

# Vietnam veterans against the war - social protest against drug addiction, health ...

[Science](#), [Social Science](#)



The paper "Protest against Drug Addiction, Health Problems and Other Social Problems Arising as a Result of the War in Vietnam" is an engaging version of a term paper on social science. For over a decade, America was torn apart by a war that was not even its own: the Vietnam War. Moreover, unlike other wars, this war won the American soldiers and the US government little, if any, appreciation or encouragements from the masses. The war resulted in heavy casualties with nearly 50,000 U.S. troops out of the half million dead, along with another million of the Vietnamese troops. It also had an adverse effect on the economy as well as the popularity of the government policies. The Vietnam War caused a social uproar, health problems, and drug addiction among other consequences that benumbed the sensibilities of the Americans.

The most devastating effect on society was felt by the Vietnamese veterans. They were so outraged by the injustice of the war that they formed the organization "Vietnam Veterans against the War". The organization grew tremendously to nearly 30,000 members from veterans in the U.S. as well as officers on duty in Vietnam. In the Foreword of the book *Telltale Hearts*, Ambrose opines that all American wars have instigated some kind of uprising against the war but the movement against Vietnam War was by far the biggest, the most influential and ironically, the least effective too (Garfunkel, 1997).

The returning veterans also experienced various health problems due to the

use of chemicals and herbicides in the war. Many of the veterans returned home only to live the rest of their lives in fear of developing diseases from the chemicals and passing it down to their children. Others were now addicted to drugs such as heroin and marijuana which increased the demand for heroin in the U. S market. According to a study conducted by the Pentagon in the 1970s, 35% of GIs had tried marijuana while the rate of this occurrence increased gradually because of the falling morale and changing the culture (Kuzmarov, 2009). Hence, drug abuse grew in American society as a result of the Vietnam War. The veterans of the war also suffered a lot of disgrace. They were severely stereotyped and were claimed unfit to readjust into society due to the gory, inhumane nature of the Vietnam War and hence, were ostracized for their participation in the war. Even though these veterans served their country just like any other, they were not given the same respect or appreciation. The writer of the book *The Vietnam War* rightly says that if the people of a nation are against a certain governmental policy, it is seldom to succeed and even if it does, the impact is temporary and rightly so (Huynh & Werner, 1993). The Vietnam veteran's memorial was erected primarily to return the honor and respect the troops deserved despite the political reasons of the war. It was built seven years after the war which was a bit too late to commemorate the sacrifices of the soldiers.

Despite the concern of POVs, people were less concerned about the internal matters of the U. S and more about the government's interest in Vietnam, or the foreign policy. Eventually, society began to see the war differently and

began to distrust the U. S government. Initially, it was the poor people who sacrificed. It was their sons who were sent to war. Eventually, the lives of the middle and upper classes started getting affected too. This is when the hue and cry against the war actually started (Huynh & Werner, 1993). The military also became extremely unpopular in the eyes of the American people. The war did not affect the U. S position as the superpower because the country was not physically hit. However, it did bring about a change in the internal politics of the country. The early 1970s witnessed “ Momentous changes” in the US because of the war. Previously, the congress was flexible with the formulation of the foreign policy by the executive and decided to ignore the latter’s manipulation. However, around this time, this practice was coming to an end (Brown, 1991). These changes proved to bring about a positive change in the government machinery.

The Vietnam War was different for the U. S government than its involvement in previous wars. Whereas in wars such as WWII, the ultimate winner of the war had no effect on U. S policies, the Vietnam War did. The U. S government was burdened with a whole set of different issues due to the war which it had never experienced before. Hence the war was a completely new deal for the government and eventually, helped the U. S. define its role in the new world and also help develop a new approach to military strategy. Thus, the Vietnam War was a combination of benefits as well as detriments. Where the country evolved with respect to its foreign policy and legislature and executive relations, the masses received a major setback. The aftermath

of the Vietnam War and its consequences on the soldiers was so distressing that the Americans awakened and became aware of the happenings around them.