with China, they resisted their rule. (pg. 4) On August 14th Ho Chi Minh worked to take control of Vietnam, marking a declaration of independence and forming a national government. When Japan surrendered to the Viet Minh, they seized control of all of Vietnam. As they continued to march North and seize major cities, they would not be stopped due to the slacking of Japan and the weakness of the French. My point is that Ho Chi Minh had the right strategy from the success of China that he was able to lead as a communist leader to take over Vietnam under his ruling. I feel that he didn't just want them to be free of ruling, but be strong in his ruling.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1) 1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**First Troops in Vietnam**by [Karson Laing](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 6:27 PM

The United States started off Vietnam with a endless bombing regime. They even gave

it a new name, it was called Carpet Bombing. With the United States constantly bombing Vietnam they eventually needed to get a way to deploy their planes other than off of their aircraft carriers. The United States set up an air base at Da Nang so they could successfully continue to bomb Vietnam. In order to defend the base Johnson deployed the Marines from 3rd battalion 9th Marine Expeditionary Force. (pg.161) The Two Marine Battalions that were deployed had to be trained in jungle warfare. The main focus was to defend Da Nang (min. 34) The Marines were not allowed to go out on patrol in the highlands they were strictly told to stay and defend the base from enemy attacks to prevent American casualties. This was the first steps into Vietnam with American boots on the ground.

Sum of ratings: 0 (1) 0

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Marines Landing at Da Nang**by [Houston Schmutz](#) - Saturday, April 21, 2018, 3:35 PM

"With the United States constantly bombing Vietnam they eventually needed to get a way to deploy their planes other than off of their aircraft carriers. The United States set up an air base at Da Nang so they could successfully continue to bomb Vietnam."

With the groundrule that the United States had to adhere to since the beginning of the Indochina war, sending in ground troops would be a total violation. But the understanding was once the first step took place, it would be "very difficult to hold the line." (pg161) The option was to send in ground troops to defend the base, like you said. Although they were "tasked" to guard the base, LBJ secretly authorized them to engage enemy soldiers in combat.

"The main focus was to defend Da Nang (min. 34) The Marines were not allowed to go out on patrol in the highlands they were strictly told to stay and defend the base from enemy attacks to prevent American casualties. This was the first steps into Vietnam with American boots on the ground. "

I agree with what you say about it being the first steps into Vietnam, but the main focus ended up being bombarded to further initiate war. "As Taylor had predicted, once the first step had been taken, it was very difficult to hold the line." (pg 162) In order to hold off major disaster, Westmoreland advocated to put two U.S. Army divisions in the Highlands, and the other in Saigon. These missions were set out to be offensive toward the enemy, rather than defensive toward the base. At this point air war was out of discussion and despite the chances of major American soldier loss, the US Army reached a compromise to commit to ground forces and an enlargement of their mission.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Marines Landing at Da Nang**by [Karson Laing](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 10:37 PM

i agree with that as well, with these being the first boots on the ground in Vietnam. What i did not know though was LBJ authorizing them to engage in combat so thank you for sharing that with me in the reply. I also agree about the first troops being there that they would have to hold the line, but inevitably they know they could only hold the line for so long before they would have to make some sort of offensive. The offensive being the two Army battalions being placed into the Highlands where the Marines could not go and as well as Saigon.

Sum of ratings:0 (1)

0

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**The O.S.S. Officer**by [Miles Arnold](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 9:46 PM

It may not be the biggest omission or error cited but, I personally have a little problem with multiple historians seemingly discrediting the claims of O.S.S. Officer Archimedes Pattis first hand accounts of his interactions with Ho Chi Minh. Challenging the credibility or obscured presentation is one thing, but to suggest that a US Intelligence officer who was spending extended periods of time with Minh personally was "Fooled by Minh" as Charlton Heston mentions, seems a bit out of place considering how certain they seem to be about the other issues they bring up.

Maybe that is the case, but I am more inclined to believe the credibility of a US Intelligence officer who probably has more intimate knowledge of the situation than a historian would ever have.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Pawns in a chess match**by [Paul Geu](#) - Wednesday, April 18, 2018, 10:29 PM

I also thought that it was interesting that they painted Officer Patti as a man that got duped by Ho Chi Minh. In terms of pure propaganda it was a brilliant move on Ho's part to have an American officer to be there when Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam independent. One thing that the AIM video did not mention was that there were multiple officers in attendance at the proclamation. On the very first page of the

Herring book is the description of U.S. fighter planes flying overhead, and Army officers standing near the reviewing stand (pg 3, Herring).

I would think that with that many officers in attendance and even Vo Nguyen Giap describing having a "Particularly intimate relations," with America that there was no instructions from the higher ups in Washington. If Patti was indeed duped by Ho Chi Minh, he certainly pulled the wool over many peoples eyes in the beginning.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1) [Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: The O.S.S. Officer

by [Parker Mann](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 2:14 PM

This is a great point here Miles. This example follows the pattern of *Television's Vietnam: The Real History* trying to discredit the PBS series at every turn with uncalled for attacks of people, places, ideologies and more. They try to discredit 1st and 2nd hand witnesses while giving creditability to Historians and Generals/Officers on their own payroll who's only interest is to defend themselves and shift blame of the public from the USA government to China, Russia, and Ho Chi Ming. So as you put it Miles, I am too "I am more inclined to believe the credibility of a US Intelligence officer who probably has more intimate knowledge of the situation then a historian would ever have."

Sum of ratings: 1 (1) [Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



AIM video contradicts PBS video on Ho Chi Mihn form of Communism

by [Paul Geu](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 10:14 PM

One of the aspects of the AIM video that I found to be very contradicting to the PBS program was the statement by historian William Stearman who said that Ho Chi Minh would have been appalled at being called a National communist by any other Communist. Stearman also said that Ho Chi Minh was one of the last of the International Communist (AIM historian Stearman). Throughout the episodes and even in the AIM video, multiple people stated that Ho Chi Minh was a Nationalist first and a Communist second. The OSS operative Patti stated in the AIM video that Ho Chi Minh was not getting help from the Soviets in 1945 and we missed a good chance of him being on our side if the United States would have supported his cause (AIM historian Patti). The PBS videos stated that once Ho Chi Minh became president on Vietnam in 1945 he was the most famous nationalist in the country. (PBS episode

1). By contrasting MINH as an international communist in league with the USSR and China instead of a Nationalist fighting for independence from colonial rule, the AIM video concludes that the PBS video paints Minh as the hero, while the South Vietnam and United States the villain. (AIM video).

When dealing with different sources giving conflicting information I always go into the material with open eyes, not firmly believing anything until I get all the possible information to make an informed opinion on the subject. The two textbooks are excellent sources not only because they give another point of view on the subject but unlike any video series, they provide a bibliography of their source material, which allows the reader to dig further into the subject. The text books, whether it is the Appy book that has interviews from both sides of the conflict to the Herring book that is a more broad history of the conflict, allows us a more detailed history that the videos could never have due to time constraints.

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

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Re: AIM video contradicts PBS video on Ho Chi Minh form of Communism

by [Jonathan Haskell](#) - Wednesday, April 18, 2018, 10:39 PM

So I am trying to understand what exactly you found contradicting and why it is so. "One of the aspects of the AIM video that I found to be very contradicting to the PBS program was the statement by historian William Stearman who said that Ho Chi Minh would have been appalled at being called a National communist by any other Communist. Stearman also said that Ho Chi Minh was one of the last of the International Communist (AIM historian Stearman). Throughout the episodes and even in the AIM video, multiple people stated that Ho Chi Minh was a Nationalist first and a Communist second."

I think the point he was making that many including myself think of him as a nationalist. His intent was to have a one undivided Vietnam ruled by the Vietnamese. That said though being Vietnamese is what he was, it is not what he believed. He believed in the communist social order. He is called one of the last international communists due to incredible history of his life. Being schooled in France and becoming a founding member of the French communist party. Then going to the Soviet Union and actually becoming a citizen there. That is in my opinion the greatest argument against him being a nationalist as he was willing to become a citizen of another country simply because it followed the same creed as he did.

"The OSS operative Patti stated in the AIM video that Ho Chi Minh was not getting help from the Soviets in 1945 and we missed a good chance of him being on our side if the United States would have supported his cause (AIM historian Patti)."

Well the Soviet Union was in complete ruins after World War II. Even though I am sure it desired to help it could do nothing. The moment Truman went against the

sure it seemed to help it could do nothing. The moment Truman went against the feelings of his predecessor Roosevelt and backed the return of French rule to keep that ally happy, then all the previous dancing done by the U.S. and Patti with Ho Chi Minh was irrelevant.

“The PBS videos stated that once Ho Chi Minh became president on Vietnam in 1945 he was the most famous nationalist in the country. (PBS episode 1). By contrasting Minh as an international communist in league with the USSR and China instead of a Nationalist fighting for independence from colonial rule, the AIM video concludes that the PBS video paints Minh as the hero, while the South Vietnam and United states the villain.(AIM video).”

I think many people looking back on history including many in Vietnam look back at Ho Chi Minh as a famous nationalist for his country. It is just understanding history at that time his beliefs were for a world order that he wanted his country to follow. I did feel the PBS show did paint Diem as a bad guy a villain if you will, but I really never got that feeling about the South Vietnamese as a people. I also looking back don't really feel it portrays the U.S. as a badguy as much as the politically and historically ignorant giant in the wrong place at the wrong time. It definitely portrays Ho Chi Minh as a hero though which is no doubt a falsehood.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

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Historian considers Ho Chi Minh to be only an international communist

by [Paul Geu](#) - Friday, April 20, 2018, 9:07 PM

The point that was made by Stearman was that Ho Chi Minh was a true international communist that cared more about party than nation and that if another communist stated that he was a nationalist he would have been appalled at being called that. However, we have seen that he was not really a party player when it came to getting support from the USSR and China. Ho Chi Minh did get his training in USSR and later China, he was a founding member of the French Communist party. Using these facts the AIM video paints Ho Chi Minh as a true party member even showing him at a Polish celebration for communist rule in 1957 (AIM Video).

However, like you said in your reply, when he declared independence for Vietnam and became president he was hailed as a famous Nationalist. Later he would try to get support for his cause from all sides including the United States (PBS video, Episode 1). This fact alone contradicts what the communists in USSR and China would have wanted and shows that Ho Chi Minh is not a true international Communist like Stearman states Minh is.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

[Reply](#)**Re: AIM video contradicts PBS video on Ho Chi Mihn form of Communism**by [Parker Mann](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 2:53 PM

I totally agree with your whole response but especially with you saying that the textbooks are an excellent source, and how they influence our opinions of both videos. With out the textbooks, which contain many first hand knowledge and witnesses, it would be very hard to determine which of the videos were more reliable. What the books provide are sources independent of each other, on many fronts including North and South Vietnamese sides, American sides and more, who give their side of things. From this is how we contrast which statement from the videos are creditable or not. An example of this would be me immediately discrediting statements from the AIM video saying that Ho Chi Ming was not respected in Vietnam, and was feared all over, and that he was 'not a hero'. I immediately discredited this based upon the various accounts in both books, and especially in the first hand statements in the *Patriots* book. All sorts of people spoke of their respect for Ho, but what really stood out to me the most was when one soldier told his account of Ho his own soldiers from the South betrayed his army out of their loyalty to Ho, and the cause of freedom.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: AIM video contradicts PBS video on Ho Chi Mihn form of Communism**by [Emilee Russell](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 6:32 PM

I would agree with the AIM historians that the term "international Communist" seems to describe Ho Chi Minh more accurately. I felt that PBS put a lot of emphasis on the "Uncle Ho" persona and less emphasis on him being known internationally as a Communist, not just in Vietnam. I felt that it did leave some to wonder if his values were just more nationalist, touting Communism as a way to strengthen Vietnam but the AIM historians made it clear that through his actions, we can confidently label Ho Chi Minh as more of a Communist then nationalist leader.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: AIM video contradicts PBS video on Ho Chi Mihn form of Communism**by [Haonan Bai](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 10:42 PM

As you said: "The PBS videos stated that once Ho Chi Minh became president of Vietnam in 1945 he was the most famous nationalist in the country. (PBS episode

1). By contrasting Minh as an international communist in league with the USSR and China instead of a Nationalist fighting for independence from colonial rule, the AIM video concludes that the PBS video paints Minh as the hero, while South Vietnam and the United States the villain. (AIM video)."

In my opinion, He studied Marxism as an international communist. He hopes that Vietnam can gain independence and freedom and ask the colonial rule of France. So, he is the most famous nationalist for the Vietnamese people. There is a relationship between the international communist and nationalist. It can be said that he is a communist and also can be said that he is a nationalist. It depends on what position was.

PBS described Ho Chi Minh as a hero and South Vietnam and the United States as bad people because South Vietnam which supported by the United States was opposition to communism. But Ho Chi Minh led communism to against the war of Japan and France. It might not true, that's why we learn about and discuss it.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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The farce of Ho Chi Min

by [Kishahn Fellows](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 10:27 PM

The most glaring discrepancy I noticed between the AIM documentary and the Vietnam television series was the depiction of Ho Chi Min. While the T.V. series seems to walk the fence on Min for some strange reason, the historians in the AIM documentary have no issue pointing out the faults in the Vietnam T.V. series. Historian Reed Irvine brings up the previously stated point when states " the producers of the series went through the whole process as if they did not know this, as if they did not find out until the end of the program...that the imposition of communist rule inevitably results in great human tragedy." (AIM Irvine 6:11) Another example would be historian Dolf Droge pointing out the series unwillingness to show the extent of Min's dedication to Communism. " In 1920 Ho Chi Min found his lifelong path, he became a french communist, a founding member of Vietnamese French Communist party, on a grant he went to Moscow to study at the Lenin institute and become a soviet citizen. After this he goes to china and serves as the Russian consulate, becoming an international Communist organizer, bringing Vietnamese to China to study revolution..." (AIM Droge 8:34) Droge then goes on to mention another glaring issue between the the two documentary's "In episode two the documentary states that when Ho Chi Min came to power in 1945, the Vietnamese had known him as a patriot for a quarter century, now of course that's wrong, because Ho only took the name Ho Chi Min in 1941 inside a Chinese prison, the Vietnamese would have no knowledge of that" (AIM Doge 10:20)

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Sum of ratings: 3 (1) [Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: The farce of Ho Chi Min**by [Maria Cecilia Contreras Sanchez](#) - Friday, April 20, 2018, 6:52 PM

I agree with your point in relation to how historians clarify how PBS historians went through that process as if they knew nothing. I also agree with you regarding the event that happened in 1941, when Ho Chi min took this name when he was in a China prison. I think one of the things that helped during the video is to give their information and at the same time transmit part of PBS videos in order to clarify even more the information that they are presenting.

Sum of ratings: 0 (1) [Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**People of Vietnam figured out who Ho Chi Minh was**by [Paul Geu](#) - Friday, April 20, 2018, 9:35 PM

One thing that struck me when Droge mentions that Ho Chi Minh changed his name in 1941 and the people did not have any knowledge on who he was it reminded me of a portion of the Vietnam A Television History. In Episode 1 of the Series, there is an interview with Hoang Quoc Viet, a veteran of the war and early Viet Minh, who states that after the formation of the Viet Minh in 1941, Ho Chi Minh sent out a letter asking for support from the Vietnam people to rise up against the Japanese. This letter rallied the people around the movement and only grew stronger once the people released that "Uncle Ho" was really Nguyen Ai Quoc the trust in the movement was further established (PBS Episode 1, 17:00).

This interview shows that the people knew who Ho Chi Minh was in 1941 and after the World War 2 was over was the clear leader of the Nationalist movement.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1) [Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**AIM and Ho Chi Minh**by [Kate Adkisson](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 11:51 AM

Paul,

I too had a problem with Droge saying no one knew who Ho was and that he appeared to the Vietnamese people out of nowhere. Ho Chi Minh was known before 1941 as shown in the Patriots book, but known as Nguyen Ai Quoc-Nguyen the Patriot. He changed his name to protect his identity to Ho Chi Minh - Ho The Bringer of Light. Droge says, "In the second episode of

the PBS series, they make the statement that Ho when he came to power in 1945, was known by the Vietnamese as a patriot for about a quarter of a century. And of course that's so totally wrong because Ho only took the name Ho Chi Minh in 1941 inside a Chinese prison, and Vietnamese would not have knowledge of that" (Television's Vietnam, 10:20). After scanning Episode 2, I cannot find this statement and I wonder if it was cut out of the program or if maybe I just missed it. Droge also comments, " He first came to the Vietnamese in 1944 and said 'I'm Ho Chi Minh, and I'm organizing these efforts, and the resistance against the Japanese, and the resistance against the French', and they would have only had one year to get to know him, and then he would suddenly be standing on a platform saying 'I am now leading this new government' and everyone would be saying 'Who is this man?'" (Television's Vietnam, 11:00). I would argue based on the reading that this is exaggerated and maybe not true. I wouldn't say that he was idolized for a quarter of a century, but I wouldn't say he was a stranger to the people. Herring writes " Ho returned to his homeland in 1940. Establishing headquarters in caves near the Chinese border by a mountain he named Karl Marx and a river he called Lenin, he founded the Independence League of Vietnam (Viet Minh). The Viet Minh gradually established itself as a preeminent voice of Vietnamese nationalism. By the spring of 1945, Ho had mobilized a base of mass support in northern Vietnam... he had raised an army of five thousand soldiers" (Herring, Chapter 1, p.7). According to Herring, Ho didn't just pop out of nowhere. Nguyen Ai Quoc and Ho Chi Minh are the same, and their accomplishments stay the same regardless of name change. Ho wasn't some obscure communist puppet, in my opinion, he was a dedicated revolutionary and leader who sought the freedom of his country and his people.

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

3

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Re: People of Vietnam figured out who Ho Chi Minh was

 by [Miles Arnold](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 10:07 PM

I agree with you here and I can't help but wonder, as it stands now, how are there still conflicting opinions about who Ho was and what he believed? There are letters and hard proof that back his stance as a nationalist. Maybe the fact that he received funding from radical communist countries led the US to believe that he was in fact a radical communist. Either way it seems like it is difficult for historians to agree on one explanation.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Provoking in the Tonkin Gulf**by [Houston Schmutz](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 10:38 PM

The most glaring contradiction I discovered was on the Tonkin Gulf. The acts of “unprovoked attacks on U.S. ships innocently steaming in international waters” seemed to unclear to make military actions upon (Herring p.146). One of the goals of the USS Maddox was to engage in reaction in enemy radars. As the Maddox was involved with the attacks of Hon Me and Hon Ngu, North Vietnam torpedo boats launched and the Maddox opened fire damaging North Vietnamese boats. After the attacks Secretary of State Rusk says, “the other side got a sting out of this, if they do it again, they’ll get another sting” (Herring p.147). This shows that the United States wasn’t interested in initiating attacks, but if provoked at all was excited for the opportunity to react. While remaining in North Vietnam, the Maddox reported attacks based on sonar and radar contacts. These readings were skeptical due to severe weather conditions, and the captain of the boat ruled them inconclusive. As the US leaders saw this as the North acting with pride and looking down on the US, Rusk labeled it as an “act of war.” Johnson and advisors agreed that in order to show the North and the US citizens their power over-seas, to air strike North Vietnamese boat bases. After it was confirmed that the first US attacks were a mistake due to poor radar readings, the second attack was a cover up to make up for the first one. After this Johnson disarmed Goldwater who initiated the escalation of the war, which brought Johnson presidential favor from the American people by defending their interests by not recklessly expanding the war.

This is a controversy because the Maddux was not actually on a patrol mission in international waters, but a spy mission in North Vietnamese waters. It shouldn’t have been there and in those waters it was unprovoked, but was prepared to find any justification to go to war. The Maddux was actually sent to provoke war. Johnson gave approval for the Maddux to go into Tonkin and used the phantom of attack to get congressional approval for American troops in Vietnam. We now know that the US sent the boat into North Vietnam as a justification to escalate the war, send more American troops, and bomb Vietnam. Months prior to the Maddux being sent to Vietnam, this was a planned operation with Maddux leaving its base in Honolulu. The Gulf of Tonkin resolution allowed for the aid of US warfare without congressional approval, but instead provoked war or, “poked the bear.” To conclude, the contradiction was that the US military did this to gain support from the Congress to further the speed of war and expand it into Northern Vietnam.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1) 1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Provoking in the Tonkin Gulf**by [Nicholas Walker](#) - Friday, April 20, 2018, 7:58 PM

This is a good analysis. To put it simply, the Tonkin incident was a false flag meant to stir up trouble. I've noticed that, especially in the post-WWII era, there are a lot of incidents of countries using ships and planes as bait in order to get their foe to retaliate. I think the US saw how successful the Pearl Harbor attacks were in riling up a people to strike against a foreign adversary, and that realization inspired the risky maneuvers practiced at Tonkin (I am, of course, **not** suggesting that Pearl Harbor was a false flag, just that it demonstrated the effectiveness of an enemy attack in inciting people to go to war).

Sum of ratings: 1 (1) 1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Yen Bai Revolt of 1930 and Ho Chi Minh**by [Kate Adkisson](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 10:56 PM

At 11:20 minutes in during Television's Vietnam: The Real Story, Charles Heston points out a conspicuous contradiction concerning documented history and information presented in the PBS documentary series. The AIM video sets out to discredit claims about Ho Chi Minh from the first episode of the series regarding The Yen Bay revolt of 1930. In the AIM video, Charles tells us, "PBS associated Ho with the Yen Bay rebellion of February 1930. The leaders of that revolt... headed a noncommunist, nationalist party" (Television's Vietnam, 11:25). Then a segment of the PBS episode before the wording was changed is shown, in which the PBS narrator credits Ho and the communists for rebellions, saying, "he was not in Vietnam, but his ideas and the Vietnamese he trained were. In 1930, new rebellions broke out" (Television's Vietnam, 11:45). I wanted to check for the context and full wording from the PBS episode, but when I watched it the segment's information had changed. The same pictures and footage were shown, but instead of the narrator crediting Ho, the narrator comments instead, "He traveled widely, organizing ex-patriot Vietnamese into a revolutionary party. Reports during the next 17 years placed him in Germany, China, Thailand, France, Russia" (PBS Episode 1, 15:08). The wording had to be changed due to mass demonstrations against the PBS series in New Orleans, Houston, San Diego, and even in Paris and London. Protesters wanted credit where credit was due, not to the communists but to the nationalists. Charles Heston remarks that such an error was so absurd it was like "saying the communists were behind our Boston tea party"

(Television's Vietnam, 13:33). I wanted to figure out the full story, which I felt neither videos were giving me, so I checked Herring's book for information around the event. Right before the book introduces Ho Chi Minh, the Yen Bay revolt is covered briefly. "French colonialism had created an urban middle class and proletariat, and the exploitation of the country sparked increasingly radical revolutionary activity. In 1930, a nationalist party headed by urban intellectuals launched the abortive Yen Bay revolt in northern Vietnam" (Herring, p. 5). This alternative source backs up AIM's claim that the PBS documentary did skew the narrative and over-credit Ho Chi Minh, however the wording they used in the original broadcast seemed vague, and I'm not entirely sure if they were just referring to that one revolt or others that happened in 1930. Just after the nationalist revolts are described, Herring writes, "urban intellectuals launched the abortive Yen Bay revolt in Northern Vietnam, while peasant and worker rebellions backed by the communists erupted throughout the central part of the country" (Herring, p.5-6). While I don't have all of the original broadcasts' wording, the snippet AIM provided doesn't explicitly note Yen Bai, it just says "in 1930, new rebellions broke out" (Television's Vietnam, 11:48). However, I can see why protests broke out and why people would be frustrated and offended by the claim (and other incorrect claims) presented in the PBS episodes. Giving Ho Chi Minh and the Communist party all the credit for Vietnamese politics, demonstrations, and other activity is insulting to the men and women who actually participated and sparked those events.

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

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PBS, AIM, and verification.

by [Nicholas Walker](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 11:05 PM

The most significant contradiction I noticed with the AIM video is that PBS was glossing over or mis-representing of facts regarding the presence and effect of communism in Vietnam, especially regarding Ho Chi Minh. The point brought against them is that PBS seems reluctant to directly link the mass exodus of Vietnamese, the war crimes of Ho Chi Minh, or Ho himself; to communism. Ho, as AIM claims, was a communist first, and a nationalist in footnote alone. While I am certainly not learned enough in the history of this war to say who is correct in this argument, I will say that it wouldn't surprise me that PBS, a publicly funded network, would see reason to educate viewers as to the dangers of a powerful government—one that would pay to keep their lights on.

I would say that the first step in dealing with conflicting information is to question how each side came to the conclusion that it did, and what their motivations were for reaching those conclusions. The reason we trust FDA researchers more than those from Frito-Lay is because one has an inherent profit bias while the other doesn't.

Suspicious motivations don't invalidate an argument, of course, so the exact sources, studies, and even the methodologies such should be examined with scrutiny on both sides. This is where textbooks come in, by providing us with specific sources of information in context and in as dry a format as possible. No musical sting or misleading footage can twist words on a page in the same way it can for television.

(Also, my sincerest apologies for missing last week's discussion. It will not happen again.)

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

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Re: PBS, AIM, and verification.

by [Maria Cecilia Contreras Sanchez](#) - Friday, April 20, 2018, 7:17 PM

I agree with you at the point that PBS videos was presenting the unclear information and even more when AIM videos said it clearly. In fact, the video gives us certain parts of PBS videos to show us the PBS version and what AIM giving to us, I like the way that you compare those two sources and even more when you said that one could have benefits while the other does not. Comparing information in different sources are so helpful in order to get an accurate and reliable information.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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Propaganda of AIM video

by [Parker Mann](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 11:12 PM

The most glaring contradiction I discovered was the way Ho Chi Ming and his communist was portrayed in the two series. In the PBS series he is portrayed as a Vietnamese Nationalist Hero, who more with the Chinese Communist's after the USA started supporting the French Colonialism again, and it was portrayed to be because of his desire for freedom and prosperity for his people against colonialism. But in the AIM video he is portrayed as an dirty communist whose only goal was to spread communism in South Asia in collusion with the Chinese and Russians. The AIM series viciously attacks claims made by PBS, in a way that immediately seems like a cover up from the government or something of similar nature. Compared to the PBS series it just seemed like propaganda and not a historical informative video.

The aim of the video seems to be to put Ho in the wrong as an evil communist who used violent force to clear the path of all non-communists in the region. This sort of

anti-communist propagandal tone discredits the video completely to me especially with hypocritical statements similar to the one made at (6:45, Television's Vietnam, The Real Story). At this point in the video a 'Professor' claims that all communist rule leads to "Great Human Tragedy", and that Ho is strictly responsible for it. I feel based on all sides of information that has been presented to us in both books, and all videos that Colonialism actually leads to "Great Human Tragedy" more than the "Communist" force used by Ho. In all the resources except the AIM movie, it is stated or inferred that much of the country had loyalty and respect to Ho, not the communist party, and that the whole time the bloodshed and fighting in Vietnam was all for the Vietnamese gaining their freedom back, not for spreading communist morals and principles as suggested in the AIM video.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Aim of AIM

by [Kate Adkisson](#) - Saturday, April 21, 2018, 9:25 PM

Parker,

I also felt that the AIM video seemed biased, especially being narrated by a smug Charles Heston. Researching further into Accuracy in Media, I found that it is a conservative leaning non-profit organization that was started by a man named Reed Irvine, who many in this forum have mistaken for a historian. Reed Irvine was an economist who started Accuracy in Media to expose and challenge the "liberal" narrative in news. Certainly this could (and I believe it did) produce bias in their program Television's Vietnam.

Your point of "colonialism actually leads to 'The Great Human Tragedy'" rather than communism is a true and powerful statement. I believe Ho's mission, and the mission of the Vietnamese people, was liberation from the evils of colonialism, and their fight was justified, where as the United States involvement was over conflicts the American people had no interest in. The true plans of our government always seem to be hidden away from us, only to be shown later in time to us to read about in history books. From the readings and the videos, the reasons the U.S got into and stayed in the war were to flex our muscles, to secure interests (such as foreign and economic), and to not back down, because backing down would mean we lost, and Americans don't lose, we win. Losing to communism, aka The Soviet Union and China, would be disastrous, and would somehow lead to the demise of us all.

lead to the demise of us all.

You said, "The aim of the video seems to be to put Ho in the wrong as an evil communist who used violent force to clear the path of all non-communists in the region."

I would also conclude that the aim (ha, AIM) of the AIM video was to discredit Ho Chi Minh and paint communism as an evil that must be avoided at all costs, in an attempt to persuade viewers that the U.S needed and absolutely had to intervene, because if they didn't the evil communist powers would destroy freedom. In the Herring book, Herring describes how in 1947, France launched a campaign to win support for their war efforts in Vietnam. On page 17, Herring writes, "France launched a systematic campaign to wean the United States from its neutrality. Failing to win a quick military victory, French leaders formulated a parallel political strategy to rally non Communist Vietnamese behind an ostensibly independent national government. By changing an anti colonial conflict into a war against communism, leaders sought to win greater support at home" (Herring, Chapter 1. P. 17). Could the U.S have used this strategy as well?

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

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Re: Aim of AIM

by [Parker Mann](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 8:10 PM

Thank you for your response Kate!

Also thank you for your research into Accuracy in Media, and the funding of the AIM film. What you found on Reed Irvine and his conservative is very interesting, and explains much of what I suspected based on the overall message of the AIM video. I also appreciate your pointing out of what our actual motive in Vietnam and the contrasting motive of the Vietnamese and their mission for liberty.

I also really liked what you brought up in your final paragraph about United States 'shift' from fighting anti-colonialism to fighting communism. The contrast with the French's plan is interesting and I am not sure if the USA could of used the same approach of the French and their swaying of opinion at home because at home in the US people were already against the war in record amounts, and that is why a lot of the stuff that went on and motives were concealed from the public, and covered up in videos such as AIM's.

Sum of ratings:0 (1)

0

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Promises and Deliveries

by [Jacob Fagan](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 11:14 PM

The most contradicting or unsettling information from this video is that the production company at PBS had to make promises and deliveries to the head company on what it would deliver to the American people. One of those being that the video would put the rest of the anxiety or “The series will contribute to healing and to national esteem in the post-war era” (Television’s Vietnam: The Real Story).

Stephen Morris of UC Berkeley says the main idea from the PBS series was that the communists weren’t actually communists but nationalists and that it was a myth. He argues that Ho Chi Minh was actually a communist and that he imposed a national threat to the world due to “his commitment to the communist community.” He also said Minh threatened the free world of his part of the world. Basically, the main issue with the PBS show was that they portrayed Minh as a nationalist and not a communist which showed PBS’s ignorance.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Re: Promises and Deliveries

by [Jonathan Haskell](#) - Friday, April 20, 2018, 3:30 PM

“Basically, the main issue with the PBS show was that they portrayed Minh as a nationalist and not a communist which showed PBS’s ignorance.”

Is omission a lie? I do not think PBS was ignorant in their action. I think they fully understood what they were doing. I think it was masked propaganda fueled with the ultimate action movie backdrop. Which leads into your beginning of,

“The most contradicting or unsettling information from this video is that he production company at PBS had to make promises and deliveries to the head company on what it would deliver to the American people. One of those being that the video would put the rest of the anxiety or “The series will contribute to healing and to national esteem in the post-war era” (Television’s Vietnam: The Real Story).”

That is exactly what I am talking about. I believe this. It is the public broadcasting station, the one channel everyone from the rich of the rich to the poor of the poor receive on their television set. You have the ability to reach everyone at once. I think they told the story they wanted to tell. The demonstrations against the show, and the show changing it for public opinion proves the story they wanted to tell

and the show is changing it for people's opinion proves the story they wanted to tell didn't paint the truth.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1) [Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Promises and Deliveries

by [Nicholas Walker](#) - Friday, April 20, 2018, 8:16 PM

I don't think it's impossible that PBS was just lazy in its research, but I think you're right about them. I've seen several programs from PBS that have distorted historical facts to suit their bias. They have always been a left-leaning network, and I think that has a domino effect on their portrayal of Communism and Marxism in General, both in this documentary and in some of their other programs that I've seen. PBS's best quality, as far as documentary-making goes, is presenting a slickly edited and easily digestible piece. Those are admirable talents, but as we all know, great production values can often mask misinformation.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1) [Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Promises and Deliveries

by [Jacob Fagan](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 8:26 PM

I think omission is an unfair way to tell a story, especially if it's clear the producers of the show thought in nationalistic ways (not in the most literal terms) and think they were more ignorant than anything else. And yes, the promises were ridiculous and reminded me of the recent news of Sinclair making their local news channels read off a script that contradicted their promises of fair news. Even if indirect, the PBS show and its process was a form of propaganda in my eyes and shows the lack of world awareness and ignorance. On the side, Television's Vietnam: The Real Story had strong evidence and knew America didn't do many correct things during those days.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1) [Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Promises and Deliveries

by [Parker Mann](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 8:58 PM

Jonathan,

I think you may be mistaken about which video was ignorant and filled with propaganda. Your first quote you mention from the AIM movie about PBS' promises does not carry that much weight with, especially with the aggressive tone used by AIM in expressing it. If you looked at littler harder at the views expressed in both texts about Ho Chi Ming, and Communism, and Loyalties, and how they match up with both movies, I think you would find that AIM is the video that ignorantly tries to trick the public through reaching the public in mass. Review first hand reports and consider there side before fully believing what 'Historians' have to say on a TV program that is clearly trying to attack a competing program. Katie I believe posted a response to my Initial post, in which she reports on her findings about who financed the AIM video, and their political agenda. Perhaps it will change you views about who is covering up what.

Sum of ratings: 0 (1)

0

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National Communism

by [Kate Adkisson](#) - Friday, April 20, 2018, 9:08 PM

I agree with the assessment that the AIM video's main problem with the PBS series had to do primarily with Ho Chi Minh and communism. Watching through Television's Vietnam a couple of times, the main issues presented in the film are the threats of communism to Indochina, the misrepresentation of Ho Chi Minh, and the misrepresentation of South Vietnam and Diem. I disagree with your statement that the "main" problem with the PBS show was Ho Chi Minh being painted as a nationalist and not a communist To understand Ho's ideologies, you have to understand his wants, what he's actually fighting for. From what we have read and watched so far, I think we can all agree that Ho Chi Minh and many other Vietnamese civilians wanted freedom, and a say in what happened to them. They wanted freedom from foreign invasion, exploitation, and intrusion not only in their daily lives but in their politics as well. Ho Chi Minh, according to the PBS series, became a founding member of the French Communist Party of 1920 (PBS Episode 1, 14:55). During that time, he was concerned with the liberation of Vietnam from French colonialism. Political independence for one's own country is a nationalistic idea. In the PBS documentary, an official from the state department Abbot Low Moffat explains, "We knew (Ho) was a communist, but we also felt, as they did... that he was first a nationalist, and second a communist, that is, he was interested in getting the independence of his people, then he thought probably the best thing for them was a communist type of government. But he was a nationalist first and foremost" (PBS Episode 1 21:10)

re: Ho's nationalism, 2:11:10.

Stephen Morris' argument concerning the myth of Ho's communism I believe is flawed and rigid, as I believe one can be a nationalist and a communist, as noted by Mr. Moffat. Ho was first a nationalist because that was the way to attain political communism. In order for his people to even consider what kind country they wanted to live in, they must first take back control of their country and government from the French. That requires patriotism in one's own nation, which is a nationalistic idea, and of course the advocacy of independent politics free from outside influence, which is also a nationalistic idea. A nationalist revolutionary first, with communistic ideology. Communist ideology, such as Marxism or Leninism, promote socialist societies in which the government returns the value of labor to the workers in the form of services. But you cannot promote a communist society unless you are independent, thus Ho's nationalism. Evidence of this point is found in Herring's book, when Herring writes, "He and other Communists who constituted the Viet Minh leadership skillfully tapped the deep reservoir of Vietnamese nationalism, muting their commitment to social revolution and adopting a broad platform stressing independence and "democratic" reforms. Displaying an organization and discipline far superior to competing nationalist groups, many of which spent as much time fighting each other as fighting the French, the Viet Minh gradually established itself as a preeminent voice of Vietnamese nationalism" (Herring, p.7).

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Re: National Communism

by [Jacob Fagan](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 9:32 PM

It's disappointing to see such a popular brand like PBS struggle to make an informative documentary about one of the most polarizing eras in American history. And good point about Morris' argument being flawed; I didn't think about the way a country needs to use patriotism to fight for the rights they want, which is a part of nationalism, but Morris' quote is damning, "If we recognize the fact that he primarily a communist we understand why his victory constituted a great setback for the cause of human rights in his own part of the world, because as a communist he felt it necessary to use massive violence against non-communists that might potentially threaten his power" (Morris, AIM). I agree he was both communist and nationalistic, but one of those were ignored by the U.S. until it was in their best interest to stop ignoring it. AIM also ignored the fact that Minh had obvious Soviet and communist ties, which is damning on their part.

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Sum of ratings: 2 (1) 2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) |[Reply](#)**Re: Promises and Deliveries**by [Emilee Russell](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 6:45 PM

As AIM chairman Reed Irvine phrased it, PBS did not use the "20/20 hindsight of history" to their advantage. When different AIM historians described these inaccuracies, they seemed perplexed because the evidence and reliable sources were readily available, but it seemed like perhaps PBS just didn't do quite enough digging in some areas of research. Whether these oversights and inaccuracies were intentional or just a result of not enough research into reliable and accurate sources, it is clear that PBS falls short of their goal to "contribute and supply information for the historical record" (AIM historian Pike).

Sum of ratings: 2 (1) 2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**My opinion of Determining the Truth**by [Haonan Bai](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 11:21 PM

The reason why we learn the history is that we want to know what happened in the past. But what if we learn the wrong history, it will lead us to misunderstanding history. So, the AIM contends that the 1983 Vietnam PBS series contained "serious mistakes and distortions" denigrating the role of American soldiers and underestimating the communist nature of their opponents. There was a series about the Vietnam war on PBS, and AIM looked at it and spotted a lot of errors and bias in it. Also, PBS did not perform what they promised. In order to know very well on the history, we should research more information about what happened at that time and compare each other. Also, we should rely on our own understanding of history and analysis of the situation at that time. We can combine all opinions on PBS and AIM even though from the book to find out the exact information and restore the truth of history.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1) 2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**The Understanding that Public Broadcasting isn't Free**by [Jonathan Haskell](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 11:33 PM

There is always going to be two different sides to every story. Usually more than two. I enjoyed the PBS documentary. I have watched it in full since you gave it to us so early and re watch episodes as the assignments dictate, but I understand that despite its format it is a television show. It needs funding. In the A.I.M. series

“Televised Vietnam-The Real Story” Douglas Pike at around the 3 minute mark or so tells us that fact. That the PBS documentary had to follow certain guidelines to get the funding from the National endowment for the Humanities.

Watching the PBS documentary I did get the sense that they were making the argument that knowing what we know now, that America was the enemy. That we and the South Vietnam were “the badguys” like Charlton Heston said (at about the 16:57 mark). Since I mentioned Heston I will say that using him as the spokesman for this video just made the wedge deeper for me in regard to the “left” side of PBS telling their side of the story and the “right” and A.I.M. telling their side of the story.

The point though is to find the true story for the historical record in between the side choosing. There are parts where PBS obviously didn’t do history any favors. One of course as I mentioned having their accurate record of events be up for debate due to funding. Another is the whole looking at Ho Chi Minh as some sort of God’s gift to his people. I believe William Stearman when he begins explaining Ho Chi through the eyes of how Ho Chi Minh really saw himself at the 15:20 mark around there. Not as a Nationalist but as a Communist leader of an international communist movement. The weird looking guy Dolf Droge reminds us at nine minutes in the film that Ho Chi Minh started out as a French Communist then went to the Soviet Union and became a Soviet citizen and then went to China, and he tells us that story about how Ho Chi sold the other guy to the Chinese for gold and used the gold to pay for a demonstration for the guy he just sold to the Chinese. Ho Chi Minh was not some sort of savior for the Vietnamese people or a nationalist like PBS tries to shove down your throat. That said from what I understand that after Ho Chi Minh was victorious and yes after he murdered everyone who stood up to him that Vietnam entered a peace and prosperity that it had never had before after years and years of being conquered and war.

I think what was really telling about it all was the demonstrations in Paris, London New Orleans, Houston and D.C. against the PBS Vietnam a Television History special by Vietnamese people, and the changing of the Rebroadcast to give the nationalist movements more credit and not just all the credit to Ho Chi Minh. Both those together proves guilt in misleading even if it was done unintentionally which I doubt. I think the need for funding was the major reasoning. As well as the simple reason stated at the 23:20 mark. All stories need a hero and a villain. If the U.S. and Diem were the heels there is only one choice for the face or good guy. Ho Chi Minh.

Sum of ratings:3 (1) 3

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Source Credibility**by [Andrea Kuipers](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 11:47 PM

One thing I found to be contradicting between the two videos was when Douglas Pike stated how the PBS producers had to submit a proposal stating their goals of what they were going to accomplish in the series. One of the “promises” he says they made was that “The series will supply information for the historical record,” (Television’s Vietnam: The Real Story, 2:58) and then goes on to say that the images used were an episodic mix of inaccurate photos, famous historical photos, and accurate photos that create a kaleidoscope of images that give the wrong view to the viewers. In Episode 3 of the PBS series, they play footage from a helicopter of them shooting and blowing up a rice paddy, as well as the communication between the helicopter pilots and passengers (Episode 3, 4:14). To see which video is more historically correct, one of the best ways to find out would be to check their sources. It also wouldn’t hurt to branch out and find sources of your own from reliable sources to compare the information. The textbooks are a good tool for being confident you are learning the correct information because the sources are literally people who were actively involved in the Vietnam War. It gave perspectives of everyone who was involved, and it showed their beliefs on what they believed to be fighting for and their experiences they encountered.

Sum of ratings:3 (1) 3

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Credibility**by [Houston Schmutz](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 8:17 PM

I agree with their inconsistency of reliable credibility. The helicopter video from episode three seems to be authentic and is followed up with a video of Johnson giving a formal announcement. At the end of the day I trust the textbooks the most. The textbooks work to give information, rather than opinion. The problem with learning about the war is when different view points or feelings get in the mix. For example as some people believed with what LBJ was saying, others saw right through him. The conflict of interest can trick our mind, but factual evidence from the book about the cause and effect of what went down and why is most beneficial to our comprehension of the war. When we learn about it we can have our own feelings about it, but when we learn about it through someone else’s feelings is when

we need to question biased credibility as well.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

2

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Re: Credibility

by [Andrea Kuipers](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 11:49 PM

The shows also more than likely had to go through a bunch of editing to make the cut for the criteria. Details often get distorted, jumbled, or cut when being edited, so for the videos there is a great possibility that some facts are wrong or missing. I agree with you though, I think the books are a more reliable source for providing real information. They go through editing too, but the texts included interviews and stories that were told by those in and affected by the war. There is always going to be bias in these texts, videos, and statements because we didn't actually experienced what each and every person experienced, and we also each have our own opinion and viewpoints that give us our impressions.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

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what is the true information about Ho Chi Minh

by [Haonan Bai](#) - Saturday, April 21, 2018, 11:57 PM

AIM raises controversy over PBS's views on the Vietnam War and video. PBS is putting on an extremely one-sided view. The series makes Ho Chi Minh into a nationalist rather than a Communist; it ignores the role of the South Vietnamese Army; it minimizes the brutal treatment of American prisoners of war; it slights the actual conduct of military operations.

The most controversial part of the film is the description of Ho Chi Minh. According to the video, Dolf Droge said that Ho Chi Minh faithful for rest of life and he became the French communist. He was founding the earliest French communist in 1920. Then he went to Moscow to study and became a Soviet citizen. After that, he went to China to study the revolution and became a member of the International Communist Organization. At the same time, he sent some Vietnamese to study the revolution in China (AIM Dolf Droge 8:35). Droge also said that PBS made the statement which is Ho Chi Minh took his power in 1945 as the patriotism. That was totally wrong because Ho only took the name Ho Chi Minh in 1941 in Chinese prison (AIM Dolf Droge 10:25). He got out at 1944 and contact the OSS in United State for helping organize north Vietnam fighting the Japanese. That's the first time he went to Vietnam and said that he is Ho Chi Minh. He will resistant Japanese and French (AIM Dolf Droge 11:10).

In the previous studies, we knew that Ho Chi Minh led the Vietnamese government against French colonization for the Vietnamese freedom which reflected his patriotism and communism. But we didn't know if it all true about him or not.

The historical events described in the book are more detailed than those described in the video. Combine data from various sources and the understanding of historical conditions to determine whether it is reliable and truthful. Check more information and learn more to ensure that the history you are learning is true

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

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**Re: what is the true information about Ho Chi Minh**

by [Parker Mann](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 3:45 PM

"IM raises controversy over PBS's views on the Vietnam War and video. PBS is putting on an extremely one-sided view. The series makes Ho Chi Minh into a nationalist rather than a Communist; it ignores the role of the South Vietnamese Army; it minimizes the brutal treatment of American prisoners of war; it slights the actual conduct of military operations."

Haonan, I agree that PBS does make Ho make look like a nationalist more than a Nationalist, but it is for good reason. In the texts, it is stated that he established a more direct communist tie after the US switched on him, and took the only support he had left from a world power. It is also stated that he would of given up any label or ideology as a communist just for the independence of his people which was his ultimate goal. The role of the South Vietnamese Army was to protect his country to imperialism and invasion, not just for power flexing of being communist. So even though Ho is undeniably communist, he put his country and Nationalism first. Even though AIM aims to add fear to the thought of communism, it has to be remembered that not all communists are 'evil'. In the Herring book Ho is even quoted as saying that ' Yes I am communist, but that doesn't mean we cant all still be friends".

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

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**Re: what is the true information about Ho Chi Minh**

by [Haonan Bai](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 9:08 PM

Thank you very much for your advice.

In my opinion, Ho Chi Minh is a communist as a patriotism.

He demanded that the French government recognize the freedom, democracy, equality, and self-determination of the Vietnamese nation. But French ignored it. So, Ho Chi Minh realized that in order to win the real independence and freedom, the oppressed nations must rely on their own strength and must emancipate themselves. So, he returned to Vietnam and organized the Vietnamese to fight against French colonization. This reflects his patriotism for the independence and freedom of Vietnam. After winning, he created the Democratic Republic of Vietnam as a communist.

But anyway, he is both a patriotism and a communist, fighting for the independence and freedom of his country.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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Re: what is the true information about Ho Chi Minh

by [Jacob Fagan](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 9:39 PM

There were so many things brought to light in AIM's film about PBS's short falls, but the description of Minh was definitely up there in the top three. Minh was in charge of finding communists and bringing them together in Soviet Russia, but PBS never mentioned that or the grant he received to go there after being a French communist. Even though communists and nationalists are nearly just as bad (not a comparison I want to go into), but portraying Minh as a nationalist made it seem like the U.S. was still plotting against communists instead of partnering with them.

Sum of ratings: 0 (1)

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PBS portrays S. Vietnam and US as villian due to elections not being held.

by [Paul Geu](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 12:53 PM

Another aspect of the AIM video that was in contradiction with the PBS video was the assertion by the AIM video saying that PBS was portraying Ho Chi Minh as the hero, while South Vietnam and the United States as the villain. Historian Bruce Loeb states that in the PBS documentary they mention that the United states and Diem reneged on holding the elections promised by the Geneva Conference 11 times and therefore paints the fact that Diem was not the legitimate leader of the Vietnam people (AIM historian "Loeb"). Loeb further mentions that the PBS documentary omits a speech by President Eisenhower on July 21, 1954, a two years before the elections were to take place, stating that the United States is not bound by the accords, and that the United States is opposed to the elections unless witnessed by the United Nations (AIM historian "Loeb").

These statements contradict the PBS documentary for couple of reasons. First, in episode 2 the PBS documentary does in fact mention that the US would not stop the elections even though they opposed the Geneva Accords (16:09 minutes in PBS episode 2). The PBS documentary states that it was Diem, who had condemned the accords, resisted the elections and after careful consideration Secretary Dulles supported the decision (PBS episode 2). It is implied that Diem did this because there was a good chance that he would lose power due to the popularity of Minh, who controlled much of the countryside politically (PBS episodes 2). In the Herring book, the Accords did have an International commission to witness the free elections with representatives of Canada, Poland, and India being the members of the commission (Herring, pg 48). These points show that even though the United States was not bound by the accords since they did not sign it, the United States did say they would honor it. However when Diem decided to not hold the elections they supported his decision.

I do not feel that the PBS documentary portrays Diem or the United States as the villain in this story but the AIM video stated that in every legend there is a villain and a hero, by showing that Diem, with United States support, did not hold the elections implies that they are the villain. The history of the Vietnam War is much to complex to be this black and white.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Perceptions of Diem

by [Kate Adkisson](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 3:40 PM

If one was to only watch the second episode of the PBS series, their opinion on Diem would be in my opinion, somewhat informed on the situation but not entirely. Of course, the PBS series was a television series and couldn't include every detail, and had to keep the attention of the viewer. The series does this by keeping all the backup information of Diem tucked away in order to express the important points that help further understanding of events at the time. In the series, Diem is painted as nationalist thrust into power who was highly suspicious of the men surrounding him. "Diem was appointed by Bao Dai, the playboy emperor picked by the French. He had few allies in South Vietnam" (PBS Episode 2, 6:15). Based on that statement alone, one would concur that Diem was a puppet and not a true leader.

The AIM documentary takes issue with the portrayal of Diem and the South Vietnamese. Charles Heston says, "The PBS series shows the South Vietnamese as the bad guys...it tells us Diem was an american puppet. which he certainly was

not. The way in which the series introduces Prime Minister Diem undermines his authenticity as a national leader. Later in this episode, Diem is described as a little known nationalist. Little known to who?" (Television's Vietnam, 16:55).

Which side is being more truthful? Reading through "America's Longest War", I found evidence to support AIM's claims that Diem was well known. "Diem's fervent nationalism and administrative experience made him an obvious choice for the premiership of an independent Vietnam. He brought to the office personal traits that would prove both assets and liabilities in governing and would in time provoke conflict with his patron, The United States. Among his most noteworthy qualities was a determination to persist in the face of severe challenge and even threats to his person" (Herring, p.59-60). This passage supports the idea that Diem was experienced and deserved the role, and did not consider himself a U.S puppet, whether or not the U.S did or not. In the end, Diem is assassinated in a coup, showing that puppet or not, his leadership was not good enough to the people of South Vietnam.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Who else could be the leader of South Vietnam?

by [Paul Geu](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 11:38 PM

When Diem was placed at president of South Vietnam he was the most qualified man for the job and he was a fervent nationalist just like the Herring book states. It is not that hard of a stretch to see that he could be a puppet of the United States in the eyes of the Vietnamese people due to him being appointed by the previous French puppet of Bao Dai. I agree that Diem did not consider himself a puppet, especially when he did refused to have US ground forces in his country but would accept military and economical aid. Diem was so difficult to work with that in the end the United States was willing to allow Diem's own generals to take over.

Once Diem was killed in the coup, there was a major power vacuum where there was no one able to do that job that Diem had been doing for so long. Leader after leader fell after several more coups to the point that no one wanted to take over the country. This lack of stability in the south Vietnam government ultimately led to the United States having to send in ground troops in an ever expanding role in the war. I do believe that even if Diem had not been killed, the situation in the South would have still decayed to the point that the United States would still have brought in ground troops.

Sum of ratings:2 (1) 2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**The discrepancies between AIM and PBS**by [Caitlin Strickland](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 7:21 PM

The AIM video presents many contradictions to the PBS documentary, pointing out errors in specific facts as well as overall presentation and ideology. The PBS documentary even inspired protests in the streets in 1982 (AIM video, 11:41). An example of this is the PBS claim that the Vietcong were communist supporters in South Korea, while they were actually a weapon supplied and organized by Hanoi to unify the two Vietnams (PBS Video 2 27:07, AIM video 26:30). Other glaring discrepancies include the role of Catholic immigrants to South Vietnam and the Geneva Accords and elections (PBS video 2, 16:25, 7:15). PBS distorted the image of North Vietnam and its leadership by entirely omitting mass murders committed by communists, including non-communist nationalists, even Marxists, Catholics, and others, killing tens of thousands to millions (AIM video 6:45, 21:20). AIM's biggest issue with PBS is their depiction of Ho Chi Minh and his government. Ho was a founding member of the communist party in France, trained in Moscow, became a Soviet citizen and served as staff of soviet council in China (AIM video 8:45). Not only does PBS not mention this, it tries to show Ho as purely a nationalist, when in fact he sold out, betrayed, and even killed Vietnamese nationalists; he was not a patriot for many years as PBS claims, but one of the last International Communists with primary loyalty to the world Communist movement (AIM video 7:10). The AIM video goes so far as to claim that the PBS films make Ho Chi Minh the "hero" of the story, showing him more positively than Diem or other South Vietnamese leaders who were in reality better known and more widely liked (AIM video, 18:40). The integrity and intention of PBS's documentary are then questioned, as well as its historical accuracy.

Sum of ratings:3 (1) 3

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Strategy for finding the truth as students?**by [Caitlin Strickland](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 7:51 PM

In analyzing historical data, it is always important to evaluate the source, its purpose, its source of information, its particular viewpoint, and read various accounts of the same events to determine which is the most informed, objective, and comprehensive. It's very difficult when two accounts conflict like the PBS and AIM videos do, to know which parts of which videos to accept as fact. This is in some ways aided, and some complicated, by the Patriots book, which shows accounts of real people involved but also widely conflict each other in the viewpoint of which each side believed, was trying to accomplish, etc. The Herring book usually has in-depth and accurate information

to accomplish, etc. The Fleming book usually has in-depth and accurate information about American policy and how it related to the war, which is a way to cross-reference and double check those facts with the ones presented by PBS. I think, overall, it will always be impossible to formulate a perfect truth about anything in the past but by being aware and cautious it is possible to differentiate good sources from misinformed ones.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

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Re: Strategy for finding the truth as students?

by [Jacob Fagan](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 10:35 PM

Do you think it was more about their sources being wrong or about them not caring about what really happened and wanted Americans to feel better? All we can do as viewers is research ourselves to find out the truth and not rely on just documentaries or books, but everything combined. That's what this class is about, as you know, and feel AIM's video did a fantastic job showcasing the importance of truth in world history.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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Conflicting information

by [Kishahn Fellows](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 10:07 PM

I personally deal with conflicting information by first identifying the contested information, then by looking up the opinions of as many other authorities on the subject at hand as i can find, and try to find a general consensus that makes logical sense. The farther removed from a particular project the other authorities are from the original source the better, as it can help reduce personal bias's between authorities, leading to theoretically more accurate results. Textbooks can be incredibly useful tools in this regard, as while they are not always 100% perfect, there is usually much less false or glossed over information within in my experience. As apposed to documentary or film, which often leave out information due to lack of time or a misfit for the narrative being presented.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

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AIM Red Flag

by [Parker Mann](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 11:52 PM

I 100% agree, and that is why the AIM video was a red flag for me. It seemed that almost all, if not all of their sources came from the American point of view and had

almost all, if not all of their sources came from the American point of view and had no Vietnamese opinions or even neutral opinions on the mater. This was a huge sign of bias for me that raised red flags about the legitimacy of the points AIM made. You are also right in that textbooks are a great tool, and that is how I determined the fraud of the AIM video. The AIM video is just too close to the original source of Pro-USA involvement to be even taken seriously.

Sum of ratings:0 (1)

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