

"I WAS THERE AND THAT'S NOT THE WAY IT WAS"

By Leonard Magruder, October 23, 2006

In the 60's-70's, my thing was walking out in the middle of a campus anti-war protest and handing out literature showing that they were idiots. One of these protests took place at the University of Nevada in 1968, the year of the Tet Offensive. Vets returning home told me the media was lying about it coming and going.

The last of these protests took place at the University of Colorado on June 22, 1972. A Special Consultant on Mental Retardation with the State of Colorado at the time, I denounced the university for "their indoctrination of students and the manipulation by liberal faculty of students to influence national policy on Vietnam," (*Boulder Daily Camera*, June 23, 1972) and charged that the American university had become nothing but "a breeding ground for indoctrination, irrationality, and subversion." (*United Press International*, June 23, 1972).

Actually, this is still going on, worse than ever, with the university still producing reporters misrepresenting or hiding the ideology behind what they are reporting.

Although three newspapers covered the Colorado protest, four television stations, the United Press and the Associated Press, the Washington news gatekeepers would not let any of this get out to the people. Dissenters were not allowed to join the debate on the issues of the hour. Only liberals could play. The event was suppressed as incompatible with the "advocacy journalism" of the day. And that is still the way it is today.

But it was exactly this suppression of opinion contrary to their views of the war by left/liberals in the university and the media that created the polarization and breakdown in national debate in the 60's and led directly to the loss of South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. And if we don't speak out this time, and let this happen again, we are in trouble.

Years later, on May 10, 1981, at the nation's first rally on any campus to honor the Vietnam veteran, organized with my students, I resigned my position as professor of Psychology at the college to protest "the damage done to the Vietnam veteran by the erroneous views of liberals in the university and the media in the 60's and their perpetuation of these views." (*The Compass*, the college newspaper, May 11, 1981)

"Newsday had been notified of the rally in advance, and although a reporter was present, the newspaper did not publish the event." (*The Compass*.)

It was this betrayal by the media of their rally to honor the veterans that led my students, working with local vets, to the formation of Vietnam Veterans for Academic Reform, the Manifesto of which I delivered to the White House by appointment some time during that May.

The subsequent story of our many battles with media and university versions of the Vietnam War, generally supported by Vietnam vet groups and some noted by General William C. Westmoreland, can be seen in the 10-part series, *Vietnam and the Media*. In response to my 31-page exposé of the lies in the CBS prime-time TV program, *The Uncounted Enemy*, Westmoreland wrote, "You have done an exhaustive bit of research, and I congratulate you. I am sending this to my lawyer," (letter, September 13, 1982). Westmoreland filed a \$21 million lawsuit over the program against CBS.

But the high point of our long campaign against the campus and media lies of the 60's came in the election of 2004. The American people, by a significant majority, rejected the anti-war movement as represented by the candidacy of Senator John Kerry. But neither media nor campus accepted the defeat graciously. Nothing changed. They are still lying, and Karnow's notorious 35-year-old history of the Vietnam War is still used at universities all over the nation, even though the bias in it triggered off riots all over the world when it appeared in TV form.

As columnist Stephen Young wrote on the 30th anniversary of the Vietnam War, "Our national recollection of the war still matches that of the New Left. No wonder certain questions are no longer asked, chief among them the question, a central one thirty years ago, of whether the U.S. involvement resulted from a tissue of lies from Washington or whether its assessment of conditions and consequent policy response to the plight of the South Vietnamese people was rational and justifiable."

How the campus and the media lied about Vietnam is the one great trauma in the tissue of American history that has never been dealt with.

That this issue of lying about Vietnam has continued to be a problem up to today is shown by the fact that even as Kerry was being nominated at the Democratic Convention in Boston, right next door at Simmons College some of the nation's top historians and military experts on Vietnam were holding a symposium, *Examining the Myths of the Vietnam War*. Out of this came the [Vietnam Veterans Legacy Foundation](#), "A non-profit educational organization to expose the myths about Vietnam and those who perpetrate them." The President of the group, Col. George E. Day, said in a press release, "A false history of Vietnam had been used to endanger and demoralize our troops in combat, undermine the public confidence in U.S. foreign policy and weaken our national security. Leftists lied about the war 35 years ago and are lying

about it today. Our goal is to counter more than three decades of misinformation and propaganda and set the record straight."

The media at the Convention next door knew all about this, but did not report on it to the American people. Not long after, the group published a booklet to be used on college campuses, *Whitewash/Blackwash - Myths of the Vietnam War*, by Bill Laurie, who is a member of our Board of Advisors, and R. J. Del Vecchio (available at TechConsultServ@Juno.com).

The truth is that even though there is now nothing that opponents of the war can point to that vindicates their position, they continue in our universities and the media to urge the nation to ignore the correct historical conclusions. To admit to having been wrong would be to face, not only guilt, but disproof of their ideological assumptions. But it is these same assumptions that are causing the wave of anti-Semitism on campus, the dangerous "Islam is peaceful" mythology, and the anti-Americanism being pressed on students: "It is because of something we did to them."

Our contribution to the 2004 election was a number of critical articles on Kerry that may be seen at v-v-a-r.org, plus a poll we put together from data sent us by 32 Vietnam vet organizations showing that 80% of Vietnam vets were going to vote against Kerry. United Press International covered this story in an article.

Sometime in 1972, the American soldier having fought the war successfully to a peace treaty left South Vietnam, leaving the South Vietnamese army to fight the North alone, which they did successfully for two years until a Democratic majority in Congress, led by Senator Ted Kennedy of Chappaquiddick fame, in a totally gratuitous betrayal of an ally, cut off all their ammunition and drowned them in the South China Sea.

The American soldier won the war, but it was thrown away by the Democrats. Is this about to happen again?

The biggest uproar in the 60's over media bias came over its reporting of the Tet Offensive. Unbelievably, as if totally unaware of this uproar charging the media with lying about the offensive, and apparently also unaware that the 2004 election was a repudiation of the anti-war position on Vietnam, *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman set off a firestorm last week by asking if the recent violence in Iraq could be seen as another Tet Offensive. In other words he was still clinging to the media interpretation that Tet had been a loss for America that so disheartened the nation that it then turned against that war.

There is a problem here. The Tet Offensive was a victory for America, but portrayed by the media as a defeat. I was there and I remember it all well. Here is the true story about that:

The Tet Offensive, which was portrayed by the New York liberal media as a defeat for the U.S., was in fact, as Westmoreland and all historians agree, an almost disastrous defeat for the North Vietnamese. Not only did they lose half of the 90,000 troops they had committed to battle, the Viet Cong was virtually destroyed.

Contrary to the expectations of the North, the people of the South took not one step to assist the invaders. Instead, they rose up in revulsion and resistance, with the government and the people galvanized into unity for the first time and volunteers for the South Vietnamese army almost doubling.

In the U.S., the facts that finally came out about the offensive, that the war was not just a "civil war," that the South clearly did not wish to live under Communist rule and welcomed American aid, and that it was the North Vietnamese who were engaged in "genocide" and "aggression" with the mass murders at Hue and the rocket attacks on helpless civilian populations, should have ended the arguments of the "peace" movement. It was the moment of truth for those in the universities and the media. They failed the test. The lying continued with renewed fury.

The New York media, recognizing an opportunity to manipulate the news to effectively impose its view of the war on the American people created, and deliberately sustained, an image of "disaster," even in the face of incoming battlefield reports that contradicted that image. This image was taken seriously by advisors to President Johnson, totally altering the outcome of the war at the very moment when victory might have been possible. The liberal media robbed the United States government and the American people of the ability to make critical judgments about their most vital security interests in a time of war. We need to make absolutely sure that is not what they are up to now. Wolf Blitzer and the folk at CNN are beginning to sound awfully funny to me.

In one of the most incredible phenomenon in the history of warfare, there was during this Tet period, thanks to the media, no logical connection between what was actually happening in Vietnam and response on the home front. The response to victory was despair. This is what the media calls the enemy's "psychological victory," which they themselves created.

And to their everlasting shame, the "peace" movement responded to any hint of success by American forces at Tet with panic, fearing that their own country might win the war. As presidential candidate George McGovern said to Vietnam vet and former Sec. of the Navy James Webb, "What you don't understand is that I didn't want us to win that war." (*American Enterprise Magazine*, May/June 1997)

The media has always tried to dismiss the charge of having lied about the Tet Offensive as a right-wing fantasy, but in material I once distributed to Congress asking for an investigation, I quoted from 21 standard histories and commentaries on the Vietnam War, some of which follow:

"The enemy has been hurt badly, he committed a total of about 84,000 men. He lost 40,000 killed." (Report of General Earle G. Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on the Tet Offensive. February 27, 1968) [*Note: the allies lost 927. This is the disaster for the North Vietnamese that CBS called a "stalemate."*]

"The Allied counter-offensive following Tet destroyed the Viet Cong based in the South and was a major defeat for the North. Yet despite this victory the press in the United States turned Tet into an American defeat." (*Great Battles of the 20th Century* - Sir Basil Liddell Hart)

"The North Vietnamese regulars and the Viet Cong guerrillas were defeated utterly on the battlefield. Granted the American superiority at that time, there is at least the probability that North Vietnam forces could have been destroyed." (*Crossroads of Modern Warfare* - Drew Middleton)

"Newsmen countered official claims of a Communist defeat by saying that even if it were true (which they refused to accept as they did the official account of enemy losses) the communists had achieved a psychological victory." (*The Vietnam War* - an international panel of historians)

"This is the only war lost in the columns of The New York Times. They created an image of South Vietnam that was as distant from the truth as not even to be a good caricature. There were those who invented, distorted, and lied. (*Certain Victory* - Dennis Warner)

"Visitors to the Lyndon Johnson Library are told, "While the President was reading reports from the war that made it clear that the enemy had suffered a severe military loss (Tet), newspaper and TV gave the impression that the loss was ours and that defeat was imminent." (*New York Times News Service*)

"COSVN, Viet Cong Headquarters, in its internal report #6, March 1968, admitted the Tet Offensive had been a failure. 'We failed to seize a number of primary objectives. We also failed to hold the occupied areas. In the political field we failed to motivate the people to stage uprisings.'" (*The Magruder Expose* - Leonard Magruder)

"For the first time in modern history, the outcome of a war was determined not on the battlefield but on the printed page and television screens - never before Vietnam had the collective policy of the media sought, by graphic and unremitting distortion, the victory of the enemies of the correspondents own side." (Encounter-British journalist Robert Elegant)

"Jack Fern of NBC suggested to producer Robert Northfield that NBC do a documentary showing that Tet was indeed a decisive military victory for the United States. 'We can't,' said Northfield, 'Tet is already established in the public mind as a defeat.'" (*Between Fact and Fiction* - Edward J. Epstein)

"When General Westmoreland publicly announced that the Tet Offensive had been a major defeat for the Communists and a major victory for the Allied forces, a fact obvious to anyone who viewed the events dispassionately, he was treated like a self-deluding fool by the news media." (*Battles and Campaigns* - Tom Carhart)

"The Tet Offensive proved catastrophic to our plans. It is a major irony of the Vietnam War that our propaganda transformed this debacle into a brilliant victory. The truth was that Tet cost us half our forces. Our losses were so immense that we were unable to replace them with new recruits." (Truong Nhu Tang - Minister of Justice - Viet Cong Provisional Revolutionary Government - *The New York Review*, October 21, 1982)

"If there is to be an inquiry related to the Vietnam War, it should be into the reasons why enemy propaganda was so widespread in this country, and why the enemy was able to condition the public to such an extent that the best educated segments of our population (that is, media and university elite) gave credence to the most incredible allegations." (Final Report - Chief of Military History - U.S. Government)

The suggestion that the media and university may once again be setting the stage for another, even more deadly betrayal, to forward their philosophical agendas, is seen in this article by German Munoz, professor of international relations at Miami Dade College. He recently wrote:

"The story being missed, or purposively kept away from the American people, is the direct connection between the actions of Muslim terrorists and the commands of Allah and Muhammad in the Koran. Our secularized elites do not want us to understand or discuss the religious base underlying the terrorists' political agenda for world domination. If they would read the Koran, they would find out that Allah wants Muslims to kill the infidels (*Koran 9:5*) wherever they are found. That the heads and fingers of unbelievers should be cut off, and that Muslims should fight and humiliate Jews and Christians.

"Why are the establishment media and academia keeping all this information from the American public? These are the types who sacrifice national security on the altar of political correctness and of a self-righteousness and irresponsible tolerance. They cannot be trusted to provide America the accurate information Americans need to protect themselves. These killers have not 'hijacked' Islam as our elites argue absurdly. They are implementing verses found in the Koran itself.

"The crucial thing now is how to inform the American people about the religious threat to their existence. The first step is to tell the truth about the Koran and its impact on the present jihad."

The point:

We know the media lied about Vietnam to further the goals of the leftist anti-war movement. We know Dan Rather and others lied about Bush to help the Democrats in 2004. Is it lying again to further an agenda of defeating the Republicans and getting the U.S. to abandon Iraq?

Under no circumstances should the media ever use the case of Vietnam to make a point about the war in Iraq. For the simple reason that the Vietnam War they have in mind is a fiction they invented. It never existed.

The importance of still trying to tell the truth about Vietnam, that it was a noble cause betrayed to tyranny and genocide by the student left on campus in the 60's, is that this would discredit and throw into disarray the left that is tyrannizing our universities and creating a polarization on the war against terrorism that could lead the nation down the path to destruction.