

The Cause of the War in Vietnam

In past wars and military conflicts, there have been definite causes and/or events that sparked the military involvement of the United States (such as the bombing of Pearl Harbor or the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait). Vietnam did not follow that precedent. Instead, U.S. involvement in Vietnam escalated in increments starting from the early 1950s with our aid to the French, and dramatically escalated to the mid 1970s. Thus, defining a definite cause of the war is quite complicated. Personally, after conducting research and discussing these issues with my uncle Herb LeBlanc, I feel that there is no single event that caused our involvement in Vietnam. Instead, I believe that the contributing factors that provoked our military involvement in Vietnam centered upon a principle: to stop the spread of communism.

The United States wanted to halt the spread of communism for various reasons. First, the principles of communism established governments that pursued military aggression, infringed upon human rights as well as personal freedom, and formed national economies that were reluctant to trade resources with the free world. Each of these principles differ greatly from what Democracy values. It was in the United States' interest to prevent Vietnam from falling to communism to both protect the rights and freedoms of the people of Vietnam and to maintain stability in the volatile Southeast Asian region.

The second reason the United States wanted to stop the spread of communism was that we viewed the spread of communism as a domino effect, if one country fell to communism, its neighboring countries would follow. After China fell to communism, the United States predicted that Vietnam would follow in turn which encouraged our efforts to aid the French.

The third main threat was that each country that fell to communism would greatly impact free world interests. This was highly important at that time because much of the world was

rebuilding from World War II and required the rubber and tin industries of Southeast Asia. If the United States could keep Southeast Asia free from communism, it would establish the industrial markets necessary to aid in the rebuilding of Japan, Great Britain, and many other countries affected by WWII.

Although Vietnam fell to communist rule after our military pulled out its forces in the mid 1970s, I feel that our efforts in Vietnam were not in vain. We helped a country stand up against the adversity that would have been its fate much earlier if we hadn't got involved. We also demonstrated to the Soviet Union and to the rest of the world that we were not afraid to fight to protect human rights and freedoms. It greatly disheartens me that our media and many of our citizens treated the returning veterans of Vietnam with such disgrace.

Regardless of if I get this scholarship or not, I will always be greatly reverent of the sacrifices that all veterans have made, especially to my uncle Herb LeBlanc. It gives me great honor to say that I am related to someone who passionately and honorably served our country in Vietnam.

Thank you for your time and consideration.