

Guide to the Vietnam war to avoid thinking of it

WASHINGTON — Here, at last, is something every American has needed for years—a concise guide to the Vietnam war which will help him avoid thinking about the Vietnam war:

1. Start of Vietnam war — Some authorities say the Vietnam war started in 1937; others say it was 1941. Partisan Democrats say President Eisenhower started it during 1950s; Republicans say President Kennedy started it. It is best not to think about when the Vietnam war started, because it will not make any difference anyhow.

2. Who is President Lyndon B. Nixonger? — It was during the Lyndon B. Nixonger Administration that the Vietnam war was escalated, coonskinned, Vietnamized, re-Americanized, simonized and sold to the South Vietnamese as the best used war available anywhere at comparable price. Many people report that thinking about President Lyndon B. Nixonger depresses them, whereas people who do not think

Lyndon B. Nixonger Administration first to simonize the war

about him say they feel fine. It is best not to think about President Lyndon B. Nixonger, since it will not make any difference anyhow.

3. Light at end of tunnel — Ever since the Vietnam war started (and remember, don't start thinking about when that might have been) there has been light at the end of the tunnel, which, decoded from the Pentagonese, means that victory has been just around the corner. Many experts, in fact, say we won the war four years ago when the enemy was defeated at Tet time. Others contend that the war is still going on. It is a waste of time thinking about whether the war is still going on or not, since it will not make any difference anyhow.

4. Antiwar demonstrations — The important thing to remember about antiwar demonstrations is that they don't make any difference. Do not think about them.

5. Why are we in Vietnam?—It is not a good idea to go around asking the question, because very few people know the answer. Those who do know the answer do not agree on what it is. Even if you knew the answer, what difference would it make? We would still be in Vietnam. It is best not to think about why we are there, because it will not make any difference anyhow.

6. Paris peace talks — Peace talks began in Paris four years ago. In the span of time since elapsed—a span in which the allied powers were able to defeat the Kaiser in World War I; in which the United States and its allies were able to defeat the Axis in

World War II—the Paris peace talks have agreed on the shape of the conference table. Many persons say there aren't any peace talks. Others say that if we were fighting the Kaiser today we would be on his side. It

Russell Baker

is idle to think about the Paris peace talks, because they will not make any difference anyhow.

7. Pitiful helpless giant — Most experts agree that if North Vietnam would surrender, the war could be ended. Because of the childish oriental insistence on "saving face," however, they will not give up. To do so, they say, would make them look like a pitiful helpless giant. There is no point in thinking about the absurdity of this attitude, because it will not make any difference anyhow.

8. Secret war-ending plan — Four years ago Lyndon B. Nixonger said he had a secret plan for ending the war, but refused to tell us what it was until he was re-elected. Some experts say it has been secretly working beautifully; others insist that Nixonger has forgotten what the secret plan was. There is no point in worrying about the secret plan, since it will not make any difference anyhow.

9. War not an issue — Politicians agree that the war will not be an issue in the forthcoming presidential election. This is because the voters will not think about the war. The reason voters will not think about the war is because it doesn't make any difference whether they think about it or not.

10. Laos — There is general agreement that Laos exists, but the United States government resents people who think about it. This is because the war there is being waged by the Central Intelligence Agency, and is, therefore classified "top secret." It is better not to think about Laos, not only because the Justice Department has several grand juries sniffing about for incipient Ellsbergs, but also because it will not make any difference anyhow.

11. Taxpayer responsibility — You may ask: "Am I, as the purchaser of the ineffective wherewithal brought to bear upon Vietnam, responsible for the devastation of that miserable country?" Most experts agree that you are. Some experts say there is no reason to feel bad, because the Vietnamese have brought it on themselves. Others say there is no reason to feel bad, because it is going to go right on happening, no matter how you feel. The best thing is not to think about responsibility, since it will not make any difference anyhow.

12. What can the responsible citizen do? — Vote for the Lyndon B. Nixonger of your choice. When he is re-elected do not make it hard on him by doing a lot of thinking.