

Where the domino fell essay



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The work of James Olson and Randy Roberts, *Where the Domino Fell: America and Vietnam 1945-1995* lies along a path less travelled by many historians and writers. The writing approach of the authors has been supported by clearly validated facts that support the authors' assertions on the war and provide new twists on the American understanding on the war. The clarity of the writers' implications has been strengthened by the availing of documentations that relevance in the authenticity of the readings.

It is an undeniable fact that Americans have had difficulty in getting a clear grasp not only of the war itself but of their feelings about it as illustrated by the authors. American's efforts in the war illustrated by the authors' demonstration of the America's entanglement in Vietnam due to one domestic policy attitude and one foreign policy attitude. America's inability to grasp the reality of the war is blinded and rooted by Cold War thinking of American leaders after the World War II.

James S. Olson and Randy Roberts in this powerful piece of literature illustrates that to the minds and the thinking of the United States leaders and the Soviet Union after the end of the Second World War, Vietnam offered a perfect ground (battlefield) for the demonstration of various sorts of war antics to win the support of the majority of the people on the need to advance capitalism or communism. The authors therefore argue that America's efforts in the war are demonstrated by the tenacity to never let go in the face of defeat. Their fear of leaving behind victory in the hands of the communists is fact they cannot swallow and proceed to sacrifice thousands of lives of American soldiers in search of a mirage.

One particular analytic chapter in the book is chapter 11- the Distorted Images - Missed Opportunities that involves the most comprehensive reports on the analysis of the war. The painting of the vet soldiers by the media as dangerous and violent group with the capacity to explode at any moment has been effectively illustrated in this book. This document (As a VN Combat Vet (1966, '69 & '70 [MACVSOG & 5th SFGA MIKE Force] (Olson & Roberts, 2008). provides a refreshing verification on almost everything that Americans thought but were unable to prove.

The authors abide with other literatures on Vietnam War in the greatest turning point of the as Tet Offensive. The Vietcong guerrilla forces violated the temporary truce pledged during the lunar year and marched into several cities including the important city of Saigon. This was the shifting of war for the first time from their rural bases to urban areas that were considered impregnable. The Tet offensive was a calculated strategic move that has been described as the major turning point in the war.

This event shook the imperialism of the United States to the core and really waned down the public support for the war- having the longest lasting effect on the opinion of the Americans. Where the domino fell is a fascinating collection of facts behind the scenes on the war that offers a fresh analysis on events on the war. The major turning point of the war is best illustrated from both the combat and the US public perspectives.

James S. Olson and Randy Roberts have added a rich source of literature on this mysterious historical event in the lives of Americans that has opened up the discovery of hidden facts through documentation. Perhaps the ability to

come up with such a powerful historical analysis was the ability to carry out an intensive research on the event for a long period of time. Major theories behind the Vietnam's war that have been treated with suspicions have been presented in in-depth analysis of the encompassing events.

The authors have also dissected the consequences of the biggest turning point of the war on Lyndon Johnson's administration. Major political analyses approximate his support on the presidency by the time he went into the office following the assassination of Kennedy at 80%. By 1967, his approval ratings had plummeted to a dismal 40% and the Tet offensive ignited a tone of dissent and defiance further eroding it to less than 30% by the end of the year.

On the critical analysis of the book, I learnt one critical omission of the fact that Vietnam War was won by September 1970. In fact the authors' discussions drive towards this point but eventually fail to clearly present it as a core historical event in the war. The victory was eventually washed away by the political meddling of politicians that introduced numerous bills and amendments condemning the war. The rules of unrealistic rules engagement deprived Americans the victory after such a long and vicious struggle.

In conclusion, I have come to learn one fact that historical facts are best presented by the availability of documentation. This serves the purposes of strengthening major assertions in the literature. I believe without a strong validation of the facts that support the authors' assertions on the war and provide new twists on the American understanding on the war, the work of James S. Olson and Randy Roberts would have just been like any other

historical literature. It can therefore be confidently stated that the controversial topic of the Vietnam War has been dissected to the reader in one of the best ways possible. This forms the reason behind the overall average ratings of this work by literal critics.