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**Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Joe Escobar](#) - Saturday, 28 November 2009, 11:25 PM

1. Did the United States win or lose the Vietnam War? Can it still be won or lost today? Justify your answer.

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Jeffrey Harmon](#) - Wednesday, 2 December 2009, 05:13 PM

I believe America lost the war. We lost so much! The more I have been in the class a lot of my beliefs have changed. We were the winners, i always thought. But the amount of human life lost from something that we didn't need to do is so destructive to the country as a whole. I came from a family where my Father did 5 tours in Vietnam. He always said we needed to be there. But I do not think he really knew what he was talking about. His head was a little messed up anyway from the wars. We lost a lot of Sons, Fathers and Husbands to a war that did not need to happen. The first way we lost the war is America pulled out. Even though wars are not won and lost on body counts, but rather "diplomacy through other means". In this respect, the U.S failed in its primary mission, keeping the Communists from taking over Vietnam as a whole. Body counts don't matter if you fail in your diplomatic course or primary mission. The major U.S. justification for the war was the Falling Dominoes theory-- if Vietnam falls the rest of Asia will follow. That never happened. "It's more complicated than simply saying it was only a civil war, but it had aspects of a civil war, one between the Vietnamese communists and the Vietnamese Catholics, and a whole lot of other in between. When the US left in 1973, South Vietnam continued to exist as an unoccupied country until it fell in 1975. It's also interesting to me that the south was fighting to simply exist as south Vietnam, while the north was fighting to control the whole of Vietnam. We accomplished nothing we went there to do. For me the war was a propaganda war, none of the facts were given and it was a lot of puppets running around. Saying it is all the communist propaganda. All the Presidents involved screwed up. Kennedy jacked our involvement from his initial 1000 guys to over 15,000. All this despite advice from his own advisers to get out. Then LBJ gets in there and the troop levels get raised through the roof. We had no clear object, no goal, no sense of what we might gain in such a war and therefore no gauge of what we were willing to pay for such a war. Political mis management of war and failure to understand what it would take to win were so huge here. So when the day is done I feel we lost. Going back to the last forum, I believe we lost in Politics, society and the military. We won no-where. This is what I think, so let's see what everyone thinks. I also look at PBS with a whole new light, they have a lot of new facts.

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Chad Schultz](#) - Wednesday, 2 December 2009, 07:11 PM

We did lose a lot. We not only lost a war but we lost many by standers trust. There was a lot of deception; for example the Gulf of Tonkin is a prime example. We stated that there was a second attack and later discovered it was an error. This was the initiative to be involved in the Vietnam War and the beginning of many lies.

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Derek Abbott](#) - Saturday, 5 December 2009, 05:26 PM

The U.S. lost the war in the 1970's, I would have to agree. The ripple effect, however, lasted in the United States for years to come. We haven't done a very good job, at an administrative level, to learn from our mistakes. We can't afford to repeat past mistakes of Johnson and Nixon, and I feel that the Bush administration did a horrible job learning from the past.

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Evan Looch](#) - Wednesday, 2 December 2009, 08:04 PM

I also thought before taking this class that we were the overall winners of the war even though we did lose many lives in combat. The fact that we continued the long fighting over there really did hurt millions and millions of Americans and Vietnamese people's lives forever. I can understand how the whole Domino theory may scare many leaders in the U.S. of a global Communist outbreak but to through a prosperous country in so quickly was ill advised.

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Tish Bottensek](#) - Thursday, 3 December 2009, 02:33 PM

Jeffrey,

You made some very valuable points, points I believe have needed to be said for some time! For instance, you expressed that your father fought in the war and believed he was fighting for a good cause. I am pleased to hear that he was one of the fortunate ones who made it home. You stated that he was never the same, the unfortunate reality is simply that many of our soldiers returned with the mental reality of war. This is an unfortunate reality many Americans were not prepared to face. I too believe in more ways than one we lost the war, if not because of the lack of accomplishment we received during our time there, the amount of lost soldiers including those who returned alive, but also for the vast amounts of money spent for the war. The physical part of the war may be over, but there are still so many soldiers who are suffering from the mental aspect of war. In their eyes I too believe they would say we lost.

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Jeffrey Harmon](#) - Saturday, 5 December 2009, 10:41 AM

Well thank you. That is a great point, that even most of the soldiers who returned really did not return the same, so the body count means nothing to me, because a lot of the alive returners feel like they mine as well be dead.

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Glenn Dalglish](#) - Thursday, 3 December 2009, 04:29 PM

Before taking this class, I was under the impression that we lost the war in Vietnam and I still feel that way. America was on a downward spiral from the beginning and although I do agree that the spread of communism needed to be stopped, I don't think war was the answer. Too many people died on both sides during the war and I do not think there was any just cause for all those deaths. Not to mention, all those who didn't die and are either living with wounds on the inside or outside. There were other methods of dealing with communism and I don't agree that the Vietnam war was a good "solution." In the end, Americans' dislike and disapproval for the things they saw and heard was a major factor for the end of the war. There were others like the fall of Saigon, us pulling out and signing the treaty, but how can a war be won if the people involved do not support it? I'm not sure if I believe that we won anything from the Vietnam War. I would hope that we would learn from our mistakes that were made and looking at the war we are currently in, it is a good example of how we can not make the same mistake twice. We helped stop the spread of communism to the rest of the world, but I believe this could have happened without the violent Vietnam War.

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Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose

by [William Wymer](#) - Friday, 4 December 2009, 04:57 AM

I am a lot like you this class has made me look at things in a lot bigger picture. I also do not see that we won Vietnam. We lost the American's trust during that time, when they found out that they were not given the whole truth or picture. I also do not think that you can say you won on body count alone. I can say that we could say that we won many of the battles, but not the war, as we did not accomplish what we set out as an objective. I said in past in a past forum that we should have used all of our forces available right from the beginning, but now as the class has progressed and the discussions that we have had in our forums, I would have to say that we should have used more diplomacy and talks before we just jumped in. You brought up some very good points, thank you for your outlook on the Vietnam war. As for the media I see it in a new light as well. The one thing that I think we need to remember is that they are going for the ratings and are going to show or tell it in their view and beliefs. Do you agree or disagree with this? As for could we win or lose the war today I do not think we can honestly say for sure. I would hope that we could say yes, but I would hope we handled the war in a different way.

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Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose

by [Patrick Brady](#) - Wednesday, 2 December 2009, 05:16 PM

I believe that the United States lost the Vietnam War, because we went to Vietnam to contain communism and help support the South Vietnamese government. The United States failed in both of their objectives. The United States pulled out our troops in 1973 and the South Vietnamese government only survived two years after that. In 1975 the South Vietnam government in Saigon fell to the communist North Vietnam, which the United States had been trying to prevent.

If the Vietnam War was based on a body count basis the U.S. would have won, but because the North Vietnamese were so desperate for a unified Vietnam they were willing to put it all on the line.

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Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose

by [Jeffrey Harmon](#) - Wednesday, 2 December 2009, 05:53 PM

I think even if we look at body counts we did win in "stats" but all other avenues we did lose, saving the south? Stopping communism? The north Vietnamese would have lost double the one and a half million, because they would have fought harder, and were willing to lose more lives than we were prepared to do.

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Rate... **Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Jennifer Mosier](#) - Friday, 4 December 2009, 07:02 PM

I agree that the United States lost. We went home with our tails tucked between our legs. The aid that the South Vietnamese government was expecting never came and the US withdrew everything. The only thing the US did in Vietnam was create chaos. The government that we were trying to establish failed.

I don't see how even the body count could be considered a win for the US. Just because the US had less casualties does not make the Vietnam war a success. In war there is always death and the US suffered many unnecessary deaths just like the Vietnamese. I don't see how killing more people on the opposed side could be seen as a win because a lot of civilians were killed.

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Rate... **Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Scott Burgess](#) - Wednesday, 2 December 2009, 05:33 PM

I hate to say that I think we lost the war in Vietnam. If you look at body counts we clearly won. We had over 58,000 KIA's and apx. 300,000 wounded. The North Vietnamese had apx. 1 1/2 million KIA's and over 3 million wounded. If you just looked at those stats you would think that we won hands down. Unfortunately, we didn't live up to our promises to our allies in South Vietnam. Our goal was to prevent the spread of communism in Southeast Asia. We did not do that, so in the end that is not a victory. Not only did Vietnam fall, so did Cambodia and Laos the whole region was a loss. One of the most disturbing things to me is that we let an Ally fall without lifting a finger to help. That part makes me sick. I am not saying that the South would not have fallen in time anyway, but it might not have.

We learned a few things from Vietnam that I think have helped us. The first Gulf War was our first test since Vietnam. I think it had a very good outcome. I would like to think that it was from us growing and learning. It sounds like we used the Powell Doctrine to its fullest extent. Objectives must be clearly defined and attainable; use overwhelming force to achieve certain, swift, and complete victory. I think that we had the whole nation behind our troops in support and it made a difference. If we had to go back and fight in Vietnam today using those methods, we would, without a doubt in my mind win. I still think that it is important to win the hearts and minds of the people you are trying to help. You have to go out of your way to set the best example you can for your country. You can not do this by blowing up entire blocks to kill a few people.

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Rate... **Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Name Withheld-6450](#) - Saturday, 5 December 2009, 10:41 AM

Well the first Iraq war was in defense of Kuwait, which was invaded by Saddam Hussein. We had countless NATO allies assisting us, so it was a combined effort on the part of ourselves and our allies.

And in fact, the first Gulf war was the second since Vietnam. Please see the invasion of Grenada of 1983. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invasion_of_Grenada

And I also agree that we left South Vietnam to basically fend for themselves. It was quite clear after Operation Linebacker, we were no longer willing to supply South Vietnam with the proper air support it needed (much less ground troops) We must also look at the failure of the South Vietnamese economy during the American pull out. Congress cut aid for South Vietnam from 1 Billion dollars to 700,000 dollars in 1974 and in 1975 Congress voted almost immediately after the midterm elections to drastically cut aid

and phase aid completely out by 1976. Not only did we leave the South Vietnamese defenseless, we left them bankrupt. The situation was hopeless for the South Vietnamese, who truly were the real losers of the war.

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Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose

by [Scott Burgess](#) - Saturday, 5 December 2009, 08:48 PM

Lets be clear Grenada was not a war it was a rescue mission to recover US students that were attending a medical school. At that time Fidel Castro had put Cuban national troops and weapons on the island and was not allowing these US citizens to leave of thier own free will. They can thank President Reagan for thier freedom. The first Gulf War was sanctioned by Congress and authorized by President Bush Sr. That was the difference between those two actions. Don't even get me started on Central America and the secret opps that went on during the mid eighties. I was just commenting on aproved military actions by Congress since Vietnam.

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Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose

by [Robert Nicholls](#) - Wednesday, 2 December 2009, 05:37 PM

President Richard Nixon once stated that he would not be the first president to lose a war. In my opinion, he was. We defiantly lost the Vietnam War. I say this because I believe that we did not obtain our main objective in Vietnam, and if you do not do what you set out to do, it is considered a loss. Many people say that we did not win or lose the Vietnam War. However, I believe that there is no mediate answer. You can either win, or lose. Since we did not stop the Communists from taking over South Vietnam, I would say we lost the war.

George Herring states that the ultimate losers of the war were the South Vietnamese. This strengthens my argument of how America lost the war because we directly represented the South Vietnamese. We fought for them, we stood up for them, and we lost for them. We could not stabilize the South Vietnamese government enough for them to fight on their own. Since this was our main goal, and we failed at doing so, we failed at winning the war in Vietnam. With the whole Watergate scandal during the Nixon era, our own government became weak and undermined. This, in turn, weakened the South Vietnamese government because we were directly related to them in almost every aspect. Everything bad that happened to us, would directly affect them. Although we were supposed to be helping the South instead of fighting for them, I feel that America had 99% of the responsibilities of the Vietnam War. Our failures translated to a direct loss of the war. Unfortunately, it had to be at the expense of many South Vietnamese lives, as well as our own.

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Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose

by [Patrick Brady](#) - Friday, 4 December 2009, 05:28 PM

I agree with you, I believe that North Vietnam won the war becuase there goal was to have a unified communist Vietnam, and they obtained their goal in 1975. Since North Vietnam won that means that the United States and South Vietnam lost. There was definatly a winner and a loser of this war.

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Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose

by [William Wymer](#) - Friday, 4 December 2009, 08:01 PM

I have to say that I agree that we lost the Vietnam War, But I believe that we failed at getting the South Vietnamese People behind us and willing to stand up and fight. We read over and over many times when they were put into a battle situation they would turn and run. If you cannot get the people you are trying to help to defend themselves then ultimately they are going to fall, it is only a matter of time and the North Vietnamese were willing to put in that time and take the loss of life, they also had their people support and belief in what they were doing was right and that they would succeed, which in the end they did. I think that we should have put more training and time to make sure that they would be able to defend themselves. We also should have help make sure their government was stable and not corrupt. I believe that we were so afraid of communism spreading that we jumped in and did not look how we would succeed (no real game plan) and what game plans we had were ether made on partially correct information or political policy. It also did not help that in the end we ourselves did not even have the support of some of our own troops, they would make up reports and actually would be setting right where we dropped them. The U.S. even lost support at home.

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Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose

by [Name Withheld-6450](#) - Wednesday, 2 December 2009, 06:44 PM

I would most definitely say that we lost. The body count is irrelevant due to the fact that our objectives were not accomplished. We left South Vietnam in a rather sloppy manner. The "Vietnamization" was a complete fluke and our presence in South East Asia was diminished severely. You cannot justify the outcome of the war simply by body count alone. If we recall a bit of history, we know that the Soviet Union suffered almost twice the casualties at the hands of the Wehrmacht, and yet we know that they clearly beat them back and won the war, hands down. There are examples like this everywhere. (One of the American accounts in the Patriot Book even attests to this, comparing the Vietnam war to our own American revolution) You can say the same for the Vietnam war, in which an enemy considered by most to be "inferior", beat an army most considered superior.

I would also like to point out that I'm sure alot of the Hawks in Washington felt like fools a while after the war with their "Domino" theory. As we know, the rest of South east Asia did not, in fact, "fall" to communism.

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Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose

by [Robert Nicholls](#) - Friday, 4 December 2009, 10:33 PM

Well i definatley agree with the majority of your post, but i have to disagree with the fact that you say "Vietnamization" was a fluke and diminished our presence in South East Asia. From the point of view of the President, as well as myself, Vietnamization was a great idea. It contained everything that we sought after when we started the war. To have the Vietnamese fight for themselves. It was not our fault at all that it failed. I believe it was the simple fact that the South Vietnamese lacked the will and pride to fight for their own country, not a failure on the shoulders of America. You can't change someone's character and amount of pride for their country.

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Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose

by [Name Withheld-6450](#) - Saturday, 5 December 2009, 09:51 AM

Well, our job was to see it to that the South Vietnamese could fight independently of American forces. We failed to convince the populace and the South Vietnamese forces of their objective and their country was worth saving, hence why Vietnamization failed.

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Jeffrey Harmon](#) - Saturday, 5 December 2009, 10:44 AM

I agree, sometimes we need to step in and help people out, but after a while we need to let them stand on their own two feet.

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Amy Wells](#) - Saturday, 5 December 2009, 04:33 PM

I agree with you that a body count does not constitute a win. For me all of the lives that were loss count as a loss, but not looking at the lives lost, I never really knew a lot about this war. I hae learned a lot in this term. Then one thing that I got was that all the fighting we did in the end we pulled out, so I feel that we did not win we just quit fighting and putting our money into a war that was going no where.

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Evan Looock](#) - Wednesday, 2 December 2009, 06:49 PM

The Vietnam War was a long-strenuously-slow fought battle that never had one side really exclaiming itself the victor. My opinion is that the U.S lost the war in Vietnam. Americans are very proud people that like to think that we actually won the War for the reason that the Cold War ended soon after the conflict was over in Vietnam. The U.S wanted to stop the Communists from taking over South Vietnam but eventually abandoned its efforts further leading to the enemy taking control over the South. We were not militarily conquered or out-equipped by the North and Communist enemies. The strategy we attempted to use was to simply make the enemies believe that they could not succeed in a military achievement. The enemy's determination and willingness to sacrifice every man and women it took lasted longer than the American's which gave little support to back up the conflict. The mismanagement from Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon and others in Washington during the Vietnam War made a victory militarily very unlikely. The U.S was not prepared for guerilla warfare from the start of the conflict in Vietnam which was a major miscalculation that cost lots of money and lives. Similarly When I first set foot in Iraq in 2003 we had no up-armored humvee's or turret armor for the top exposed parts of tanks that I was in (except sandbags). Nor did we even need sixty-plus ton heavy armored tanks patrolling city streets and highways. Things that should have been more thought out in past wars need to be applied to more current engagements before committing young men and women and millions of dollars to them. The U.S overall misjudged its enemies thinking that they could merely intimidate them with destructive bombs and superior technology. Soon as the U.S finally came to the realization that it could not be won this way they withdrew and the North Vietnamese and Communists took control of Hanoi.

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Chad Schultz](#) - Wednesday, 2 December 2009, 07:03 PM

I agree that America and the soldiers both were not ready for the type of war that was fought. Before the exposure of the war it was accepted, and then when the front runners lost their crutch, we started fighting our own war. No one is actually prepared for a war like Vietnam or anything similar but America was not aware until exposure was brought.

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Jennifer Mosier](#) - Friday, 4 December 2009, 07:06 PM

The US was not ready for this war! Just because the US was bigger and was better equipped did not make this war any easier. The US didn't have the heart that the Vietnamese had in saving their country. We were arrogant to expect that we could win anything just because we are the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Evan Looch](#) - Friday, 4 December 2009, 09:21 PM

Thats what I was saying and just cause were a prideful type of people with higher technological capabilities does not mean anything when you fight an enemy who will never give up. We are still this way today being arrogant in our belief that cause we got unmanned aerial drones that can bomb the Taliban in Afganistan from California that they are going to be terrified in our tech. accomplishments and give up.

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Chad Schultz](#) - Wednesday, 2 December 2009, 06:58 PM

Honestly, I feel as if the U.S. lost. We engaged in Vietnam to stop the spread of communism in South Asia. This was something we should not have incorporated our self's with. We tried using "Bronze" over brains and clearly, statistically, it states that the U.S. won, but we didn't. Yes, our "Body count" was numerous but we lost composition and became "Monsters". My Lai is a prime example; we were killing innocent by standers and up rooting them from their homes. Our "search and destroy" mission were taken literal. We were shooting at anything that moved. (don't get me wrong, who knows what would have happened, they were defending themselves. But did we really need to be even in this area at this time.) Our tactics were unmoral and media was exposing this to Americans back home. This increased anti-war movements and once-supporters of Vietnam, saw themselves opposed to this grueling war. Now, we were not only fighting the war over seas but one on our home front. There was so much deception and betrayal that we were swimming in our own defeat. I think, that accepting the wrong and learning from previous mistakes can be taken into account. But obviously, we have not learned from Vietnam, nor any other war since we are once again in a war being continued for unknown reasons. We can not Win or Lose Vietnam but we certainly can learn not to repeat the same.

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Michael Bellamy](#) - Wednesday, 2 December 2009, 07:32 PM

A question such as this can look simple at first glance and seem short in response at first thought, but that is hardly the case here. When it comes to war there are so many different factors that determine "winning" and "losing." These factors cover all angles whether it's through military, politics, territory, or socially. When we look at the United States' involvement with the Vietnam War, we immediately come to the conclusion that it was an obvious loss when the Northern Vietnamese forces took over Saigon, and the country, along with Cambodia and Laos, fell to communism. Usually after one side of a war forcibly takes over and controls the opposing side that's considered a loss for the opposition. More often then not this statement is accepted as true by the general public and with the Vietnam War we must determine who exactly is on the losing side.

First let's look at the military aspect of Vietnam - specifically the body count, which was one of the main statistics used for measuring the rate of success during the war. The United States military lost over 58,000 lives throughout the duration of the entire war, which is a total that is noticeably less than the South Vietnamese body count at over 220,000, and the North Vietnamese body count at well over one million. Generally the side with the lowest body count walks away victorious, so if we were to determine the winner based off of this result, technically the United States won right?

Now let's look at politics. It is very apparent that the United States was fighting a war against communism, and that the end of the war resulted in South Vietnam falling under communist rule. But that's South Vietnam. Over here in the United States we're the same old nationalist country we've always been, and so far there hasn't been a hint of communism in any level of our government. So then this must mean we didn't lose, right? Clearly the Southern Vietnamese are the ones who bear the burden of defeat. We made a political choice to withdraw troops and they did not succeed in defending their own government.

Finally let's consider the territorial and social components of the war. The entire war was fought in Southeast Asia and an overwhelming majority of the Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian land was destroyed beyond imaginable. Entire villages were burnt to the ground and what was left, if anything, was finished off by another air bombing attack. For the Vietnamese, a normal social life was absent, only a distant memory from before the very beginnings of the war. It didn't matter if it was a town, a small village, or a deep part of the jungle, it was affected in one way or another and the very last place to search for peace. The United States on the other hand wasn't being bombed, and there weren't any small towns invaded by search-and-destroy operations. People were not evacuated from their homes and could carry out their everyday lives as they pleased. As far as social life is concerned, there was nothing altering about the direct actions in Vietnam for our country itself. Vietnam was physically torn to shreds, and since the United States came out of the war in one piece, clearly it's the Vietnamese who suffered a much heavier loss, right? Well, maybe...

We look at these elements on paper and get a first impression that the United States "losing" the Vietnam War is hardly the truth. Yet, why is it that when we speak of Vietnam it is always in a negative manner? Why is it that when Vietnam War veterans are asked to relive their experiences many begin to emotionally tear up? And why is it that this war in particular has left such a stabbing pain in our society, and has affected the lives of countless people who were never actually in Vietnam themselves? Even though the numbers go our way, and the overall condition of our country ended in our favor, nothing can take away from the individual personal losses many people experienced throughout the Vietnam War. The United States as a country did not lose, but those individuals will never recover from the searing pain they experienced both physically and emotionally. With that being said, the real question to ask is: *what exactly did we achieve?* Because whatever that is, it's certainly nothing close to a victory.

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Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose

by [Matthew McIntosh](#) - Wednesday, 2 December 2009, 07:49 PM

Can you lose and still win? I might be wrong but I am going to go out on a limb and say that the United States won the war. I know that seems crazy but as I read more about Vietnam I think we won. We went to Vietnam to stop the spread of communism and even though South Vietnam and some of the surrounding countries were taken by communism it did not spread world wide and wasn't that the goal to stop the spread of communism? We lost less men than the North Vietnamese and after we finally left and South Vietnam fell to the North, we limited trade, aid from other countries, and even limited business trying to be established in Vietnam. After Vietnam Congress now stands up to the president and doesn't give him the power to do what ever he wants(except maybe Bush) and now media coverage and how the United States looks at foreign affairs has changed, we now look before we leap or are more cautious with what we do in other countries. With all that I think those things might just be lessons we have learned from Vietnam, but I think we won.

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Paul Slaughterbeck](#) - Wednesday, 2 December 2009, 08:26 PM

I admire you for attempting to argue what is a pretty hard argument for a lot of people to swallow. I wonder if the "(except maybe Bush)" part isn't more important, however. What Bush did in deceiving Congress about the "Weapons of Mass Destruction" to get us into a war with Iraq seems very similar to the way LBJ used the "incident" in the Tonkin Gulf to get the resolution passed that enabled him to do the same in Vietnam. This lesson (even if you argue that both were due to faulty intelligence) is one that was clearly not learned. As to your previous point, you are correct that communism never dominated the world as "we" feared it might, but I don't know whether this can be attributed to our efforts in Indochina or not. Once again, I like that someone had the courage to take up this argument, however.

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Kelly Culhane](#) - Thursday, 3 December 2009, 09:18 PM

I also commend the position that you are taking. If you break things down so black and white like you have, maybe to some people the United States did win. But, I believe that things are not so clear cut. What did we win? As far as the media coverage goes, of course things have changed. Technology has changed drastically, and things are much more readily available, between satellites and the internet. What I find even more disturbing is that we have all of this technology available to us, yet we still remain naive and misinformed about major political issues. We also seem to be a society that has turned into a society obsessed with gossip. Doesn't anyone else find it sad that we are at war, can not get public health care for our citizens as a fundamental right, but we want to know if Tiger will be getting divorced and how many affairs did he have? Sorry, that was my personal pet peeve!

Anyway, I think that we lost the war in many aspects. The citizens lost their faith and trust in the government that runs them. Soldiers came home, the ones that actually came home, with so many more problems than what we were prepared to treat them for. Nowadays many of them are homeless, incarcerated, in mental institutions, or have lost many things in their life due to the fact that no one was prepared for the problems that they came home with, mentally and physically.

My question is, why has no one discussed who truly lost the war, the Vietnamese? Here is a country that only wanted it's own independence, they did not ask to be at war for generations. What gave us, or the French, or Chinese to decide that we know what is right for anyone else? Where does our responsibility lie in all of this? We went over there and destroyed more than what any of the other wars they had to fight did. More destruction of their land, lives, and their way of life. So many refugees fled and were murdered, yet we did nothing to help them rebuild. Sure we gave humanitarian aid, but I am sure that was about trying to save face with the rest of the world. Where was our moral and ethical obligation to help people all over the world then? Why haven't we had to suffer the disgrace of having some of our military men and politicians subjected to War Crimes trials? Is it because we think that we are better than everyone else, or that we are above the laws that we expect others to live and govern by?

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Brian Hein](#) - Thursday, 3 December 2009, 09:34 PM

One of the main reasons we entered into the Vietnam War in the first place was to stop the global spread of communism. We were really afraid China's and Russia's influence in the world would spread. The reading for this week gave a different perspective to the Vietnam War. With the "collapse of the Soviet Union and its empire and the demise of communism" "American's may come to regard the Vietnam War as little more than a tactical setback in what turned out to be a strategic victory, a lost battle in a war eventually won"(Herring pg. 357). Still, it is hard to think of 58,000 Americans losing their lives was just battle in a larger war.

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Rate... **Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Paul Slaughterbeck](#) - Friday, 4 December 2009, 03:52 PM

What about the fact that it was and is not our right to decide what form of government other countries choose to adopt. If China wants to start running an all children's government in which the rights of people are decided by how much cheese they can produce, so be it. Whether or not Communism spreads to other countries may have been disconcerting to us, but these countries don't belong to us. It is just a subversive form of world imperialism to think otherwise. We must take in as many refugees from tyrannically run countries as we can, and do whatever we can diplomatically and with sanctions to limit the power of the governments in these countries, but we don't have a right to dictate how they are run through force. And the idea that we can predict our own imminent danger, thus allowing us to wage war because it may stop a "future" danger, is a very slippery slope.

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Rate... **Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Name Withheld-6450](#) - Saturday, 5 December 2009, 10:21 AM

Hmm, I'm not sure I agree there. Yes, these countries do not belong to us, but we have to draw a moral line somewhere. Do you know how many people died in the Great Leap forward? Gulags in Siberia? We regard World War 2 as a "moral" war but stopping communism now seems more like Imperialism on *our* part but not on the part of the aggressors. (The Communists) Would you consider the war against the Axis as a war of Imperialism on our part?

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Rate... **Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Paul Slaughterbeck](#) - Saturday, 5 December 2009, 07:44 PM

Who says who gets to draw the moral line where? I am not saying that we should not fight against tyranny, just not militarily outside of our own borders. If someone hits you, you can defend yourself. In 911 we were "hit", so a response was understandable (against the Taliban and with the help of the rest of the world). If someone just looks at you mean, (Iraq, Iran, N. Korea, etc) that doesn't mean that you can hit them. I know these are idealistic and simplistic views, but I just think that war should truly be the last option. Instead it often seems that we are just looking for the first chance we can get to flex our muscles. This policing of the world business is neither our job nor our right, in my opinion. If there were a country who should be doing this duty, I would hope it wouldn't be a capitalistic greed-based society who doesn't even seem to care about their own subjugated and impoverished people.

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Rate... **Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Mikco Stiner](#) - Saturday, 5 December 2009, 07:24 PM

Your right we dont have the right to tell other countries how to run their government but there is suggestion. The only reason Vietnam happened was out of fear of communism causing a domino affect. Which never happened anyway, but the point was we were supposed to be looking out for not only the U.S. but the rest of the world. Sometimes you step out of your bounderies to do so.

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Mikko Stiner](#) - Saturday, 5 December 2009, 07:18 PM

I do agree that the war started because of the fear of communism causing a domino effect. And although we didn't win the war the domino effect never took place anyway. So did we even need to be there fighting to begin with?

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Mikko Stiner](#) - Saturday, 5 December 2009, 07:29 PM

I never thought of it that way but it is a good point. Stopping communism in Vietnam itself was also an objective and that was not reached? And still to this day we have many Veterans that suffer still from the war. Day after day they are still affected greatly by the time they spent there wheather mentally, physically, or both. To me the suffering Veterans is part of our loss that stays with us day after day. I just think there are different kinds of winning and losing.

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Tiffany Adrian](#) - Wednesday, 2 December 2009, 10:08 PM

"The American evacuation of Saigon revealed in microcosm much of the delusion, frustration, and tragedy that had marked the American experience in Vietnam(Herring pg.336.) No I don't believe that we won the war in Vietnam, for many reasons. I think us getting into the war in the first place seemed like a fight that we could not win. Even with the peace agreements in 1973,the war seemed to wage on, and continued to wage on even when the last American helicopter left Saigon. Nixon had promised continued aid to South Vietnam after our departure to ensure they could continue on with the fighting we had trained them for. Unfortunately after Watergate Nixon no longer had any power and congress decided to stop all aid to South Vietnam. "Nixon's ill-advised promises tempted President Thieu to reject the admittedly risky choice of negotiations and to launch a war he could not win."(Herring pg.338),With this NLF invaded Saigon and South Vietnam fell.

So why was the United States so unsuccessful? I think in a lot of ways we were fighting a country that had been fighting for their independence for a thousand years. Even as the Prime Minister of Vietnam said to Robert McNamara "We were fighting for our independence, and we would fight until the last minute, and we were determined to do so, and no amount of money, no amount of U.S. pressure would have stopped us.(Robert McNamara's speech.) With a country so determined to win, could we have ever stopped them, and if we hadn't pulled out could we possibly be at war today? It seems that we did leave the South Vietnamese to fend for themselves and made empty promises to them. We abandoned our allies when we tired of the war. In the end the real losers of Vietnam were the South Vietnamese.

Although North Vietnam was victorious they won at a great expense. Millions of people had lost their lives, and had become refugees. The North and South were still at odds with one another. The country went into economic crisis and the effect of Agent Orange that the U.S. sprayed is still having it's effect today on many people.

Years later I think that we have made our amends and each of our nations share in a history that defines us today. Even today I think maybe there was a small victory for the United States in part with the Normalization of Vietnam in 1977 and then the full support and help of Vietnam to help find those missing in action. We now have opened up an embargo that was administered under the Clinton Administration with Vietnam and large company's like Pepsi Cola and Nike being one of Vietnam's largest foreign employers (Herring 365.) So maybe in ways we did have a small victory, but overall the Vietnam War was a frustrating and disappointing war for Americans who fought and lived through those times. I only hope that we learned our lesson as McNamara stated in his speech. Maybe, but even today it seems we are fighting a war with no end and more American lives are being lost. Will we ever truly learn?

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Mikco Stiner](#) - Thursday, 3 December 2009, 09:34 PM

Unfortunately I do believe that we lost the Vietnam war and still to this day are suffering and at a loss from it. By all means the body count surely showed in our favor but when you take a look at our objectives they were clearly not met. We did not stop communism or the eventual taking over of South Vietnam by the communists. This is what North Vietnam wanted, so they succeeded in reaching their objectives while the U.S. failed. That is why I would say we technically lost the war. If you take a look at the Veterans who were fortunate enough not to lose their lives in combat and came home had to and still may have to deal with the people they saw die even by their own hands, family members in the war that may have died, or a wife or girlfriend who couldn't handle being with a soldier. Many soldiers mentally never came back from Vietnam. They may suffer from things such as Post traumatic stress disorder which can cause them to have persistent frightening thoughts and memories of the ordeal, feel emotionally numb, especially with people they were once close to, sleep problems, being easily startled, or having angry outbursts. There are also many health related problems that many veterans suffer from as well, besides just the more known combat wounds. Agent Orange was the problem of many of those health problems which many are still suffering from today. Some Agent Orange caused illnesses may be: neuropathy, different kinds of leukemia, diabetes mellitus(type2), hodgekins disease, prostate and respiratory cancer, and many others. My dad did two tours in Vietnam and now has neuropathy and diabetes. He is considered 100% disabled. I remember how in shape and healthy he used to be, and in his pictures his muscles were really toned. He now weighs only about 110lbs. His neuropathy is so bad he has trouble walking so he usually uses a cane and often uses his balance and falls. It is so heartbreaking for me to see him this way and I know that there are others out there feeling the loss as well. So for me we lost the Vietnam war and continue to lose everyday as we carry it with us.

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Michael Bellamy](#) - Friday, 4 December 2009, 06:40 PM

I would like to start a new discussion here, and that's focusing on the second part of this question: *Can the Vietnam War still be won or lost today?*

As far as winning is concerned, I honestly think that if Vietnam never happened when it did, and instead started in the present day, we would still not win. I believe that our government would have done the exact same thing as it did all the way back throughout the duration of the war and would get too caught up in trying to prevent something that eventually turned out "unwinnable." If the Vietnam War started today, we would not have learned any of the mistakes we did in the actual war. Obviously now we have far better technology and highly advanced war equipment than we did 30 years ago, but then again, you reflect back on the war and realize that wouldn't make a difference. Back then when you compare our technology to that of the Vietnamese it wasn't even close - this means that our level of success was not related to the technological advances we possessed.

When you look at the current conflicts in the Middle East you can't help to be reminded of Vietnam. Each president during the Vietnam War contributed to the war's escalation in one way or another and just recently, President Obama addressed he will be sending 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan. Again, when hearing things like this you can't help to be reminded of Vietnam.

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**Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose**by [Name Withheld-6450](#) - Saturday, 5 December 2009, 10:47 AM

Yes, totally agreed. We are seeing the exact same patterns now in our current conflicts in the Middle East and Central Asia. A war that is extremely unpopular, troop increases and decreases. And now our current

president has set an exact date for our troops to pull out of the Middle East. I will not make any political statements here, but I will state that simply, we are doing the exact same things now that we did in Vietnam. Whether it's for the best or not, time will only tell.

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Re: Question #1 - Win or Lose

by [Nicholas Holden](#) - Saturday, 5 December 2009, 07:30 PM

Who won the Vietnam war and who lost? With the North Vietnamese flag flying over Saigon it seems like the answer would be pretty strait forward. But the effects of America's involvement in Indochina from '64-'72 are anything but strait forward. I would say that using the terms "win or lose" as well as "victory and defeat" are far too crude and inexact to describe the very nuanced and wide ranging outcome of the ten thousand day war.

First off, the Hanoi was able to conquer the south and reunite the nation of Vietnam on it's terms and under it's banner; it's difficult to argue with a result such as that. America's ally was literally wiped off the map and the images of Marines hauling down the Stars and Stripes over the US embassy in Saigon were seared into the national consciousness for decades to come. America's policy of countering communist threats to Indochina lay in ruins.

But, what of America's other goal; stopping the fall of dominoes in greater East Asia? By this measure America was largely successful. While the US lost in Vietnam we won in a incomparably more important country; China. The Nixon/Kissinger meetings with Mao and the turning of the People's Republic of China against the Soviet Union and it's Vietnamese client stands as the ultimate achievement of statecraft by any power during the Cold War. With one fell stroke Nixon had mitigated many of the ill effects of an American withdraw from Indochina and had given Hanoi a powerful enemy to contend with long after the US had left the scene. It is also worth pointing out that the Indochinese wars did not end after the fall of Saigon in '75. In 1978 Hanoi invaded Cambodia and ousted the Chinese backed Khmer Rouge regime of Pol Pot. Beijing was none too pleased with the actions of their erstwhile comrades in Hanoi and subsequently launched a month long invasion into northern Vietnam in February of 1979 in effort to make the Vietnamese see the error of their ways and leave Cambodia.

While the Chinese invasion was by many accounts an unmitigated military disaster and failed to force Hanoi out of Cambodia it did serve to draw more of Vietnam's scarce resources away from repairing the vast destruction wrought by the American War. The combined drains of a miniature cold war with China and a ten year occupation of Cambodia served to limit Vietnam's ability to act on the world stage until well into the 1990's. All said, while Hanoi won Vietnam America won Asia.

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