

History 353

Spring '95

Re: Final Exam (Take Home)

The handout that goes with this assignment was written by former Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara. After 25 years he has finally broke silence and put into print his reflections on the Vietnam War recounting the mistakes that the policy makers made in prosecuting this criminally wasteful and tragic war.

The title of the book is In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam (1995)

The handout is a digest of what McNamara believes what went wrong in Vietnam. Your assignment is to choose any 4 of these lessons and critique them. You are free to agree or disagree with all or none of McNamara's "lessons" as they are presented in the handout. I simply want you to use what you have learned in this course to demonstrate your understanding and command of the material by developing arguments at length (either pro or con) for the four "lessons" you choose to write about.

Formatting: The paper should be a minimum of 8 pages, double-spaced and typewritten. Since this is a think piece and not a formal paper there is no need for all the paraphernalia of footnotes ,etc. If you use a direct quote that helps underscore a point then you should credit the source.

Due Date: The paper should be in the instructor's hands no later than Tuesday, May 16 at noon. If you are a graduating senior I must have the final product no later than Saturday, May 13, at 4 p.m.

If any serious questions arise about the assignment feel free to call me. My home phone number is (301) 473-5639.