

Example of critical thinking on american foreign policy

[Countries](#), [Vietnam](#)



Part 1 Question 1

The Vietnam is also commonly called the American War in Vietnam (Rosenberg, 2012). This war was fought between 1959 and April 30, 1975. Most of the American citizens were opposed to the war and they felt that America should not have gotten involved in the muddle. They felt that there was no need as to why the nation could lose much of its resources and soldiers in fighting a war which, in their eyes, was not bound to deliver any benefits to the nation. For the purpose of this paper, it is important to look at the cause of the war and the reason as to why America was involved.

According to Rosenberg (2012), America and the USSR emerged as the two world super powers after the World War II. They were the only nations in the world which were left stable and with the ability to produce nuclear weapons. The main difference between the nations is that America observed a capitalist economic system while the USSR observed a communist system. This brought ideological differences between the two as each sought to appear superior to the other. The two nations aimed at spreading their influence to the rest of the world. America was bound to stop the advancement of any form of communism since the world had already seen the harm that communism could do.

The clash between the two nations came about in Vietnam. It happened at a time when the nationalist forces in Vietnam were trying to unite the nation under the umbrella of communism. These had the support of the Russians. On the other hand, there was the Vietnam South with the aid of America

which was struggling to stop the spread of communism. In a way, the war appeared as if it would never end, and this is the reason as to why Americans withdrew their support from the government in going on with the war.

With the understanding of the Vietnam War, it is possible to look at it through the lenses of the three main schools of thought, namely realism, neo-conservatism and collective security. Realism, as defined by Mavridis (2011) is a system where every nation tries to survive. This is as indicated by Morgenthau in his book entitled "Politics Among Nations, The Struggle for Power and Peace." In defining the understanding of the people in this school of thought, Morgenthau argues that in the eyes of realists, the state is at the core of the school of thought. However, the realists do not understand the national interest as such but they believe that the fundamental point is survival. Given this understanding, this survival is defined in terms of power where the nation has to be at the helm of power in order to survive. The realists also believe that the morality of the state is different from that of individuals, and the leaders have the responsibility of distinguishing between the moralities of the nation from that of individuals during the feat for survival. Autonomy is also a very crucial factor when it comes to the realists.

Looking at Morgenthau's argument (Mavridis, 2011), it can be said that the realists looked at the Vietnam War as a struggle for power. The struggle existed between the Russians and the Americans. Since there cannot be two leaders, there had to be a way in which one would outdo the other and stand as the super power. This is why the war seemed to be hitting a deadlock

since no side was ready to lose its position of power. It was a struggle for survival, where the one loosing would have lost the throne of power to the other. The moral fiber of the nations here was different from that of individuals. Even if the individuals' morals were being compromised, the morals of the nation were still intact; it had to retain its position of power and service. This is the reason as to why America continued fighting even when the citizens felt that there was no need for the war.

Neo-conservatism is another school of thought through which the Vietnam War can be analyzed. Ehrman (2011) argues that this movement came about as a right wing branch of the American liberalists. They had some kind of utopianism on liberal matters, and were concerned with issues such as unintended consequences and inefficiencies of the welfare state, amelioration of the racial strife and the issue of equal opportunity. The neo-conservatives, who came about between 1960s and 1970s advocated for non-promotion of communism and the elevation of democracy in the foreign states. This school of thought was based on the ideas of Leo Strauss. These Straussians can be said to be modern conservatives who reject the issues of modernity and prefer reason to tradition. This belief makes them think that philosophers are the rulers of the world. They also believe that deception and lying are two ways that can be used to maintain power. This is the same belief as Plato had that there some to be someone at the position of power and others who have to be led. Nevertheless, they differed with the Plato ideals in that Plato argued that the person in power must be in a position to resist the temptation that comes with the power.

The neo-liberalists, therefore, could have seen the Vietnam War through the same eyes as the realists. It was a struggle for power where one nation had to come down and let the other be the leader. However, rather than the realists who could look at the war from a neutral point of view, the neo-conservatives could take sides in the war. Since they are opposed to the spread of communism, the neo-conservatives could support America and the South Vietnam in opposing the spread of communism. After all, communism would hinder the liberal nature which is at the core of the neo-conservatives.

Collective security is the last school of thought through which the Vietnam War can be seen through. According to Academic DB (2007), this school of thought has it that the security of all states must be ensured. This was as noted by one of the recognized pioneers of the school, Inis Claude (Academic DB, 2007). This implies that all states could unite against a single state that became aggressive and threatened to affect the security of the other nations by unleashing its power. Such a state is called an aggressor and has to be contained by whichever means possible such as economic sanctions, or in severe cases, the use of military force. The school is based on three main factors which are utility, certainty and universality. Certainty has it that the force of all other nations can outdo the force of the aggressor, the utility aspect has it that an act of aggression by one such nation could be effectively met by the mechanisms that are at the disposal of all the other nations. Lastly, universality has it that there would be the need for all the nations to unite in order to ensure that the political structure of the world is not disrupted. Based on the ideologies of the collective school of thought as

suggested by Inis Claude, it can be seen that the Vietnam War came about as a way of preventing an aggressor from disrupting the security of the entire world. In this case, the aggressor is seen to be the USSR while the US was just one of the forces that tried to prevent the harm from spreading. The use of force is seen as just one of the ways in which the aggressor had to be stopped.

After looking at these three schools of thought, it is possible to draw the differences and similarities in their perception of the Vietnam War. The realists and the neo-conservatives saw the war as a struggle for power. This is because the two schools believe that the political system of the world is maintained by the balance of power. The collective security school, on the other hand, sees the war as a way of preventing an aggressor (USSR) from harming more nations. The other similarity arises between the neo-conservatives and the school of collective security. Both could have supported the war since they did not support communism. However, the realists were neutral to the war, just seeing it as a necessity in maintaining the power balance.

Part 2 Question 1

Many people do not seem to understand the difference between warfare and capitalism. The two terms are used interchangeably and in a manner that leads to a misconstruction of the actual meaning of the terms. In this section, these two terms are going to be looked at independently, with the aim of identifying their differences and the manner in which they are applied. The two are going to be addressed from the perspective of neo-conservatives

as described by Ehrman (2011) and also from the point of view of the school of collective Security as described by Academic DB (2007).

Warfare is defined as the use of force, especially the military force in a bid to control an aggressor. It is where two opposing sides are involved in an armed confrontation after differences arise between them. This was the case that was seen in the World Wars and even in the Vietnam War. Different countries could not agree, and the only way through which they thought they could resolve their issues was through armed combat. Of course. Such a strategy leads to the deaths of many and loss of property.

This component is seen from the utility component of the theory as defined by Inis Claude. It is simply one of the alternatives that can be used in controlling an aggressor from continuing with the aggressive motives.

Capitalism, on the other hand, is a form of economic system where there is a lot of liberalism and the people are free to engage in the economic activities of their choice just so long as the activities are acceptable.

This is an economic system where the term 'survival for the fittest' applies best. It fits well with the neo-conservatives since they are for the idea that no one should receive preferential treatment. Rather, everyone should be given a level field and be equally exposed to the available resources. The manner in which the individuals decide to manipulate the resources to their benefit is up to themselves.

Looking at these two definitions, it can be seen that there is a distinct differentiation between warfare and capitalism. Warfare is about use of force, mostly the military force in order to advance the interests of a nation and retain the position of power. Capitalism, on the other hand, is a system of free economy where all are given an equal chance to exploit the resources. Superiority is brought about by the ability of some of the individuals to utilize the resources better than the others.

Part II Question 5

Derber (2010) looked at the issue of immoral morality. He defined it as the context where an individual uses a moral in order to do or justify immoral acts. For instance, there is the case given on Bush who invaded Iraq in a bid to propagate liberty. Of course, it can be seen that Bush's intentions were not bad. However, in order to accomplish the noble purpose of spreading liberty, he had to engage in the ignoble act of invading another country and starting a war. This brings about the aspect of immoral morality. In other words, it can be said to be a situation where an individual uses the wrong platform in order to carry out the right thing. From one perspective, this can seem to be very wrong but from the other end, it appears to be right. It is quite a controversial matter which would form a good discussion for the philosophers.

The three schools of thought would have different perceptions about the immoral morality concept. The realists would take it as something that is bound to happen anyway. Since the world is a place of survival, anyone

would do whatever it takes in order to remain at the top and to continue surviving. As such, this would not be such a big deal to the realists.

The neo-conservatives would equally be comfortable with the Derber's argument. The Straussian argument that the neo-conservatives hold to has it that deception and lying are some of the methods that can be used in order to remain in power. They also believe that the philosophers or thinkers are the true rulers of the world. As such, the neo-conservatives would have an open mind to this. After all, the argument in itself is philosophical in that some people might find it hard to comprehend what immoral morality is. Those who can fathom what it is and use it to their advantage only get a competitive edge.

The collective security school of thought would, however, be reserved from accepting this argument. This school holds that the security or the good of all the nations should be observed, and it should also be respected by all other nations. It is well known that an act of immoral morality would, in one way or another, affect some individuals negatively. As such, there is no way that the followers of this school of thought would agree or ascribe to such a philosophy as immoral morality. The first thing would be to look at a more amicable way of handling the issue rather than using the immoral morality concept.

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