

3-8-99

To C-SPAN 2,

I was disgusted at the recent lecture by a former captain who has written a book about Vietnam. This guy actually considers the U.S. military intervention in a civil war on foreign ground justifiable, even after all that is now known.

The U.S. got mired in the unnecessary war in Vietnam based on and perpetrated by government and military lies, such as the "Gulf of Tonkin" incident. It involved the use of a toxic poison, agent orange, which was sprayed recklessly and in higher than recommended concentrations, causing disease, birth defects, and numerous deaths in the civilian population and among American soldiers. It involved a defective rifle, the M-16, which at one time was a decent, reliable weapon until the Army Ordnance Corps turned it into a malfunctioning piece of crap, mainly by forcing the use of "ball" powder in the ammunition, which caused the rifle to fire at a faster rate than for which it was designed, resulting in it jamming. The Corps then told the rifle manufacturer to falsify reliability tests, because the weapon couldn't pass them.

Apparently this captain is helping the government to rewrite history, asserting that most soldiers did their duty and returned home to a normal life, like it was no big deal. That's not correct; Vietnam veterans got the shaft. People like this lying lifer make me sick; too bad he didn't get maimed in Vietnam, but as a captain he probably got fairly safe duty.

The sleazebag officer even said that war protesters were motivated by their fear of being drafted. That may be true in some cases, because most people wouldn't want to die or be maimed in an unjust war based on lies; would you?

But what about the numerous protestors who weren't subject to the draft, such as all women, and men above a certain age? The fact is, although it took many Americans far too long to figure it out, they finally came to understand the sheer stupidity of U.S. involvement.

The U.S. has always had a tendency to gloss over and not acknowledge the shabby treatment and the very real problems of Vietnam veterans. A study for the General Counsel of the House Armed Services Committee revealed in 1981 that more Vietnam veterans have committed suicide than the number of American soldiers who died in the war. Statistics compiled by the Veterans Administration reveal that Vietnam veterans have a suicide rate four times as high as veterans of other wars.

O. B. K. TV, Hemphill



The war in Vietnam wasn't a popular one, and a relatively few men were supposed to be willing to sacrifice everything while it was business as usual back home. The strategy and tactics employed by the military in Vietnam were poorly conceived and inappropriate.

The U.S. had no right to invade Vietnam, contrary to what the asshole captain says. There is only one Vietnam; South Vietnam was an artificial construction of the U.S. The 17th parallel was only a provisional boundary set by the Geneva Conference of 1954 and was to last until 1956 when general elections were to be held to decide on a single government. Other provisions explicitly prohibited introducing additional troops or munitions or the establishment of military bases by any foreign country.

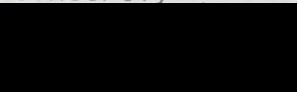
The U.S. refused to sign the agreement and the free election never occurred. Instead the U.S. helped establish Ngo Dinh Diem as the leader of its' artificial construct, South Vietnam. Diem managed to gain the powers of an absolute dictator.

Villages were routinely bombed, shelled, or torched by troops; millions of civilians were uprooted and relocated to camps surrounded by barbed wire where they lived in filth and squalor; crops were burned, animals slaughtered, free-fire zones established, and much good land poisoned by agent orange (not to mention people, including U.S. soldiers); torture and mistreatment of prisoners was common. One study found that 75% of affected civilians "hated" the U.S. for what it had done to them and their country (which is rather high, considering the power the U.S. had over them).

Yet the war managers seemed to consider that the U.S. was doing them a favor by destroying their country and ruining their lives. The U.S. killed probably somewhere on the order of a million civilians in the war.

James William Gibson, author of "The Perfect War: Technowar in Vietnam," attributes this strange mental attitude to Orwellian double-think, which was used in all phases of the war, in order to justify it. Doublethink is partially described as follows: "to tell deliberate lies while genuinely believing them, to forget any fact that has become inconvenient, and then, when it becomes necessary again, to draw it back from oblivion for just as long as it is needed; to deny the existence of objective reality and all the while to take account of the reality which one denies--".

sincerely



Missoula, MT