

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

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Week 3 Forum Determining the Truth

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Determining the Truth

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

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, something that describes which one of the questions you are addressing. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Determining the Truth

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Who is PBS? Who is Ho Chi Minh

by [Jacob Egan](#) - Monday, April 16, 2018, 6:39 PM

The motivations behind PBS not telling or giving all the facts about the Vietnam war could be endless. There are many reasons why someone would want to give you some facts but hide others. The reason I think they did it is because PBS didn't like the war. I feel that they left out some big facts to persuade our thoughts on the righteousness of the war. For example, I believed Ho to be an honorable nationalist, but now I feel he was a megalomaniac. This is because in 1926 Ho invited his oldest teacher and counselor, Phan Boi Chau, to Shanghai to talk about revolution. Instead, though, Ho betrayed him to the French communist police for gold. He then used the money to finance a communist movement in China, which protested the inhuman arrest of Phan Boi Chau (AIM 10:30). PBS is portraying Ho Chi Minh in a different way than AIM. I believe that they are doing this to make us feel bad for the war.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Re: Who is PBS? Who is Ho Chi Minh

by [Tyler Cannon](#) - Saturday, April 21, 2018, 9:53 PM

Another detail that PBS chooses to fabricate is that when they say that "In the second episode of the PBS series they describe Ho after his rise to power in 1945 as a patriot for a quarter of a century." (AIM, 10:26). This was further explained by Dolf Droge as being incorrect since Ho didn't actually take up that name until 1941 in a Chinese prison until he came out of the prison and was working with the U.S in 1944 against the Japanese. This means that Ho Chi Minh could not have been known as a patriot for half a century since he wasn't actually real until 1941 and not real to the Vietnamese until 1944. Ho Chi Minh was also much more a worldwide communist than a nationalist seeing as he pleaded to Russia and China to work their differences out and come together to continue the spread of communism. This sounds like someone who wants to spread communism across the world and not someone who is just a peaceful nationalist of Vietnam.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Re: Who is PBS? Who is Ho Chi Minh

by [Genevieve Gallagher](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 10:43 PM

I agree with your reason that PBS didn't give us all the facts because they didn't like the war, and one of the most glaring oppositions was how they portrayed Ho Chi Minh in a different way than AIM. In some ways it makes you think are they not teaching us the whole truth in history? Ho Chi Minh was one of the first Vietnamese to speak out for independence. The United states didn't believe a small backwards country could stand against them. It would be like a congressional filibuster,

Johnson once speculated, enormous resistance at first, then a steady whittling way, Ho Chi Minh hurrying to get it over with (Herring 174). Being the leader of Vietnam Ho Chi Minh didn't realize that after July of 1965 the longest war was about to take place. He and Americans did not see eye to eye on the idea of communism. Yet Ho maintained his power, because he had political and his country backing him up. He would do anything to maintain his power and the loyalty of others.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Determining the Truth First Entry**by [Spencer Gutierrez](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 2:01 PM

After viewing the two videos and reading the assigned parts of the book there are multiple points that are contradictory, such as PBS saying that Diem was a little known nationalist when in reality he was a highly known nationalist. Diem was regarded highly by the people of Vietnam due to his strong character and honesty he was more favored than Ho Chi Minh. With these contradictory claims being presented, it forces you to think critically about the situation whether to believe one source or the other or to take away aspects of each. It is important to not let one point of view on the situation to distort your knowledge of the subject. The textbook can also be a great source to double check the claims being made by the documentaries. With firsthand knowledge we can dissect the false information from the more true statements.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Determining the Truth First Entry**by [Danielle Wardrip](#) - Thursday, April 19, 2018, 3:14 PM

Not only did PBS not portray Ho Chi Minh correctly, they also made it seem as if Diem was a monster. They only focused on the bad that he did and only showed the good that Ho did. What I do not understand is why. There are so many contradicting stories out there. Maybe they are all stretching the truth in different ways, maybe they are all lying completely. When we research further and find more examples of one story than any other story, we assume that one is correct, or at least mostly correct. There's really no telling what each man was like without meeting them ourselves, I think. I mean, we could watch/read interviews of people who knew them and get their story, but I am sure that there would be some who loved either man and others who hated him. Every perspective is different. My perspective regarding Ho Chi Minh changed just from watching the AIM video.

Also, any kind of witness has a level of unreliability. Since each person has different ideas and definitions for some words, they take things said/done differently. For instance, if I were to stand up in the middle of a crowd of people and yell, "I am a Nazi!" (I'm not, but that's the first thing that popped into my head, so we'll go with it.) Now, some people would think "what a weirdo" and continue whatever they were doing without a second thought. Others would frown and shake their head. Still others might even confront me or call the police. These are only a few of the thousands of reactions that people might have to the situation. Those that were apathetic to the exclamation would not remember it very well and, if they did, would retell it neutrally. Those that frowned might remember it a little differently. They might say "oh, this crazy chick stood up and started yelling she was a Nazi. I can't believe she would joke about such a thing", or something similar. Those that called the police or confronted me might say "There was a Nazi in the store today. She started yelling and screaming about how we should join her! I told her to shut it and she spit in my face!" Though I would never do such a thing, they remember it differently. Now, you may say that they're just lying and I would be inclined to agree. However, they may not believe that they are lying. Perhaps that is how they remembered it, meaning it's the truth to them.

With so many people involved in the war, I am sure that almost all of them took one of the stances listed above (or one of the many that I did not explain). This means that every single person would have a different story. Some may be more different than others. This is most likely what gives us these contradicting tales. We do not know for sure which story is true and it would be very difficult to find out. I am sure that Ho Chi Minh had both good and bad attributes and tendencies. I am sure that Ngo Dinh Diem did as well.

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

3

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Re: Determining the Truth First Entry

by [Casandra Fountain](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 10:05 AM

I agree with you that the PBS opinion of each leader was very different than how the AIM video described them. Major General Edward Lansdale was sent to Vietnam in 1954 when Ngo Dinh Diem was appointed as Prime Minister. From what he recalled Diem was very well known in Vietnam. The population thought of him as honest, strong character, most felt he was the best well known living nationalist and he was more favorable than compared to Ho Chi Minh (18:10, AIM video). Everett Bumgardner of the US Information Agency described Diem's thoughts of the United States as the nation being a great big child, well intentioned, powerful, with technical know how but we were not sophisticated

enough in dealing with him or his race or country problems (18:10, PBS Pt 2). As you said everyone does remember things differently, it made me think of the telephone game. If you ever have played it, it's quite interesting to see the message changed from beginning to end. Messages change in the moment but especially over time when people are trying to recall information.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Determining the Truth First Entry

by [Jonus Woolley](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 10:09 PM

Although I agree with what you're saying, I still just find it difficult to follow the "real" truth. You stated, "It is important to not let one point of view on the situation to distort your knowledge of the subject." I find that really hard to do as I am reading/watching educational things, only to find out that it might not be entirely true. I think emotion often gets in the way, and that being very opinionated can distort many facts. It is difficult to find a good source of educational information that is 100% completely unbiased.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Madison Zemba](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 10:29 PM

Exactly right- I have never had a class in which we were presented contradictory information from multiple sources. Normally we are assigned to read through the textbook and watch a movie or two. I think as time goes on we will start learning real truths that have been removed or distorted from textbooks. It is scary to think that companies such as PBS have such an impact on what we as a nation know about our history.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Determining the Truth First Entry

by [Genevieve Gallagher](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 10:36 PM

The two videos were opposing. In the PBS series, Diem was a very unpopular ruler and had little support among the South Vietnam people. But reading further into the Herring book, they talk about how Diem treated the military operations. Instead of

broadening his government as the Americans urged, he retreated more and more into isolation (112). With the celebrations of his death in Vietnam, I don't think he was a person who advocates political independence for his country. I believe he belittled Kennedy and the US. It is hard to watch two different videos and decide which information to believe. Using the books to tie in the information into the videos has helped be differ what is the truth.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

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Ho Chi Minh: Nationalist or Communist?

by [Danielle Wardrip](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 3:37 PM

The most glaring contradiction was that of Ho Chi Minh. Throughout the PBS series, Ho Chi Minh was declared to be a Nationalist first and a Communist second. The AIM video states the exact opposite. Stephen Morris says, "If he was primarily a communist, as I've argued, this means that he did constitute a security threat to the United States and the free world" (AIM video, minute mark 7:10). Morris highlights Ho's "commitment to the Internationalist Communist community led by the Soviet Union" (AIM, 7:26). If Ho was such a Nationalist, he would not have supported the international ring as he did. PBS gave the impression that he had no ties whatsoever to the Russians or the Chinese.

William Stearman says that "Ho himself would have been absolutely appalled had he been called a National Communist by any other Communist...he was one of the last of the old International Communists" (AIM video, minute mark 15:41). PBS never discussed his loyalty to the international arena of Communism. Even more convincing was the statement that Ho "firmly believed in the solidarity of the world Communist movement and so said in his last testament, which was published just after his death" (AIM, 16:23, Stearman).

In the PBS series, they never once said that Ho had dealings with the Communists in other parts of the world after he moved back to Vietnam. The video clips shown throughout the AIM video prove this omission of information. "Ho was never called a Soviet puppet. He was never portrayed as an autocrat" (AIM, 17:27, Stearman).

Both videos, however, acknowledged the fact that Ho Chi Minh was a founder of French Communism (PBS Episode 1, minute mark 14:55 & AIM video, minute mark 8:41, Droge). The AIM video takes it a step farther when they show Dolf Droge stating that Ho was an "International Communist organizer" (AIM, 9:10). Meanwhile, PBS shifts to different subjects and does not focus on this important side of Ho. "PBS glossed over this negative side of Ho Chi Minh's career" (AIM, minute mark 10:13, Droge).

Sum of ratings:3 (1) 3

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Ho Chi Minh: Nationalist or Communist?**by [Casandra Fountain](#) - Saturday, April 21, 2018, 4:35 PM

I was on the same thought process as this. Another topic that was contradictory in the PBS series was the communist violence that took place in 1945-46. Stephen Morris describes how the series does not mention the massive communist attack on non communist leaders during a 6-12 month span in 1945. It was believed that close to 10,000 people were killed in the assassinations (20:30, AIM video). Morris makes a jab stating anyone who is concerned about human rights would consider that a major statistical fact. Five years later there was communist unprovoked military attack on Catholics, who consisted of the core refugees of the north, which had cause Catholics to flee from North Vietnam to South Vietnam (22:00, AIM video). These two attacks were prime examples of what PBS left out of the history of Vietnam and the communist violence committed against them.

Sum of ratings:2 (1) 2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**What Are AIM's Biases?**by [Daisy Burge](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 4:29 PM

History is often presented as a singular narrative for the sake of clarity rather than presented in its more complex reality as a series of nebulous pieces of evidence and opinions. The goal of historiography (the study of historical writings) is to critically examine the biases behind each historical narrative we are presented with in order to come closer to a more truthful version of events. Each source has economic, political, social, and personal moral obligations to fulfill in their examination of any given set of events, and Accuracy In Media is no different.

Accuracy In Media, the watchdog group that is the producer of "Television's Vietnam: The Real Story" (1984), was founded in 1969 by economist Reed Irvine and is described by most as a staunch anti-Communist and politically conservative group. Millionaires and billionaire capitalists associated with the oil and drilling industry are some of the primary funders of this self-described "grassroots" organization. This information into AIM's background can inform us as to their economic and political obligations in their analysis.

AIM's main criticisms are that the PBS documentary series is overly sympathetic towards the Northern Vietnamese and that the series portrays them primarily as nationalists rather than Communists, which, according to Irvine, is false. Herring informs us at this juncture with the reminder of Ho Chi Minh's initial declaration of independence is rooted in Jeffersonian ideology of self-determination and democracy (Herring 3).

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Re: What Are AIM's Biases? Pt. 2

by [Daisy Burge](#) - Wednesday, April 18, 2018, 5:05 PM

Herring further serves to directly contradict the assertions of AIM in a passage in the first chapter, in which he asserts that "U.S. diplomats in Vietnam correctly reported that they could find no evidence of direct ties between the USSR and the Viet Minh and stressed that [...] Ho had established himself as the 'symbol of nationalism and struggle for freedom to the overwhelming majority of the population.'" (Herring 15).

The key word here is correctly. Herring's analysis based on his study of the Vietnam War is that the United States diplomats in Vietnam were correct in identifying Ho primarily as a nationalist, which serves as a direct contradiction to the assertions made by AIM. Herring goes on to assert that the only reason other government bodies like the State Department considered Ho a "Moscow-directed" threat was that the Cold War had left "little room for nuance." (Herring 15). In other words, Herring asserts that the State Department through the late 1940s and 1950s was subject to great political bias and radical anti-Communist, just as many perceive AIM to be.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Truth or Dare to examine what Truth is

by [Jonathon Gray](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 5:52 PM

How should we deal academically with conflicting information, as has been presented in the PBS videos and AIM response video? Conflicting information should be examined on the merit of bias and examining the logic in which it comes from.

Television's Vietnam is produced by Accuracy in media (AIM) cited as being "extreme right bias" by [mediabiasfactcheck.com](#), an independent online media outlet with the

right bias" by mediabiasfactcheck.com, an independent online media outlet with the purpose of determining bias. On top of that Reed Irvine, the creator and (at the time) head of AIM, is a noted conservative and enthusiastically in favor of right wing conspiracies. Other gems from the AIM library include investigations into [Hillary Clinton murdering people](#) and climate change denial (it's largest contributors include several oil companies) Finally, in order for PBS to air the production it required multiple sections of deliberate distortions to be deleted. All of this paints a real picture of an untrustworthy bias. Vietnam: A Television History (Our primary source for this class) was produced for the Public Broadcast System. Programs airing on mediabiasfactcheck.com generally receive "left-center bias" by mediabiasfactcheck.com (unfortunately they do not have a rating for the channel itself).

That being said, 'Televisions Vietnam' does demonstrate flaws in the logic, and presented information in Vietnam: A Television History. For example, it delves into Ngo Dinh Diem being labelled unknown and discusses the call for his legitimate claim to leadership in Vietnam (18:13 into part 1, Television's Vietnam). On top of that they point out the lack of assassinations and other atrocities that are fairly established (20:48 into part 1, Television's Vietnam). Vietnam: A Television History tends to focus on personal experiences, while 'Televisions Vietnam' tends to focus on historians.

Watching and rewatching you can see the tones that each one wishes to convey. One positive of Ho Chi Minh and Northern Vietnam, one negative of Ho Chi Minh and Northern Vietnam. Deconflicting opposing information should be attacked with bias in mind. Each media source is trying to clearly identify a narrative. Does that narrative fit with the other narrative? How does each statement hold up to additional peer review? Is it an appeal to emotion over research like personal stories tend to do? Is it a distortion of logic like bias research tends to do? These are questions that need to be answered with each new information provided

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Madison Zemba](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 10:24 PM

The point you made about biases is very important. If we can determine biases and analyze them, we should be able to determine something closer to the truth than what we are initially presented with.

While learning about any aspect of history, in high school specifically, I found that the bias of teachers really affects how the subject is being taught. Even subconsciously a lot of teachers project their beliefs onto students.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**AIM takes aim at PBS documentary**by [Genevieve Gallagher](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 7:22 PM

The most glaring contradiction I discovered was the way Ho Chi Minh was portrayed. PBS presented Ho Chi Minh in a positive light. In the series he was a hero and a nationalist whose goal was to gain independence for Vietnam. In the AIM video, Ho Chi Minh is shown to be a global communist with strong ties to the Soviet Union. AIM was critical of the perceived way PBS framed the war as a showdown between the “white hats” (Ho Chi Minh and North Vietnam) and the “black hats” (United States and South Vietnam). AIM said every documentary needs a good guy and a bad guy and it was obvious that PBS was biased against the United States and South Vietnam. In addition, the two documentaries were at odds over the depiction of the Diem government. In the PBS series, Diem was a very unpopular ruler and had little support among the South Vietnam people. The death of Diem was celebrated in South Vietnam. In Saigon, jubilant crowds smashed statues of Diem, danced in the streets, and covered ARVN soldiers with garlands and flowers (Herring pg.130) AIM’s video took the opposite approach, stating that Diem was a strong leader who opposed communism and was an ally of the United States.

As a student there will always be conflicting historical information regarding wars. It is our responsibility to do the research using reputable sources. It's important to not let our own personal beliefs and biases influence our conclusions.

The two textbooks offer additional information about the Vietnam War. The books are a reference to reinforce what I’ve learned in the videos. They allow me to better assess the accuracy of the information provided in the videos. I am confident that by using multiple sources, I am learning accurate historical knowledge.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: AIM takes aim at PBS documentary**by [Alysia Knapp](#) - Friday, April 20, 2018, 9:25 PM

It definitely is essential to try to remain and unbiased as possible when learning history. However it can be challenging as a student when the sources might be biased. I didn't think that the PBS documentary might be biased or have an agenda until I watched the AIM video. But now I am questioning whether AIM had a specific

message they wanted to tell rather than just pure history. As a student of history I have to question whether they made that video bashing PBS just to be controversial or to actually share the truth. So far in this class we are reading two books and have watched several videos. A variety of sources is a good way to learn several perspectives about this complicated subject.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: AIM takes aim at PBS documentary**by [Jonus Woolley](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 10:02 PM

I feel the same way. It is quite confusing reading/watching several different sources of information, and not have them all saying the same things. I found it difficult to follow along with what was fact or false. I also agree with your statement, "I have to question whether they made that video bashing PBS just to be controversial or to actually share the truth." I too also have issues with still distinguishing the actual truth, and can't help but feel extremely skeptical about all sources of information we have been given. I think the best thing to do here in this situation is read out of both textbooks and watch all videos we are given and find which facts intertwine between the different sources of material to decipher fact from false.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**PBS Contradictions**by [Jonus Woolley](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 7:28 PM

I feel that the "PBS series" was very "Americanised." It felt one sided and completely biased towards America being the hero who storms in and stomps out communism. "The real story" video clip felt more factual and more true to what may have really happened. One of the biggest contradictions I saw where all of the "Assassinations" which took place that were not mentioned in the "PBS series," probably because it would have made America and the Vietnam war look bloody and brutal. Along with the associations was the attack on the catholic Vietnamese who fled to the south. Now the PBS series says it was because of a religious enlightening but in reality it was because of an unprovoked attack by North Vietnam. I think the text book could help a lot with finding the real truth because we can decipher fact from exaggeration of lies in text a lot easier then by word but also because when facts show up multiple times we can infer that it is truly fact.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

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Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

**Re: PBS Contradictions**by [Danielle Wardrip](#) - Thursday, April 19, 2018, 3:35 PM

"...it would have made America and the Vietnam war look bloody and brutal."

This is a very good point. As Americans, we like to think that we can do no wrong. (I'm generalizing, of course.) I do, however, think that the PBS production makes America's role in the war very confusing. They focus on Diem's shortcomings and try to play on Ho Chi Minh's good points. This portrays to viewers that America made a huge mistake backing Diem and should have just made allies with Ho Chi Minh. Then, in the next episode, they show how they fought against Ho and didn't want him to win, no matter what. PBS probably did this to satisfy both extremes of viewers; those who hate the Vietnam War, and those who are proud of our involvement. They are most likely trying to justify the pointless (due to our utter loss) deaths by showing how much we HAD to fight against Communism and to criticize America's leaders for getting involved by showing how horrible we were to the Vietnamese.

As I've said before, it's all a matter of perspective. Those that were fighting and losing their lives may or may not have thought it pointless. Those making the decisions to send those soldiers out there may or may not have thought it dastardly. The only way to know is to hear it from the people themselves. That's why I believe we need to take Appy's stories to heart. Though they may not coincide (which also points to the formerly-made suggestion regarding points of view), the stories shed light on the claims made in the videos we watch and those made by Mr. Herring.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

2

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**Re: PBS Contradictions**by [Jacob Egan](#) - Friday, April 20, 2018, 4:09 PM

After reading a few posts from this forum I have come to the conclusion that PBS is just trying to make its viewers happy. This may be an incorrect conclusion but after reading the sentence in Daneille's post, "PBS probably did this to satisfy both extremes of viewers; those who hate the Vietnam War, and those who are proud of our involvement" I am confident. PBS has been throwing out information left and right that isn't fully credible and it seems each time it leans for the opposing side (for or against the war). But in the end, it comes down to the facts. An individual has to be careful what they decide to believe and what not to believe. For all we know PBS could be telling us the 100 percent truth and AIM is

setting us astray. If you read or hear something that doesn't seem like it may be fully true, look it up somewhere else. Luckily for us we've been given (so far) four different ones.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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You Can't Handle the Truth

by [Tyler Cannon](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 9:35 PM

Let me just start off by saying WOW! I am so glad that we were exposed to the AIM video because it really helped me open my eyes to the fact that perhaps PBS is wrong. I think the biggest contradictory to me was the validation for Ho Chi Minh to return to war because PBS makes it look like the American's and South Vietnamese went back on our agreement and gave him the backdoor. As stated in the AIM video by Dr. Bruce Loeb's "The PBS series leaves out the fact that our ambassador to Geneva states that the United States is not bound by the Geneva Accord and that in Article 7 the United States opposes elections unless they are monitored by the United Nations and can be free." (Aim, 25:05). He then also goes on to say that the President at the time, President Eisenhower, in a press conference says "the U.S is not a party to or bound to the agreements made at Geneva. PBS really is not doing its service to educate or add to the historical records as it initially promised to do. Leaving these facts out really makes America and the South Vietnamese really seem like villains while Ho Chi Minh and the northern communist are perceived as the good guys and heroes. This gave justification and a rational reasoning to Ho Chi Minh and the reason that he wanted to "unite his country" when no such credit should be given. That was another top contender for things misinterpreted by PBS which was the character of Ho Chi Minh. They portray him in the PBS series as a beloved political figure and "nationalist" when in fact he was just a very devoted Communist. He even makes a plea to the Soviet Union and China to put aside their differences and come back together to push the international communist movement in his last testament in 1969. (Aim, 16:33). Why portray this man to be something that he is not? Why make him the hero and America the villain in a time where people were having a very hard time coping with the effects of the war? America was afraid to show that Ho Chi Minh was a danger to national security and we failed to do anything about it.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Re: You Can't Handle the Truth

by [Jonathen Gray](#) - Thursday, April 19, 2018, 12:15 PM

It's interesting that Dr. Loeb stresses how America was not a party to supporting the

It's interesting that in 1954, Eisenhower's administration was not a party to supporting the elections. "On July 21st, 1954 president Eisenhower in a press conference explicitly stated that the United States was not a party to and is not bound by the decisions taken in the Geneva conference" (18:13 into part 1, Television's Vietnam). The interesting bit comes in the form of how that should matter. Diem and the United States wanted to paint the narrative that under no circumstances free elections could be held in the North. However, the rest of the International Control Commission believed free elections could be held. Is this a justified fear or did they believe they would lose and imagined a fake crisis. While Bedell Smith wanted a UN commission to oversee the election there is no evidence to demonstrate why the ICC would not be sufficient. PBS really dropped the ball in demonstrating why the US did not want to be involved in the election. I wish either source would give the reasoning behind decisions. The US didn't want the ICC to oversee the elections. So what? Does that justify not having them? All other members wanted it including members who were sympathetic to the US goals.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

2

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**Re: You Can't Handle the Truth**by [Danielle Wardrip](#) - Thursday, April 19, 2018, 3:43 PM

"I wish either source would give the reasoning behind decisions."

I wish this as well, but after thinking about it further, I realized something. Perhaps they do not know the reasoning. There were so many different people involved in making those decisions. I mean, we had 5 different presidents during this time and all of their different staff. If Kennedy had a reason to decide something, Truman might have had a completely different reason for deciding the same exact thing. Besides the reasons they gave in front of a camera, we do not have much to tell us why they did what they did. And who knows, the reasons they gave on screen could have been as far from the truth as North is from South.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

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**Re: You Can't Handle the Truth**by [James Alewine](#) - Saturday, April 21, 2018, 7:23 AM

Eisenhower and Dulles agreed, for example, that if the elections were held immediately, Ho Chi Minh would be an easy victor. But the two year delay gave the United States "fairly good time" to get ready. (Herring, pg. 50) In truth, the administration was not displeased. The agreements were better than

anticipated...and they allowed sufficient latitude to proceed along the path Dulles outlined." (Herring, pg. 50)

"The US had opposed the Geneva agreements but pledged to respect them. Dien who had condemned the Accords now resisted the nationwide election. Dulles had to decide what to do." (PBS part 2, 16:10)

Paul M. Kattenburg State Department Aid. "I distinctly recall the clock ticking on the wall and his breathing heavily as he read through the paper, turning to the few of us who were there at that meeting and saying "I don't believe Dien wants to hold elections, I believe we should support him in this." (PBS part 2, 16:30)

Eisenhower, "about at that time, we had a dictator that was now controlling more than half the country and with a great deal of his population and he would get 100% of the vote." (PBS part 2, 16:45)

PBS did do their job in showing how the U.S. and Diem felt about the elections. The administration knew that Ho would get the vote leading to a full loss to the communist party, so they decided to stall.

"The Americans and Dien carried the day, there were no country wide elections, Vietnam remained divided and Washington welcomed Dien as a hero." (PBS part 2, 17:00)

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

3

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How to Deal With Conflicting Info

by [Tyler Cannon](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 10:04 PM

If you look back at my first post in relation to my shock about how much of a contrast there was between the PBS and AIM videos about just what was promised at the Geneva convention and how if it is taken out of context the wrong people could be the hero and the wrong people can be the villains. As we study history it is important that we base many of our final decisions on historical events on historical facts. The AIM video referred the viewer directly back to the exact article (article 7) in the Geneva

conference paperwork that explain how the U.S is opposed to elections unless they are observed by the United Nations and deemed free and fair. It also chooses to point out the fact that the president had a press conference and even said that Geneva does not dictate what America does. PBS chooses to leave out any cold hard details in its explanation on the reason that America dropped the ball and betrayed Ho Chi Minh and took away his "fair" elections. I looked up a copy of the final declaration of the Geneva accords and since the U.S refused to sign the final statement it did give out a declaration from the secretary of state in which one of its points is "In the case of nations now divided against their will, we shall continue to seek to achieve unity through free elections supervised by the United Nations to insure that they are conducted fairly." (http://highered.mheducation.com/olc/dl/35271/7_4.html). This goes to prove that the AIM video's facts are correct and can help its case over PBS which provides no such evidence. Our textbooks can prove to be a great use because they can provide us with more validation to which side was right and confirms that we are learning factual information. One example of this would be in the Herring book it states "The administration protected itself from domestic attack and retained its freedom of action by refusing to associate itself with the agreement." (Herring, pg 50). As you can see, the Herring book also confirms the claim of the AIM video in which the U.S was not bound to this agreement and had freedom to act as it wanted to. This is why using our textbook can provide useful fact checks to confirm what we are learning is historically accurate.

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

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Re: How to Deal With Conflicting Info

by [James Alewine](#) - Saturday, April 21, 2018, 7:50 AM

It wasn't just the Americans that didn't sign the Geneva Agreement, no one signed it.

"The Americans said from the start that they would not sign any document to which communist china was a signatory because the US didn't recognize communist China. So the general secretary of the conference set up a system under which delegation made known its views verbally on each individual point. It was a very delicate bit of diplomatic maneuvering, and the American position would have enormous repercussions later. The American declaration contained two solemn undertakings. The French agreed they would not use force to alter the agreements that had been reached, and secondly, that they would consider to use or the threat of force to alter the agreement as an act of aggression. Thus, without even signing the Geneva Agreement, the Americans undertook the same

even signing the Geneva Agreement, the Americans undertook the same obligations as the French had previously undertaken, which is why the Geneva Accord was never signed by anyone.” (the first war in Vietnam, 12:41)

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

2

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“Pizzazz”

by [James Alewine](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 10:05 PM

First, I would like to point out how Charlton Heston was used to narrate *Television's Vietnam: The Real Story - Part 1* to give it a little more “pizzazz”. He is not a historian, but a well-known actor from the 1950's and 1960's, and starred in the films *The Ten Commandments*, *Ben Hur* and *Planet of the Apes*. This is the first indication that what I'm seeing, might not be as real as it seems. Then notice how the title has “The Real Story” in it. Subliminal cue to believe what you are watching is the truth, this is a tactic well known to FOX News outlets.

But as a student of history, I must give everything a chance, then do a bit more investigating! I find it interesting how *Television's Vietnam: The Real Story - Part 1* took the stance as though *PBS Vietnam Television History* painted a picture that North Vietnam and Ho Chi Minh was the good guys and the Prime Minister Diem in the south was bad because he lacked legitimacy. I honestly didn't understand it this way. It seems to me after reading *Americas Longest War* and having other content to verify this, I get the sense that the producers intent was to smear *PBS Vietnam Television History*.

Bruce Loeb had some interesting things on this topic of good versus, he says” that all myths have to have a hero and in the PBS series is clearly Ho Chi Minh, but he needs to be constructed as a hero. Every myth needs a villain and in the PBS piece is South Vietnam and the United States.” evil (23:48 *Television's Vietnam: The Real Story - Part 1*)

I did some research on Bruce Lobs and found this on the University of Idaho website where he is a professor. “Bruce Loeb received his PhD from the University of Oregon. After five years of teaching and coaching debate at California State University at Hayward, he came to ISU as department chair in 1969, a position he held for thirty-six years. He taught courses in rhetoric including COMM 1101, Argumentation, American Public Address, the Rhetoric of Hitler and Churchill, and Rhetorical Issues.”

Now, you tell me! Is he a reliable source to describe what happened in Vietnam?

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

2

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Re: “Pizzazz”

by [Jonathen Gray](#) - Wednesday, April 18, 2018, 4:46 PM

I don't necessarily see that as discrediting him as a source. I wasn't able to find what his PhD was in but as long as he has a historical background teaching rhetoric

what his FID was in but as long as he has a historical background teaching rhetoric and communication is not an out and out a damning concept. On the contrary, it was probably an asset on what was response to the PBS series. Oftentimes *Television's Vietnam: The Real Story* used strategies to debate the presentation of facts rather than the actual facts. Not a "discredit"-worthy offense but something that is to be aware of.

However, the idea that stuck out with the quote "that all myths have to have a hero... every myth needs a villain" was silly to say the least. It's a concept that deals in absolutes. Only people who understand rhetorical arguments deal in absolutes. Slightly off topic but the best myths deal in non-absolute morality. Mythology is packed to the brim with grey morality and shifting morality. Sometimes the hero and the villain are the same person. Sometimes the hero in one story is the villain in another. Sometimes, the hero becomes the villain. Why bring it up? Because the Vietnam war was no different. America had noble (or at the very least not evil) intentions, goals, and tactics. Inversely America also had horrible (or at the very least not well thought out) intentions, goals, and tactics. Where the two series diverge is that I was not able to find one instance of *PBS Vietnam Television History* making an absolute statement on morality.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

2

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Re: "Pizzazz"

by [Daisy Burge](#) - Wednesday, April 18, 2018, 5:12 PM

Heston was most likely chosen for his role here because he was a conservative political activist who served on the advisory board for Accuracy in Media and therefore was most likely influential in the organization.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

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Re: "Pizzazz"

by [Danielle Wardrip](#) - Friday, April 20, 2018, 2:03 PM

"Where the two series diverge is that I was not able to find one instance of *PBS Vietnam Television History* making an absolute statement on morality."

Very good point. I do not think that the obvious one-sidedness of *Television's Vietnam: The Real Story* necessarily discredits them. Though they relay terms in absolutes, they may have many of the facts right. Granted, they may also not have any facts right. This challenges us to dig deeper and to strive to find our own facts. With only the resources that Mr. Escobar had given us, we can determine who and what to believe.

I would like to point out, though, that every single one of our resources has some sort of bias or belief set behind them. George Herring writes very strongly; you can tell what his opinion is when you read his work. I mean, it's glaringly obvious. Christian Appy did not publish all of the stories that he was told. He only published those that he thought were important. He may have only included the ones that he thought were intriguing or that held with his beliefs. Yet, we can still use both textbooks to back up or contrast the claims made in both videos.

For instance, Herring writes that "Stalin distrusted Ho from earlier ideological spats" (p. 15, Herring). Now, this does not mean that Ho Chi Minh was not part of the international Communist party. This only means that Stalin and Ho did not conduct personal business together. Herring also says that "the United States could not 'afford to assume that Ho is anything but Moscow-directed'" (p. 15, Herring). This shows that America couldn't trust Ho or Stalin. Both quotes help us to understand which, if any, video(s) may be right. We can do this with every source we have. It's a sort of cross-examination, if I may.

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

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Re: "Pizzazz"

by [Tyler Cannon](#) - Saturday, April 21, 2018, 9:19 PM

I would also agree with Jonathen that Loeb's PhD does not make him an incredible source. The main reason for this is because what he says in terms of his facts against PBS is facts that anyone can go and look up on their own. He quotes a specific declaration from our ambassador to the Geneva Conference as well as a press conference that president Eisenhower held that "explicitly stated that the U.S is not a party to and is not bound to the decisions made at the Geneva conference." (Aim, 25:40) You do not need a PhD or any degree at all to point out clear cut facts that can be seen on T.V or by a simple google search. To be exact President Eisenhower said "Accordingly, the United States has not itself been a party to or bound by the decisions taken by the conference, but it is our hope that it will lead to the establishment of peace consistent with the rights and needs of the countries concerned." (<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/pentagon/ps17.htm>)

Also I would like to point out that a professor in argumentation and rhetoric would be the perfect person to call out PBS for purposely omitting things from its episodes in order to push their views and agendas forward instead of dealing with the facts. He knows all of the tricks in the book for someone to get the viewers and people on their side seeing as he taught a class about the rhetoric of Hitler and Churchill which can be considered two of the most influential political leaders ever.

(http://www2.isu.edu/cmp/Fac_Staff.html) Lastly, they never claim that Charlton Heston is a historian or that any claims he is stating is of his own creation. Rather, they use him more as a spokesman for the show because being an actor he has mastered the way of speaking and presenting on a film or T.V series in this case. This does not take away credibility from the claims made by other historians and professors, but rather just presents them and transitions topics with a clear spokesperson

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

3

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Ho Chi Minh Portrayal

by [Connor Antich](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 10:32 PM

The most glaring contradiction I found between the PBS series and the AIM video was how the North Vietnam leader Ho Chi Minh was portrayed. I learned while watching the PBS series that he was a Nationalist revolutionary leader who wanted his country free from colonialism and that he was a true patriot. But, when I watched the AIM video I quickly learned and believed this to be wrong. From the AIM video, I learned that Ho Chi Minh was a true communist and was not a nationalist. Too the vietnamese people he may have came off as a patriot to some, as portrayed in the PBS series but this is false (AIM Historian "Dorge"). In the 1920's Ho Chi Minh became a member of the French Communist Party and traveled to Moscow on a grant and studied at the Lenin institute and took on a soviet passport and graduated in 1926 (AIM Historian "Dorge"). He immediately then traveled to China and was on the staff of the soviet consultant in Canton, China where he worked as a international communist organizer (AIM Historian "Dorge"). He would bring vietnamese people to China to study revolution. But he made sure these people would retain communist ideals from there studies and if they hung onto there nationalist ideals, he would sell them out to the french police when they would return to Vietnam (AIM Historian "Dorge"). Also to support the fact that Ho Chi Minh was a communist and not a nationalist, during the war the viet cong leader frequently received weapons and supplies from communist China. To add on to this, in Ho Chi Minh's final testament in 1969 before his death, he appealed to the Soviet Union and China to try to resolve their differences and re-establish the world communist movement (AIM Historian "Stearman"). Also another thought or question I asked myself regarding this portraival was would the United States really wage war on a

country (North Vietnam) that had a pure nationalist revolutionary movement that had no ties to communism during the time of the Cold War? The answer is yes but the fact of the matter is that history to me shows Ho Chi Minh was a true communist above a nationalist and would laugh at the fact today if people called him a nationalist rather than a communist. I believe the PBS series portrayed him wrong and the AIM video gave me some very accurate historical facts from some very prestiged historians stating facts that Ho Chi Minh was really a communist and not a nationalist or both.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Ho Chi Minh Portrayal

by [Jonathen Gray](#) - Thursday, April 19, 2018, 12:02 PM

To the point that you say "pure nationalist revolutionary movement that had no ties to communism" I am unable to find anywhere in the PBS series where they claim this. The PBS series highlights Ho Chi Minh as a nationalist first but also points to Communist tendencies as well. But a quick review of the [Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam](#) presented by Ho Chi Minh (24:40 into Episode 1, Vietnam Television History video). and it certainly has the spark of Western ideals and espouses the need to be an independent state. Communism? Nationalism? A wise man once said isms are not good. A person should not believe in an ism, he should believe in himself. That is the concept at play. Goals before isms.

To me it's clear Ho Chi Minh supported whatever concept removed the French and Western countries out of Vietnam. Sergei Khrushchev recalls "the Soviet Union did everything it could to make America's life in Vietnam worse. It was the simple rule of the Cold War. If you could do something bad to the opposite side you had to do it. Americans did the same thing in Vietnam (Appy, p.88, Vo Nguyen Giap). The Soviets were using Vietnam to hurt the US and the US was using Vietnam to hurt the Soviets. For the super powers Vietnamese independence took a back seat to a proxy war to hurt the other super power. For Ho Chi Minh the market concepts of capitalism and communism also took a back seat to "who help me get rid of the country who enslaved my people to Michelin rubber."

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Ho Chi Minh Portrayal

by [Jonus Woolley](#) - Saturday, April 21, 2018, 12:24 PM

You said that when watching the PBS videos you felt that Ho Chi Minh “was a Nationalist revolutionary leader who wanted his country free from colonialism and that he was a true patriot.” and later learned in the AIM videos that he was communist. It is crazy to me that two different people talking about the same subject can make someone appear completely opposite from each other and the best part about having different perspectives is that they are both right in the eyes of some. Ho Chi Minh was a hero and in others he was “a communist threat” so history is not only fact but also opinion which is something we should all learn to decipher.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Ho Chi Minh Portrayal**by [Danielle Wardrip](#) - Saturday, April 21, 2018, 5:51 PM

"history is not only fact but also opinion"

Yes. History is full of opinions. If it had not been for opinions, we would not have the history that we have today. Our country was based on the opinion that we deserved our independence. Britain had a completely different opinion on what we deserved. In every piece of history, we find multiple opinions that fueled the actions that were made. Without opinions, there would have been no reason to start all of the wars that history tells us of. Without opinions, we would not have thought we needed such fantastic (and not so fantastic) (*did you catch that opinion??*) inventions.

"they are both right in the eyes of some"

Every side has their own opinion. This means that every side sees every decision made in a different way. This means that Ho Chi Minh was both a Nationalist and a Communist. He could have been mostly a Nationalist, mostly a Communist, or equally both. We don't know. Really, the only people who would be able to tell us for sure would be Ho Chi Minh himself or those closest to him. I have only done minimal research on the subject, but I'm relatively sure that all of those people are dead. Now, if we could see Ho's last testament in written form and confirm that it really is his, that could help us determine either way. Since we do not have that, we have to come to our own conclusions on the matter.

My conclusion: Ho was a Communist who wanted his people to be a unified people.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1) [Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Ho Chi Minh Portrayal**by [Alysia Knapp](#) - Saturday, April 21, 2018, 8:57 PM

Yes! It is better to have a more complete understanding of several opinions involved in history. It seems like the books are generally less biased than the videos, but even the Herrings book throws in some opinions. He uses a lot of adjectives when describing the character of the leaders of the war, especially Diem, Kennedy, and Johnson.

Describing Johnson: "A remarkably adroit politician, brilliant legislator, and highly successful Senate majority leader, he was a driven man, prodigiously energetic, single-minded, manipulative, often overbearing." (Pg 140)

How are we supposed to know if these things are facts or just the opinions of the author? We must learn about others' opinions to form our own.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1) [Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**US and cancellation of elections**by [Alysia Knapp](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 10:36 PM

There were several differences stated by the AIM video, most of which were pretty surprising, but the one that stood out the most to me was the United States' association with the Geneva Accords regarding the elections. PBS often portrays the US like it was in agreement with Diem's decision to call off the elections, and sometimes equally blames the US and Diem for the resulting consequences. Episode 2 states at 16:57 "Americans and Diem carried the day. There were no countrywide elections."

The Herring book seems to give an explanation of the United States and the Geneva Accords that is more similar to what the AIM videos says. "The United States and the State of Vietnam refused to associate themselves with the formal agreements." (pg 49).

It is implied several times in the AIM video that PBS portrayed the two sides in a more black and white manner: the south was bad, the north was good. The Herring book says "Shocked by Diem's unexpected moves and disappointed in the lack of help

provided by the major powers, North Vietnam could do nothing more than condemn the United States for 'sabotaging' the elections." (pg 68). Perhaps in order to continue with their portrayal, PBS exaggerated both the United States' and the North's reaction to the cancelled elections.

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

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Truth

by [Madison Zemba](#) - Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 11:15 PM

I think that retrieving information from multiple sources is a great, and possibly only way to figure out the real truth. But I also think it's important to keep the conversation going, either in an in-class or forum setting. It is also helpful hearing perspectives from both sides of the story. America was great at providing citizens with distorted or false information, information which might have/may be used to teach further generations. "Television's Vietnam: The Real Story" mentioned that images in the other program were "only a kaleidoscope of images".

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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Re: Truth

by [Danielle Wardrip](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 3:02 PM

"retrieving information from multiple sources is a great"

One thing that I have neglected to address throughout this forum is the credibility of the sources. In the AIM video, they have many different speakers that support the beliefs that they want to portray. What we must consider is if these speakers are experts in, or at least knowledgeable about, the subject. We must ask this of everything that we watch/read. More research is necessary to determine if the speakers in the AIM video are legitimate.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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BEHIND AIM...Who are we listening to!

by [James Alewine](#) - Saturday, April 21, 2018, 6:39 AM

I decided to look up all those interviewed... This is what I found with the website links attached.

I believe in order to get the full picture you need to know this...it help paint a better picture for everyone.

In my opinion Douglas Pike would be the foremost expert on Vietnam, I encourage you to go to <https://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~sdenney/> it has a vast collection that may be useful in this class.

Reed Irvine was the founder of Accuracy in Media, a watchdog group dedicated to exposing, challenging and at times bullying those he accused of slanting news coverage from a liberal perspective. Founded in 1969, Accuracy in Media is a group that, as Mr. Irvine described it, was intended to be 'representative of the consumers of the journalistic product and not the producers.' Ideologically, it paved the way for the tide of conservative talk shows, Web sites and news programming that would follow decades later. And while AIM occasionally lived up to its name, it also spent much of its time pursuing conspiracy theories.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2004/11/19/us/reed-irvine-82-the-founder-of-a-media-criticism-group-dies.html>

"The Indochina Center of the University of California, Berkeley, contains one of the largest collections in the world of English-language materials on Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The heart of the collection comprises approximately 225 file cabinet drawers (525 linear feet) of government documents, press clippings, and private papers stored in vertical files and organized by subject.

The collection was founded and developed by **Douglas Pike** from the time he was a U.S. Foreign Service officer in Vietnam, and continued to develop under his direction after he came to Berkeley in 1981 until 1997 when he moved to the Vietnam Center at Texas Tech University, as the university here could no longer support the collection and his work as head of the UCB Indochina Studies Project. At the time, Mr. Pike had intended to take all the files with him to Texas Tech, but was prevented from doing so by the university here. So he left behind about half of the files, dealing with post-1975 conditions in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, along with many files on North and South Vietnam during the war, and microfiche of most of the Vietnam war files which went to Texas Tech "

OF THE VIETNAM WAR SONGS WHICH WENT TO TEXAS TECH.

<https://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~sdenney/>

"After retiring from federal service in 1983 **Dolf Droge** began a second successful career as a public speaker for civic organizations, high schools, and colleges. He was a tireless supporter of military veterans and POW/MIA causes. A prolific songwriter and singer, Dolf entertained and educated innumerable crowds with his many original songs, several of which are in the Vietnam War Collections in the Archive of Folk Culture at the Library of Congress."

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/washingtonpost/obituary.aspx?pid=175046343>

"**Nguyen Ngoc Bich**, educator, lecturer, author, translator, born in Hanoi Vietnam, educated in Saigon, the US, Japan and Europe, received his B.A. in Political Science from Princeton University in 1958. He did graduate work in Asian studies at Columbia University (1959-65), Japanese literature at Kyoto University (1962-63) bilingual education and theoretical linguistics at Georgetown University (1980-85). In 1975, he came to the US, settled in Virginia, where he taught adult education, elementary school and high school in Arlington, then Vietnamese Literature and Vietnamese Culture and Civilization at Trinity College, George Mason University, and taught at Georgetown University as a teacher trainer in bilingual and Multicultural Education. He is also one of the founders of National News Service, which provides news of interest to readers of Vietnamese language newspapers worldwide."

(Books Written)

- 1- 'The Poetry of Vietnam (New York: Asia Society, 1969)
- 2- North Vietnam: Backtracking on Socialism (1971)
- 3- An Annotated Atlas of the Republic of Vietnam (1972)
- 4- A Thousand Years of Vietnamese Poetry (Knopf, 1975).

http://www.thewriterspost.net/author_nguyenngocbich.htm

"**Bruce Loebs** received his PhD from the University of Oregon. After five years of teaching and coaching debate at California State University at Hayward, he came to ISU as department chair in 1969, a position he held for thirty-six years. He taught courses in rhetoric including COMM 1101, Argumentation, American Public Address, the Rhetoric of Hitler and Churchill, and Rhetorical Issues."

http://www2.isu.edu/cmp/Fac_Staff.html

"**Elbridge Durbrow's** diplomatic career spanned 38 years, most of them spent in Europe and Southeast Asia. He retired in 1968.

President Eisenhower named him Ambassador to South Vietnam in 1957, when Indochina meant little to Americans. The French, trying to recover and hold their colonies in the region, had been routed at Dien Bien Phu by the Viet Minh forces three years earlier.

Since then, Washington's determination to hold Communism at bay in the region had led to a low-profile political and military presence in newly divided Vietnam; little of it was noticed at home. For Mr. Durbrow, however, Saigon quickly turned into a diplomat's bad dream.

On the one side, he had to deal with the authoritarian regime of Ngo Dinh Diem and a morass of corruption and ineffectiveness that was hard to overlook. Another bane was American military leaders who considered themselves omniscient.

Disgruntled senior Vietnamese officers sought to enmesh him in their cabals against President Diem. He refused, telling them that Washington was supporting the Diem Government, at least for a while, even as he shed his own illusions about the situation."

<https://www.nytimes.com/1997/05/23/world/elbridge-durbrow-us-diplomat-dies-at-93.html>

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

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**Re: BEHIND AIM...Who are we listening to!**by [Danielle Wardrip](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 3:04 PM

Thank you for the insight. I just posted that we should look into the legitimacy of the speakers. This helps.

Sum of ratings:0 (1)

0

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Perfectly imperfect**by [Casandra Fountain](#) - Saturday, April 21, 2018, 10:39 AM

It quite disappointing that academical information presented to us can be conflicting. As students, we want to believe that reputable sources are always right and there is no need to investigate to be sure of accuracy. But unfortunately that is exactly what you have to do anymore; check your source, see where the producers or authors come from, and what are their ideals. With our two textbooks we can see what fact correlate and what facts differ. When they do differ we need to compare other reputable sources and see if there are any similarities or differences between all the sources.

It is disheartening that individuals today are wanting to change, erase, or forget about our history and the events that took place. By removing statue and swaying our history books in different directions from the truth, we are telling our future generations that we were perfect in an imperfect world. A 100 years from now what will our history be telling us?

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Perfectly imperfect**by [Jonus Woolley](#) - Saturday, April 21, 2018, 12:11 PM

I totally agree with you that history can be obscured but I think that sometimes this obscurity is not just to make one side look better than another but because people honestly believe that history was a certain way. If you hear the history of Vietnam from a soldier that was actually there compared to a politician during the time it might sound different not only to uphold "their view" but also because that is what they have been taught and thus history becomes obscured by the people you learn it from.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

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**@ AIM: It's OK to Admit to U.S. Isn't A Beacon of Morality**by [Daisy Burge](#) - Saturday, April 21, 2018, 1:01 PM

Among AIM's central criticisms of the PBS documentary series is that the series portrays the United States in negative light and in doing so, damages our reputation and esteem as a nation. According to the narrator and historians, the docuseries mischaracterizes the threat of the Viet Minh by portraying them as nationalists first with their central concern being independence from the French.

One of the central problems with regarding AIM's rebuttal as a matter of historical record rather than a weakly cited opinion piece is that their literature all is built around the idea that the United States was justified in its actions in Vietnam. Whether or not the United States had the moral high ground in its actions in Vietnam is an opinion based of off political ideology and personal ethics. It's not the job of historians to make that determination. The purpose in studying the Vietnam War, just as it is in studying any military conflict, is to examine the conflicting ideologies and motivations on each side and the consequences of actions taken on each.

While it's much easier to blindly accept that American leadership always has legitimate reasoning behind its actions than it is to critically and comprehensively examine a conflict on all sides, it's also antithetical to the purpose of historical research to ascribe moral high ground to any one side of the conflict. It's OK to admit that the United States isn't a beacon of morality set on spreading the concepts of self-determination and democracy and instead focus on a more nuanced form of analysis that considers both American and Viet Minh motivations, actions, and literature. AIM can't claim to be historical experts in the war when their understanding of Communist side ignores Ho's large ideological differences with both Stalin and Mao.

Sum of ratings:2 (1) 2

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Herring's book serves a historical source that doesn't primarily aim to construct moral high ground for one side. Though of course it is not a work free from bias, his work isn't predicated on creating the "correct" historical narrative for the United States. Herring states that Ho "was no tool of the Kremlin" and that he was "not prepared to subordinate Vietnamese independence to them" (Herring 24) in direct

contradiction to AIM's assertions that Vietnam was a direct Communist threat to American security.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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Proposal v. Delivery

by [Casandra Fountain](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 8:09 PM

In the AIM video, Director of the Indochina Archive, Douglas Pike, lists four different promises PBS stated their series would uphold. For each of those promises, Pike provides PBS's actual delivery of what they showed in their series (2:20, AIM video). First one was that the series would supply information for the historical record, but in reality the PBS series only provided a "kaleidoscope of images". Second, the series said it would provide an antidote to the misuses of history which in turn it only contributed to the misunderstandings of history. There are many examples throughout the series where various information is misconstrued or blatant lies. The narrator of the AIM video, Charlton Heston, states how PBS illustrated Diem as America's puppet which was false (17:15, AIM video). He continues with how Diem was a little known nationalist and introduces Edward Lansdale to support how this claim was also false (18:10, AIM video). The third proposal of PBS was that their series was going to contribute to the healing and to nation esteem in the post-war era. Pike describes this as the most flagrant violation of all, this series does not do anything for the American people and is nothing they can be proud of. Lastly, the fourth promise was that the series would contribute to historical methodology, the method of writing history. But the delivery of this promise does not do that, it only is an object lesson of how not do it. The last thing Pike says about the series is it is many things but it is not history telling (4:22, AIM video). Having this AIM video provided to us has made me pay closer attention to what is being said in the PBS series and how they are portraying each side. I was admittedly just going through the motions with all the videos we are having to watch and not paying close enough attention to how PBS made Ho Chi Minh out to be more nationalist than communist and how Ngo Dinh Diem was not a puppet of the United States or even the mass murders that took place in 1945 of non communist leaders that were committed by Ho Chi Minh and the Vietnam communists. As soon as I think I have it, Mr. Escobar throws a curveball.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

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