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The People United Against War

For much of history, war has been perceived as a necessity and as such did not face severe public scrutiny. It has only been in the past few decades that individuals and groups have stood up to protest armed conflict. One of the first wars to face severe public opposition was in fact not a war at all, but a conflict between North Vietnam and the United States of America. The Vietnam Conflict was a conflict of unknown purpose in a foreign land. It was a conflict which had absolutely no impact on the average American citizen. Since Vietnam, anti-war sentiments have continued to grow at a rapid pace, culminating in the current protest of the most unpopular war of all time.

On March 20th, 2003, (Wikipedia, March 23, 2006) the United States of America invaded the sovereign nation of Iraq. The United States attempted to justify their attack on Iraq by stating that doing so was not just a continuation of the War on Terror, but to search for Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction. Tens of millions of people saw through this immediately as Iraq was not responsible for the attacks upon the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11,

2001, Al Qaeda was and the United State had already invaded the entire nation of Afghanistan to stop that terrorist organization. It would also become evident very soon that Iraq had no Weapons of Mass Destruction and that evidence of their existence was falsified. It would become obvious quite soon that the only reason the United States of America had invaded Iraq was to protect their own interests, especially to further control the World's oil supplies.

The circumstances surrounding the Vietnam Conflict and the War on Iraq were completely different, but the reasons for America's involvement in them were virtually the same. In Vietnam, the United States sought to stop the spread of communism throughout Southeast Asia by removing the communist North Vietnamese from South Vietnam. Very similar to America's involvement in the Korean War, Vietnam was an attempt to stop the spread of communism throughout Asia. The Americans believed in the Domino Effect theory, which stated that if communism was allowed to take hold of one area, other nations would soon succumb to its expansion. It was clear that this conflict was fought for American interests as the United States feared nothing more than the spread of communism, and not to save the people of South Vietnam from communism. In Iraq, it has become evident that the United States is only involved in the war for their own

interests once again.

The world and the United States of America have a voracious demand for energy, and that need is often fulfilled by oil. The United States, has made every possible attempt to control as much of the world's oil supply, to satisfy their need. This of course involves invading a sovereign nation to secure their oil supply for themselves.

Public reaction to both of these conflicts has been extremely negative, neither seeing much public support for the fighting at all. Vietnam was seen by many Americans as a conflict that did not concern them in the slightest. It is also likely that the only reason public support for the conflict was existent at all was due to the American's fear of losing and their pride being damaged. The majority of Americans would eventually oppose the war due to the rising death toll and likelihood of the conflict not being winnable. Protests were not at the scale of modern demonstrations, but college campuses around America saw a dramatic increase in student opposition to the war. Americans began to not fear the repercussions of protest and so they upheld their desire to express their disagreement to the conflict. Certain demonstrations turned violent, such as the Kent State Massacre where four protesting students were killed by the National

Guard during the event. (Wikipedia, March 23, 2006) Despite massive public disapproval of the Vietnam Conflict, various American presidents continued the United States involvement in Vietnam until in 1973, (Wikipedia, March 23, 2006) Richard Nixon removed American troops from the conflict. It was clear that the overwhelming opposition to the fighting and the likelihood of the war not being won by the United States before even further casualties were incurred had finally brought an end to American involvement.

In the modern war in Iraq, immense protests have been staged around the world, with millions involved in mass demonstrations against the American invasion. The largest protests were seen on the weekend of February the 15th, (Wikipedia, March 23, 2006) with approximately ten to thirty million protestors involved in demonstrations across nearly sixty nations. Unfortunately, protests such as the three million strong demonstration in Rome, Italy appeared to have no effect on deterring the United States' invasion of Iraq and the operation went ahead as planned on March 20, 2003. (Wikipedia, March 23, 2006)

Protests have seen been staged on numerous occasions, but the largest forum for anti-war movements has become the Internet. Unlike

with the Vietnam Conflict, the Internet and various war discussion web forums have allowed for instant communication regarding opposition and support for the Iraq War. This technology has become a new form of protest, one where instead of mass demonstrations, textual arguments taken the form of opposition. The majority of online protests are aimed not at the war itself but at the man who started it.

President George Walker Bush is one of the least popular presidents of all time, with an approval rating of just 36% according to a recent CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll. (CNN, March 23, 2006) Bush is seen by many as a very unintelligent and foolish leader, one who if not for the fact that he can not be legally, would not be reelected in the next Presidential Election. Most Americans blame George W. Bush for starting a needless war and strongly oppose his continuing support for the conflict.

Similar to the Vietnam Conflict, the Iraq War is becoming less certain every day, not only when will it end, but how many have to die before the United States of America realize that it is a war which can not be won. President George W. Bush has stated that the United States of America has no intentions of leaving Iraq until they have eliminated all hostile insurgent forces and the nation can sustain itself.

Bush was clearly hopeful for a peaceful end to the war when he stated, "the situation in Iraq is still tense, and we're still seeing acts of sectarian violence and reprisal. Yet out of this crisis, we've also seen signs of a hopeful future."(Cnn, March 24, 2006) President Bush must however be talking about another war, as currently there are very few signs of an improving situation in Iraq. Public disapproval for the Vietnam Conflict was a major contributing factor towards the end of American involvement in the conflict, and those who oppose the Iraq War hope that their protests will result in the same outcome. Unfortunately, American President George Walker Bush's determination to win the Iraq War will likely mean that opposition to the war will be ignored, at least until the next Presidential Election.

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