

Lyndon johnson essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In Larry L. King's, *Trapped: Lyndon Johnson and the Nightmare of Vietnam*, Larry King makes his assessment of Lyndon Johnson. King states, " His personal history simply permitted him no retreats or failure in testing. " (Portrait of America page 313) What King is trying to say about Lyndon Johnson in this statement is that his past does not allow him to retreat or to fail. King describes Lyndon Johnson's history by saying, " LBJ's mother, who smothered him with affection and praise should he perform her pleasure and expectations, refused to acknowledge his presence should displease or disappoint her.

His father accused him of being a sleepy head, a slow starter and sometimes said in town had a two hour head start on him. " (Portraits of America page 313) By the way that Lyndon Johnson was raised he was thought to succeed. If Lyndon Johnson did not succeed, he would not receive the praise he desired from his parents. For that reason LBJ could not conceive American defeat in Vietnam. King goes on to further say, " These and other disturbing dreams haunted his White House years." (Portrait of America page 313)

King is explaining that LBJ was terrified of failure, therefore could not conceive a defeat in Vietnam. Lyndon Johnson definitely did support the troops and its request for manpower. Larry King writes in his essay *Trapped: Lyndon Johnson and the Nightmare of Vietnam*, " almost always, however, he went along with bigger military spending and, in most cases, with more bombing or whatever tough military action the brass proposed. " (Portrait of America page 314) This shows Larry King's support for the military manpower.

Johnson began serving as President of The United States of America in 1963 after the death of John Kennedy; he was the 36th president of the United States. He always talked of the necessity to be strong. He invoke his father's standing up to the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920's, Teddy Roosevelt's carrying that big stick. FDR's mobilizing the country to beat Hitler and Tojo. He had liked ol' Harry Truman tough little bastard and his own man but, listen, Harry and Dean Acheson had lost control when they failed to prosecute the Korean War properly.

They lost the public's respect, lost control of General MacArthur, lost the backing of Congress, lost the war or the next thing to it. Next thing you know, they were blamed for losing China, and then there was Joe McCarthy accusing them of being soft on communism and the people started to believe it. Well, it wouldn't happen to him. He hadn't started the Vietnam War, Jack Kennedy had made the first commitment of out and out combat troops in force, don't forget, but he wouldn't bug out no matter how much the Nervous Nellies brayed.

Kennedy had proved during the Cuban Missile Crisis that if you stood firm, then the Reds would back down. They were bullies, and he didn't intend to be pushed around anymore than Jack Kennedy had. When a bully ragged you, you didn't go whining to the teacher but gave him some of his own medicine. In *Trapped: Lyndon Johnson and the Nightmare of Vietnam* by Larry King, he states, " Only later, in exile, when he spoke with unusual candor of his darker secretions, did it become clear how obsessed with failure Lyndon Johnson always had been.(Portraits of America page 313)"

As a preschool youngster he walked a country lane to visit a grandfather, his head stuffed with answers he knew would be required and fearing he might forget them. If he forgot them, he got no bright-red apple but received, instead, a stern and disapproving gaze. LBJ's mother, who smothered him with affection and praise should he perform to her please and expectations, refused to acknowledge his presence should he somehow displease or disappoint her. His father accused him of being a sleepyhead, a slow starter and sometimes said every boy in town had a two-hour head start on him.

Had we known those things from scratch, we might have not wondered with Lyndon Johnson seemed so blind to the Asian realities. His personal simply permitted him no retreats of failures in testing. From childhood, LBJ experienced bad dreams. As with much else, they would stay with him to the shadow of the grave. His nightmares were of being paralyzed and unable to act, of being chained inside a cage or to his desk. These deep-rooted insecurities prompted Lyndon Johnson always to assert himself, to abuse staff members simply to prove that he held the upper hand.

To test his power in small or man ways. In Trapped: Lyndon Johnson and the Nightmare of Vietnam by Larry King, he states " Sometimes in sending Vice President Humphrey off on missions or errands with exhortations to get going he literally kicked him in the shins. Hard, Humphrey later recalled, pulling up his trouser leg to exhibit the scars to columnist Robert Allen. Especially when drinking did he swagger and strut.

Riding high as Senate Majority Leader, Johnson one night after a Texas State Society function, in the National Press Club in Washington, in the spring of

1958 repaired to a nearby bar with Texas Congressmen Homer Thornberry and Jack Brooks. (Portrait of America page 314)" I do not think that Lyndon Johnson was correct in assuming that the Eisenhower and Kennedy administration committed him to go into the Vietnam War. Personally, I believe that everyone makes their own decisions, regardless of what has happened previously. Obviously the decisions that were made in the past could affect the present decisions being made but at the end of the day, Lyndon Johnson committed himself to the War in Vietnam.

Lyndon Johnson's background and character made it very difficult for him to appreciate the position of his anti-war opponents or the significance of the Tet offense. His background included a life where failure was not an option. All throughout Lyndon Johnson's life he strived to succeed so whenever someone or something, such as the anti-war protest, got in the way he opposed it and did not take any time to listen or appreciate what they were trying to do. The Tet offense is also another example of something getting in Johnson's way.

The Tet Offensive was a military campaign during the Vietnam War that was launched on January 30, 1968 by forces of the Viet Cong and North Vietnam against South Vietnam, the United States, and their allies. The Tet offense played a huge part in the war because it completely changed the strategy that was used by the American troops. Both the anti-war protest and the Tet offense tested Lyndon Johnson's strength and his dignity. Because of Lyndon Johnson's background he did not like the fact that he was being opposed at all and did not want to deal with failure, failure was not an option for Lyndon Johnson.