

Running head: Was Vietnam War winnable?

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The Vietnam War was unwinnable. The United States' intervention on behalf of a weak and incompetent army trying to pursue a victory against a determined army that quickly decides on the military operations only after inevitable American political exhaustion undermined potentially decisive US military responses a paramount to whether the war was winnable or not. However, even if the United States had attained a more comprehensive and fined military decision, its cost would have exceeded any possible expected benefit. Any military attack, like the one used by the American army, is expected to have completely destroyed the army of the Vietnamese. But what is presented to have happened is quite different. The mission of the American army in the My Lai massacre was to clear the area of the communists completely in order to secure the land and not to kill the civilians (O'Brien, 1999). The later action of killing the civilians was achieved but this kind of killing should not be considered a win because the civilians were not armed to fight and they were not the target enemies, hence no war. Therefore this was just a genocide or simple massacre.

The reason why the US went to war was to stop the spread of communism, which started in North Vietnam by the leader Ho Chi Min and spread southwards towards the commercial center of Saigon (Mangold & Penycate, 2005). While the war had lasted for three years, the soldiers of the two powerful opposing sides began to expect what seemed to be opposite of the outcome. Despite the fact that there were many and several experienced and tactical soldiers in the war against Vietnamese, the successful war meant that they capture the Vietnamese soldiers and full recovery of the weapon. This did not happen since the Thuan and his team shot many American army men. Detonation of mines prematurely by the United States army complicates the situation and made their mission hard to accomplish. The structure of command in the army changed and a new team was ushered in to lead the United States army in the Vietnam War. The new command team brought some changes and the operation tactics changed. The resources were diminishing but they nevertheless deployed them in form of money, manpower, time and materials shortly before the United States army was withdrawn from the South Vietnamese. This task was conducted with absolute professionalism, intelligence, sincerity and decency and in the process Vietnam War nearly could have resulted in stable peace.

The key to defeat of the US army was the underestimation that the enemy was weak with less fighting ability. The communists viewed the American soldiers to be strong and feared them. The American army was deployed into companies that were distributed all over the Vietnamese territory to defend the land. These were Charlie Company, Task Force Barker. These landed at different points of My Lai. The American policy at the time was to neutralize communism spread. This neutralization of communism could have been done in a different war like Korean War but instead United States focused too much on this agenda in the Vietnam War. Furthermore, the aggression of Communists minimization was not on the agenda of many and United States lose focus in trying and achieve this mission. The strategy of the America, media misinformation and poor leadership are some of the factors that meant Vietnam War was unwinnable. This war on Vietnam can be argued that it was only fought for America to retain its credibility. The South Vietnamese people was meant to enjoy their freedom after this war which was a legitimate reason for the war given the communists style of leadership. The leadership failures were as a result of inept decisions made and no clear and decisive actions were made by those in power at the time. In addition, poor strategy meant that the enemy was not fully understood in which the army was fighting.

The attacking strategies by the American army company was done on paperwork (textbook operation) through leadership of the captain of the armies, move in faster, surprising the enemy and cutting off the escape routes and finally driving them to the sea (Olson & Roberts, 1998). Unfortunately the attack could not happen because the army to be fought was not even seen by the US army men in the companies. The strategies that were on plan were good enough to give the American army a win but they fail to locate and destroy the communist army men who fought underground

The American army fired anything that was moving like cows, chicken, buffalo's water, pigs, and ducks. They shot at civilians who seemed to be running around, threw grenades into houses, scream orders to harass the communists. There was a random shooting of old men sitting in their homes, women carrying water and children. Other soldiers practiced rape. This therefore should not be considered to be a win. The people being shot directly were not armed to fight, therefore no war took place, and it just seemed a massacre.

The structure of the chain of command of the United States military was well organized as compared to that of the Vietnamese army (O'Brien, 1999). It involved the captain- median, lieutenant colonel Frank Barker, colonel Oran Henderson, major general Samuel Vorster and commander of the whelming, egregious and aggravated. On the other hand the soldiers of Vietnam had a simple structure of commander, deputy commander and the village defense force. Comparing such forces it should be expected that what the US army should win the war but it fails to defeat the Vietnamese army who operated underground.

The Vietnamese people saw the US presence as a continuation of the colonization they had experienced under the French. South Vietnamese therefore chose not to be supportive of the US, and the North was motivated to get the US out. Therefore winning the war was ultimately low. The underground fighting tactic was also to the advantage of the Vietnamese army. They understood the terrain very well and US army was in the process of learning the landscape. This meant that Vietnamese army had an upper hand as the underground fighting tactic was concerned. The society could not reveal to the US army the entry and exit points of the Nam Than, the leader of the communist party of phi mu hung village.

Another major reason why there would be no win was that The American elites' civilian and military had a failure of vision, insight, courage, and integrity. This is well shown by the conflicting interests of those in the army (Mangold & Penycate, 2005). The captained had not mentioned clearly of the killing of people that merely took control of the US army operation. Some soldiers admit during the interview that they had no intentions to kill the civilians. Some says that the killing was ordered during the briefing of the soldiers by the army.

Vietnam War could not be won because the US military did not manage or not allowed to fight with military strategy in mind, instead there was a primarily political agenda. The way to military victory is to destroy the will or means of your enemy to conduct war. That is hard to do when you are not allowed to attack the source of the enemy war machine. North Vietnam was very well much an off limits as well as neighboring territories that could source the war machines. Some cross border operations occurred but not at the level that was needed. This took to an advantage of the Vietnamese army.

However, politics and war go together. The US military ability was not the problem; rather the political limitations put on them were chief obstacles (Olson & Roberts, 1998). The political climate with major influence from the MSM was not right to win the war. There was neither capital center nor a king leader to stand up to the political picture and pull out victory from those who wanted to despair because it was like a fruitless fight. Therefore this can be argued to stance which Vietnam was. Nevertheless, giving up was a neither bad deal, a kind one may agree with the cost versus benefit argument. Vietnam was a war that US should not have engaged in from the beginning.

References

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