

Assignment: quiet american and the vietnam war assignment

[History](#)



The novels *The Quiet American*, by Graham Greene, and *Bloods*, by Wallace Terry, disclose various ways the U. S. Contributed to this prolonged war. Despite all the benign intentions, many people feel the Vietnam War was a costly mistake that should've been avoided. While *The Quiet American* takes place in Vietnam during the French war years prior, *Bloods* tell firsthand experience of African-American soldiers who served in the Vietnam War. Pyle in *The Quiet American* resembles America as a whole, "(Pyle) was absorbed in the Dilemmas of Democracy and the responsibilities of the West; he was determined... o do good, not to any individual but to a entry" (Greene, 18). He believed preventing the spread of communism would be beneficial for all. Based in the mysterious Asian country as a secret agent, his job was to import weapons and set up attacks throughout the country. One incident describes: " that day all over Saigon innocent bicycle pumps had proved to contain bombs which had gone off at the stroke of eleven.... It was better from their point of view to let people assume that the bombs were communist" (Greene, 18-135). To stir up anti-communism the U. S. Litany put the blame for civilian casualties on the rebellious Viet Congo, giving a compelling reason to the American people for why they must be stopped. *Bloods* states how the United States went to just about any extent " to prevent the Domino Theory... The Communists taking South Vietnam and then the Philippines and marching across to Hawaii and then on the shores of California" (Terry, 156). Consequently, government officials promoted fear with the Second Red Scare to incite their citizens to take a stand against the further spread of communism. American troops were placed in Vietnam up until spring 1975.

Between that time American troops were let loose in this foreign country. Not only was there a age culture shock, but also language played as a barrier. Little efforts to understand the Vietnamese culture became an issue in the war. One of the soldiers said, " this old man was running like back towards his crib... I think people said halt" but we didn't know no Vietnamese words" and so they shot him (Terry, 7). Another case of miscommunication was when a soldier told a girl to did did AMA and her lack of effort to clear the streets caused her to get shot. Terry). There could have been many factors to why she remained on the road; she couldn't get through traffic or could not understand his Vietnamese. America showed no mercy and was brutal to anything and anyone that stood in the way. With their endless supplies of artilleries " if something moved in front of you.. You fired at it" (Terry, 157). Lots of the poorly trained solders were blind in the jungles of Vietnam, especially at night, aimlessly shooting to any noise. Americans treated the people of Vietnam poorly as well, women especially.

Some of the captives were women and while being integrated they were abused. One of the African American hospital corpsman from the Navy was explaining how he saw a Vietnamese woman get a lit flare shoved in her during questioning (Terry). Pyle never physically harassed a female, but saw Phonon (his Vietnamese lover) as an object. Disregarding her input, he was going to bring her to America as his wife (Greene). Poor interactions with the Vietnamese people, a negative ambiance was left behind by the Americans. Americans believed they were sincerely helping the Vietnamese.

When in reality the people of Vietnam did not see the need for their intervention. A soldier explained, " I spent a great deal of time discussing the problem of Vietnam with the Vietnamese people, and what they thought about America's involvement. I earned right away the war was not the right thing to from the people's point of view/" (Terry, 67). The people of Vietnam could have cared less if they were getting military support from America. In fact they did not like the war that was happening on their homeland. " They want one day to be much the same as another.

They don't want our white skins around telling them what they want" (Greene, 86). They want to go back to their daily simple lives before any war began. Their way of life is agriculture of rice patties not whether they have a communist or democratic government. Pyle was getting lectured about what the Vietnamese people wanted, " do you think peasants sit and think of God and Democracy... We've brought them up in our ideas" (Greene, 87). Before intervene from America, people of Vietnam were not thinking of which government is suitable for them.

Neutral Vietnamese said, " Whoever win is the one we go with. The Americans are the ones that are crazy; cause they not gain anything. They lose their lives and their money here"(Terry, 67). America did not gain anything directly from this war. There were no significant natural resources and hundreds were dying everyday. As the war got dragged even Americans began to question heir intentions of being in the war. While men were fighting for a better government, there was trouble back at the home front.

Racism was a big factor still in the United States and that custom was brought overseas.

Men of color were grouped together and were mainly put on the front end. An African American war veteran said, " more blacks were dying in combat than whites, proportionately, mainly because more blacks were in combat-oriented units, proportionately, than whites" (Terry, 167). White folks were still seen inferior to blacks. There were times were the whole squad would be of black men (Terry). This prevented white Americans from getting hurt during the war. Even though there was inequality, African-Americans were still treated better then in the States.

While enlisted, they could hold some kind of power. There weren't many opportunities for blacks in private industry then... I was an officer and a gentleman by act of Congress. Where else could a black go and get that label just like that? " (Terry, 221). African-Americans enlisted as an escape of racism and segregation because in the war zone they are all fighting together under one cause, democracy for the Vietnamese. One big issue in both books for the reason why they lost the war to the Viet Cong was the inability to establish who the enemy was.

It was Vietnamese fighting Vietnamese- like the civil war. White folks could not identify whom to shoot, " It wasn't suppose to be nobody out at night but the marines. Any Vietnamese out at night was the enemy... It was easy to get killed by an American" (Terry, 7). The soldiers were trained to take down Vietnamese enemy. Everyone looked like the enemy to them. This became problematic of many innocent lives being killed. For this reason, Americans

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are seen as mechanical seats across the globe and will strike at ease in order to win.

Americans played different roles in the two books due to the time frame, but had the same goal of fighting for democracy. In *The Quiet American* being European or white was favorable. "An advantage of this war was that a European face proved in itself a passport on the field: a European could not be suspected of being an enemy agent" (Greene, 42). This is why Pyle was able to sneak around Vietnam with bombs. No one suspected Americans (whites) behind the attacks. Things were a lot more peaceful for Americans before they sent troops over.

Once the military got involved, it was non-stop gunshots after gunshot. It got to the point where soldiers did not know why they were shooting, they were just told to. Around this time, university students also began to question the government along with the uprising of segregation. Congress had a hard time dealing with upset citizens over the death of Martin Luther King and the questioning of when the war will end. In the efforts to help Vietnam have a better life under Democracy, America suffered from the high death toll, expenses on weapons and supplies, and the extended years spent overseas.

For this reason America gets involved in casualties in other countries when it is unnecessary. There are many factors to why this war was lost. Some can be blame due to the ill trained troops, miscommunication, and the essence of the war was lost during the long battle. Nonetheless the domino theory of the spread of communism did not go in affect.