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How Journalism Influenced American Public Opinion During the Vietnam War: A Case Study of the Battle of Ap Bac, The Gulf of Tonkin Incident, The Tet Offensive, and the My Lai Massacre

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HOW JOURNALISM INFLUENCED AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION DURING THE
VIETNAM WAR: A CASE STUDY OF THE BATTLE OF AP BAC, THE GULF OF TONKIN
INCIDENT, THE TET OFFENSIVE, AND THE MY LAI MASSACRE

by

Kyle Hadyniak

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for a Degree with Honors
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Abstract

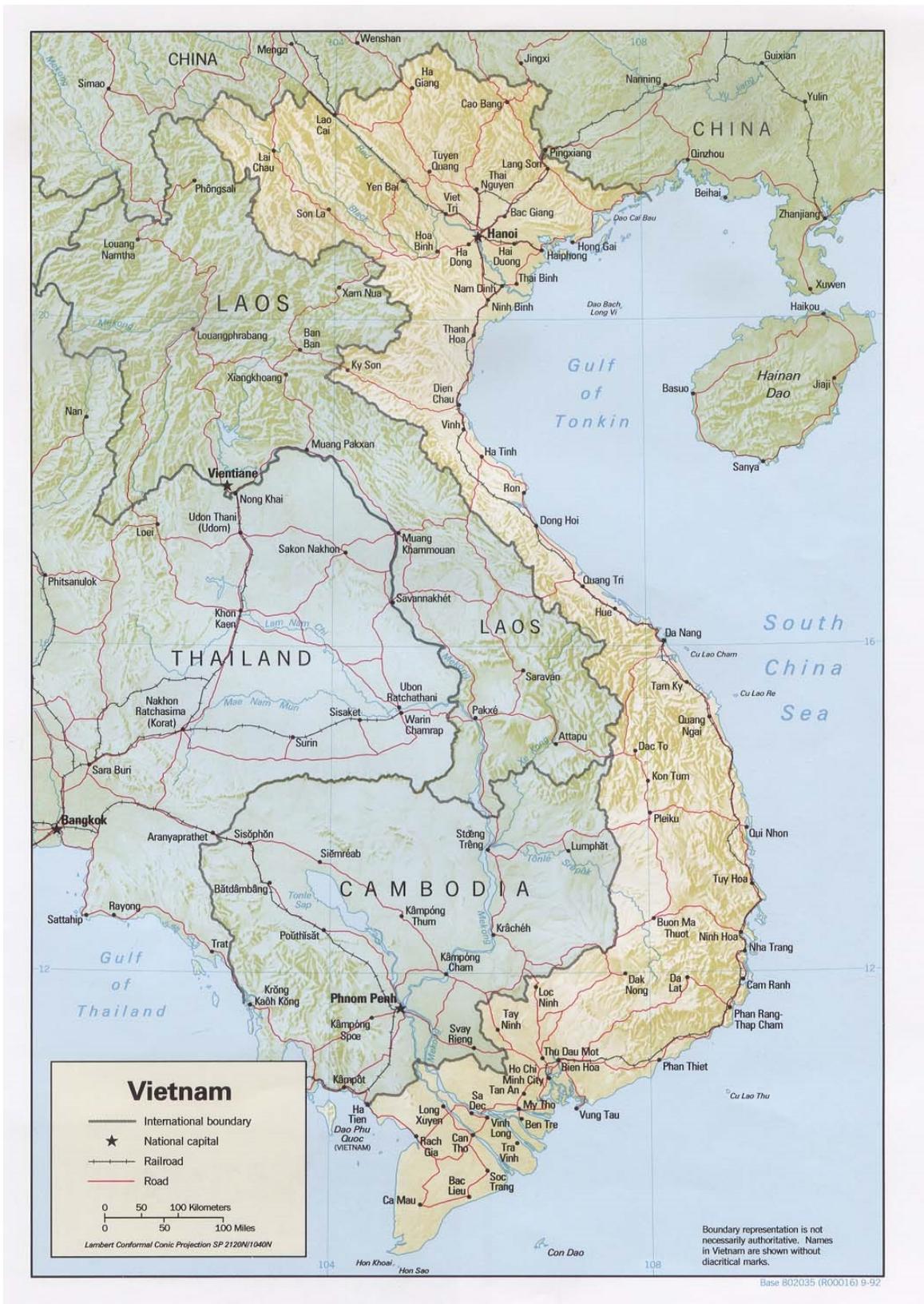
The Vietnam War was a hallmark in journalism history. Not only was newspaper reporting placed in a prominent role, both on the front lines and at home, but for the first time television was also utilized to bring the horrors of war into the living room. Vietnam may have been in Southeast Asia, but half the fighting occurred in the United States because journalists in Vietnam brought a different, pragmatic view to the American public than what the government was providing. The latter's misleading optimism and, in some cases, outright deception soon ignited an anti-war movement previously unseen on American soil. Using four pivotal Vietnam War events as case studies, this thesis will illustrate journalists' influence, showing how important journalism was in the "living room war of the 1960s and 1970s."

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The author would like to acknowledge his grandfather, Norman Qualtrough, for his two-tour service in the Vietnam War, and for igniting the author's interest in this war. Along with thanking family for their support throughout his schooling and his dedicated thesis committee throughout the thesis process, the author wishes to express his appreciation to his brother, Tyler, for sparking his interest in history, however long it took.

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This map provides an excellent overview of Vietnam's prominent towns and villages. Courtesy of Vietnamtravelchannel.com

Methods

This thesis was written using various newspaper articles collected from the University of Maine's Fogler Library microfilm collection, along with articles compiled in any secondary sources. Letters to the editor were found in either the microfilm collection or the *New York Times* online resources. Gallup poll data, invaluable to any public opinion research, were found on the Fogler Library's online database. Lastly, secondary sources, such as Marilyn Young's *The Vietnam Wars*, helped tremendously in the distillation and explanation of various Vietnam War events.

Chapter One: Introduction

Journalism and war have been undeniably linked since the former's invention. The first use of journalism in America can be traced back to 1690, when Boston's anti-British *Publick Occurrences, Both Foreign and Domestick* was published. Whether reporting was used as a truthful informative method or the more common and effective propaganda technique, the practice of informing the public of the state of war is well established in the annals of any nation. The United States, in particular, with its historically proven imperialistic practices and powerful military, have experienced more than its fair share of conflict, and with it, warfare journalism.

In the case of the Vietnam War (1955-1975), journalism was suddenly and eagerly pushed into its prime, as correspondents across Vietnam rushed to the front while the government wrote its own stories from the relative comfort of Saigon. The American public quickly "caught on" to this dichotomy, and as this thesis will explore, the severe backlash against the war was like that hitherto unseen in American history. The large-scale anti-war movement fueled by the government's poor operation of the war was fueled chiefly by journalism. What is more, the Vietnam War's psychological scar has journalism to thank, as this is the aspect ingrained in America's collective memory more than anything else. In the years since the Vietnam War, government officials, most notably former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, have admitted the government's poor handling of the Vietnam situation, and journalists, such as My Lai Massacre reporter Seymour Hersh, have reflected on the fickle nature of truth during the war. This is nothing to say of the countless veterans and anti-war participants who have regularly disavowed the war's necessity.

Television's historic role in the Vietnam War warrants its own explanation and analysis, as the medium matured throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Television's impact can be boiled down

to two aspects: television's visual nature and its focus on the negative. Television has the ability to show the raw horror of war, and in the case of the Vietnam War, it showed the uncensored nature of warfare in a way print or radio could not. Thus, Americans saw firsthand not only the battered, shelled landscape of Vietnam's huts, buildings, jungle, and fields, but also the equally battered soldiers. This undoubtedly impacted the nation psychologically, and it was a clear contributor to the nation's growing unrest during the years of conflict. At this time, television was extraordinarily popular, as a reported 58 percent of people received "most of their news" from television, according to a study done in 1964. By 1972, this number would increase to 64 percent.¹ Furthermore, television personalities became extremely popular; for example, the titular anchors for the NBC news program *The Huntley-Brinkley Report* were said to be "better known than John Wayne, Cary Grant, Jimmy Stewart, or the Beatles,"² and Walter Cronkite became the "most trusted man in America."

Television coverage focused on negative news more so than print. Because television stations were constantly competing for ratings, unlike newspapers who don't usually compete "head-to-head" for readership, it was more sensational for television programs to report Vietnam's various negative stories, whether it be soldier casualties, lost battles, or scandals within the American administration. Compounding this issue, a study in the mid-1970s found that Vietnam War television coverage was more memorable to viewers than regular evening news stories. The study, conducted by media analyst W. Russell Neuman, found 50 percent of viewers could not recall any non-Vietnam War stories from a news broadcast they had recently

¹ Daniel C. Hallin, *The Uncensored War* (New York: Oxford), 106

² William Witworth, *An Accident in Casting* (The New Yorker)

watched, yet they could recall 9.9 percent of stories about Vietnam watched without prompting. This number increased to 19.9 percent when subjects were supplied with a list of stories.³

As historian Steve Michael Barkin stated, “At some point the Vietnam War and television news became inseparable, joined in a relationship of suspicion and hostility between the government, the American public, and broadcast journalists.”⁴ For this reason, the Vietnam War has been called the “living-room war,” as no previous war had been so accessible to journalists and therefore the American public. What is more, by 1968 television figureheads were making an increasing number of editorial comments. Per hour of coverage, North Vietnam reporting received about 20 comments from television’s major players, and South Vietnamese coverage received about 10.⁵ For this reason, government officials were known to become displeased with what networks were airing, as newscasts often provoked public displeasure and doubt about American involvement in Vietnam. One such program aired by CBS in 1965, for example, detailed how an American military company had destroyed an entire Vietnamese village thought to be launching guerrilla attacks. The documentary showcased the American soldiers as “unsure of their military objective and unimpressed by their own officers,” which undoubtedly angered American command staff.⁶

Through visual media, the American public lost much confidence in the Vietnam War. As Barkin summarizes: “The unrelenting, nightly scenes of suffering both caused and sustained by Americans: an almost-naked child running from the fighting, her eyes a mirror of unspeakable terror; the brutal and seemingly instantaneous on-street assassination of a suspected Vietcong officer of the South Vietnamese army; correspondents in Saigon under fire themselves in a war

³ Hallin, *The Uncensored War*, 107

⁴ David Pierson, *American Television News: The Media Marketplace and the Public Interest*, 39

⁵ Hallin, *The Uncensored War*, 149

⁶ Pierson, *American Television News*, page 39

that was said to be not only winnable but ‘under control.’”⁷ Indeed, Vietnam revealed the power of television news in a new light, and the inescapable effect it had on the public helped fuel the anti-war movement.

President Lyndon Johnson, after announcing that he would not seek reelection in 1968, stated his opinion on television’s effect on the American public:

As I sat in my office last evening, waiting to speak, I thought of the many times each week when television brings the war into the American home. No one can say exactly what effect those vivid scenes have on American opinion. Historians must only guess at the effect that television would have had during earlier conflicts on the future of this Nation: during the Korean war, for example, at that time when our forces were pushed back there to Pusan; or World War II, the Battle of the Bulge, or when our men were slugging it out in Europe or when most of our Air Force was shot down that day.⁸

With this message, directed at a meeting of the National Association of Broadcasters, Johnson implied that if previous wars had been televised, America would not have persevered in fighting them. To Johnson, releasing scenes from the Vietnam War to the American public made victory impossible.

In September 1968, American public war support dropped to its lowest, an abysmal 19 percent, and this was due in large part to journalism’s role in the war. Without a doubt, the state of American public opinion was influenced by the uncensored journalism coming from Vietnam, and the result was nation-shaking riots, severe government criticism, and an anti-war movement previously unseen on American soil.

⁷ Pierson, *American Marketplace*, 40

⁸ Hallin, *The Uncensored War*, 157

The Vietnam War: A Summary

The American War, as the Vietnamese call it, was a long, bloody affair with no clear battle lines or mission objective. In all, 2,709,918 American military personnel served in the Vietnam Era (August 5, 1964 – May 7, 1975). 58,148 Americans were killed and another 75,000 severely disabled. Of those dead, 61 percent were younger than 21 years old. During the conflict, the average infantryman would experience an average of 240 days of combat per year; in World War II, the average was 40 days.⁹

In the years leading up to the war, U.S. foreign policy was dominated by the “domino theory,” i.e. the United States believed that if Vietnam had succumbed to Communism, then its neighbors, and eventually all of Southeast Asia, would too. Therefore, the U.S. started supporting the anti-Communist South Vietnam, led by Ngo Dinh Diem. President Kennedy started sending American military advisors to Vietnam to help train South Vietnamese units against the National Liberation Front (NLF). The NLF was organized by President Ho Chi Minh, who had led the Viet Minh independence movement since 1941, and remained a highly visible figurehead in North Vietnam until his death in 1969. Diem soon proved an ineffective, corrupt, and unpopular leader, and in 1963 the United States backed a coup that overthrew Diem.

After Kennedy’s assassination on November 22, 1963, his successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, used the Gulf of Tonkin incident and resulting resolution as permission to escalate U.S. involvement in Vietnam. By the end of 1966, nearly 400,000 U.S. troops were in Vietnam, and countless bombing campaigns had ravaged the Vietnam landscape. The Tet Offensive of 1968

⁹ Author Unknown, *Interesting Facts About the Vietnam War*, armedforcesmuseum.com

only showed that the North Vietnamese were more resilient and coordinated than ever, despite what American officials had been saying throughout the war. Morale both abroad and stateside was at an all-time low. As a result, an anti-war movement hitherto unseen in American history had manifested itself across the nation, and the low troop morale was symbolized in the My Lai massacre of 1968, when U.S soldiers brutally killed hundreds of Vietnamese civilians. Victory for the United States was slim, to say the least.

After President Johnson, the Vietnam burden fell on Richard Nixon, who promoted the “Vietnamization” of the war, by which the U.S. would gradually hand over the Vietnam situation to its South Vietnam allies. In a near-sighted move, Nixon also approved the clandestine bombing of Cambodia and Laos, without the knowledge of Congress or the public. This, combined with the publication of the Pentagon Papers, a meaty account of the numerous lies and manipulations by the U.S. government in the war thus far, forced Nixon to pursue a peace settlement. The U.S. signed a cease-fire in 1973, and soon all military personal were out of the country. By 1975, the South Vietnamese had proved they could not continue the war on their own, and their capital, Saigon, fell to the North Vietnamese in April 1975. Accordingly, Vietnam was reunited as a Communist country, yet the “Domino Theory” never became a reality. The staggering cost of human lives and the estimated \$110 billion in material costs¹⁰ has begged the question, “Was it worth it?” This question has been asked year after year in the decades since the war’s conclusion, and one would be pressed to find someone answer “yes.”

From the beginning, the United States fought another battle much different from the ground and air conflicts in Vietnam: control the press. The Kennedy and Johnson administrations utilized a public relations strategy that was effectively a double-edged sword. While North

¹⁰ Stephen Daggett, *Costs of Major U.S. Wars*, fpc.state.gov.

Vietnam had to be convinced that the United States would do everything in its power to protect the South Vietnamese and stop the spread of communism, the American people had to be assured that the United States' involvement in Vietnam was limited, without the possibility of a full-blown war.¹¹ A telling example of this dichotomy occurred in April 1962, when a returning sergeant was denied a Purple Heart because the Kennedy administration had not officially acknowledged the United States at war;¹² Congress had never legally declared war in Vietnam. For all purposes, this was not a war, but the Vietnam Conflict. One historian has noted that when considering this dilemma, it is not surprising to know the government had to resort to clandestine measures when dealing with American press relations.

The Vietnam War: Major Media Personalities

The Vietnam War was characterized by a plethora of news personalities. While it is impossible to discuss every journalist who either traveled to Vietnam or remained at home to report the news, the following are those journalists whose impact was substantial and prolific.

Walter Cronkite (1916-2009) was anchor of the "CBS Evening News" from 1962-1981. Cronkite was hailed as the "most trusted man in American."¹³ He began his reporting experience as a United Press Correspondent in World War II. He covered the North African and Sicily landings, as well as the Allied Invasion of Normandy and subsequent battles across France. Returning to his roots as a battlefield reporter in 1968, Cronkite traveled overseas to cover the Tet Offensive aftermath, and on his return, he famously stated his disapproval about the war's course.

¹¹ Hallin, *The Uncensored War*, 36

¹² Hallin, *The Uncensored War*, 40

¹³ Author Unknown, *Reporting America at War: Walter Cronkite*, pbs.org.

David Halberstam (1934-2007) began his career working for *The Daily Times Leader* in the 1950s. He joined *The New York Times* in 1960 and was assigned to the paper's headquarters in Saigon. Halberstam was one of the first reporters who began to question the government's optimism about the war, and it was reported at the time that his work from Vietnam bothered President Kennedy so much that the president requested Halberstam be reassigned.¹⁴ In 1963, Halberstam penned an extensive, detailed account of the military coup in Saigon, and in 1964, he earned a Pulitzer Prize for his Vietnam reporting. Soon after, he authored a best-selling book, *The Best and the Brightest*, chronicling America's involvement in Vietnam.

Malcolm W. Browne (1931-2012) was originally a chemist, but he was drafted at the end of the Korean War and assigned to *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, a military newspaper. He was one of the first reporters in Vietnam, arriving in 1964 for the Associated Press. His South Vietnam civil unrest reporting earned him a Pulitzer Prize, and his account of the Buddhist protests of 1963 drew attention to the disturbing matter. In 1968, he joined *The New York Times*, authoring a sobering piece about the fall of Saigon in 1975. After working for *Discover* magazine following the Vietnam War, Browne returned to war reporting during the Persian Gulf War from 1990-1991.¹⁵

Homer Bigart (1907-1991) was a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner covering World War II and the Korean War for the *New York Herald Tribune*, and he later reported for *New York Times* in Vietnam. Bigart was known for his tough, skeptical reporting, helping shape the critique for which Vietnam War journalism became known. One of his most famous works includes a 1962

¹⁴ Author Unknown, *Reporting America at War: David Halberstam*, pbs.org.

¹⁵ Author Unknown, *Reporting America at War: Malcolm Browne*, pbs.org.

piece about “the very real war in Vietnam,” stating how the United States was involved “ever since 1949” when French rule was subsidized against the “Communist Vietminh rebellion.”¹⁶

Seymour Hersh (1937-) is an investigative journalist who regularly contributes to the *New Yorker*. He first gained popularity in 1969 by exposing the My Lai Massacre, which earned him a Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting in 1970. After the Vietnam War, Hersh worked for *The New York Times* covering international affairs. He heavily criticized the Iraq War during that conflict’s beginning in 2001, and has continued critiquing the government in Middle East matters to this day. In March 2015, Hersh published an article regarding his return trip to My Lai, reflecting on that event and the impact it had on the United States.

In conclusion, the Vietnam War was a diverse affair that was more than just the events in Southeast Asia. On the home front, journalists played a pivotal role in relaying information to the public, information that differed considerably from the government’s accounts. Thus, the 1960s and 1970s were marked as a volatile time in American history, not just for the battles abroad, but for the battles at home.

Chapter Two: Practices of Modern Warfare Journalism

While press coverage of the Vietnam War saw many innovations, perhaps the most significant being the advent of television, media coverage had been a major component of warfare since the First World War, albeit in a drastically different way.

¹⁶ Author Unknown, *Reporting America at War: Homer Bigart*, pbs.org.

First World War journalism was characterized mainly by frontline war correspondents, as television had not yet been invented and radio was in its infancy. However, even the use of correspondents was limited in 1914, as British Prime Minister Lord Kitchener severely opposed front-line correspondents. He opted instead to appoint Colonel Ernest Swinton, Britain's Western Front journalist. Swinton wrote reports about the war, and these reports were critically examined by Kitchener before



Philip Gibbs, World War I Reporter (Source: Wikipedia.com)

being released to the news media. Reporters who were already on the frontline when war broke out in August 1914 were chastised by Kitchener and threatened if they did not stop sending uncensored news reports. For example, Phillip Gibbs, a British Expeditionary Force reporter, was threatened with execution by Kitchener unless he ceased his reporting; Gibbs was sent back to England in 1915.¹⁷

Individual journalists were not subject to celebrity status in their wartime coverage, and many had to act clandestinely to deliver their reports. Those who were captured were considered outlaws, and those like Gibbs were forced to either cease and desist or face harm. Kitchener's negative view of journalists stemmed from his experiences in the Boer War in the 1880s, and this view influenced the entirety of World War I.¹⁸

However, Kitchener was not the only Allied leader to share this view, as America took its own measures to control the assimilation of information to the public. Perhaps the greatest measure taken by the United States government was the Espionage Act of 1917. Enforced by U.S. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, the act essentially made it illegal for anyone to write

¹⁷ John Simkin, *British Journalism and the First World War*, spartacus-educational.com

¹⁸ Richard Evans, *Why We Should Remember the Bravery of World War One*, blogs.independent.co.uk.

or demonstrate anti-war sentiment.¹⁹ Clearly, the government used this as a way to control the press, and when combined with the United Kingdom's 1914 Defense of the Realm Act, one can see how World War I featured tight journalistic control and censorship.

Several journalists became well known during or after World War I for their correspondent efforts. American Richard Harding Davis, an experienced war correspondent by the time World War I broke out, was highly paid to report from the front lines. Davis originally covered the war until 1915, until he disagreed with the government's press restrictions and ceased reporting. Peggy Hull, widely regarded as the first female war correspondent, did not even have support from the U.S. government when she traveled to the Western Front. After the war, she stayed overseas covering other conflicts until the onset of World War II. Floyd Gibbons, a *Chicago Tribune* correspondent, was wounded in trench warfare and remained on the frontline for hours before he could retreat.

Lastly, Lowell Thomas, an American correspondent with an interest in documentary filmmaking, is recognized for his valiant reporting in the Middle East following T.E. Lawrence, the British officer who led the Arabs against the Ottoman Empire.²⁰ Together, these reporters and others like them founded modern warfare reporting, and their emphasis on detailed frontline reporting and concise writing remained in use throughout the next half-century.



In an attempt to turn public opinion pro-war in 1916, the United States utilized propaganda to secure funds, troops, and support. After maintaining a neutral position throughout World War I for isolationist purposes, President Woodrow Wilson,

¹⁹ Author Unknown, *The Espionage Act of 1917*, digitalhistory.uh.edu.

²⁰ Rick Musser, *History of American Journalism*, history.journalism.ku.edu.

upon committing the U.S. in 1917, was faced with growing anti-war public sentiment. To combat this, he assembled the Committee on Public Information (CPI), an organization that gained support through any available means. Headed by journalist George Creel, CPI utilized propaganda posters, film reels, newspapers, billboards, and numerous other methods to secure public support.²¹ The committee played a prominent role in the government's manipulation of the public, and even though it was disbanded in 1919 at the end of the war, the United States continued to use propaganda to control public information.

World War II was also a turning point in warfare journalism coverage. As countless news services sent agents to cover the sprawling conflict, this information came back on a daily basis. Thanks to the prevalence of radio, reports could be delivered to news stations and the American public, a service that paved the way for Vietnam War coverage. While television was in its infancy at this time, the onset of war and technical delays meant the new technology would not become publicly widespread until after the war.

The "Murrow Boys," for example, were a band of journalists led by Edward R. Murrow who utilized radio to convey thought-provoking reports of public affairs both abroad and at home.²² Consisting of many well-known journalists, including Murrow, William Shirer, Eric Sevareid, Charles Collingwood, Larry Lesueur, Howard K. Smith, Cecil Brown, Winston Burdett, and many others, the "Murrow Boys" were a salient entity in American World War II journalism. Nearly every major war theater, and even individual cities and regions, were covered: North Africa, Europe (as a whole), France, Soviet Union, Germany, Vienna, Great Britain, the Middle East, Turkey, Moscow, and Washington were all covered by members of the

²¹ Author Unknown, *Poster Art of World War I*, pbs.org.

²² Musser, *History of American Journalism*

Murrow Boys. Their broadcasts from Europe brought the war closer to home, and their network, CBS, rose to prominence as a leading news agency in the subsequent years.

Like World War I, propaganda played a significant role in World War II. The Office of Censorship ensured news organizations adhered to a strict “voluntary censorship code” to maintain a healthy flow of patriotic and morale-boosting messages.²³ Additionally, propagandistic motion pictures were created by Hollywood producers. Short films such as the “Know Your Enemy” orientation films highlighted either the Germans or Japanese, casting an antagonistic light on both. The German film emphasizes the historical nature of Germany’s “thirst for power” amid patriotic music and heroic American sentiment. Likewise, anti-Japanese propaganda highlights the foreignness of Japanese culture, saying that, “We shall never completely understand the Japanese mind, and they don’t understand ours, either. Otherwise, there would never have been a Pearl Harbor.”²⁴

Frank Capra, a prolific Hollywood film director, created a seven-part propagandistic film series, under the direct supervision of General George C. Marshall, designed to boost morale and support the American war effort. Narrated by Academy Award-winner Walter Huston, the films include obvious racial and nationalist rhetoric, describing the Japanese as “blood-crazy” and the Germans “warlike.” Some action sequences were reenacted “under War Department supervision,” and animation was completed by Disney Studios. The series, produced from 1942-1945, included the following segments: *Prelude to War*, *The Nazis Strike*, *Divide and Conquer*, *The Battle of Britain*, *The Battle of Russia*, *The Battle of China*, and *War Comes to America*.²⁵

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Musser, *History of American Journalism*

²⁵ Author Unknown, *Why We Fight*, en.wikipedia.org.

The Korean War (1950-53) took place at a time when television reporting was underdeveloped, and major networks were not prepared to abandon their primary reporting method: radio. This rough transition meant television, unlike during the Vietnam War, was not the major source of news, but this did not stop networks from trying to incorporate television as best they could. As such, news networks relied on buying newsreel footage from the U.S. Army Signal Corps, which had its own motion picture photographers and individual photographers.²⁶ Because the military supplied much of the war footage, and commendations for journalists on the front, the military undoubtedly had influence over what news returned to the homefront. As a result, the first months of the Korean War were displayed as sensational and anti-Communist.

In December 1950, General Douglas MacArthur imposed military censorship on Korean War journalists. While this censorship continued throughout the war, restrictions were loosened to a point where, in 1952, the government announced that new controls “will not be used to prevent the transmission of news upon the grounds of anticipated adverse reaction by the American people.”²⁷

Television trends, such as live broadcasts and extensive, multi-part coverage, were first used in Korea. For example, CBS and NBC stations in New York City aired live coverage of U.N. Security Council sessions, as well as broadcasting them sometimes two hours after they aired. In 1950, NBC aired a weekly *Battle Report* series using footage filmed by select cameramen in Korea. Additionally, in 1951, CBS aired the four-part *Crisis* series documentary hosted by Douglas Edwards, known as America’s first network news television anchor.²⁸

²⁶ Fred MacDonald, *Television and the Red Menace*, jfredmacdonald.com.

²⁷ MacDonald, *Television and the Red Menace*.

²⁸ Ibid

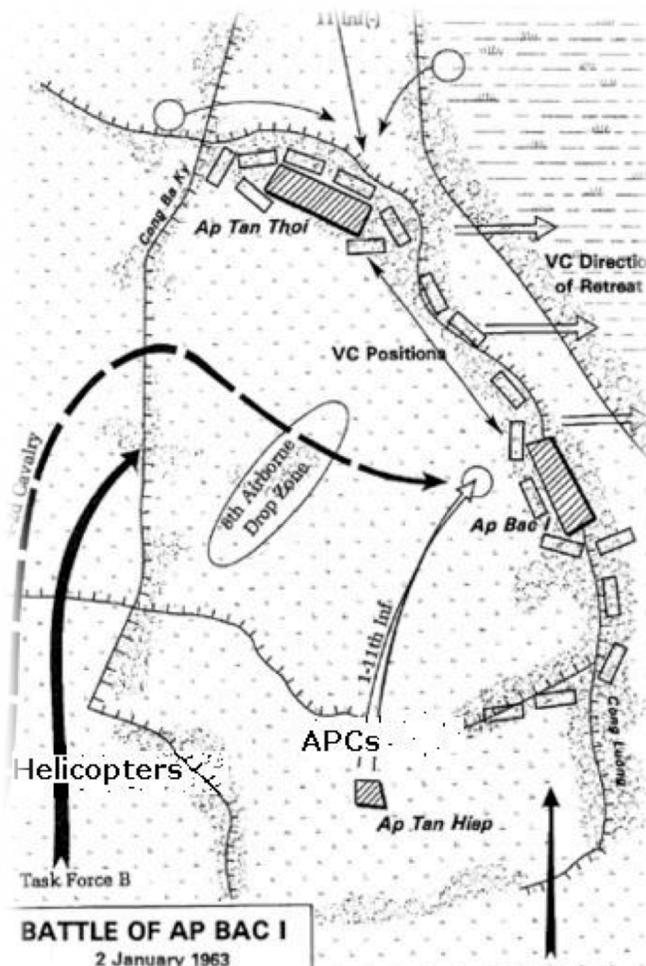
As in World War II, Edward R. Murrow played the most salient individual journalistic role in the Korean War. While Murrow was adept at radio due to his earlier war reporting experiences, it was Korea that witnessed his emergence on the television scene. His realistic and worldly view on Korea was refreshing from government rhetoric, even going further and sympathizing with the average people involvement in the war. For example, an April 27, 1951 report about the U.S. progress in Korea not only straightforwardly relates the strategic goal of the U.S. defense against an advancing Red army, but ends with a solemn assessment of the homesick troops.²⁹ Murrow's documentaries, such as *Christmas in Korea*, *See it Now*, and *Christmas in Korea – 1953* cemented his name across the medium, and he also recruited photographers and reporters such as Robert Pierpoint, Ed Scott, Lou Cioffi, Larry Leseur, Bill Downs, and Joseph Wershba to assist with his pragmatic coverage of the war.³⁰

²⁹ Edward R. Murrow, *Murrow Reports on Korean War*, history.com

³⁰ MacDonald, *Television and the Red Menace*.

Chapter Three: The Battle of Ap Bac – January 2, 1963

For the most part, the government's public strategy was effective until the Battle of Ap Bac in 1963. The strategy had convinced the American people that the situation in Vietnam was



indeed a non-issue. However, when the South Vietnamese were defeated at Ap Bac on January 2, 1963, the American people were now more aware of the Viet Cong and the power of the North Vietnamese army (known as the National Liberation Front, or NLF).

The Battle of Ap Bac was the first time the South Vietnamese tried to use American-advised tactics. Simultaneously,

the North Vietnamese were attempting to prove they had developed tactics that resisted American technical prowess. The clash began on January 2, when a meager 200 NLF faced 2,000 soldiers of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), assisted by American-operated helicopter gunships, fighter bombers, armored personal carriers, and advisors.³¹ Ultimately, NLF forces inflicted severe damage to the ARVN force, leaving 61 dead, three of whom were Americans, and more than 100 wounded; the NLF had even managed to counter the armored personal carriers.

However, the official report illuminated a different result than Ap Bac's actual events. American officials insisted that ARVN emerged victorious, and this created a friction between field journalists and higher-up American officials; this friction would grow as the war went on. As American General Paul D. Harkins announced the ARVN victory from his headquarters in Saigon, journalists who had been in the field were unconvinced. Armed with first-hand evidence, reports were sent out of Vietnam and back to the American homefront.

A newspaper article published in the *New York Times* by correspondent David Halberstam on January 7, 1963, cites the pessimistic view of Ap Bac and the war in general:

The Battle of Ap Bac, in which attacking South Vietnamese troops were badly beaten by Communist guerrillas, had bewildered high United States officials in Saigon.

United States advisers in the field, however, have long felt that conditions here made a defeat like this virtually inevitable...

American officers throughout the Mekong Delta feel that what happened at Ap Bac goes far deeper than one battle and is directly tied to the

³¹ Marilyn Blatt Young, *The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990* (New York: Harper Collins), 89

question – whether the Vietnamese are really interested in having American advisors and listening to them.³²

While this entry is certainly damning of the South Vietnamese army's quality, Halberstam followed this article with another on January 11, illustrating the corruption within the fragile ARVN:

Gen. Paul D. Harkins, commander of the United States forces in Vietnam, issued a strong statement today defending the courage of the Vietnamese soldier.

Sources said General Harkins' statement had come as a result of criticism in the United States following the defeat suffered by government troops in the recent battle of Ap Bac.

Other sources said the problem of Ap Bac was not a question of the courage of the Vietnamese soldier...

The advisors feel there is still too much political interference in the Vietnamese army and that promotion too often depends on political loyalty.³³

Simultaneously, United Press International reporter Neil Sheehan authored a similar critical article, focusing on the poor performance of the South Vietnamese troops, even when directed by American advisors:

Angry United States military advisors charged today that Vietnamese infantrymen refused direct orders to advance during Wednesday's battle at Ap Bac and that an American Army captain was killed while out front pleading with them to attack.

³² David Halberstam, *Vietnam, Defeat Shocks U.S. Aids*, 1963

³³ David Halberstam, *Harkin Praises Vietnam Troops*, 1963

The Vietnamese commander of an armored unit also refused for more than an hour to go to the rescue of 11 American crewmen of downed helicopters and an infantry company pinned down by Communist small arms fire, they said.

“It was a miserable damn performance” was the way one American military man summed up the humiliating and costly defeat suffered by the South Vietnamese army at the hands of outnumbered Communist guerrillas...

[American military personnel] spoke of the marked ‘lack of aggressiveness’ of Vietnamese commanders, their refusal to heed recommendations of their American advisors, refusal to carry out orders from their superiors and a breakdown in the chain of command of the 7th Vietnamese Division.

Most of the Communists were able to withdraw from the hamlet during the night because a paratroop battalion was dropped on the west side of the hamlet instead of the east, leaving an escape route into the jungles.

One U.S. advisor said bitterly, “[The Vietnamese] won’t listen – they make the same mistakes over and over again in the same way.”³⁴

The Wall Street Journal likewise criticized the South Vietnamese forces, citing in a January 11 article that, “Some U.S. advisors in the Southeast Asia nation recently criticized the fighting ability of Vietnamese troops. These advisors charged that in a battle last week in which the Vietnamese were beaten badly by Red guerrillas, the Vietnamese refused to obey orders to go into battle.”³⁵ It should be noted that this entry was one of very few articles about Vietnam in

³⁴ Neil Sheehan, *Vietnamese Ignored U.S. Battle Order*, 1963

³⁵ Author Unknown, *The Wall Street Journal*, 1963

The Wall Street Journal in January 1963, which shows the conflict's relative infancy in the press at this time.

The Boston Herald ran a lengthy story on the Battle of Ap Bac, highlighting not the South Vietnamese's order refusal, but the five U.S. helicopters that were shot down by North Vietnamese troops. The author, David Halberstam, cited the incident as the "worst day experienced by U.S. helicopters" since the American buildup in South Vietnam, and he continued to describe the unusual tenacity of the North Vietnamese:

The guerilla action came as a shock to most Americans. The Communist Viet Cong, forsaking their usual tactics of disappearing as soon as government troops appeared, stayed in their positions and refused to be budged...³⁶

A follow-up article the next day in the *Boston Herald* focused on the South Vietnamese defeat. The article described how the "Communist guerillas...stood their ground...and inflicted a major defeat on a larger force of Vietnamese regulars." Moreover, Halberstam wrote:

It was the opinion of observers here, the worst defeat government troops have suffered in more than a year... What made this defeat particularly galling to Americans and Vietnamese alike was that this was a battle initiated by government forces in a place of their own choice with superior forces... And it was in a war in which both Americans and Vietnamese have long yearned for a chance to make the Communists stand and fight.³⁷

To combat the negative press, the Kennedy administration ordered an assessment of the war's state. As reported to Kennedy by his military advisors, the war's course was certainly not as positive as Saigon officials had led him to believe: "Our overall impression is that we are

³⁶ David Halberstam, *The Boston Herald*, 1963

³⁷ Ibid

probably winning, but certainly more slowly than we had hoped,” stated the report.³⁸ While this assessment was optimistic in light of the recent Ap Bac defeat, the press, with unseen vigor, called into question American officials’ optimism, especially with regard to the South Vietnamese leader, Ngo Dinh Diem, and the fact that ARVN had been unable to apply American-advised tactics. As newly appointed American Ambassador Frederick Nolting stated, “People keep writing me, asking, ‘what’s going on out there all of a sudden? I thought we were doing so well.’”³⁹

It is important to note public opinion statistics at this time. The American public was

(Please tell me whether you think the Kennedy administration is doing a very good job, a fairly good job, not so good a job, or a poor job on each of these?)... Handling the situation in Vietnam and Laos. (Source: ORC Public Opinion Index, Oct, 1963)



Figure 1

relatively non-reactive to the Vietnam situation in 1963. As seen in *Figure 1*, 35 percent of the 1,506 people polled offered “no opinion”

on how President

Kennedy’s administration was handling the conflict, and a close second was the “not so good” option.⁴⁰ Thus, in the early years of American involvement in Vietnam, the public, even at

³⁸ Young, *The Vietnam Wars*, 94

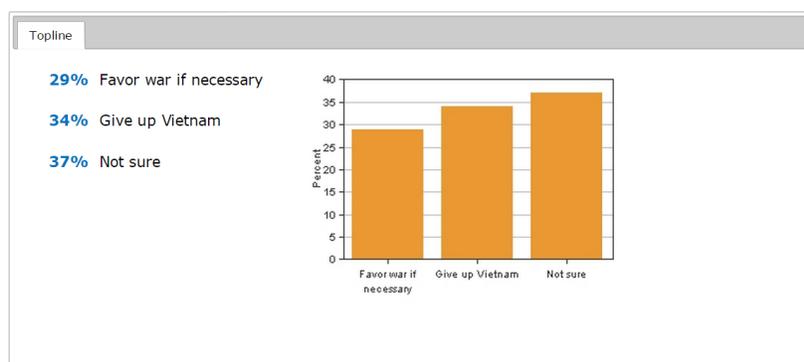
³⁹ Young, *The Vietnam Wars*, 91

⁴⁰ See Appendix

different levels of awareness, didn't think the administration was doing a good job. Indeed, only 8 percent thought Kennedy was handling the situation well.

Similarly, a poll asking 1,250 participants whether they would favor "giving up Vietnam" and going to war with "Red China" shows a similar lack of information, and early anti-Vietnam sentiment. 37 percent of participants said "not sure," reinforcing the

If it meant going to war with Red China over Vietnam, would you favor going to war or giving up Vietnam-- if it came to that? (Source: Harris Survey, Sep, 1963)



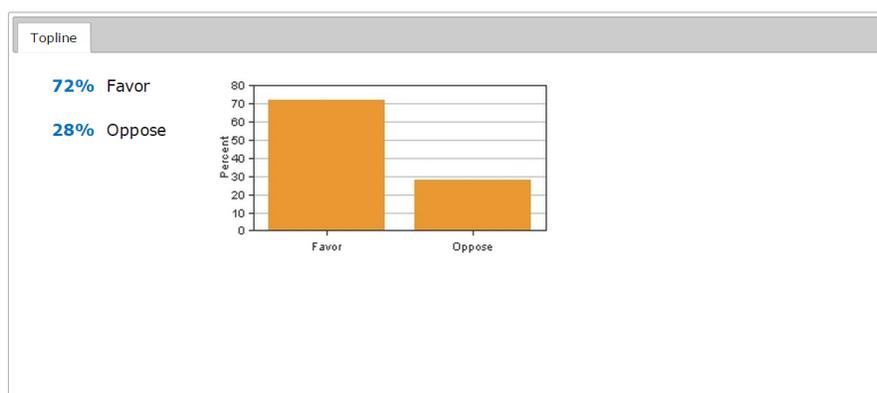
Methodology: Conducted by Louis Harris & Associates during September, 1963 and based on 1,250 personal interviews. Sample: National adult. Sample size is approximate. As reported in The Washington Post. [USHARRIS.093063.R2] ([View Citation](#))

Topics: WAR ASIA

Figure 2

hypothesis that the public wasn't sufficiently aware of the Vietnam situation. Thirty-four percent opted to relinquish

In the past year some American lives have been lost in the fighting in Vietnam. Our government is trying to help the non-communist government there resist a communist take-over. From what you know or have heard, do you favor or oppose the policy our government has followed in Vietnam? (Source: Harris Survey, Sep, 1963)



Methodology: Conducted by Louis Harris & Associates during September, 1963 and based on 1,250 personal interviews. Sample: National adult. Sample size is approximate. As reported in The Washington Post. [USHARRIS.093063.R1] ([View Citation](#))

Topics: WAR ASIA

Figure 3

Vietnam, which clearly shows that U.S. involvement in Indochina was unpopular. This left 29 percent in favor of war with Red China.

Interestingly, *Figure 3* shows the influence, or rather lack of influence,

journalism had at this early point in the war. As the public at this time relied mostly on the government's word to trust, instead of the press later in the war, the question of whether or not people favored the government's policy thus far showed a favorable response. As seen in this graph, 72 percent agreed with the government's policy in Vietnam, while 28 percent opposed it. One must consider the question posed by the poll, however, as the phrasing "Our government is trying to help the non-communist government there resist a communist take-over" plays specifically to the Communist fear at the time, which undoubtedly influenced results.

The next few years before the Gulf of Tonkin Incident saw numerous developments at home and on the warfront. Turmoil in Vietnam was agitated throughout the summer of 1963 by numerous Buddhist demonstrations throughout South Vietnam. Starting on May 8, the 2,527th birthday of Buddha, Buddhists flew their flags in objection to a Vietnamese law that only

allowed the national flag to be displayed in public areas; nine people died when troops opened fire on a celebrating crowd. The South Vietnamese ruling Ngo Dinh family denounced Buddhists as a Communist front organization, and placed armed guards around the most active



Browne's image of a Buddhist monk aflame, 1963. Courtesy of Bing Images.

pagodas. The crisis peaked when Buddhists started immolating themselves, captured so dramatically by Malcom Browne's famous picture of a Buddhist monk silently, motionlessly engulfed in flame; this stirred sympathy for the Buddhists and national hostility toward Diem. It

was soon after this conflict that Henry Cabot Lodge replaced Frederick Nolting as U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam.

On November 1, 1963, Diem was overthrown by South Vietnam military forces, with clandestine United States approval. The United States viewed Diem as detrimental to their Vietnam goals, and hostile to the country itself, as seen in the Buddhist repressions earlier in the year. Diem was captured and killed by South Vietnamese, and his death caused much celebration among South Vietnam. The country soon become more politically volatile, however, and the United States' presence was increased to try and stabilize the region.

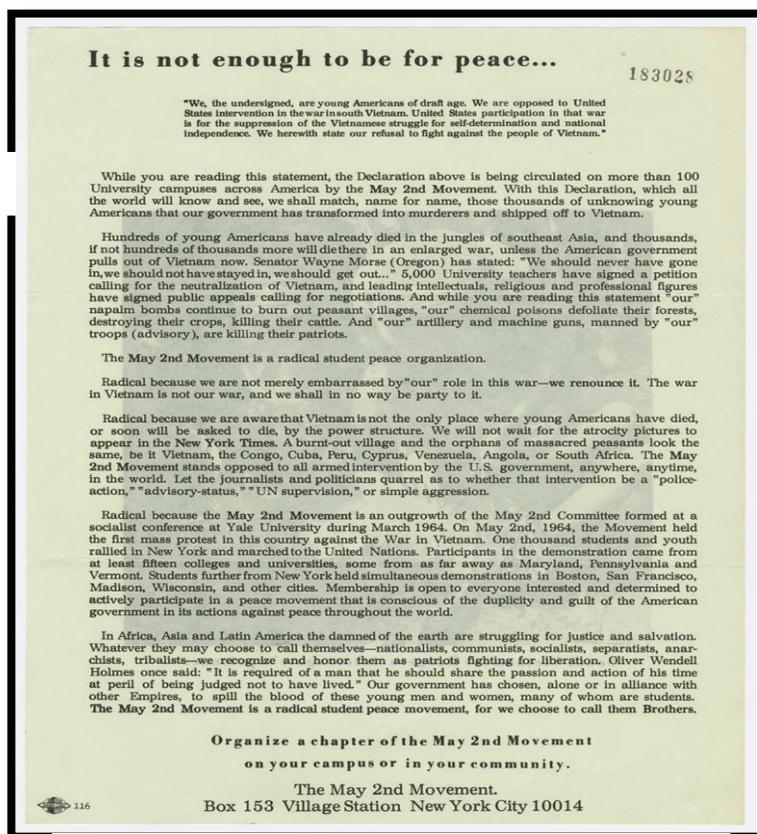
In a devastating blow to the nation, President Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963 in Dallas, Texas. Vice President Lyndon Johnson assumed the Vietnam War burden, and while Kennedy had planned a gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam, Johnson did the opposite; by the end of the year, 16,000 troops were in Vietnam, in an effort to combat any signs of weakness following Kennedy's assassination. According to Johnson, "...they'll think we've lost heart...The Chinese. The fellas in the Kremlin. They'll be taking the measure of us." Johnson's promise to help the post-Diem South Vietnamese government was engaged in full force. As he stated to his biographer, "[Nothing could as terrible] as the thought of being responsible for American's losing a war to the Communists. Nothing was worse than that."⁴¹

The first notable protest of the war was on May 2, 1964, when approximately 1,000 students marched from Times Square to the United Nations in what was called a protest on "U.S. intervention on behalf of the legitimate government of South Vietnam."⁴² In a second, smaller protest, 700 students marched through the San Francisco streets, and other, smaller protests

⁴¹ Young, *The Vietnam Wars*, 105

⁴² Author Unknown, *The Sixties Project*, www2.iath.virginia.edu

occurred in Boston, Madison, Wisconsin, and Seattle. These groups described themselves as students in the “richest but most brutally confused country in the world,” and that they believed they should “organize themselves in the broadest possible way to combat [the] lack of the education... For it is a lack, a vacuum, that leads to political degradation and default.”⁴³ The group continues by attacking the United States’ role in Vietnam:



A May 2nd Movement Leaflet, Image Courtesy of Bing Images

administration will demand that black Americans stop protesting in an attempt to cover angry faces with a mask of "national unity."

Most people realize that the U.S. is not fighting for freedom and democracy in Vietnam, that the Vietnamese people want nothing more than the U.S. to get out. We say to those who are being forced to kill and die for the interests of imperialism--*don't go*. The May

The major issue facing U.S. students at this time is the war against the people of Vietnam. This war is also against the interests of the students and almost the entire population of the United States. The war has been used against steel workers, who were told that they were not permitted to strike because of the "national emergency." The

⁴³ Ibid

2nd Movement is launching an anti-induction campaign on the campuses. This campaign will organize existing resistance to the draft, based on the refusal to fight against the people of Vietnam. Each campus and each community should say, "No one from this college (or community) should be drafted." Declarations and literature will be circulated, forums and meetings held, demonstrations organized and acts of disobedience engaged in. The theme will be, "*We Won't Go.*"⁴⁴

Draft card burning also became a symbol of war resistance, often considered a type of violence itself by the public.⁴⁵ Beginning in Boston in May 1964, the act soon spread nationwide to include not only many cities, but many kinds of people; draft-age men were aided by women and older men who encouraged and abetted this act of resistance. By mid-1965, there were already 380 prosecutions for induction refusal; this would increase to more than 3,300 three years later.⁴⁶

Chapter Four: The Gulf of Tonkin Incident - August 2, 1964

⁴⁴ Author Unknown, *The Sixties Project*, www2.iath.virginia.edu

⁴⁵ See appendix

⁴⁶ Young, *The Vietnam Wars*, 197

The Gulf of Tonkin “incident” in August 1964 was a vital part of the United States formally declaring aggression against the North Vietnamese. The destroyer *Maddox*, entering the Gulf on July 31, observed

raiding actions conducted by South Vietnamese commandos on islands in the gulf, but on August 2 the *Maddox* became a

target of action herself. As the destroyer was cruising by the islands under attack by South Vietnamese, three North Vietnamese patrol boats

pursued the *Maddox* into the middle of the gulf. According to



the report by Commodore Herrick, Commander of the Destroyer Division 192, the boats were “charging at the ship in a V formation and then rapidly veering off.”⁴⁷ The *Maddox* soon opened fire, yet the patrol boats held their course and fired torpedoes. Missing their target, the patrol boats were damaged by the *Maddox*’s guns and retreated to their port.

Washington’s response was one of anger. Johnson ordered a second destroyer, the *Turner Joy*, into the Gulf, and as a safety precaution, alerted Moscow that American warships were now

⁴⁷ Young, *The Vietnam Wars*, 117

stationed in the Gulf but that there was “no cause for alarm.”⁴⁸ U.S. combat troops were placed on high alert, and bomber squadrons in Thailand were strengthened, as well. The aircraft carriers *Ticonderoga* and *Constellation* were repositioned to the Gulf, and all Navy ships were instructed to “assert the right of freedom of the seas.”⁴⁹

A second “incident” occurred on August 4, when the sonar men from the *Turner Joy* and *Maddox* detected numerous torpedoes bearing on their position. The destroyers spent the night firing at these presumed torpedoes, but it soon became doubtful whether these torpedoes actually existed; a fighter pilot with a clear view of the waters commented that he failed to see any hostile attack.⁵⁰ The next morning, even lacking evidence that an attack had taken place, Herrick was given orders to retaliate. Before Johnson had the legal resolution from Congress to conduct retaliatory operations – and with a “slight possibility” that an attack hadn’t taken place, according to Herrick – American forces soon were targeting North Vietnamese locations.⁵¹

Johnson quickly placed a resolution before Congress on August 5, and after two days of debate the House passed the resolution by a 416-0 vote. The Senate followed with a 88-2 decision. The Gulf of Tonkin resolution stated:

Whereas the naval units of the Communist regime in Vietnam, in violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, have deliberately and repeatedly attacked United States naval vessels lawfully present in international waters...and Whereas these attacks are part of a deliberate and systematic campaign of aggression that the Communist regime in North Vietnam has been waging against its

⁴⁸ Young, *The Vietnam Wars*, 117

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Young, *The Vietnam Wars*, 118

⁵¹ Ibid

neighbors and the nations joined with them in the collective defense of their freedom...and Whereas the United States is assisting the peoples of southeast Asia to protect their freedom and has no territorial, military, or political ambitions in that area, but desires only that these people should be left in peace to work out their own destinies in their own way.⁵²

Press coverage reflected Johnson's aggression, while simultaneously stirring public pro-Vietnam sentiment, as seen in the *New York Time's* reporting of the Gulf of Tonkin incident:

President Johnson has ordered retaliatory action against gunboats and "certain supporting facilities in North Vietnam" after renewed attacks against American destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin.

In a television address tonight, Mr. Johnson said air attacks on the North Vietnamese ships and facilities were taking place as he spoke, shortly after 11:30 P.M.

This "positive reply," as the President called it, followed a naval battle in which a number of North Vietnamese PT boats attacked United States destroyers with torpedoes. Two of the boats were believed to have been sunk. The United States forces suffered no damage or loss of lives.

Mr. Johnson termed the North Vietnamese attacks "open aggression on the high seas."

Washington's response is "limited and fitting," the President said, and his administration seeks no general extension of the guerrilla war in Southeast Asia.⁵³

⁵² Young, *The Vietnam Wars*, 119

⁵³ Tom Wicker, *Attack in the Gulf of Tonkin*, 1964

The Wall Street Journal dedicated a substantial portion of its World-Wide news column to the Gulf of Tonkin Incident, stating that “The Navy said the boats attacked the USS Maddox without provocation in international waters 30 miles North Vietnam, using machine guns and torpedoes. The boats weren’t marked, but Secretary of State Rusk said they were North Vietnamese.”⁵⁴ The article also mentioned that Republicans used the incident as an attack against the administration’s “poor handling” of the anti-Communist struggle.

A letter to the editor in *The New York Times* bashed the administration for faking the Gulf of Tonkin incidents, and showcased the growing anxiety the public was experiencing about the Vietnam War.

For an understanding of the so-called mystery of why the United States of America is deeply involved in South Vietnam, it might be well to recall what Van Wyck Brooke had to say in 1921: “Few Americans know, even today really know – I mean apprehend – that America is an empire, with all the paraphernalia of imperialism. This is an honest statement, one made at a time when we were not yet suffering from the “Red” psychosis... The Tonkin incidents have been manufactured. We are itching for a war and we will have it as retaliation “against bullets and torpedoes that – even accepting the official interpretation – were never fired.”⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Author Unknown, *The Wall Street Journal*, 1964

⁵⁵ Robert Harper, *Tonkin Linked to War Aim*, 1968

Unsurprisingly, after the “open aggression on the high seas,” American support for the Vietnam War was mainly positive. In a September 1964 poll taken by Harris Survey, 56 percent of respondents approved of Johnson’s “handling of the war in Vietnam.”⁵⁶ A similar poll in August 1964 resulted in 72 percent of responders rating Johnson’s handling of

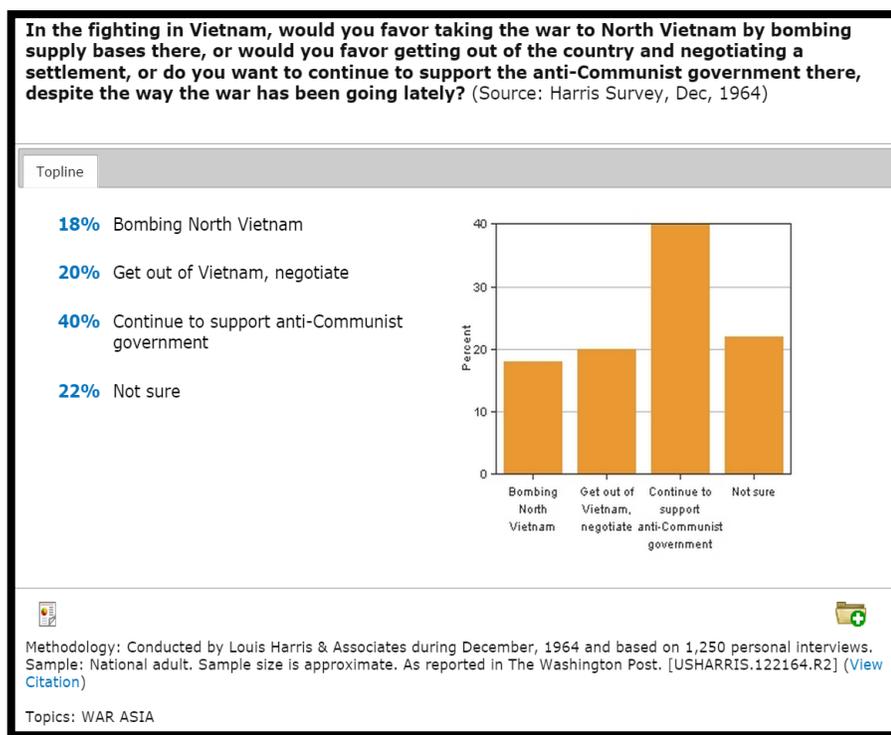


Figure 4

the war as “excellent/pretty good.”⁵⁷ In a lengthier question provided by the same polling agency in December 1964, 40 percent of respondents supported continuing assisting the anti-Communist forces in the Vietnam, and 18 percent opted to continue bombing North Vietnamese targets; only 20 percent thought America should “get out of Vietnam” and negotiate (refer to *Figure 4*).

The years in between the Gulf of Tonkin incident and the Tet Offensive were turbulent. In February 1965, President Johnson authorized Operation Rolling Thunder, a continuous, devastating bombing of North Vietnam. As National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy stated, the operation was designed to “damp down the charge that we did not do all that we could have

⁵⁶ See Appendix

⁵⁷ See Appendix

done, and this charge will be important in many countries, including our own.”⁵⁸ Intended to reduce North Vietnam’s ability to wage war, the bombing would persist for three years. The operation marked the first sustained American assault on North Vietnam, making it a major milestone in the war. Bombing was halted on October 31, 1968 to pursue negotiations. A sizeable part of U.S. air attacks, Operation Rolling Thunder contributed greatly to the 4.6 million tons of bombs the U.S. dropped on North Vietnam.⁵⁹ However, in late 1967, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, in an uncharacteristically critical assessment of war operations, called Operation Rolling Thunder ineffective. He maintained that supply movement had not been reduced, nor had the enemy’s morale been lessened.

1965 saw the first teach-ins, public gatherings on college campuses that emphasized



University of Michigan, 1965 (Image courtesy of Bing Images)

discourse on taking action and informing the public. While the spring 1965 teach-ins consisted mainly of professors, other academics, and even American government officials, by the summer there were anti-war activists and North Vietnamese official. One such teach-in on the University of Michigan

campus brought guest speakers, seminars and films, and drew over 3,000 students and 200 faculty members.⁶⁰ Speakers at these teach-ins utilized journalists’ reports, as by this time news stories were becoming increasingly critical of American action. A paper written for these teach-ins by historian Howard Zinn arguing for U.S. withdrawal used excerpts from *The New York*

⁵⁸ Young, *Vietnam Wars*, 136

⁵⁹ Author Unknown, *Operation Rolling Thunder*, History.com

⁶⁰ Jack Rothman, *A Decade of Dissent*, bentley.umich.edu.

Times and other newspapers. Zinn wrote that these articles were not “exceptions but examples...a tiny *known* part of an enormous pattern of devastation.” Zinn used *The New York Times* reporter Jack Langguth’s story on the bombing of Quang Ngai, in one of his papers:

Many Vietnamese – one estimate as high as 500 – were killed by the strikes. The American contention is that they were Vietcong soldiers. But three out of four patients seeking treatment in a Vietnamese hospital afterward for burns from napalm...were village women.⁶¹

Zinn also used *The New York Times* reporter Charles Mohr’s September 5, 1965 report to emphasize the destruction caused by the United States in South Vietnam:

In a delta province there is a woman who has both arms burned off by napalm and her eyelids so badly burned that she cannot close them. When it is time for her to sleep her family puts a blanket over her head. The woman had two of her children killed in the air strike that maimed her. Few Americans appreciate what their nation is doing to South Vietnam with airpower...this is strategic bombing in a friendly allied country...innocent civilians are dying every day in South Vietnam.”⁶²

What is more, Zinn used similar reports from other news agencies. From the *Herald Tribune* in September 1965:

United States Air Force B-52 jet bombers...dropped hundreds of tons of high explosives on the hamlet of Phuong X Tay...The raid had been ordered after intelligence experts concluded the hamlet to be a large Communist communications center. But...what aerial

⁶¹ Young, *The Vietnam Wars*, 196

⁶² *Ibid*

photo-analysis thought were sandbagged bunkers appeared to be an ancient wall. What had appeared to be fortified trenches turned out to be seldom-used oxcart trails.”

From UPI in August 1966: “30 civilians were killed and 30 others wounded last week when jet planes strafed a river barge convoy near Saigon...mistakenly identifying [it] as Viet Cong-operated vessels.”

The teach-in movement steadily grew as the war and American public opinion worsened. A national anti-war movement had developed, and while never officially organized into a singular organization with set tactics and ideology, the common outcry – to bring the soldiers home immediately – indeed signified a national unity. As historian Marilyn Young has stated about this time, “Living in America increasingly meant having guilty knowledge of the war and of the government’s lies about it.”⁶³

In March 1968, the first U.S. Marines arrived in South Vietnam at Da Nang to secure the air base there. The *USS Henrico*, *Union*, and *Vancouver* carried the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, about 3,500 marines total, and the troops were greeted by South Vietnamese civilians and officers. While there were scattered reports of Viet Cong fire near the air base, no marines were injured. As the first combat troops on the ground in Vietnam, this landing is a foretelling of gradual troop escalation; by the end of the year, more than 200,000 troops were in Vietnam.

The first large-scale battle of the Vietnam War took place in the Ira Drang Valley on November 14, 1965. The four-day battle included approximately 1,000 United States soldiers and 2,000 North Vietnamese. Establishing two landing zones and contesting them hotly, United States forces suffered 496 casualties, while the Vietnamese suffered 1,203 killed and wounded.

⁶³ Young, *The Vietnam Wars*, 197

The United States utilized air support and heavy weapons to combat the Vietnamese, ultimately emerging victorious, but the Vietnamese quickly learned that the United States' air power could be neutralized by fighting at close range.⁶⁴

On January 8, 1967, the biggest ground offensive in the war to date was launched by an American-South Vietnamese force. Dubbed Operation Cedar Falls, 16,000 U.S. soldiers and 14,000 South Vietnamese troops attempted to disrupt insurgent operations near Saigon. The force's primary targets were the Thanh Dien Forest Preserve and the Iron Triangle, a 60-square-mile jungle area suspected of North Vietnamese activity. During the operation, the allied force destroyed a massive tunnel complex appeared used to launch guerilla raids and Saigon terrorist attacks. 1,199 enemy men were killed or captured during the campaign, and the allies suffered 428 casualties throughout the 18-day campaign. Operation Cedar Falls set the tone for the rest of the year, as similar operations in 1967 would soon dominate across Vietnam.

By 1967, a national call for draft resistance was issued, along with plans to march on the Pentagon. The organizing group, the National Mobilization Against the War, coordinated efforts on both coasts, including the West Coast's Stop the Draft Week. Both the Pentagon march and the Stop the Draft Week involved direct police confrontation. In California on October 16, 3,000 protestors surrounded the induction center, met by police who attacked the arrested members of the crowd. Likewise, in Washington, D.C., about 100,000 people protested first on the National Mall, then in front of the Pentagon, which they saw symbolized the headquarters of sanctioned violence. As night fell, dozens of draft cards throughout the crowd were burned, prompting applause.

⁶⁴ Kennedy Hickman, *Vietnam War: Battle of Ia Drang*, militaryhistory.about.com.

A telling sign of the U.S. government's lack of progress in Vietnam was revealed in a *Boston Herald* article on January 1, 1968, the day the Tet Offensive began but was still unknown to the American media. This article, titled "Pressure from U.S. is On: 'Show Signs of Progress,'" illustrates how poorly the war was going for the Americans:

American officials at almost all levels, both in Saigon and in the provinces, are reported to be under steadily increasing pressure from Washington to produce convincing evidence of progress in the next few months... They expect [the pressure] to continue to increase, as first the primary and then the general elections begin to preoccupy politicians in Washington.⁶⁵

As one could see, the Vietnam War was at this point an increasingly hot topic for the American public. Major battles were happening across South Vietnam, and the roots for a large-scale anti-war movement were growing at home. The movement's size in the following years would grow with American involvement in Vietnam, and the Tet Offensive would prove to be a critical event not only for the war, but for the ever-frustrated American public.

⁶⁵ R.W. Apple Jr., *Pressure from U.S. Is On: 'Show Sign of Progress'*, 1968

Chapter Five: The Tet Offensive – 1968

The Tet Offensive was undoubtedly a milestone in the Vietnam War; it forever altered the public's view of the war, as press critique sharply increased and writers and television personalities editorialized more and more. Tet also showed the American military forces that the



Viet Cong were sizeable, coordinated, and willing to continue the supposed stalemate between the ARVN-American forces and the NLF/Viet Cong.

During a ceasefire in honor of the Vietnamese lunar New Year, the Viet Cong were actually coordinating and implementing a massive simultaneous attack on numerous cities and provincial capitals. For the first time, war was brought into the cities; five of the six largest Vietnamese cities, 34 of 45 provincial capitals, about one quarter of the 242 district towns, Cholon, Saigon's Chinese section, the Saigon American embassy, and Hue, a prominent South Vietnamese city, were all engulfed in the battle.

Throughout the attack, fighting was abnormally fierce. In the three-week battle in Saigon, a thousand NLF troops fought 11,000 American and ARVN troops to a stalemate, in the process killing or wounding 17,300 civilians while displacing 206,000 others, and destroying 19,000 homes.⁶⁶ In Hue, Robert Shaplen, a journalist for *The New Yorker* and veteran of Korean War

⁶⁶ Young, *The Vietnam Wars*, 220

coverage, wrote, “Nothing I saw [in Korea] or in the Vietnam War so far has been as terrible, in terms of destruction and despair, as what I saw in Hue.”⁶⁷ Of Hue’s 17,134 houses, 9,776 were completely destroyed, and in the city and surrounding area, the official U.S. figures list between 2,800 to 5,700 civilians were killed, all buried in shallow mass graves.

University of Maine professor and historian Ngo Vinh Long has written that the objective of the Tet attacks was to “force the United States to deescalate the war against the North and to go to the negotiating table.”⁶⁸ It was the North Vietnam hope that the Tet Offensive, at its most successful, would collapse the Saigon government, which would lead to a coalition government that would force the United States to withdraw. While this lofty goal was not achieved, the more modest hope that the United States would halt and perhaps reverse the war’s escalation was successful.

While the Tet attacks themselves were shocking, this impact was augmented by the previous optimistic view of the war thus far. For example, Brigadier General William Desobry, after completing an eighteen-month tour of the Mekong Delta, told reporters that he believed the local Viet Cong were “poorly motivated, poorly trained,” and that ARVN had “the upper hand completely.”⁶⁹ It was historical irony that, at approximately the same time that he was speaking, Viet Cong units were securing vital transportation routes into provincial and district capitals throughout the Mekong Delta. Likewise, in the 120-square mile Iron Triangle, a Viet Cong stronghold throughout most of the war, the commanding officer of the 173rd Airborne Brigade had confidently declared in October 1965, “The Iron Triangle was thoroughly searched and

⁶⁷ Young, *The Vietnam Wars*, 217

⁶⁸ Young, *The Vietnam Wars*, 216

⁶⁹ Young, *The Vietnam Wars*, 220

investigated, and all enemy troops and installations were destroyed.”⁷⁰ The area was again searched in 1966 by Americans in Operation Cedar Falls to make sure no North Vietnamese had returned to the area, a common practice throughout the Vietnam War. Even so, the Tet attack on Saigon was launched from this area, as the North Vietnamese utilized a complex tunnel network the Americans had apparently missed.

Even more disturbing is that there were signs of the coming Tet Offensive. The only officially recognized foretelling was the attack on Khe Sanh, a base in the northwest mountains close to the demilitarized zone and the Laos border. General Westmoreland reinforced the base in the time leading up to the January 21, 1968, attack, so at its peak there were 50,000 U.S. and ARVN troops occupying the base, ultimately making it easier for North Vietnamese troops to attack other areas during the Tet Offensive. Besides this diversionary attack, other signs of attack, such as captured documents, rumors, and warnings by pro-American Vietnamese, could have been recognized. However, investigation into these warnings would have meant questioning the firm position of the U.S. government: that the NLF was not the credible, revolutionary force they claimed and ultimately proved to be.

While the American press accepted the official statements, saying Tet was a defeat for the NLF, the spin Washington tried to sell – that their defeat predicted victory for the United States and the South Vietnamese – was not believed. Author Daniel Hallin summarizes this view well: “Journalists seems to have interpreted Tet, without consciously making the distinction, for what it *said* rather than what it *did* – as proof, regardless of who won or lost it, that the war was not under control.”⁷¹

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ Young, *The Vietnam Wars*, 222

A major development regarding the Vietnam War's portrayal in the public eye came when Walter Cronkite delivered his famous anti-war opinion on-air during his CBS broadcast in February 27, 1968. Having recently returned from reporting overseas, Cronkite began his



Walter Cronkite in Vietnam, 1968

broadcast by saying, "Tonight, back in more familiar surroundings in New York, we'd like to sum up our findings in Vietnam, an analysis that must be speculative, personal, and subjective."⁷² This introduction already cast an opinionated shadow

over the events of the war, particularly the recent Tet Offensive. Cronkite continued:

Who won and who lost in the great Tet Offensive against the critics? I'm not sure... The referees of history may make it a draw. We have been too often disappointed by the optimism of the American leaders, both in Vietnam and Washington, to have faith any longer in the silver lining they find in the darkest clouds. It would improve [the Communists] position and it would also require our realization, that we should have had all along, that any negotiations must be that – negotiations, not the dictation of peace terms. For it seems now more certain than ever that the bloody experience of Vietnam is to end in a stalemate. To say that we are closer to victory today is to believe, in the face of the evidence, the optimists who have been wrong in the past. To suggest we are on the edge of defeat is to yield to unreasonable pessimism. To say that we are mired in stalemate seems the only realistic, yet unsatisfactory, conclusion. But it is increasingly

⁷² Young, *The Vietnam Wars*, 222

clear to his reporter that the only rational way out then will be to negotiate, not as victors, but as an honorable people who lived up to their pledge to defend democracy, and did the best they could.⁷³

Television coverage of the war after Tet was altered. Typical American troop stereotypes pre-Tet showed them to be “macho” and infallible, but the horrors of the Tet Offensive, and the declining optimistic nature of war coverage, showed American soldiers in a different light: imperfect and generally weaker than the public’s ideal image. Post-Tet television showed a sizeable increase in the number of negative references regarding U.S. troop morale, whereas pre-Tet coverage contained almost none at all.⁷⁴

As Hallin notes, television’s pre-Tet coverage characteristics changed after Tet. Specifically, war had been seen as a national endeavor, where Vietnam was reported as “our” war, while it was thereafter referred to as “the” war, signifying that journalists were distancing themselves from support of the war effort. Additionally, television coverage post-Tet focused more on the costs of the war to American troops, as casualties were no longer hidden under pure statistics. For example, the Public Affairs Office in Saigon released weekly casualty figures, and before the Tet Offensive the networks would display these numbers next to either American, South Vietnamese, or North Vietnamese flags. After Tet, these reports became more sympathetic; sometimes, still photographs of wounded soldiers would be used instead of flags, and sometimes, such as in a report by David Brinkley in June 26, 1969, a comment would introduce the numbers. As Brinkley said, “Today in Saigon, they announced the casualty figures for the week, and through they came out in the form of numbers, each one of them was a man,

⁷³ Walter Cronkite, *We are Mired in Stalemate*, 1968

⁷⁴ Hallin, *The Uncensored War*, 180

most of them quite young, each with hopes he will never realize, each with family and friends who will never see him again. Anyway, here are the numbers.”⁷⁵

The first report of the Tet Offensive from the *Boston Herald* cites the casualties from a “truce” battle. “In effect,” Alvin B. Webb Jr. wrote, “the war never really stopped.”⁷⁶ On January 3, 1968, the *Herald* followed with an article about the shelling of Da Nang Base, known now as one of the first attacks of the Tet Offensive. Citing “man-sized rockets bouncing all over the place” during the fighting, as well as the numerous poison-spewing “beehive” rounds, the article had an unusually graphic quality to it.⁷⁷ The newspaper called the battle “one of the costliest enemy setbacks of the war,” and the article was accompanied by a picture of marines evacuating bodies into a helicopter.

The *Saint Louis Post-Dispatch* also played the Communist angle with their headline “Reds Shell U.S. Air Force Base at Da Nang.” In the article, the paper cited U.S. officials’ description of the attack: “the bloodiest of all’ Vietnam truce attempts.” The article continues:

Calculations of violations and casualties were complicated because the Viet Cong’s announced three-day truce ended at 1 a.m., five hours before the end of the allied stand-down. Guerrillas striking in the period between the expiration of their own cease-fire and the allied-proclaimed truce attacked a dozen government installations in the northern coastal lowlands.⁷⁸

The next day, January 3, 1968, the *Post-Dispatch* once again ran a front-page article about the New Year’s attacks, playing heavily on the casualties inflicted on both sides, stating

⁷⁵ Hallin, *The Uncensored War*, 175

⁷⁶ Alvin Webb Jr., *26 GIs Killed in ‘Truce’ Battle*, 1968

⁷⁷ Alvin Webb Jr., *Cong Shell Da Nang Base, Destroy 3 Planes*, 1968

⁷⁸ Author Unknown, *Reds Shell U.S. Air Force Base at Da Nang*, 1968

“The enemy in some cases took heavy casualties” and “A rocket assault on Da Nang Air Force Base destroyed three planes.”⁷⁹ The article elaborates that “heavy fighting dotted South Vietnam, but it was in the five northern provinces of the First Corps that the action was hottest,” before ending with a short bit about a “costly marine operation” which left “87 Leathernecks dead and 87 wounded.” Indeed, cynicism lurks throughout these *Post-Dispatch* articles, as they highlight the dead and violent fighting from the beginning of the Tet Offensive.

Unsurprisingly, Vietnam was the subject of various letters to the editor, and these documents help tell what many people were thinking: Vietnam, at this point, was a lost cause. Take New York resident Irwin Stark’s February 28, 1968, letter to *The New York Times*, for example:

The failure of the “pacification” program, our continued cooperation with a military dictatorship which has imprisoned the leaders of the “loyal” opposition and obviously lost the confidence of many of its erstwhile native supporters, and our increasing reliance on weaponry strongly suggest that American democracy has less and less to offer as a challenge to the Revolutionary Warfare of the Communists... It is, I submit, much too late to do anything else but get out quickly and with the best possible grace.⁸⁰

A similar letter by Louis G. Halle from Geneva, New York, criticizes the American military presence in light of a rumor that 100,000 more men will be asked for by General Wheeler in Vietnam:

This is a war we should never have got into. Not wickedness in Washington but misconceptions generally shared by the American people got us into it. The dynamics of

⁷⁹ John M. Hightower, *In 1968 – Peace, or Wider War?*, 1968

⁸⁰ Irwin Stark, *For Withdrawal From Vietnam*, 1968

the situation, however, compel the Administration to move in ever deeper, and the deeper we get in the greater the disaster for our country and our civilization. Over the years (and several administrations) Washington has allowed itself to be funneled into a situation that has brought it at last to intellectual bankruptcy. Continuing failure in Vietnam drive it constantly to compound the military commitment because it can think of nothing else to do.⁸¹

Another example shows New York lawyer Hoch Reid challenging the legality of the war itself:

Our State Department has gone to great lengths in its attempt to build a legal foundation for our intervention by documenting what it terms as “aggression from the North.” The result, however, is not much more convincing to the international community than was Mussolini’s attempt to justify the Italian military venture in Ethiopia by alleging Ethiopian aggressions on the frontiers of Italian Somaliland... The trial of [anti-war supporters] should bring squarely before our domestic courts the legality of the war itself. Whether our courts will be able to render a decision unprejudiced by domestic political considerations is another question.⁸²

Finally, there is John M. Hightower’s editorial in the January 3, 1968 issue of the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, which further illuminates, with supporting statistics, the spreading conflict:

The New Year has a fair chance of seeing the Vietnam war brought to an end or finding it expanded into a much more general conflict in Southeast Asia. Among some of the best informed officials there is a sense of increased expectation of apprehension, depending

⁸¹ Louis G. Halle, *Military Commitment in Vietnam*, 1968

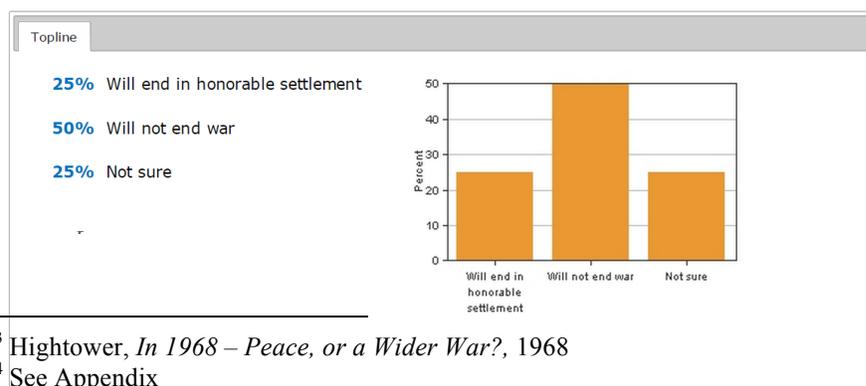
⁸² Hoch Reid, *Legality of Vietnam Venture*, 1968

on whether a particular expert judges that the prospect for ending of dampening down the conflict is greater than the prospect of its spreading.

U.S. troops increased from almost 400,000 to more than 470,000 but still could not completely dictate the terms of battle to the enemy. North Vietnam suffered the weight of 887,000 tons of bombs in [1967] but showed no outward sign of cracking. These developments helped set the stage for the new year.⁸³

By 1968, polling data showed that Americans had a grimmer view of the war. After the Tet Offensive, the public was asked about the Paris Peace Accords, an effort by the United States to reach an agreement with the North Vietnamese. Figure 5, distributed to 1,116 people, showed 50 percent of them did not think the Paris Peace Accords would bring an “honorable” settlement to the war. Additionally, 25 percent were not sure whether or not the accords would produce a settlement, and the remaining 25 percent optimistically thought the accords would end the war. A similar survey⁸⁴ showed that 73 percent of those polled thought the Paris Peace Accords were not making headway, while only 13 percent thought they were. These numbers are similar to a

As you know, negotiations are now going on in Paris between our government and North Vietnam. Do you think these negotiations will end in an honorable settlement of the war?
(Source: Harris Survey, May, 1968)



Gallup poll released on March 3, 1968, in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, reporting

⁸³ Hightower, *In 1968 – Peace, or a Wider War?*, 1968

⁸⁴ See Appendix

Methodology: Conducted by Louis Harris & Associates, May 16 - May 18, 1968 and based on 1,116 personal interviews.
Sample: National voters (see note). Reinterviews of 1116 voters from an earlier survey of 1417 voters originally interviewed 4/24-5/1/68 [USHARRIS.060368.R1] ([View Citation](#))

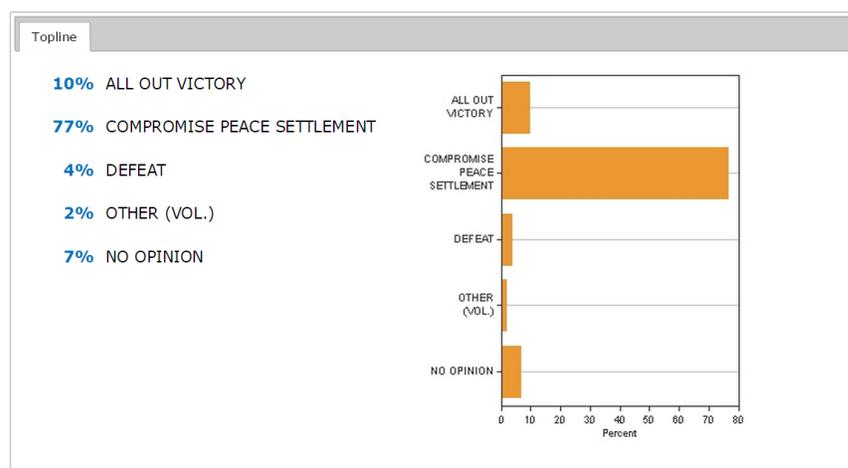
Figure 5

that confidence in Nixon dropped to a “new low” of 50 percent. The article stated the two main factors in the decline, the “discouragement over the Vietnam War” and the state of the economy, and that the numbers had steadily been decreasing since January 1968.⁸⁵

Similarly, a poll taken on February 1968, when the Tet Offensive was prominent in Americans’ minds, showed that 61 percent of the 1,500 people polled thought the war would end in compromise.⁸⁶ This is clearly in contrast to the 1963 polling results. Only 20 percent thought the war would end in victory, another testament to the shocking effects of the Tet Offensive, while only 4 percent thought the war would end in defeat. In a similar poll taken in May 1968 (refer to Figure 6), the percentage of people who thought the war would end in compromise increased to 77 percent, those who believed in victory decreased to 10 percent, while those who thought the war would conclude in defeat stayed the same.

A poll conducted by the Gallup Organization that asked whether or not participants

HOW DO YOU THINK THE WAR IN VIETNAM WILL END--IN AN ALL-OUT VICTORY FOR THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE, IN A COMPROMISE PEACE SETTLEMENT, OR IN A DEFEAT FOR THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE? (Source: Gallup Poll (AIPO), May, 1968)



Methodology: Conducted by Gallup Organization, May 2 - May 7, 1968 and based on 1,507 personal interviews. Sample: NATIONAL ADULT. [USGALLUP.761.Q19] ([View Citation](#))

Figure 6

thought the North Vietnamese was “sincerely interested” in finding a peaceful solution reinforces

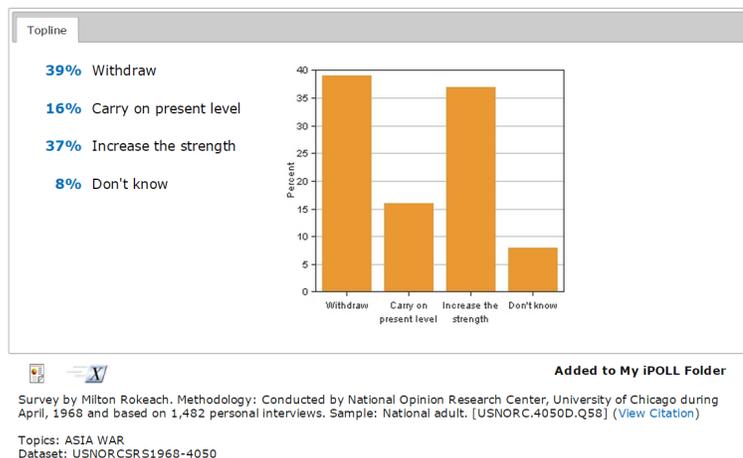
⁸⁵ George Gallup, *Confidence in Nixon Declines to New Low*, 1968

⁸⁶ See Appendix

the above data. Sixty-five percent of 1,507 people polled in May 1968 thought the North Vietnamese were not interested, with only 25 percent believing they were.⁸⁷

Regarding the U.S. troop strength in 1968 in Vietnam, a poll taken in April shows only 16 percent of 1,482 people interviewed thought the U.S. should continue with its “present level” of troops in attacks against North Vietnam, while 39 percent said the U.S. should withdraw

Just from what you have heard or read, which one of the statements on the card comes closest to the way you, yourself, feel about the war in Vietnam?...A. The U.S. (United States) should begin to withdraw its troops. B. The U.S. should carry on its present level of fighting. C. The U.S. should increase the strength of its attacks against North Vietnam. (Source: NORC SRS Amalgam--Vietnam And Political Preference, Apr, 1968)



altogether and 37 percent said the U.S. should increase attack strength.

In conclusion, the Tet Offensive was more than a military setback. The attacks showed the public that the government were being too optimistic, and journalism supported this theory. By 1968, the anti-war movement was in full swing, and the United States witnessed protests of all shapes and sizes. Journalism’s role in the Vietnam War was far from over, however.

⁸⁷ See Appendix

Chapter Six: The My Lai Massacre – 1969-1973

Possibly the most damning journalism that came from Vietnam were the reports that



American soldiers had massacred a group of Vietnamese civilians in the hamlet of My Lai, called “the most shocking episode of the Vietnam War” by historian Bernd Greiner.⁸⁸ The massacre itself took place on March 16, 1968, when between 347 and 504 unarmed civilians were killed by U.S. Army soldiers from the Company C of the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 11th Brigade of the 23rd Infantry Division. Considered a response to the Tet Offensive, historian Marilyn Young describes the grim massacre as a “real massacre, the

sort of thing Americans were used to seeing in old war movies about the Nazis or the Japanese. It was also the sort of thing the United States claimed the Viet Cong might do.”⁸⁹

When the massacre was revealed to the American public in November 1969, it immediately became a complex issue. As reported by Seymour M. Hersh for *The New York Times* on November 13, 1969, the military had formally charged Lt. William L. Calley, Jr., a 26-

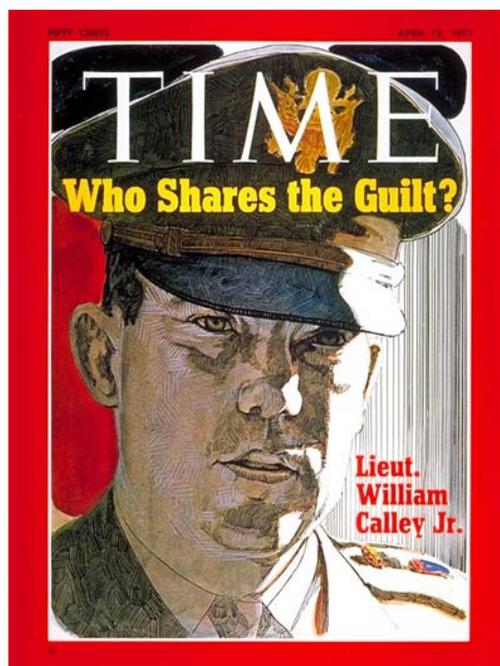
⁸⁸ Hallin, *The Uncensored War*, 242

⁸⁹ Young, *The Vietnam Wars*, 243

year-old Vietnam combat veteran, with the murder of at least 109 Vietnamese civilians during a search-and-destroy mission. While the army cited Calley's actions as the "premeditated murder [of] Oriental human beings...by shooting them with a rifle," one of Calley's comrades defended him by saying, "There are always some civilians casualties in a combat operation. He isn't guilty of murder."⁹⁰

Additionally, Calley's attorney, former Judge George W. Latimer of the U.S. Court of Military Appeals, said in an interview, "This is one case that should never have been brought. Whatever killing there was was in a firefight in connection with the operation. You can't afford to guess whether a civilian is a Viet Cong or not. Either they shoot you or you shoot them." Also included in Hersh's article was a sobering opinion given by one of Calley's friends: "It could happen to any of us. [Calley] has killed and has seen a lot of killing... Killing becomes nothing in Vietnam."⁹¹

Moreover, there was a third damning aspect to the My Lai case: the Army had tried to cover up the whole affair. Hersh's article states that "interviews have brought out the fact that the investigation into the [My Lai] affair was initiated six months after the incident, only after some of the men who served under Calley complained."⁹² Hersh also presents the information sheet provided by the Army public affairs officer immediately after the original incident: "The



Calley's April 1971 Time Cover

⁹⁰ Seymour Hersh, *The My Lai Massacre*, 1969

⁹¹ Ibid

⁹² Ibid

swiftness with which [American units] moved into [My Lai] surprised the enemy. After the battle, the Eleventh Brigade moved into the village searching each hut and tunnel.”⁹³ Similarly, an Army communique that reported on the incident mentioned captured weapons, enemy documents, and one short-wave radio, but made no mention of civilian casualties.⁹⁴ Clearly, the initial reports skirted the details of the mass killings, and the fact that the army failed to investigate the situation until six months later heavily implicates the desire to keep the press away. According to one of Hersh’s sources, “The Army knew it was going to get clobbered with this at some point. If they don’t prosecute somebody, if this stuff comes out without the Army taking some action, it could be even worse.”⁹⁵

This was not the only article Hersh wrote about the My Lai massacre. In a follow-up article published November 20, 1969, Hersh interviewed three American soldiers who were in the 11th Brigade when the My Lai took place. Hersh cited Sgt. Michael Bernhardt’s account of the situation. Bernhardt stated,

The whole thing was so deliberate. It was point-blank murder and I was standing there watching it. They [Calley’s men] were doing a whole lot of shooting, but none of it was incoming – I’d been around enough to tell that. I figured they were advancing on the village with fire power. I walked up and saw these guys doing strange things. They were doing it three ways: One: They were setting fire to the [huts] and waiting for people to come out and then shooting them up. Two: They were going into the [huts] and shooting them up. Three: They were gathering people in groups and shooting them. As I walked in, you could see piles of people all through the village...all over. I saw them shoot a

[grenade launcher] into a group of people who were still alive. They were shooting women and children just like anybody else. We met no resistance and I only saw three captured weapons. We had no casualties. As a matter of fact, I don't remember seeing one military-age male in the entire place, dead or alive. The only prisoner I saw was about 50.⁹⁶

When asked why he did not report the incident sooner, Bernhardt explained that after the My Lai event, a colonel had visited Bernhardt's firebase and inquired about the massacre, but Bernhardt "heard no further" about the event. Later, Bernhardt described how [high-ranking officials] came to the firebase and asked him to "not write my Congressman." Furthermore, Bernhardt was ordered by the army "not to talk," making Bernhardt question whether or not he could "trust people anymore."⁹⁷

Hersh also interviewed another witness to the shootings. Michael Merry of C Platoon offered an account similar to Bernhardt's:

"[American soldiers] just marched through shooting everybody. Seems like no one said anything... They just started pulling people out and shooting them. They had [civilians] in a group standing over a ditch – just like a Nazi-type thing... One officer ordered a kid to machine-gun everybody down, but the kid just couldn't do it. He threw the machine gun down and the officer picked it up... I don't remember seeing any men in the ditch. Mostly women and kids."⁹⁸

The publicity of My Lai came at a time when the administration was defensively trying to gain support for the war. On November 11, 1969, Veterans Day, pro-war administrators planned

⁹⁶ Ibid

⁹⁸ Ibid

nationwide Veterans Day observances in the hopes of proving that the “great silent majority” of Americans supported Nixon’s handling of the war. Pro-war Texas Senator John Tower was quoted as saying that if the Veterans Day pro-war supporters did not match the numbers of the anti-war demonstration planned for that week, “it’s because most of the silent majority are working people who can’t get away from their jobs.”⁹⁹ One of these anti-war demonstrations in Washington D.C. involved 15,000 Massachusetts residents, transported in more than one hundred buses.¹⁰⁰ To meet them during the week were 40,000 security men “ready to put down any violence that might occur.”¹⁰¹

Public opinion of the Vietnam War, and the My Lai event and resulting court-martial in

particular, was acutely agitated. Gallup

Poll data from this time show the Lt.

Calley incident represented opinions

about the U.S. command in general.

When asked in April 1971 whether

Calley was “being made the scapegoat

for the actions of others above him or

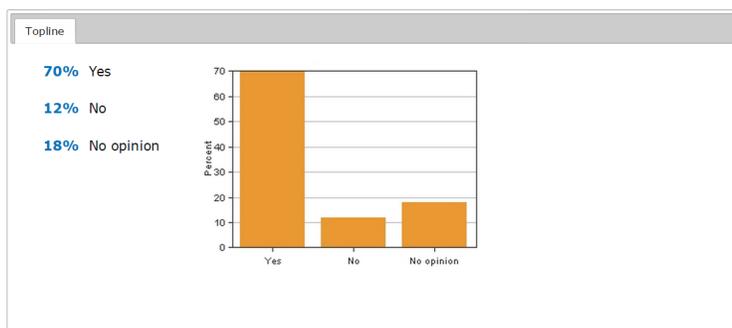
not,” 70 percent said “yes”; only 12

percent said “no.” In a similar poll, when asked whether or not one disapproved of the My Lai court-martial because what happened at My Lai was not a crime, or because others may share the

blame, 56 percent said they thought others shared responsibility.¹⁰² Perhaps even more

disturbing, on a separate poll questioning whether or not the My Lai massacre was an isolated or

Do you think Lt. Calley is being made the scapegoat for the actions of others above him or not (with regard to the My Lai incident)? (Source: Gallup/Newsweek Poll, Apr, 1971)



Survey by Newsweek. Methodology: Conducted by Gallup Organization during April, 1971 and based on 522 telephone interviews. Sample: National adult. [USGALNEW.71CLLY.R2] (View Citation)

Topics: ASIA WAR DEFENSE CRIME

⁹⁹Joseph E. Mohbat, *The Support*, 1969

¹⁰⁰Joe McLean, *15,000 from Mass. To Join Anti-War Activities in Capital*, 1969

¹⁰¹Isabelle Hall, *40,000-Man Force Ready*, 1969

¹⁰²See Appendix

common incident, 52 percent of the 522 interviews said it was a common one.¹⁰³ Referring to the role of media, specifically television in the My Lai trial, a poll asked if television was wrong to “raise the whole My Lai episode”, and 47 percent thought it was right of television to press the issue.¹⁰⁴

An April 1, 1973 article in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reported that telegrams to President Nixon from public opposing Calley’s conviction were “100 to 1.” The article continues:

Presidential Press Secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said yesterday that about 5000 telegrams had been received and a backlog of about 20,000 was waiting to be transmitted. He said virtually all favored clemency for Calley...

The public weren’t the only ones who thought others shared the blame for Calley’s actions. Utah’s Democratic Senator Frank E. Moss was quoted in the same article, saying: “We as a nation cannot wipe this blemish from our national conscience simply by finding one man guilty. Lt. Calley should not go unpunished, but he alone should not be called on to pay the price.”

The same article also mentions Florida Democratic Representative Don Fuqua and his notion to have Calley address Congress. Fuqua explained, “It seems to me that this would be a perfectly legitimate function of Congress, for maybe the laws relating to military justice are somewhat less perfect than many would have us believe.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ See Appendix

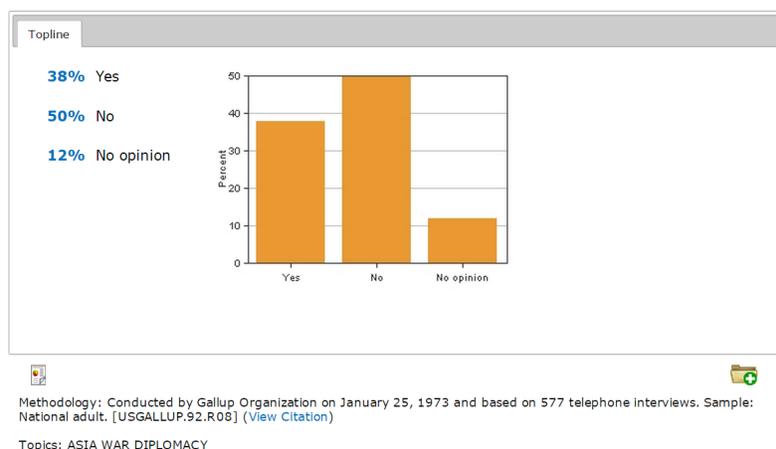
¹⁰⁴ See Appendix

¹⁰⁵ Author Unknown, *Telegrams Back Calley 100 to 1*, 1973

In April 1973, anti-war demonstrations were more numerous than ever. Starting April 1, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reported that demonstrations were planned for “24 of the next 36 days.” Activities included anything from peace prayers to deliberate confrontations to “stop the government.” One of the movements, the May Day Tribe, planned to block major bridges and highways into Washington D.C. A newspaper article quoted one of May Day Tribe’s organizers, Rennie Davis, as saying, “If the government won’t stop the war, we’ll stop the government.” What is more, the Tribe had vocalized their plan to encircle the Capitol to “keep Congress in session until it ends the war.”

On the Vietnam War in general, public opinion at this time was more severe than the consensus in 1968. When asked if [members of the public] thought the Vietnam War would be over by Election Day 1972, 73 percent said “no.” Additionally, a poll asking whether the war

Suppose when U.S. troops are withdrawn, North Vietnam does try to take over South Vietnam again, do you think the U.S. should send war materials to South Vietnam, or not?
(Source: Gallup Opinion Index, Jan, 1973)



would end in U.S. victory, defeat, or compromise, 68 percent thought it would end in compromise; only 8 percent thought victory was possible. Compounding this issue was the lack of support the U.S. public seemed to

give the South Vietnamese; when asked, after U.S. withdrawal, if the South Vietnamese warranted more war materials, 50 percent said no. It is also important to note the overall distrust toward the Nixon administration at this time; a January 1973 poll asked whether or not Nixon’s

administration was “not telling the public all they should know about the Vietnam War,” and the result was an overwhelming no (67 percent).¹⁰⁶

In March 2015, the My Lai massacre once again surfaced in the news. On the television show *Democracy Now!*, Seymour Hersh, who first reported the story 47 years earlier, was interviewed about returning to My Lai and his thoughts decades after the horrific event. Hersh’s view of the event was still one of anger, sorrow, and frustration:

And it was hard. It was hard to see the ditch. It was hard to see how so many American boys could do so much and how it could be so thoroughly covered up by the government, not only up until the time I wrote about it, but even afterwards...So, My Lai, yes, it was terrible. It was much worse than other incidents. But incidents killing 60, 100, 120, there was just much too much of that during the war. Really bad leadership.

And there was a horrible moment that got me, really got me. At some point, when they were done shooting, some mother had protected a baby underneath her body in the bottom of the ditch. And the GIs heard, as somebody said to me, a keening, a crying, whimpering noise, and a little two- or three-year-old boy crawled his way out full of other people’s blood from the ditch. It’s hard for me to talk about this. And right across what was—it’s now been plowed over, but it was a rice ditch. It’s now been paved over at the site. And I saw it all. I’d seen it in my mind, and I saw it visually that day I was there. And the kid was running away, and Calley went after it—Calley, big, tough guy

¹⁰⁶ See Appendix

with his rifle—and dragged him, grabbed him, dragged him back into the ditch and shot him. And that stuck in people’s minds.¹⁰⁷

Hersh also related an interview he had with another soldier in the My Lai incident,

Private Paul Meadlo:

Meadlo began following orders. He began crying. This is something I did not know until I revisited some of the investigations. I went and reread everything that the Army had done. I just had not read it all before. And I found other witnesses who testified at Army hearings. After my stories came out, there was a big investigation by a general named Peers. And there was another soldier, a New York kid. Naturally, a New York street kid wasn’t going to shoot, but he watched what happened. He testified about Meadlo beginning to cry. He didn’t want to do it, and Calley ordered him to. And he began to shoot and shoot. And they fired clips...into the ditch.¹⁰⁸

After the My Lai Massacre, the war’s years were numbered. Thanks to the lingering losses of the Tet Offensive, President Nixon was encouraged to enact the Nixon Doctrine, the process of building up the South Vietnamese Army so they could defend themselves sooner rather than later. This policy became known as “Vietnamization.” Beginning in 1970, U.S. troops started withdrawing from the most violent regions in Vietnam’s interior to the coast; this led to a significant reduction in casualties compared to 1969. Simultaneously, Nixon also ordered the clandestine bombing of Laos and Cambodia, as the neighboring countries were being used as Communist supply bases. The invasion sparked nationwide protests, as many Americans did not like once more expanding the war. To make matters worse, Nixon’s peace efforts with North

¹⁰⁷ Seymour Hersh, *My Lai Revisited: 47 Years Later*, democracynow.org.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

Vietnamese in 1971 and 1972 ended up deadlocked due to disagreement between North and South Vietnam.

While not considered by this thesis as an event in itself, the publication of the *Pentagon Papers* in 1971 warrants special mention for its place in journalistic history. First commissioned by Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara at a time when he himself was disenchanted with the war, the 2.5 million-word work took 36 analysts a year and a half to write. The narrative covered American involvement in Indochina from World War II to May 1968, using memorandas, cablegrams, and direct orders from the major government players at the time. The *Pentagon Papers* covered government decisions for the aforementioned time period, detailing who made the decisions, why, and how.

Through the efforts of Daniel Ellsberg, *The New York Times* obtained and published these papers, titled “Vietnam Archive: Pentagon Study Traces Three Decades of Growing U.S. Involvement,” on June 13, 1971. After three days, the government sought a restraining order against the newspaper, as the government argued “the national defense interests of the United States and the nation’s security will suffer immediate and irreparable harm” should the papers continue to be published.¹⁰⁹ The court case remained in contention for 15 days, and the Supreme Court ruled on June 30, 1971 that the press had the right to continue publication.

The most damaging revelation from the Pentagon Papers was the fact that four U.S. administrations, starting with President Truman through Johnson, deliberately misled the public about their intentions in Southeast Asia. Public dissemination of this information played a large role in the peaking anti-war movement, and was one of the key factors in Nixon’s decision to deescalate the war effort.

¹⁰⁹ Neil Sheehan, *The Pentagon Papers, As Published By the New York Times* (New York: Quadrangle), 10

In 1973, Nixon announced a break in offensive operations thanks to the Paris Peace Accords, and the official treaty was signed on January 27, 1973. U.S. prisoners of war were released, and a cease-fire was enacted between North and South Vietnam. Within 60 days, all U.S. troops were removed from Vietnam. In December 1974, North Vietnam resumed operations against South Vietnam, and thanks to insufficient materials and the lack of American troops, South Vietnam soon succumbed. The war culminated in the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

As supported by newspaper articles, television segments, letters to the editor, and poll data, it is clear that the American public was heavily influenced by the candor in journalists' reports about the Vietnam War. The anti-war movement was symbolic of the decade as a whole: a morally volatile, compelled, and angry population against its dishonest and untrustworthy government. While this thesis only focuses on four events, one must keep in mind the countless other events throughout the decade-long war. In retrospect, it is no wonder that the public was so agitated, considering the many mistakes of U.S. government policy and the sheer uselessness of the war's vague, convoluted objective.

Journalism played a major role in the deeply wounded psyche of American culture. In the years after the last helicopter evacuated Saigon in 1973, a negative aura surrounded the Vietnam War as portrayed in popular culture. In film, the war was portrayed as immoral and convoluted. As early as 1974, *Hearts and Minds* gave the public a shocking, sobering view of the war in a documentary style. Other films portray the war similarly. For example, Robin William's decidedly anti-government movie *Good Morning, Vietnam* features the actor playing a Saigon radio jockey who must decide whether to report the news the government is issuing, or what he learns from first-hand experience. Stanley Kubrick's masterful *Full Metal Jacket* captures the horrors of war for an inexperienced journalist and his fellow companions.

Singer-songwriters across America bewailed the war musically, such as when Billy Joel cried in 1987,

Remember Charlie, remember Baker/They left their childhood on every acre/And who was wrong?/ And who was right?/It didn't matter in the thick of the fight.

Another popular, clearly anti-war song called “Find the Cost of Freedom” was produced by Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young. They lamented in 1970,

All the brave soldiers that cannot get older been askin' after you/Hear the past a/ callin',
from armageddon's side/ When everyone's talkin' and no one is listenin', how can we
decide?

Mid-war, protest songs gave the anti-war movement fuel and credibility. Such songs include Credence Clearwater Revival's mainstay “Fortunate Son,” which has been featured in numerous films, and Edwin Starr's famous “War,” which has itself become inseparable from its Vietnam-era origin. The list of both mid- and post-anti-Vietnam songwriting is endless.

Journalism itself was changed after the war. Specifically, the government placed journalists on a tighter leash than ever before. The exercise of “embedding” a journalist into a company of soldiers, a practice not common in Vietnam, has today changed the way warfare is reported. Indeed, the United States government learned the value of transparency and trust after Vietnam, and the government is seemingly quite apt not to repeat history in lieu of the dangerous repercussions another sizeable anti-war movement might bring. No matter where a journalist is, however, Vietnam taught the profession, as well as the public, to question the government's actions in wartime.

Very few people today would not cite the Vietnam War as a mistake, and this trend started in force thanks to the media as soon as the buildup of ground troops began in 1965. As political scientist Samuel Huntington wrote in 1975, “The most notable new source of national

power in 1970, as compared to 1950, was the national media.”¹¹⁰ Huntington continued by saying, “In the 1960’s the network organizations, as one analyst put it, became ‘a highly credible, never-tiring political opposition, a maverick third party which never need face the sobering experience of governing.’”¹¹¹ Adding more fuel to the fire, even President Johnson believed that the Vietnam War was lost because the war had been televised. As Michael Mandelbaum wrote, “The fact that scenes from the war appeared regularly on television has seemed to others besides President Johnson to have made it impossible for the United States to win in Vietnam. Regular exposure to the realities of battle is thought to have turned the public against the war, forcing the withdrawal of American troops and leaving a way clear for the eventual Communist victory.”¹¹²

The publication of the *Pentagon Papers* in 1971 has given the public hundreds of pages explaining each government mistake, deception, or lie in detail. Even today, veterans lambasting the government’s objectives are commonplace, and even government officials, with the value of retrospect weighing on their shoulders, have admitted to mistakes and mismanagement. Perhaps the most impactful apology came from former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara in 1995, who said, admitting to being haunted by the government’s mistakes and convoluted role in Vietnam, “People don’t want to admit they’ve made mistakes. We were wrong, terribly wrong. We owe it to future generations to explain why.”

¹¹⁰Daniel Hallin, *The Media, the War in Vietnam, and Political Support: A Critique of the Thesis of an Oppositional Media*, 1

¹¹¹ Ibid

¹¹² Michael Mandelbaum, *Vietnam: The Television War*, Jstor.org.

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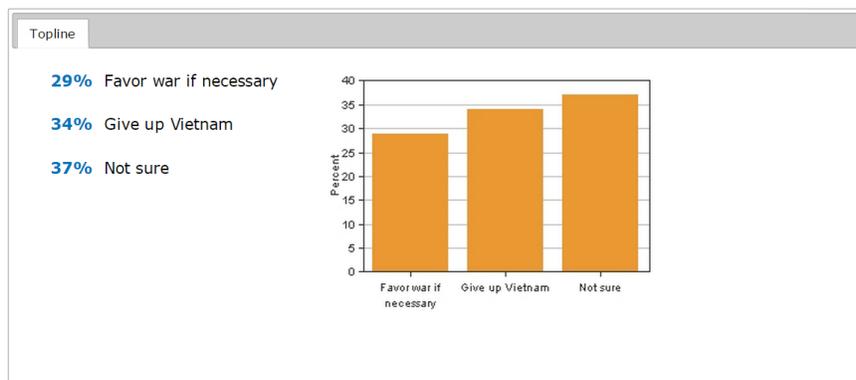
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Appendices

Appendix A: Gallup Poll Charts

If it meant going to war with Red China over Vietnam, would you favor going to war or giving up Vietnam-- if it came to that? (Source: Harris Survey, Sep, 1963)

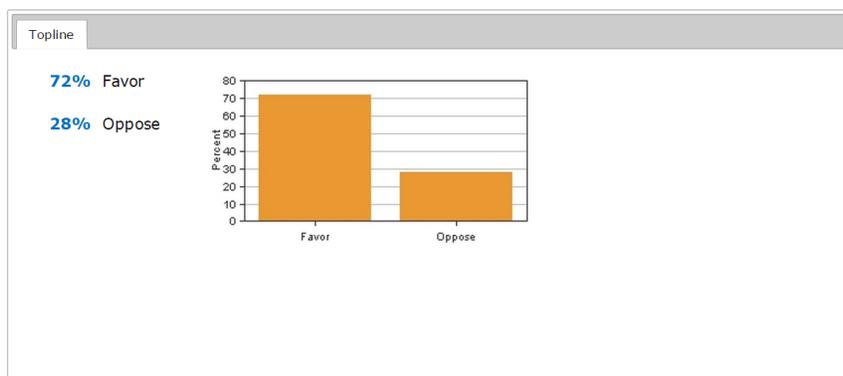


Added to My iPOLL Folder

Methodology: Conducted by Louis Harris & Associates during September, 1963 and based on 1,250 personal interviews. Sample: National adult. Sample size is approximate. As reported in The Washington Post. [USHARRIS.093063.R2] ([View Citation](#))

Topics: WAR ASIA

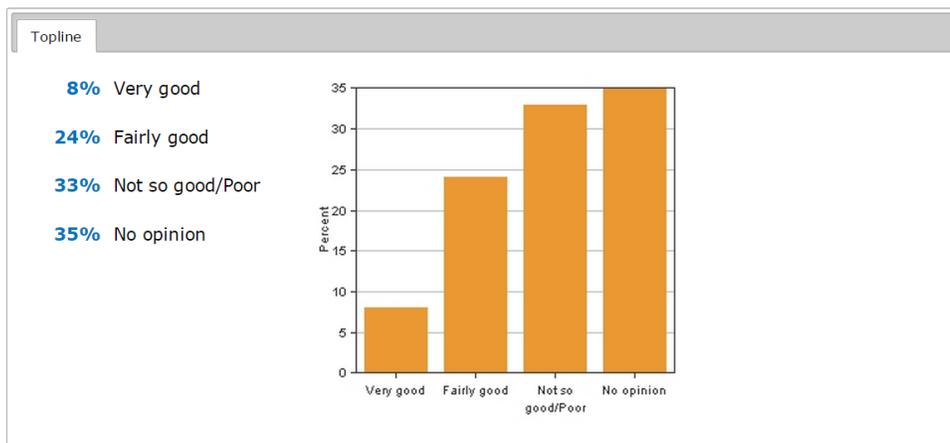
In the past year some American lives have been lost in the fighting in Vietnam. Our government is trying to help the non--communist government there resist a communist take--over. From what you know or have heard, do you favor or oppose the policy our government has followed in Vietnam? (Source: Harris Survey, Sep, 1963)



Methodology: Conducted by Louis Harris & Associates during September, 1963 and based on 1,250 personal interviews. Sample: National adult. Sample size is approximate. As reported in The Washington Post. [USHARRIS.093063.R1] ([View Citation](#))

Topics: WAR ASIA

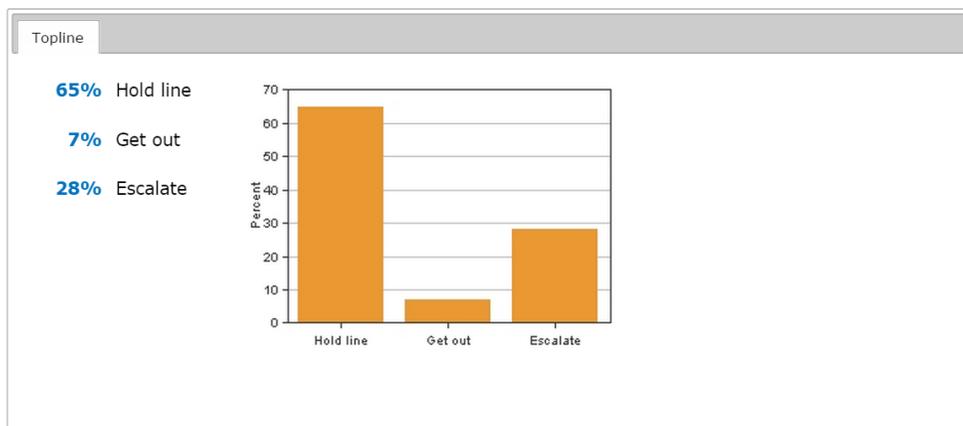
(Please tell me whether you think the Kennedy administration is doing a very good job, a fairly good job, not so good a job, or a poor job on each of these?)... Handling the situation in Vietnam and Laos. (Source: ORC Public Opinion Index, Oct, 1963)



Methodology: Conducted by Opinion Research Corporation, October 15 - November 15, 1963 and based on 1,506 personal interviews. Sample: National adult. [USORC.64JAN.R2V] ([View Citation](#))

Topics: PRESIDENTIAL_APPROVAL

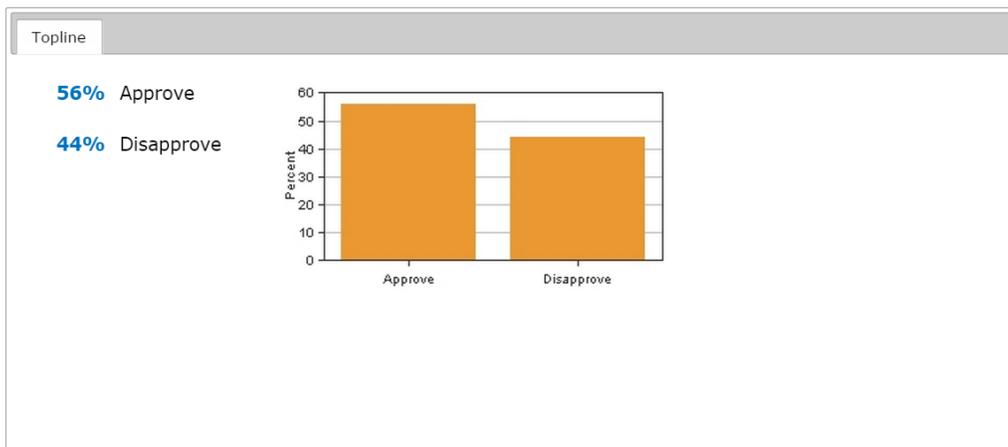
All in all, what do you think we should do about Vietnam now? We can follow one of three courses: Carry the ground war into North Vietnam at the risk of bringing Red China into the fighting, withdraw our support and troops from South Vietnam and negotiate, or continue to try to hold the line there to prevent the Communists from taking over South Vietnam. Which do you favor? (Source: Harris Survey, Dec, 1965)



Methodology: Conducted by Louis Harris & Associates during December, 1965 and based on 1,250 personal interviews. Sample: National adult. Sample size is approximate. As reported in The Washington Post. [USHARRIS.120665.R2] ([View Citation](#))

Topics: ASIA WAR DIPLOMACY

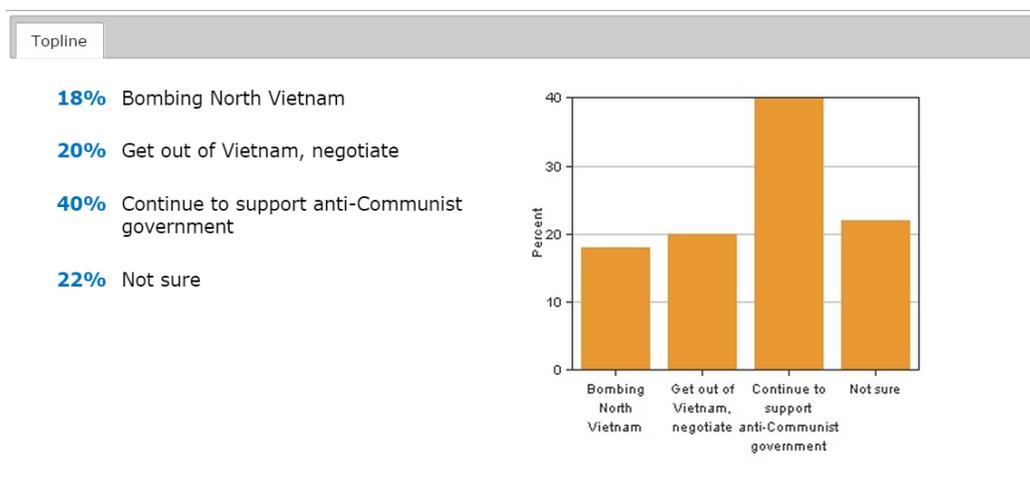
Do you approve or disapprove of the job President (Lyndon) Johnson has done in... handling the war in Vietnam? (Source: Harris Survey, Sep, 1964)



Methodology: Conducted by Louis Harris & Associates during September, 1964 and based on 1,250 personal interviews. Sample: National adult. Sample size is approximate. As reported in The Washington Post. [USHARRIS.091464.R1C] ([View Citation](#))

Topics: PRESIDENTIAL_APPROVAL

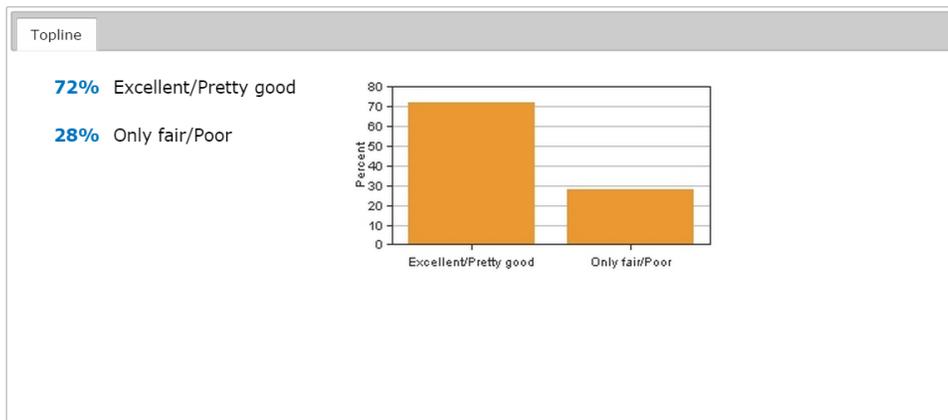
In the fighting in Vietnam, would you favor taking the war to North Vietnam by bombing supply bases there, or would you favor getting out of the country and negotiating a settlement, or do you want to continue to support the anti-Communist government there, despite the way the war has been going lately? (Source: Harris Survey, Dec, 1964)



Methodology: Conducted by Louis Harris & Associates during December, 1964 and based on 1,250 personal interviews. Sample: National adult. Sample size is approximate. As reported in The Washington Post. [USHARRIS.122164.R2] ([View Citation](#))

Topics: WAR ASIA

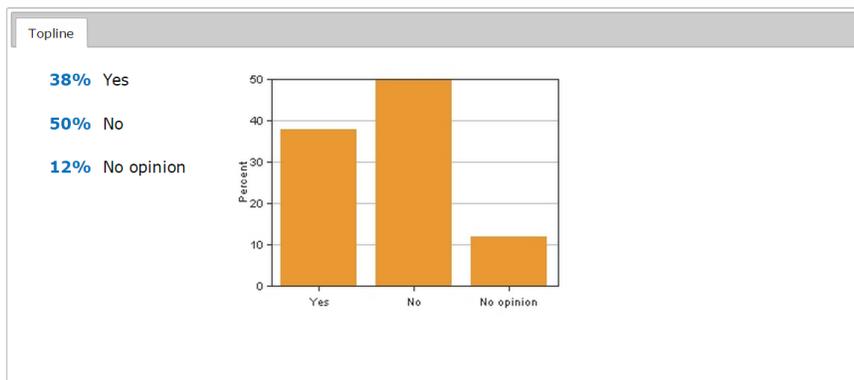
How would you rate the job President (Lyndon) Johnson has done on... handling the war in Vietnam... excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor? (Source: Harris Survey, Aug, 1964)



Methodology: Conducted by Louis Harris & Associates during August, 1964 and based on 1,250 personal interviews. Sample: National adult. Sample size is approximate. As reported in The Washington Post. [USHARRIS.082464.R2A] ([View Citation](#))

Topics: PRESIDENTIAL_APPROVAL

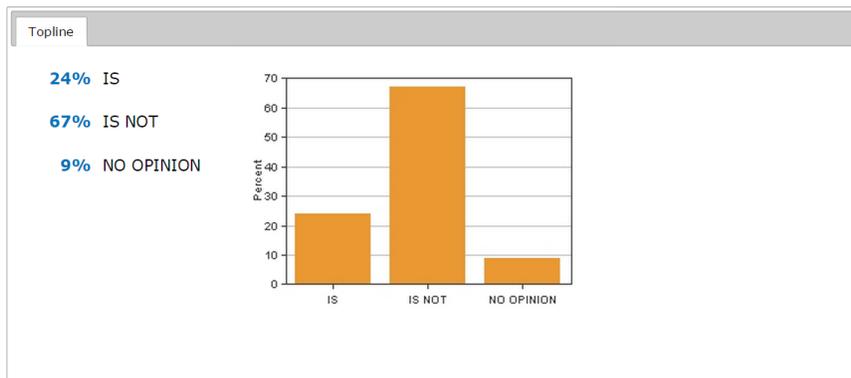
Suppose when U.S. troops are withdrawn, North Vietnam does try to take over South Vietnam again, do you think the U.S. should send war materials to South Vietnam, or not? (Source: Gallup Opinion Index, Jan, 1973)



Methodology: Conducted by Gallup Organization on January 25, 1973 and based on 577 telephone interviews. Sample: National adult. [USGALLUP.92.R08] ([View Citation](#))

Topics: ASIA WAR DIPLOMACY

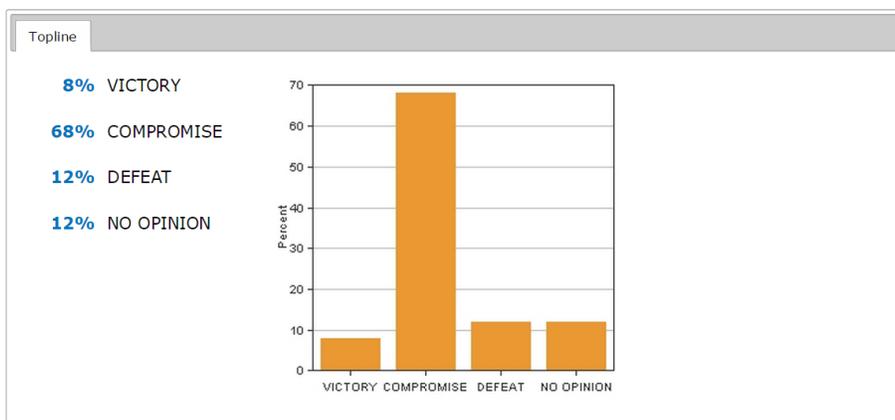
DO YOU THINK THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION IS OR IS NOT TELLING THE PUBLIC ALL THEY SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE VIETNAM WAR? (Source: Gallup Poll (AIPO), Jan, 1973)



Methodology: Conducted by Gallup Organization, January 12 - January 15, 1973 and based on 1,549 personal interviews. Sample: NATIONAL ADULT. [USGALLUP.862.Q005] ([View Citation](#))

Topics: PRESIDENCY WAR ASIA
Dataset: USAIPO1973-0862

HOW DO YOU THINK THE WAR IN VIETNAM WILL END--IN AN ALL-OUT VICTORY FOR THE U.S. AND THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE, IN A COMPROMISE PEACE SETTLEMENT, OR IN A DEFEAT FOR THE U.S. AND THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE? (Source: Gallup Poll (AIPO), Nov, 1972)

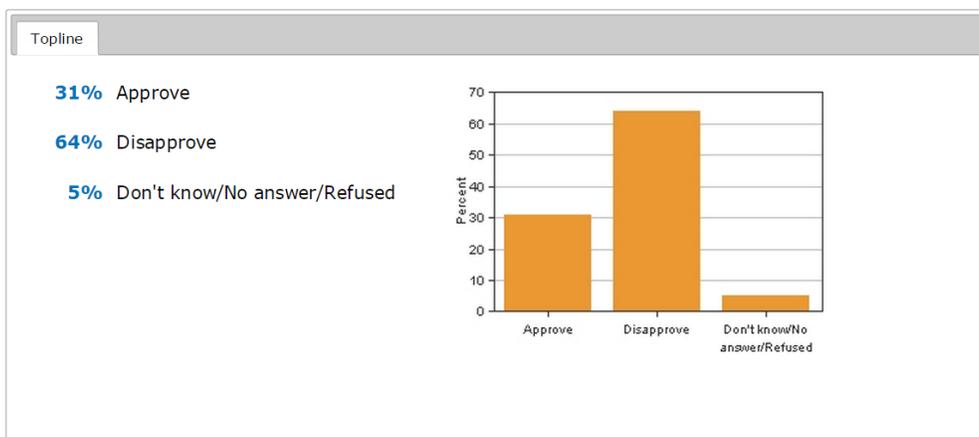


Methodology: Conducted by Gallup Organization, November 10 - November 13, 1972 and based on 1,462 personal interviews. Sample: NATIONAL ADULT. [USGALLUP.860.Q012] ([View Citation](#))

Topics: WAR ASIA DIPLOMACY
Dataset: USAIPO1972-0860

The government's defense budget is spent in many different ways. As I read some of the ways it can be spent, I'd like you to tell me whether you approve or disapprove of this use of government money...The war in Vietnam (Source: General Electric Survey, Oct, 1972)

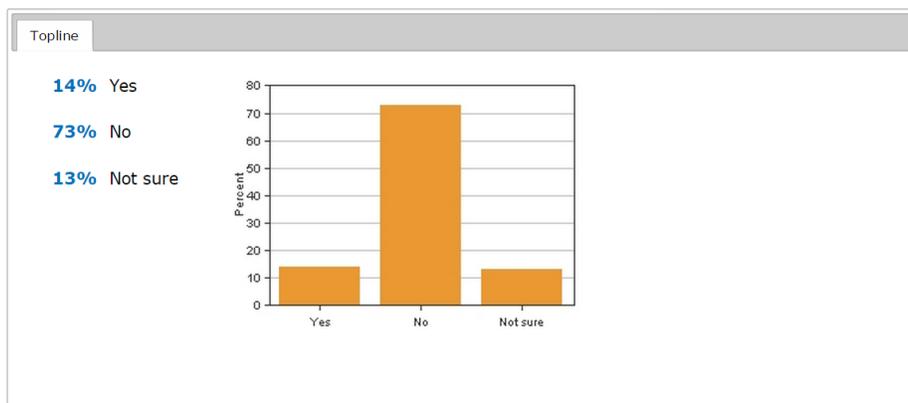
Subpopulation/Note: Asked of Version 1 half sample.



Methodology: Conducted by General Electric, October 27 - November 5, 1972 and based on 2,153 personal interviews. Sample: National adult. Interviews were conducted by Trendex. [USGE.197204.Q07AV1] ([View Citation](#))

Topics: DEFENSE SPENDING ASIA WAR
Dataset: USGE1972-04

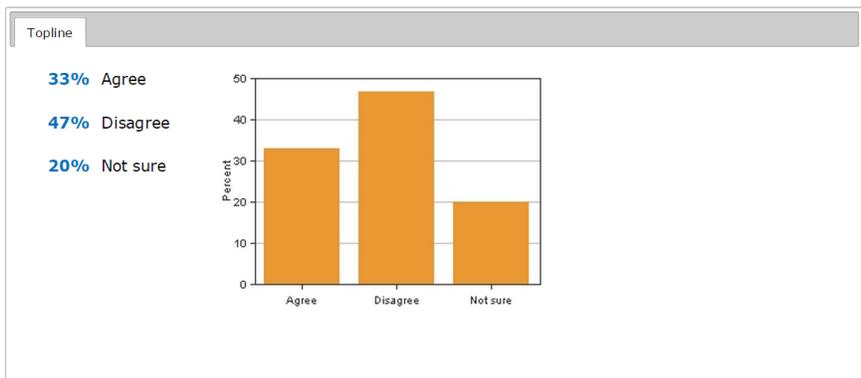
Do you expect the Vietnam war to be settled before Election Day (1972)? (Source: Time/Yankelovich Voter Study Wave 4, Oct, 1972)



Survey by Time. Methodology: Conducted by Daniel Yankelovich, Inc. during October, 1972 and based on 3,012 telephone interviews. Sample: National adult in the 17 largest states according to electoral votes. [USYANK.72VOT4.Q06B] ([View Citation](#))

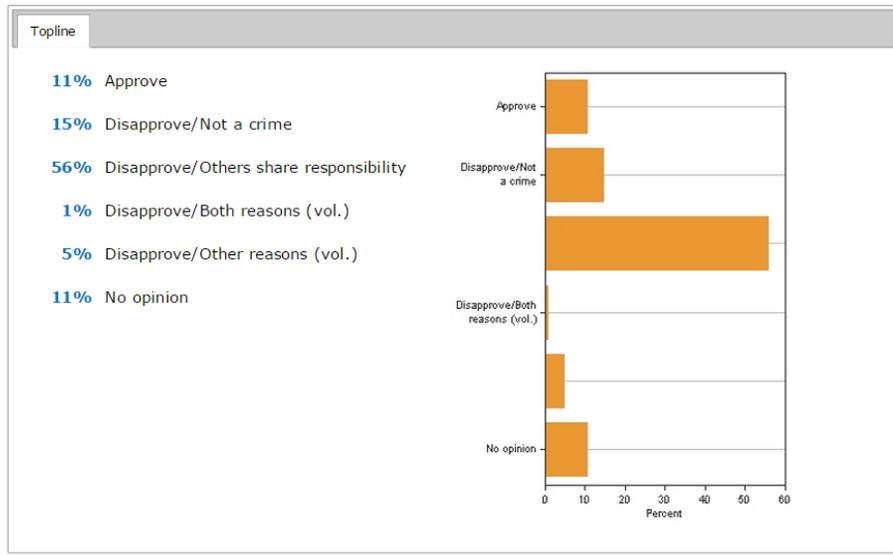
Topics: VOTE_FOR_PRESIDENT FUTURE ASIA WAR

(Now let me read you these statements about television. For each, tell me if you tend to agree or disagree with each.)...Television was wrong to raise the whole My Lai episode which resulted in the courtmartial of Lt. Calley. (Source: Harris Survey, May, 1971)



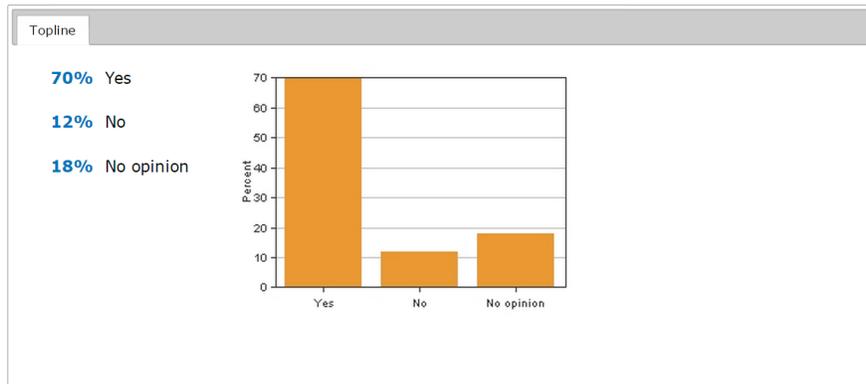
Methodology: Conducted by Louis Harris & Associates during May, 1971 and based on 1,600 personal interviews. Sample: National Adult. [USHARRIS.71MAY.R32G] (View Citation)
Topics: TELEVISION PRESS WAR ASIA

Do you approve or disapprove of the court martial finding that Lt. Calley is guilty of premeditated murder? (If 'Disapprove', ask:) Do you disapprove of the verdict because you think what happened at My Lai was not a crime, or because you think many others besides Lt. Calley share the responsibility for what happened? (Source: Gallup/Newsweek Poll, Apr, 1971)



Survey by Newsweek. Methodology: Conducted by Gallup Organization during April, 1971 and based on 522 telephone interviews. Sample: National adult. [USGALNEW.71CLLY.R1] (View Citation)
Topics: ASIA WAR DEFENSE CRIME

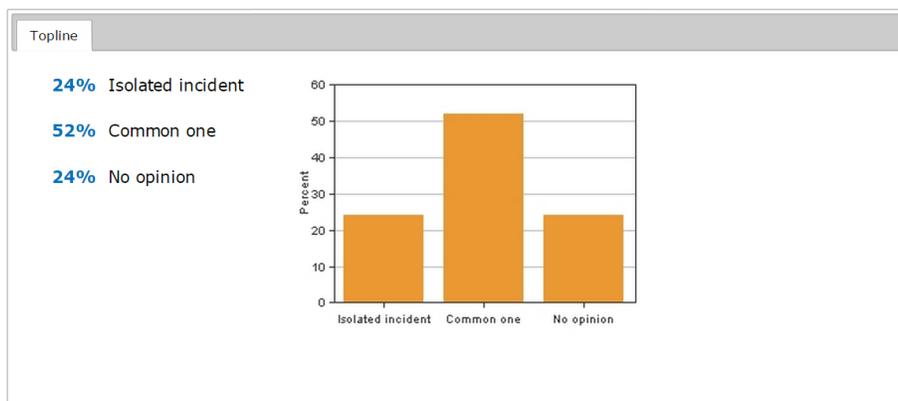
Do you think Lt. Calley is being made the scapegoat for the actions of others above him or not (with regard to the My Lai incident)? (Source: Gallup/Newsweek Poll, Apr, 1971)



Survey by Newsweek. Methodology: Conducted by Gallup Organization during April, 1971 and based on 522 telephone interviews. Sample: National adult. [USGALNEW.71CLLY.R2] ([View Citation](#))

Topics: ASIA WAR DEFENSE CRIME

Do you think the incident (My Lai massacre) for which Lt. Calley was tried was an isolated incident or a common one? (Source: Gallup/Newsweek Poll, Apr, 1971)

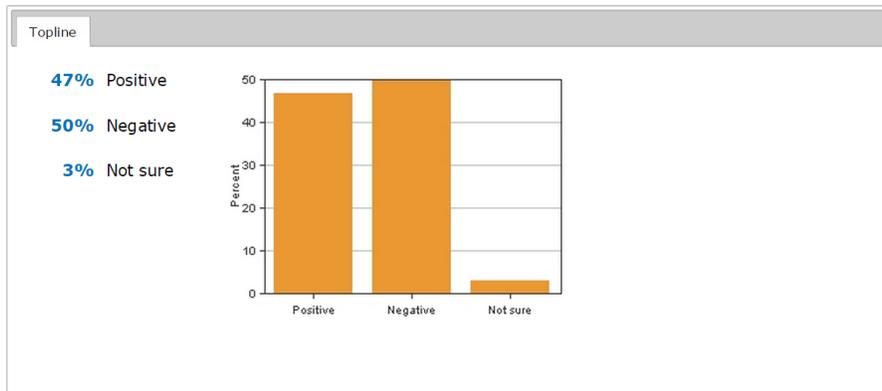


Survey by Newsweek. Methodology: Conducted by Gallup Organization during April, 1971 and based on 522 telephone interviews. Sample: National adult. [USGALNEW.71CLLY.R4] ([View Citation](#))

Topics: ASIA WAR DEFENSE CRIME

How would you rate President Nixon on...Handling the Vietnam War--excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor? (Source: Harris Survey, Aug, 1972)

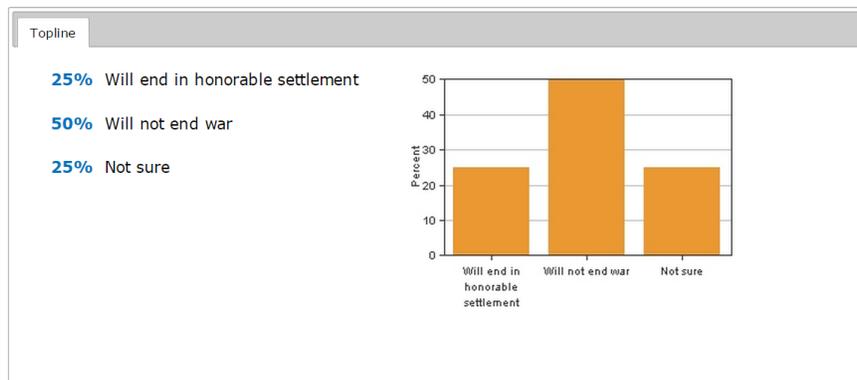
Subpopulation/Note: . Positive = excellent and pretty good. Negative = only fair and poor.



Methodology: Conducted by Louis Harris & Associates, August 2 - August 3, 1972 and based on 1,635 personal interviews.
Sample: Likely voters. [USHARRIS.082172.R2F] ([View Citation](#))

Topics: PRESIDENTIAL_APPROVAL

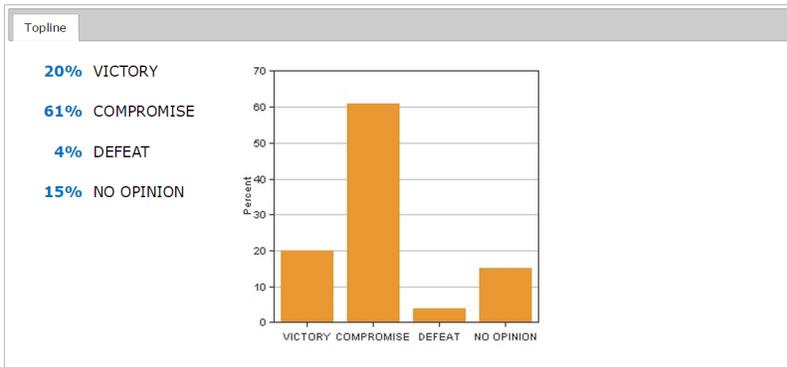
As you know, negotiations are now going on in Paris between our government and North Vietnam. Do you think these negotiations will end in an honorable settlement of the war? (Source: Harris Survey, May, 1968)



Methodology: Conducted by Louis Harris & Associates, May 16 - May 18, 1968 and based on 1,116 personal interviews.
Sample: National voters (see note). Reinterviews of 1116 voters from an earlier survey of 1417 voters originally interviewed 4/24-5/1/68 [USHARRIS.060368.R1] ([View Citation](#))

Topics: ASIA WAR

HOW DO YOU THINK THE WAR IN VIETNAM WILL END--IN AN ALL OUT VICTORY FOR THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE, IN A COMPROMISE PEACE SETTLEMENT, OR IN A DEFEAT FOR THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE? (Source: Gallup Poll (AIPO), Feb, 1968)

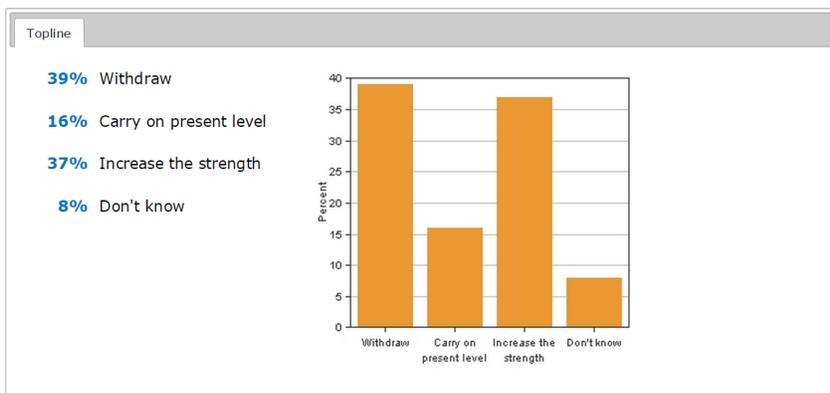


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Methodology: Conducted by Gallup Organization, February 1 - February 6, 1968 and based on 1,500 personal interviews. Sample: NATIONAL ADULT. [USGALLUP.757.Q017] ([View Citation](#))

Topics: WAR ASIA DIPLOMACY
Dataset: USAIPO1968-0757

Just from what you have heard or read, which one of the statements on the card comes closest to the way you, yourself, feel about the war in Vietnam?...A. The U.S. (United States) should begin to withdraw its troops. B. The U.S. should carry on its present level of fighting. C. The U.S. should increase the strength of its attacks against North Vietnam. (Source: NORC SRS Amalgam--Vietnam And Political Preference, Apr, 1968)

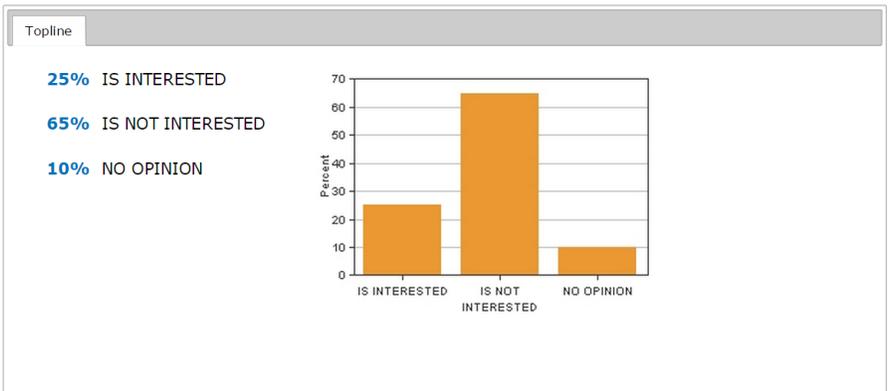


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Survey by Milton Rokeach. Methodology: Conducted by National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago during April, 1968 and based on 1,482 personal interviews. Sample: National adult. [USNORC.4050D.Q58] ([View Citation](#))

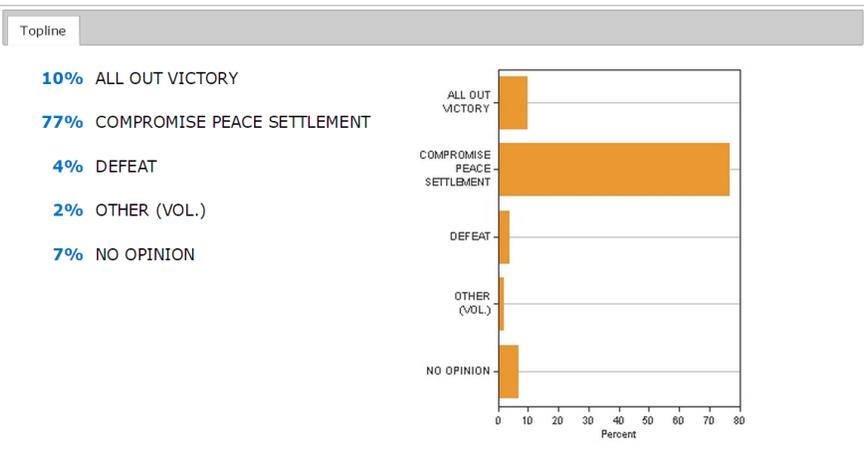
Topics: ASIA WAR
Dataset: USNORCSRS1968-4050

DO YOU THINK NORTH VIETNAM IS SINCERELY INTERESTED IN FINDING A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE WAR, OR NOT? (Source: Gallup Poll (AIPO), May, 1968)

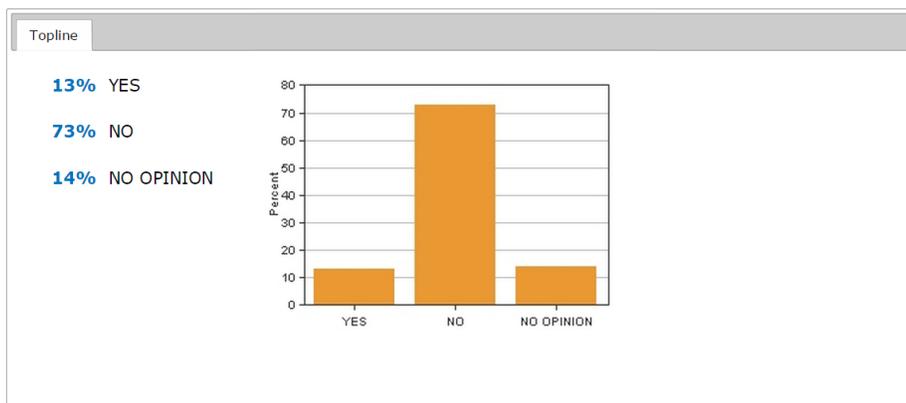


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HOW DO YOU THINK THE WAR IN VIETNAM WILL END--IN AN ALL-OUT VICTORY FOR THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE, IN A COMPROMISE PEACE SETTLEMENT, OR IN A DEFEAT FOR THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE? (Source: Gallup Poll (AIPO), May, 1968)



DO YOU THINK THE PARIS PEACE TALKS (ABOUT THE VIETNAM WAR) ARE MAKING HEADWAY, OR NOT? (Source: Gallup Poll (AIPO), Aug, 1968)



Methodology: Conducted by Gallup Organization, August 7 - August 12, 1968 and based on 1,526 personal interviews.
Sample: NATIONAL ADULT. [USGALLUP.766.Q11] ([View Citation](#))

Topics: DIPLOMACY WAR ASIA
Dataset: USAIPO1968-0766

Author's Biography

Kyle Hadyniak, originally from Carteret, New Jersey, has lived in Freedom, Maine, for the last 18 years. Despite his fondness for Orono, Kyle plans to move back to Freedom in the near future to be closer to his family and his bloodhound. Graduating with a B.A. in Journalism and minors in History and Music, he will pursue graduate school in the fall in Mass Communications. Currently, he has spent two years working for *The Maine Campus*, an experience he considers invaluable to his future as a journalist, and for the University of Maine Alumni Association as Senior Editorial Intern. In his free time, he enjoys reading historical non-fiction, playing video games, and listening to and playing music.