

CWA 4.10 – What Happened at My Lai? (Page 1 of 6)

Background: On March 16, 1968, the soldiers of Charlie Company entered My Lai, within Son May village, prepared for a fierce fight with Vietnamese communists believed to be the area. The platoon had already suffered heavy casualties from previous missions. However, reports had been wrong: there were no enemy soldiers. Without any return enemy fire, Captain Ernest Medina, Lieutenant William Calley and other members of Charlie Company shot and killed nearly every man, woman, and child in the village. The official U.S. count for those murdered is 347, while the My Lai site memorial notes 504 killed. Seymour Hersh, an independent journalist, reported the cover up on November 11, 1969. By then, the military had charged Lt. Calley with murder and ordered an official investigation, which produced the Peers Commission report. Calley's trial opened a heated national debate about the morality of war, soldier conduct, and U.S. objections in Vietnam.

Instructions: Assign each person in your group a primary source. Everyone must compile notes and fill in notes for their source below. Afterwards, share your results with your group. Next, write one paragraph explaining what happened on March 16, 1968. You must refer to each primary source and cite evidence from it. Your paragraph should also answer the following question: *Why is My Lai Important?*

Source – Citation (Title, author, date, audience)	How is this source related to the My Lai massacre? What is this source's perspective about the My Lai massacre?	What information from this source is most important? How does it help you understand what happened at My Lai?
"The Massacre at MyLai," <i>Life Magazine</i> , December 6, 1969, available online here: http://life.time.com/history/my-lai-remembering-an-american-atrocity-in-vietnam-march-1968/#3 (Photos by Ronald Haeberle, former U.S. Army photographer)		
Lt. William Calley Military Court-Martial Transcript, 1970.		
Lewis Puller Autobiography <i>Fortunate Son</i> (1991)		

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Source – Citation (Title, author, date, audience)	How is this source related to the My Lai massacre? What is this source’s perspective about the My Lai massacre?	What information from this source is most important? How does it help you understand what happened at My Lai?
Nguyen Hieu Testimony Peers Commission, 1970		
Peers Commission Report "Summary of Findings" 1970		
<p>1. What Happened at My Lai?</p>		
<p>2. Why is My Lai Important?</p>		

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Lt. William Calley Trial Transcript

At his court-martial trial in 1970, Lt. William Calley answered questions about company casualties and operations prior to My Lai and how those events affected his attitude. A military jury found him guilty of killing 22 people and sentenced him to life imprisonment. President Richard Nixon placed Calley on house arrest and pardoned him in 1974. Below is an excerpt:

Q: Every time that the company would go, at least a company-sized unit, to try to get in that area and stay in there, they encountered hostile fire, enemy fire, suffered casualties, and were driven out?

A: Yes, sir. [Calley was asked about an incident that occurred when he was returning to his company from in-country R and R. As he was waiting for a helicopter to take him to his men, he helped unload a chopper filled with casualties caused by a mine field.]

Q: What did you see and what did you do in connection with that helicopter when it landed back there and before you boarded up to get to meet your company?

A: The chopper was filled with gear, rifles, rucksacks. I think the most—the thing that really hit me hard was the heavy boots. There must have been six boots there with the feet still in them, brains all over the place, and everything was saturated with blood, rifles blown in half. I believe there was one arm on it and a piece of a man's face, half of a man's face was on a chopper with the gear.

Q: Did you later subsequently learn that those members that were emaciated in that manner were members of your company or your platoon?

A: I knew at the time that they were.

Q: What was your feeling when you saw what you did see in the chopper and what you found out about your organization being involved in that kind of an operation?

A: I don't know if I can describe the feelings.

Q: At least try.

A: It's anger, hate, fear, generally sick to your stomach, hurt.

Q: Did it have any impact on your beliefs, your ideas or what you might like to do in connection with somehow or other on into combat accomplishing your mission? Am I making that too complicated for you?

A: I believe so.

Q: I'm trying to find out if it had any impact on your future actions as you were going to have to go in and if you did go in and reach the enemy on other occasions and if so, what was the impact?

A: I'm not really sure of what my actual feelings were at the time. I can't sit down and say I made any formal conclusions of what I would do when I met the enemy. I think there is an—that instilled a deeper sense of hatred for the enemy. I don't think I ever made up my mind or came to any conclusion as to what I'd do to the enemy.

Q: All right. Now did you have any remorse or grief or anything?

A: Yes, sir. I did.

Q: What was that?

A: The remorse for losing my men in the mine field. The remorse that those men ever had to go to Vietnam, the remorse that being in that situation where you are completely helpless. I think I felt mainly remorse because I wasn't there, although there was nothing I could do. There was a psychological factor of just not being there when everything is happening.

Q: Did you feel sorry that you weren't there with your troops?

A: Yes, Sir.

Source: Olson, James and Randy Roberts. My Lai: A Brief History with Documents (Boston: Bedford Books, 1998), 52-53.

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Lewis Puller Autobiography

From *Fortunate Son: The Autobiography of Lewis B. Puller Jr.* (1991). Lewis Puller, a U.S. Marine who lost both of his legs and an arm in combat during the Vietnam War, felt that the My Lai episode stained the reputations of millions of honorable young men who had fought in Vietnam.

On November 12, 1970, at Fort Benning, Georgia, the court martial of Lieutenant William L. Calley, Jr., for the murder of civilians at My Lai began. The trial lasted for more than four months and was the focus of such intense media coverage that it became, in effect, a forum for debate over American involvement in Vietnam. Calley was portrayed by supporters of the war as a maverick acting alone and without orders, whose actions, brought on by the stress of prolonged combat and casualties in his own unit, were an aberration from the rules of engagement. The opposing viewpoint held that his actions, if not sanctioned by higher authority, were at least tolerated and were typical of the conduct of ground units in the war.

I was deeply offended by the notion that the hideous atrocities committed by Calley and his men were commonplace in Vietnam, an inevitable consequence of an ill-advised involvement in someone else's civil war. The men I had in combat, were, like any cross section of American youth, capable of good and evil, and I felt we all were, by implication, being branded as murderers and rapists. Throughout the proceedings the reportage seemed to me to accentuate the monstrous evil of a group of men gone amok without any effort to depict fairly the discipline and courage that existed along with the forces of darkness in most units.

Lieutenant Calley was ultimately found guilty of the premeditated murder of twenty-two civilians and sentenced to life imprisonment, but I felt his punishment could never right the evil he had done or the perceptions he helped foster of America's soldiers and Marines as bloodthirsty killers. At the end of the trial I wrote letters to several local newspapers protesting that it was unfair for the Calley case to have so influenced public opinion, but the grisly photographs of murdered civilians lying in a ditch at My Lai which had been so prominently displayed in newspapers across the country, spoke far more eloquently than my feeble words.

Source: Lewis Puller, "Fortunate Son: The Autobiography of Lewis B. Puller," in James Olson and Randy Roberts, *My Lai: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 1998): 187-188.

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Nguyen Hieu Testimony

Nguyen Hieu was 23 years old and an eye-witness of the massacre at My Lai. The following is his testimony to the Peers Commission, the official U.S. Army investigation of the killings and cover up.

Q: What is your name?

A: Nguyen Hieu.

Q: How old are you?

A: Twenty-five years old.

Q: Are you a native of Tu Cung?

A: Yes...

Q: ...Were you in a house on the morning of 16 March 1968 when the Americans came?

A: Yes, I lived there in 1968.

Q: Were you there on the morning of 16 March 1968 when the Americans came?

A: Yes, I was there that morning.

Q: How many other members of your family were there with you in the house that morning?

A: Five.

Q: What did you do when you heard the artillery fire?

A: For the first time early in the morning I heard artillery come in here (indicating) and American helicopters come into here (indicating) on the west side of the village. They came here and they took us from the bunker.

Q: Was the bunker near your house?

A: Yes, right here (indicating).

Q: Did all the members of your family go in the bunker?

A: My mother stayed in the house. I and the children went to the bunker.

Q: How long did you stay in the bunker?

A: About 2 hours.

Q: Did you Americans come near the bunker?

A: Yes, they came into the bunker

Q: They came into the bunker?

A: Yes.

Q: And did they make you come out of the bunker?

A: When the Americans came to my house my mother came out of the house, and the Americans then raped my mother and they shot her.

Q: They shot and raped your mother?

A: Yes, shot and raped my mother. My sister ran out of the bunker and they shot my sister and two children.

Q: How many Americans were there?

A: Two Americans

Q: Were you the only one that stayed in the bunker?

A: Yes, I stayed alone.

Q: And your sister went out of the bunker and was shot?

A: My sister went out of the bunker to help my mother and was shot.

Q: After the soldiers that shot the people left, how long were you in the bunker before the other soldiers came that burned the house?

A: About 40 minutes

Q: Did they shoot any livestock? Any animals, chickens, pigs?

A: They killed two buffalo.

Q: What did you do after the soldiers left?

A: After the Americans left I buried my mother and sister.

Q: I am sorry that your family was killed like this. Thank you for coming here today to help us.

Source: *My Lai: A Brief History with Documents* 94-96.

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Peers Commission Summary of Findings

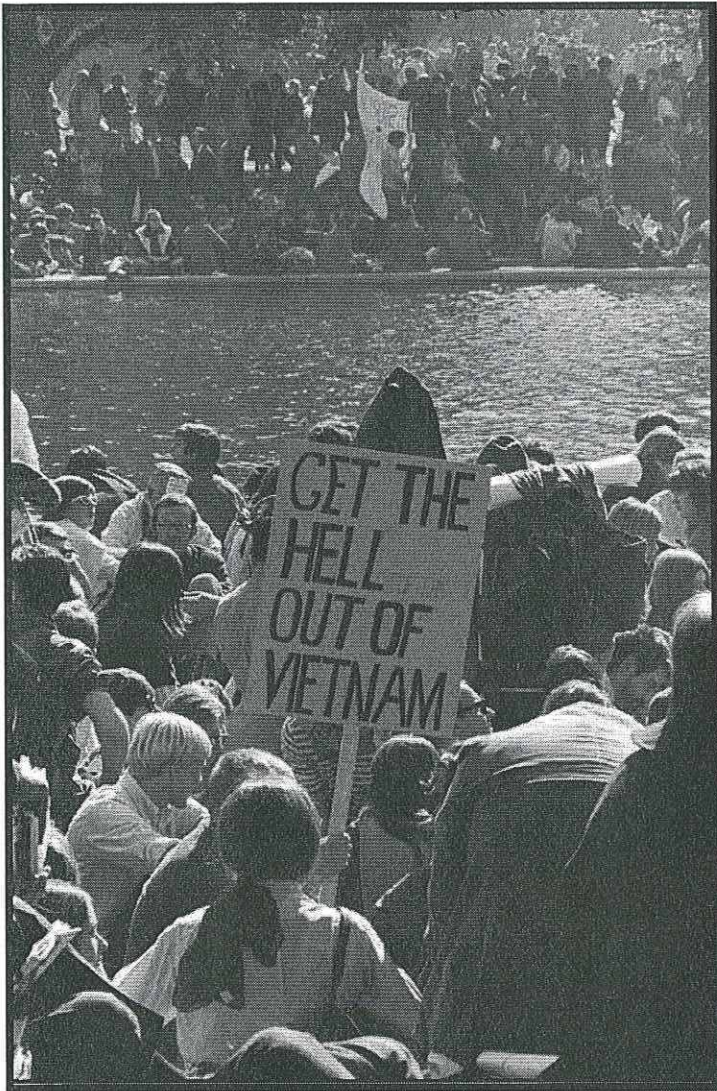
After the media exposed and charged the military with a cover up of the massacre, the U.S. Army assigned Lieutenant General William R. Peers with the investigative task of determining an official account of the events on March 16, 1968 and the extent of the cover up since that day. Known as the Peers Commission, the task force interviewed eye-witnesses and personnel with knowledge of the massacre. A summary of its findings is below. "Task Force Barker," "11th Brigade," and "Americal Division" refers to parts of Charlie Company of which Lt. William Calley's was a commanding officer. For more information, see http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/RDAR-Vol-I.pdf (page 2-12 to 2-13).

It is concluded that:

1. During the period of 16-19 March 1968, troops of Task Force Barker massacred a large number of Vietnamese nationals in the village of Son My.
2. Knowledge as to the extent of the incident existed at company level, at least among the key staff officers and commander at the Task Force Barker level, and at the 11th Brigade command level.
3. Efforts at the Division command level to conceal information concerning what was probably believed to be the killing of 20-28 civilians actually resulted in the suppression of a war crime of far greater magnitude.
4. The commander of the 11th Brigade, upon learning that a war crime had probably been committed, deliberately set out to conceal the fact from proper authority and to deceive his commander concerning the matter.
5. Investigations concerning the incident conducted within the Americal Division were superficial and misleading and not subjected to substantive review.
6. Efforts were made at every level of command from company to division to withhold and suppress information concerning the incident at Son My.
7. Failure of Division headquarters personnel to act on information received from GVN/ARVN officials served to suppress effectively information concerning the Son My incident.
8. Efforts of the Division to suppress and withhold information were assisted by US officers serving in advisory positions with Vietnamese agencies.

For more information, http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/Peers_inquiry.html.

CWA 4.12- How to Stop the War? (Page 1 of 5)



Vietnam War protesters at the March on the Pentagon, October 21, 1967, Frank Wolfe, Photographer. Source: Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library, National Archives, Reference # 7051-33.

Background: Unlike previous wars, the public outcry over Vietnam was national in scope and protests were large, highly publicized mobilizations that involved many student groups, social justice organizations, and civil rights activists. Much like the war itself, the anti-war movement was prolonged as well. As early as 1965, Americans began protesting the Vietnam War because they questioned the legitimacy of U.S. presence in Vietnam. The protest movements started with younger Americans, who often organized on college campuses. These college-aged anti-war protesters felt the immediate threat of the war since they were subject to the draft. Widespread protest grew by 1967 when the U.S. had nearly 500,000 troops in Vietnam; by the end of that year 15,058 troops had been killed and 109,527 had been wounded. Over time, the war was costing Americans \$25 billion each year and nearly 40,000 men were being drafted each month. In one of the largest anti-war protests up until that point in American history, on October 21, 1967 about 100,000 protesters gathered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. to express their discontent over the war. The next year turned even more Americans against the war. The Tet Offensive and Walter Cronkite's public questioning of the U.S.'s ability to win the war turned more Americans against the war. In fact,

many soldiers returning from the war joined the anti-war movement. The organization Vietnam Veterans against the War began in 1967; 30,000 became members quickly. On campuses,

students and professors staged teach-ins. Elsewhere, artists and musicians produced anti-war art and songs.

Directions: In your groups, review each primary source and complete the source analysis chart. After you've completed your review, discuss the following:

- Why did some Americans oppose the Vietnam War?
- What methods did protestors use to oppose the war?
- What impact, if any, did protests have upon American leadership?

CWA 4.12- How to Stop the War? (Page 2 of 5)

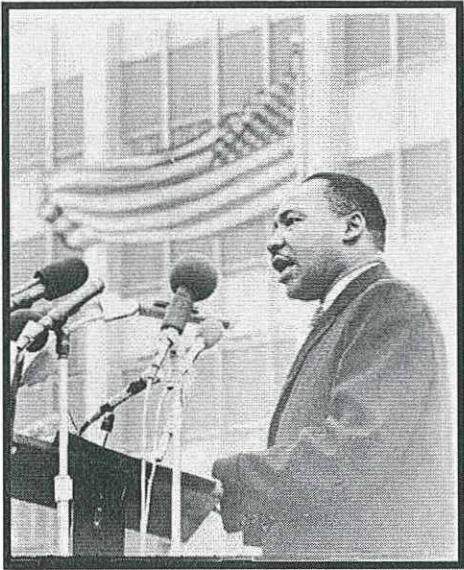
Basic Source Information	Source Description	Source Analysis
Title:	What is the source about? (use bullets to describe)	Audience: Who is the intended audience for this source?
Author:		Purpose: Why was this source created?
Document type (text, photo, map, etc.):		What is the main idea / thesis of the source?
When created:		Relevant Evidence: Why did some Americans oppose the Vietnam War?
Where created:		Relevant Evidence: What methods did protestors use to oppose the war?
Citation:		

CWA 4.12- How to Stop the War? (Anti-War Protest Outside White House)



Anti-Vietnam war protest and demonstration in front of the White House in support of singer Eartha Kitt, who publicly criticized the war effort when she was invited to a luncheon hosted by first lady Lady Bird Johnson. January 19, 1968, Warren K. Leffler, Photographer, U.S. News & World Report Photo Collection. Source: Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010646065/>

CWA 4.12- How to Stop the War? (Beyond Vietnam by Martin Luther King, Jr.)



Martin Luther King, Jr., half-length portrait, facing left, speaking at microphones, during anti-war demonstration, New York City / World Journal Tribune photo by Don Rice, 1967. Source: Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/94505369/>

Background: Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968), a prominent Civil Rights leader, gave a speech on April 4, 1967 before 3,000 people at Riverside Church in New York City, as guest of the organization Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam. Dr. King risked his political influence within the Civil Rights Movement and with President Lyndon Johnson when he made this public declaration against the war. During the speech, he presented seven reasons for his opposition: 1) funds that could go towards the poor in the U.S. were spent instead on the war; 2) a disproportionate number of black people were sent to fight and die in Vietnam compared to whites; 3) a firm belief in non-violence; 4) a commitment for full equality for black people, and not just civil rights; 5) dedication to "life and health of America"; 6) his religious faith; and 7) vows as a minister of his faith. In this excerpt, Dr. King provided five recommendations for ending the Vietnam War.

Excerpt: "If we continue, there will be no doubt in my mind and in the mind of the world that we have no honorable intentions in Vietnam. If we do not stop our war against the people of Vietnam immediately, the world will be left with no other alternative than to see this as some horrible, clumsy, and deadly game we have decided to play. The world now demands a maturity of America that we may not be able to

achieve. It demands that we admit we have been wrong from the beginning of our adventure in Vietnam, that we have been detrimental to the life of the Vietnamese people. The situation is one in which we must be ready to turn sharply from our present ways. In order to atone for our sins and errors in Vietnam, we should take the initiative in bringing a halt to this tragic war.

I would like to suggest five concrete things that our government should do to begin the long and difficult process of extricating ourselves from this nightmarish conflict:

Number one: End all bombing in North and South Vietnam.

Number two: Declare a unilateral cease-fire in the hope that such action will create the atmosphere for negotiation.

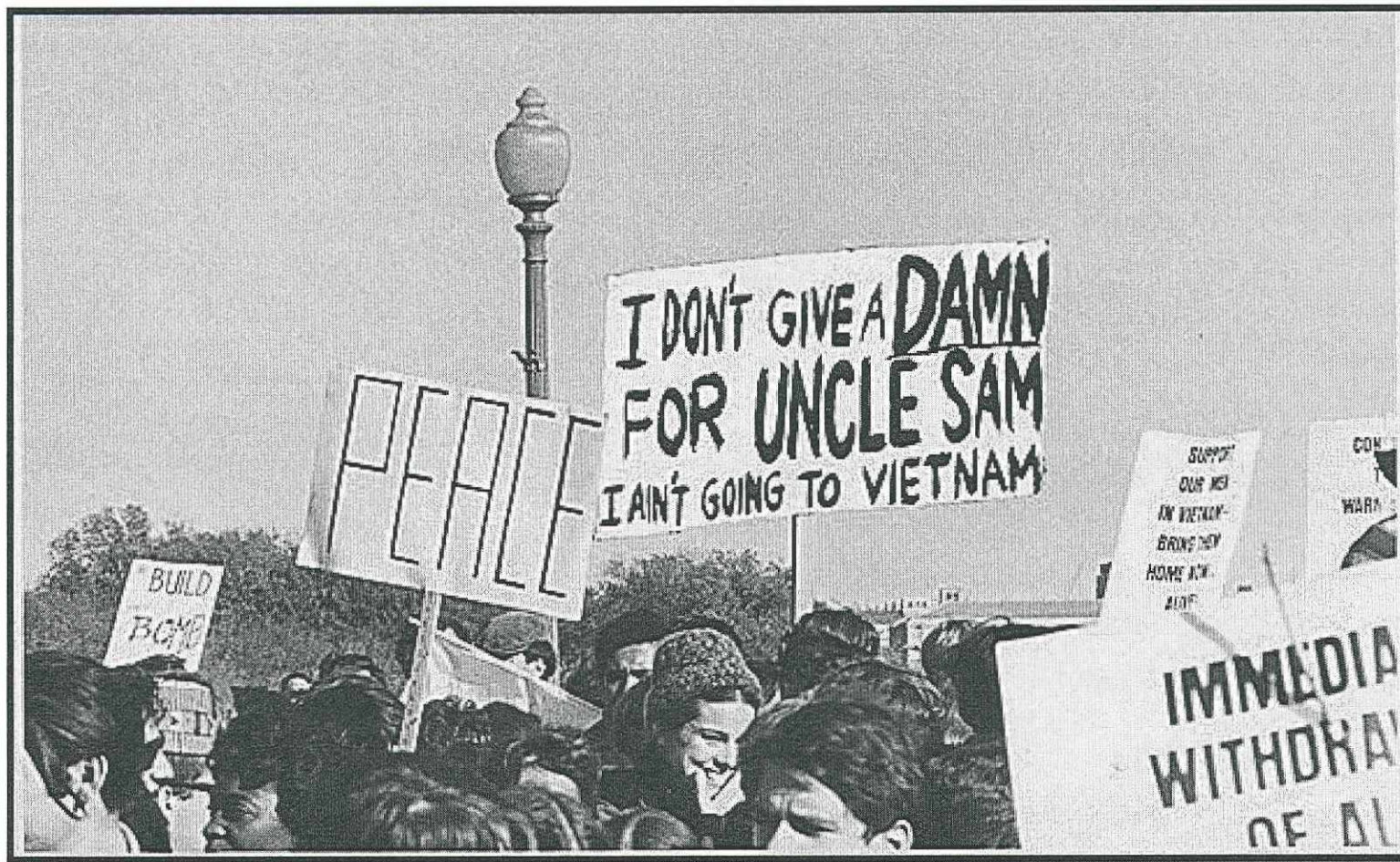
Three: Take immediate steps to prevent other battlegrounds in Southeast Asia by curtailing our military buildup in Thailand and our interference in Laos.

Four: Realistically accept the fact that the National Liberation Front has substantial support in South Vietnam and must thereby play a role in any meaningful negotiations and any future Vietnam government.

Five: Set a date that we will remove all foreign troops from Vietnam in accordance with the 1954 Geneva Agreement."

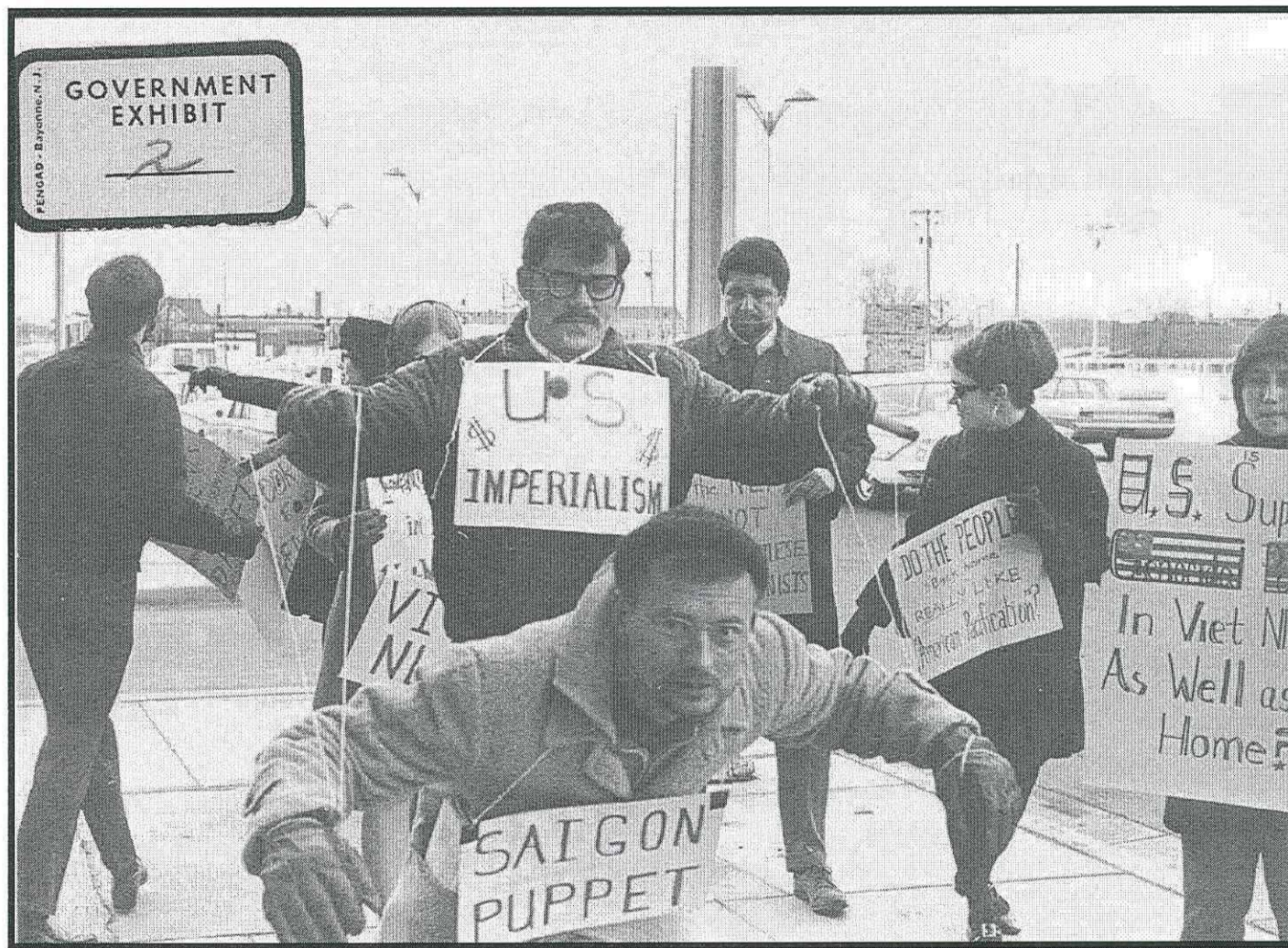
Source: *The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute at Stanford University, http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/doc_beyond_vietnam/. The corresponding audio clip for the text above is from timestamp 33:50 to 37:16.*

CWA 4.11- How to Stop the War? (March on the Pentagon)



Public Reactions:
The March on the
Pentagon,
10/21/1967.
Source: Lyndon
Baines Johnson
Presidential
Library, National
Archives, ARC
Identifier 192605

CWA 4.12- How to Stop the War? (Kansas War Protestors)



*Vietnam War Protesters,
Wichita, Kansas, 1967*
Item from Record Group 21:
Records of District Courts of
the United States, 1685 –
2004, U.S. District Court for
the Second (Wichita) Division
of the District of Kansas.
(06/09/1890 -) File
Unit: United States v.
Blackmon, 1967 - 1967
Source: National Archives,
ARC Identifier 283625

CWA 4.12- How to Stop the War? (John Kerry Testimony before Congress)

Background: On April 22, 1971, Lt. John Kerry, spoke on behalf of Vietnam Veterans of America to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Kerry later became a U.S. Senator himself, representing Massachusetts and was appointed Secretary of State in 2013. An excerpt of the transcript of his testimony is printed below.

(Source: Congressional Record (92nd Congress, 1st Session) for Thursday, April 22, 1971, pages 179-210. To see excerpts of his recorded testimony online, visit C-SPAN <http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/181065-1>)

Excerpt: "The country doesn't know it yet, but it has created a monster, a monster in the form of millions of men who have been taught to deal and to trade in violence, and who are given the chance to die for the biggest nothing in history; men who have returned with a sense of anger and a sense of betrayal which no one has yet grasped.

As a veteran and one who feels this anger, I would like to talk about it. We are angry because we feel we have been used in the worst fashion by the administration of this country.

...we cannot consider ourselves America's best men when we are ashamed of and hated what we were called on to do in Southeast Asia. In our opinion, and from our experience, there is nothing in South Vietnam, nothing which could happen that realistically threatens the United States of America. And to attempt to justify the loss of one American life in Vietnam, Cambodia, or Laos by linking such loss to the preservation of freedom, which those misfits supposedly abuse, is to us the height of criminal hypocrisy, and it is that kind of hypocrisy which we feel has torn this country apart.

... I want to relate to you the feeling that many of the men who have returned to this country express because we are probably angriest about all that we were told about Vietnam and about the mystical war against communism. We found that not only was it a civil war, an effort by a people who had for years been seeking their liberation from any colonial influence whatsoever....

We found most people didn't even know the difference between communism and democracy. They only wanted to work in rice paddies without helicopters strafing them and bombs with napalm burning their villages and tearing their country apart. They wanted everything to do with the war, particularly with this foreign presence of the United States of America, to leave them alone in peace, and they practiced the art of survival by siding with whichever military force was present at a particular time, be it Vietcong, North Vietnamese, or American."

CWA 4.13 – Vietnamization & the Silent Majority (Page 1 of 3)

Instructions: See below for an excerpt from President Richard Nixon's "Silent Majority" speech, which he delivered to the nation on November 3, 1969. Nixon made the speech following a period of intense anti-war protests and to address a public that overwhelmingly opposed continuing American involvement in Vietnam. Read the excerpt and with your group, discuss the questions that follow.

For an audio excerpt of the speech, visit the Richard Nixon Presidential Library: <http://www.nixonlibrary.gov/forkids/speechesforkids/silentmajority.php>. For a video of the entire speech, visit the C-Span archive: <http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/153819-1>.

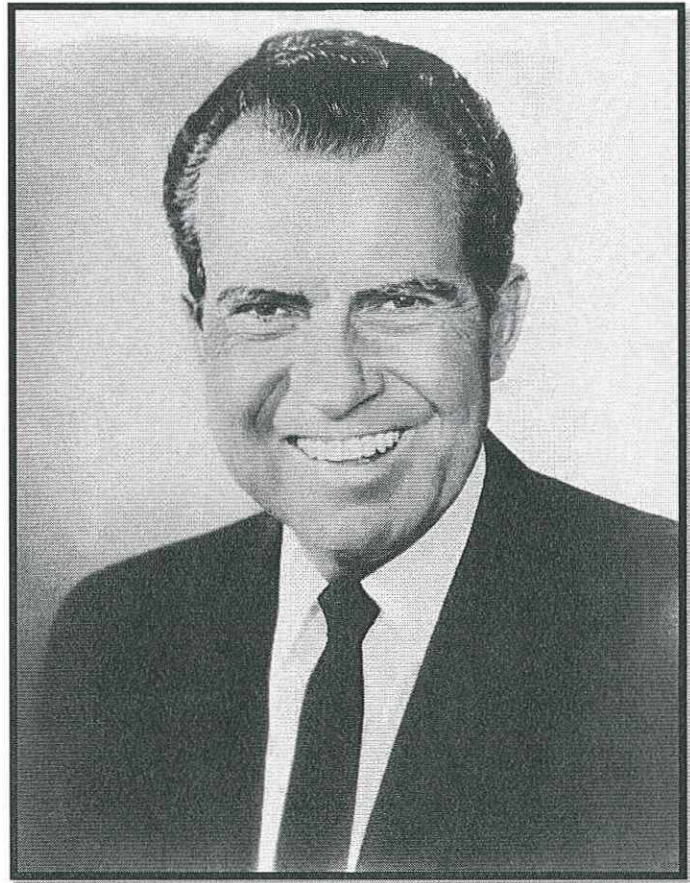
The defense of freedom is everybody's business--not just America's business. And it is particularly the responsibility of the people whose freedom is threatened. In the previous administration, we Americanized the war in Vietnam. In this administration, we are Vietnamizing the search for peace.

The policy of the previous administration not only resulted in our assuming the primary responsibility for fighting the war, but even more significantly did not adequately stress the goal of strengthening the South Vietnamese so that they could defend themselves when we left.

The Vietnamization plan was launched following Secretary Laird's visit to Vietnam in March. Under the plan, I ordered first a substantial increase in the training and equipment of South Vietnamese forces. In July, on my visit to Vietnam, I changed General Abrams' orders so that they were consistent with the objectives of our new policies. Under the new orders, the primary mission of our troops is to enable the South Vietnamese forces to assume the full responsibility for the security of South Vietnam....

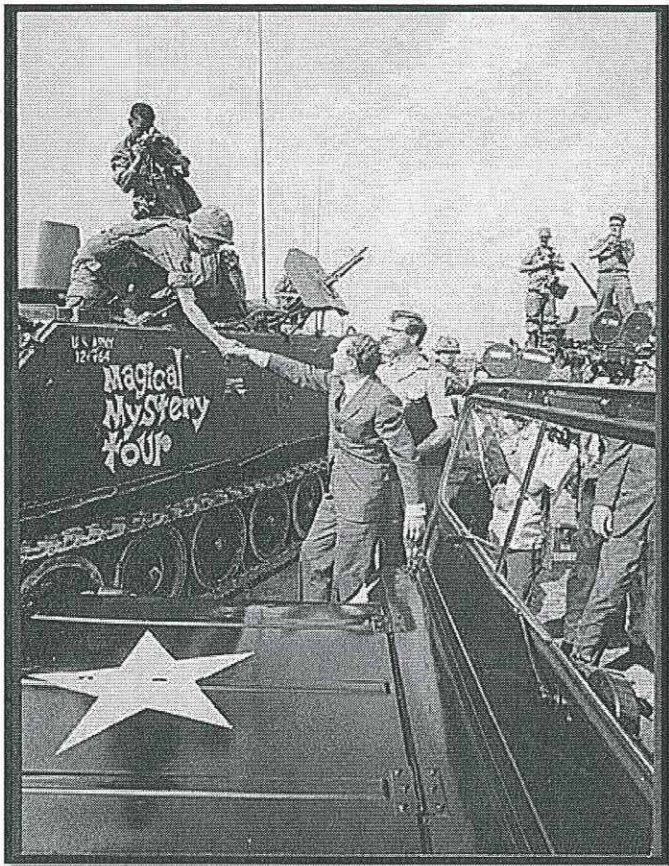
We have adopted a plan which we have worked out in cooperation with the South Vietnamese for the complete withdrawal of all U.S. combat ground forces, and their replacement by South Vietnamese forces on an orderly scheduled timetable. This withdrawal will be made from strength and not from weakness. As South Vietnamese forces become stronger, the rate of American withdrawal can become greater.

I have not and do not intend to announce the timetable for our program....



Richard M. Nixon, head-and-shoulders portrait, [facing front], 1969 – 1973. Source: Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/96522669/>

CWA 4.13 – Vietnamization & the Silent Majority (Page 2 of 3)



*Richard M. Nixon shaking hands with armed forces in Vietnam
July 30, 1969. Source: National Archives, ARC Identifier 194650*

My fellow Americans, I am sure you can recognize from what I have said that we really only have two choices open to us if we want to end this war.

--I can order an immediate, precipitate withdrawal of all Americans from Vietnam without regard to the effects of that action.

--Or we can persist in our search for a just peace through a negotiated settlement if possible, or through continued implementation of our plan for Vietnamization if necessary--a plan in which we will withdraw all of our forces from Vietnam on a schedule in accordance with our program, as the South Vietnamese become strong enough to defend their own freedom. I have chosen this second course. It is not the easy way. It is the right way.

It is a plan which will end the war and serve the cause of peace--not just in Vietnam but in the Pacific and in the world.

In speaking of the consequences of a precipitate withdrawal, I mentioned that our allies would lose confidence in America.

Far more dangerous, we would lose confidence in ourselves. Oh, the immediate reaction would be a sense of relief that our men were coming home. But as we saw the consequences of what we had done, inevitable remorse and divisive recrimination would scar our spirit as a people.

We have faced other crises in our history and have become stronger by rejecting the easy way out and taking the right way in meeting our challenges. Our greatness as a nation has been our capacity to do what had to be done when we knew our course was right.

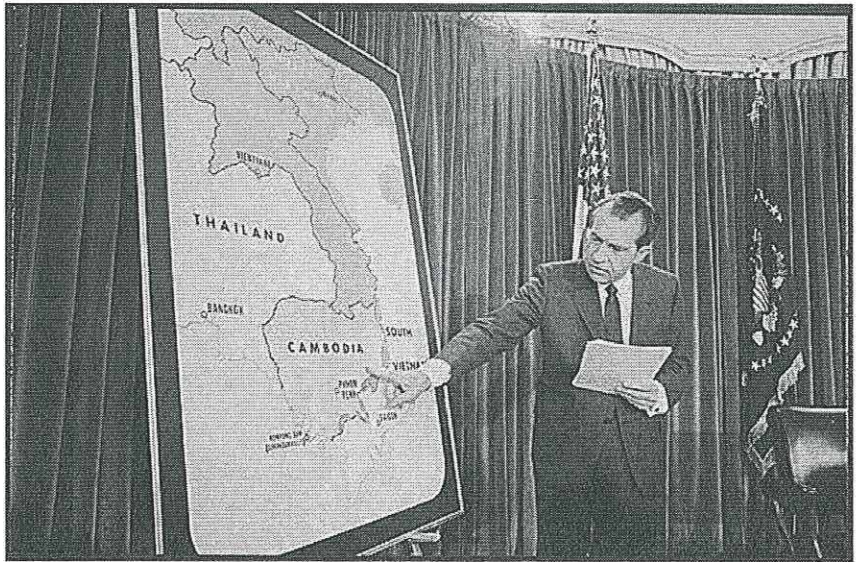
I recognize that some of my fellow citizens disagree with the plan for peace I have chosen. Honest and patriotic Americans have reached different conclusions as to how peace should be achieved.

In San Francisco a few weeks ago, I saw demonstrators carrying signs reading: "Lose in Vietnam, bring the boys home."

CWA 4.13 – Vietnamization & the Silent Majority (Page 3 of 3)

Well, one of the strengths of our free society is that any American has a right to reach that conclusion and to advocate that point of view. But as President of the United States, I would be untrue to my oath of office if I allowed the policy of this Nation to be dictated by the minority who hold that point of view and who try to impose it on the Nation by mounting demonstrations in the street.

For almost 200 years, the policy of this Nation has been made under our Constitution by those leaders in the Congress and the White House elected by all of the people. If a vocal minority, however fervent its cause, prevails over reason and the will of the majority, this Nation has no future as a free society.



*Richard M. Nixon during a press conference on Vietnam and Cambodia, 04/30/1970.
Source: National Archives, ARC Identifier 194674.*

And now I would like to address a word, if I may, to the young people of this Nation who are particularly concerned, and I understand why they are concerned, about this war.

I respect your idealism. I share your concern for peace. I want peace as much as you do. There are powerful personal reasons I want to end this war. This week I will have to sign 83 letters to mothers, fathers, wives, and loved ones of men who have given their lives for America in Vietnam. It is very little satisfaction to me that this is only one-third as many letters as I signed the first week in office. There is nothing I want more than to see the day come when I do not have to write any of those letters....

Source: The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=2303>

Discussion Questions:

1. What was Vietnamization?
2. Who was "the silent majority?"
3. Why did President Nixon believe that Vietnamization was the best plan for the nation in 1969?
4. How did President Nixon answer critics who he anticipated would oppose his plan?
5. Based on what you have learned about the war in Vietnam and the broader Cold War, do you think Nixon's plan for Vietnamization was a continuation of the governmental policy of containment or something totally different? Explain.

CWA 4.14 – The Legacy of the Vietnam War

Background: The war in Vietnam had many and far-reaching effects. In addition to the hundreds of thousands lives lost, those who returned home struggled to survive in civil society. The end of the war brought real change to the American government and reunified Vietnam under communist rule. Finally, environmental damage has had a profound effect on both the Vietnamese landscape and the people who survived the war.

More than 58,000 American troops died during the conflict. Many more soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines returned home permanently disabled, sick, or suffering from mental and emotional distress. Many veterans reported a variety of health problems and concerns, which some of them attributed to their exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides. Unlike veterans coming home from WWII or Korea, American veterans from Vietnam came home to a society that did not, by and large, support their mission. Some anti-war protestors believed veterans were war-criminals; instead of welcoming the soldiers home, they treated them with antipathy or outright hatred. Popular opinion had turned so strongly against military intervention, the government passed laws and implemented policies designed to make sure the country would never again commit itself to this kind of war, especially a war that lacked Congressional oversight.

In Vietnam, the end of the war reunified the country under communist rule. Many South Vietnamese citizens who feared for their safety had to flee the country and became war refugees. Decades after the end of the war, the country's landscape still contains visible signs of the conflict and many of the people and their bodies have been permanently disfigured because of the environmental impact of the weapons during the war.

Directions: Review each of the following sources. As you review each source, be prepared to discuss with your group your answers to the following questions:

1. What is most interesting, puzzling, or important about this source?
2. What does this source tell you about the legacy, or long-term impact of the Vietnam War?

CWA 4.14 – The Legacy of the Vietnam War (Veterans)

American Wounded & Casualties of the Vietnam War

Sources:

- *Statistical Information about Fatal Casualties of the Vietnam War, National Archives, <http://www.archives.gov/research/military/vietnam-war/casualty-statistics.html#category>.*
- *Diseases associated with Agent Orange Exposure: Dept. of Veterans' Affairs: <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/diseases.asp>.*
- *Image: An Air Force honor guard pallbearers carrying the casket of an MIA away from a C-141 Starlifter aircraft are framed by a saluting arm. The C-141 transported the remains of POW's and MIA's from North Vietnam, 03/29/1977. Source: National Archives, ARC Identifier # 6375756.*

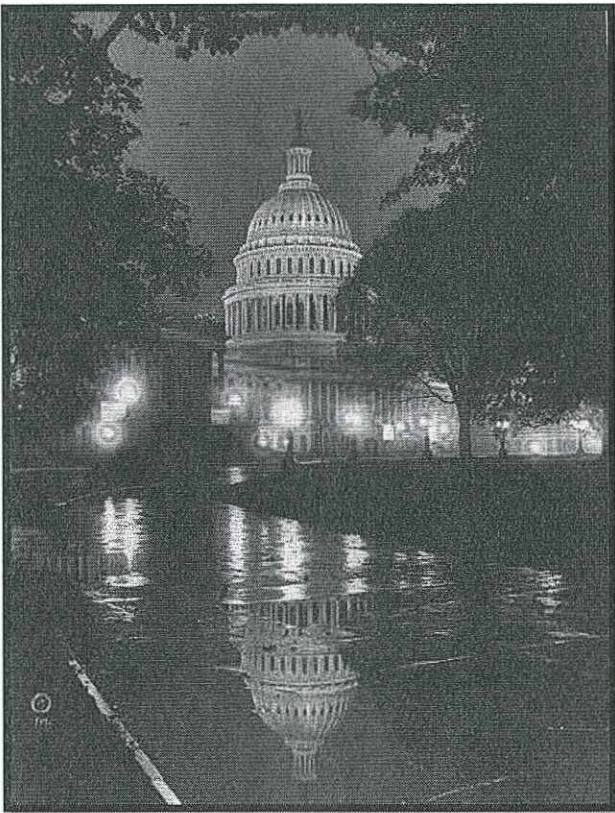


Wounded		Casualties					
Total	Number	By Category	Number	By Service	Number	By Race	Number
Total Severely Disabled	75,000	Accident	9,107	Air Force	2,586	Amer. Indian / Alaska Native	226
Total 100% Disabled	23,214	Declared Dead	1,201	Army	38,224	Asian	139
Lost one or more limbs	6,364	Dead of Wounds	5,299	Coast Guard	7	Black or African American	7,243
Partial list of diseases associated with Agent Orange Exposure: Cancer (Leukemia, Myeloma, Prostate, Respiratory, Soft Tissue sarcomas), Diabetes, Hodgkin's Disease, Ischemic Heart Disease, Neuropathy,		Homicide	236	Marines	14,844	Hispanic one-race	349
		Illness	938	Navy	2,559	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	229
		Killed in Action	40,934			Non-Hispanic more than one-race	204
		Presumed Dead (Remains recovered)	32			White	49,830
		Presumed Dead (Remains not recovered)	91				
		Self-inflicted	382				
Total Records	303,704	Total Records	58, 220	Total Records	58,220	Total Records	58,220

CWA 4.14 – The Legacy of the Vietnam War (War Powers Resolution, page 1)

Background: On November 7, 1973, through a Joint Resolution, Congress passed the War Powers Act, which checks the President's power to commit troops into battle without Congressional consent. The resolution was passed over President Richard Nixon's veto; every president since has questioned its constitutionality. An excerpt is included below.

Source: The Avalon Project at Yale University, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/warpower.asp



D.C., Washington - Capitol - Exterior - Night View of S.E. front on rainy night, 1919. Source: Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2005681020/>

Purpose and Policy

SEC. 2.

a. It is the purpose of this joint resolution to fulfill the intent of the framers of the Constitution of the United States and insure that the collective judgment of both the Congress and the President will apply to the introduction of United States Armed Forces into hostilities, or into situations where imminent involvement in hostilities is clearly indicated by the circumstances, and to the continued use of such forces in hostilities or in such situations.

b. Under article I, section 8, of the Constitution, it is specifically provided that the Congress shall have the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying into execution, not only its own powers but also all other powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof.

c. The constitutional powers of the President as Commander-in-Chief to introduce United States Armed Forces into hostilities, or into situations where imminent involvement in hostilities is clearly indicated by the circumstances, are exercised only pursuant to (1) a declaration of war, (2) specific statutory authorization, or (3) a national emergency created by attack upon the United States, its territories or possessions, or its armed forces.

Consultation

SEC. 3. The President in every possible instance shall consult with Congress before introducing United States Armed Forces into hostilities or into situation where imminent involvement in hostilities is clearly indicated by the circumstances, and after every such introduction shall consult regularly with the Congress until United States Armed Forces are no longer engaged in hostilities or have been removed from such situations.

CWA 4.14 – The Legacy of the Vietnam War (War Powers Resolution, page 2)

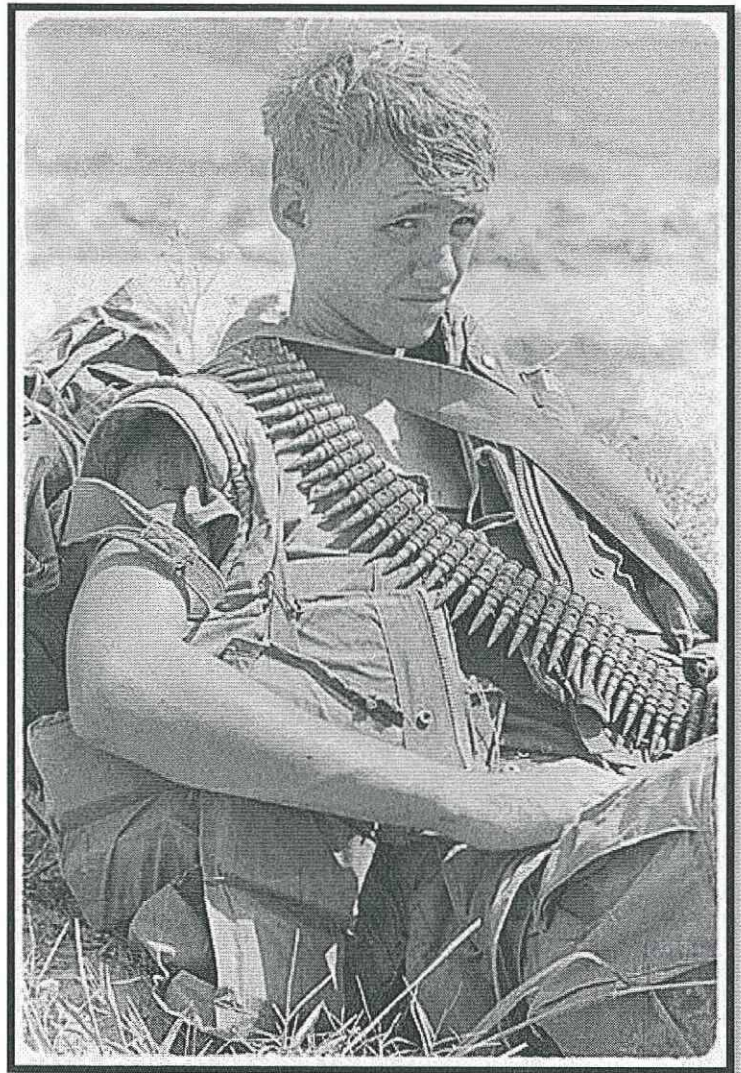
Reporting

SEC. 4. (a) In the absence of a declaration of war, in any case in which United States Armed Forces are introduced--

- (1) into hostilities or into situations where imminent involvement in hostilities is clearly indicated by the circumstances;
- (2) into the territory, airspace or waters of a foreign nation, while equipped for combat, except for deployments which relate solely to supply, replacement, repair, or training of such forces; or
- (3) in numbers which substantially enlarge United States Armed Forces equipped for combat already located in a foreign nation; the president shall submit within 48 hours to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and to the President pro tempore of the Senate a report, in writing....

Congressional Action

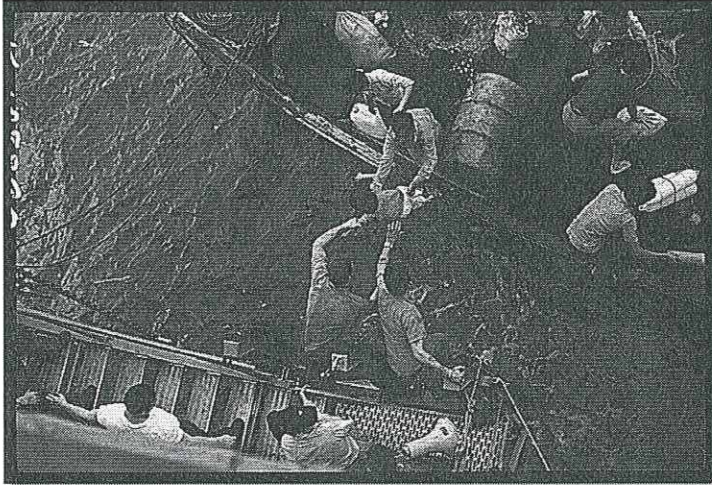
SEC. 5. (c) ... at any time that United States Armed Forces are engaged in hostilities outside the territory of the United States, its possessions and territories without a declaration of war or specific statutory authorization, such forces shall be removed by the President if the Congress so directs by concurrent resolution.



Photograph of Private First Class Russell R. Widdifield in Vietnam, 1969. Source: National Archives, ARC Identifier 532493.

CWA 4.14 – The Legacy of the Vietnam War (Refugees)

After the fall of Saigon and the Communist re-unification of Vietnam in the mid-1970s, many South Vietnamese citizens and people from neighboring Laos and Cambodia fled the nation. Close to 2 million became known as “boat people refugees” because they tried to sail across the Pacific Ocean on small boats. The excerpt below is from a refugee’s memoir. He explained what changed under this Communist government and how that motivated his desire to flee to the United States.



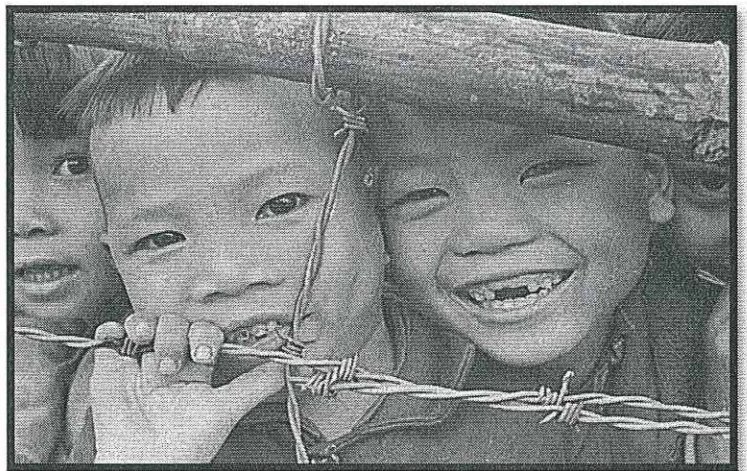
South China Sea....Crewmen of the amphibious cargo ship USS Durham (LKA-114) take Vietnamese refugees aboard a small craft. The refugees will be transferred later by mechanized landing craft (LCM) to the freighter Transcolorado., 04/03/1975. Source: National Archives, ARC Identifier # 558518.

Each family had a ration ticket book for rice, meat, milk, things like that. When a person went to the government cooperative, they gave him some rice and took the ration ticket. They gave the buyer what they had, but they did not have everything. We were authorized to buy up to a certain limit, but it was not enough for us. That’s the reason we had to buy outside the cooperative, on the black market. Because we had insufficient rice, we had to buy other things outside, such as corn and manioc. Still, it was not enough, so we had to add water and make soups of rice. That made people dissatisfied. That’s why we and so many others turned to unlawful or black- market behavior.

Source: “Mr. Liem Escape from Ban Me Thuot: 1975-1978 ”in James M. Freeman Hearts of Sorrow: Vietnamese-American Lives (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989) P.277-278.

From the day of liberation to the day I left, it was three years. Life under the Communists was so hard compared with before. Every three to six months, the Communists would do an inventory of everything in our house. People owned these things, but the government controlled it. In that sense, it belonged to the Party and the nation. The reason why I, my family, and other people decided to escape from Vietnam was that we didn’t own anything at all.

Food prices increased. It became hard to get work, and finally we could not work. We could not freely buy rice. Everything belonged to the government cooperative. Under their control, even rice became scarce. A person had to have a ticket to buy everything.



Vietnam. Vietnamese children of the Phong Dien refugee hamlet peer through a fence. There are 126 families, 10 sisters, 250 children from 6 years to 15, and 115 children under 6 years old in the village., 01/12/1967. Source: National Archives, ARC Identifier # 532507