

# **The SAGES University Seminar Essay Awards**

**2013-2014**

*The SAGES University Seminar Essay Awards  
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*The essays included in this booklet were selected  
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award in academic year 2013-2014.*

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*Written for USSO 286X, "The Future of News"; William Doll (Seminar Leader) & Arielle Zibrak (Writing Instructor)*

**Assignment Description:** Develop a portfolio-quality research paper exploring issues in the state of the media today and the future of news. This essay addressed the topic of social media and the Arab Spring, asking: "What effect, if any, has social media had on the social revolutions in the Middle East?"

**Instructor's Nomination:** Emma made her case, and did so in a clear, forceful, coherent essay, supported with good detail and authoritative support. She used quotes well. Most of all, as she elaborated her thesis, it was not black and white. She was aware of, and had thought through, the shades of meaning in "social media and revolution."

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*Written for USSY 290G, "Women & Warfare: Reality & Representation"; Ravenel Richardson (Seminar Leader) & Wells Addington (Writing Instructor)*

**Assignment Description:** The assignment was to write a 10- to 12-page research paper addressing women's war experiences during a specific conflict with the goal of contributing original research and ideas to the burgeoning field of women's war studies. I provided optional prompts; this student chose their own topic. Research requirements included locating four secondary, critical resources (only academic texts and scholarly journals acceptable) on the historical and cultural context of the conflict they chose. Additionally, students were required to analyze a minimum of one primary,

representational source (text, film, interview, work of art) of the chosen conflict to support their thesis.

**Instructor's Nomination:** Spencer's paper addresses the causes and nature of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in women serving in the US armed forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. Spencer's research far exceeded the requirements of the prompt – he found three archival interviews of female veterans in addition to watching the documentary *Lioness*. Spencer demonstrates a nuanced understanding of women's controversial roles in Iraq and Afghanistan, and of PTSD. Spencer's clear and well-developed essay provides insightful and original contributions regarding the causes of PTSD in female veterans serving in the Middle East, and his analyses of the interviews and film fully support his very interesting claims.

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*Written for USNA 262, "How I Learned to Love the Bomb"; Amy Absher (Seminar Leader)*

**Assignment Description:** Each student received a year. Within that year, they had to find a paper topic that related to our class. Then they contributed their research to the class readings and assisted in the teaching of the course. The course focused on the scientists who created the atomic bomb and the consequences their choice to do so had for them personally and for the rest of humanity.

**Instructor's Nomination:** Katy illustrates that the same ethical dilemmas surrounding the bombing of Hiroshima were still alive in 1970 and 1971 as the United States contemplated using the atomic bomb on Vietnam. She does an excellent job of dissecting the political motivations and the nature of American power in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **#Jan25: Social Media as a Tool for Revolution**

**By Emma Bardwell**

### **Introduction**

In the last month before the march on Tahrir Square, the moment that the Egyptian revolution truly began, one quote flooded social media sites across Egypt and the Middle East as a whole: "'Ha'anzil youm 25 yanayir' (I will go out on January 25<sup>th</sup>)" (Faris 158). This, along with numerous hashtags, circulated the web, encouraging people to band together and march against the oppressive regime under President Hosni Mubarak. This was just one of the many revolutions of the all-encompassing 2011 uprisings, or as the western world terms it, the "Arab Spring." In this movement, thousands of Arabs in many different countries began protesting and fighting against the numerous regimes denying them basic rights. These protests required planning and organization, and with social media becoming more and more prominent in the region, sites like Twitter and Facebook became a forum for this. Many argue that social media was, in a sense, a catalyst for the revolution, and that without such a tool, many of the events in the 2011 uprisings would not have occurred. This is a strong and controversial statement, but it is undeniable that social media played some role in the revolutions, and particularly in Egypt's revolution. Although it was not the cause of the Egyptian revolution, social media played a key role in the process by providing a place to organize protests, a way for citizens to read unbiased news, and a means of broadcasting the events to the rest of the world, ultimately leading to the successful overthrow of Hosni Mubarak and his regime.

### **The Beginning of the Uprisings**

Social media was used as a means of social commentary and protesting before the 2011 uprisings. It was used to document regime brutality before any real protests were held, and before the entire Middle East blew up into multiple revolutions. It began in Iran, when a woman named Neda Agha-Soltan was executed by a regime sniper during a postelection demonstration against the regime in Tehran, June 2009. Phillip Howard and Muzammil Hussain explained in their article "Egypt and Tunisia: The Role of Digital Media" that after Neda's death, she "became a protest icon,"

and a video of her death was uploaded and shared all over the Internet (Howard, Hussain 113). This was followed by a protest by Mohamed Bouazizi. Bouazizi was a fruit stand owner who was "accosted (not for the first time) by police thugs demanding a bribe. Mark Pfeifle, former deputy National Security Advisor for communications and global outreach, describes how "They confiscated his wares; he complained to the government, which, as usual, did nothing" (Pfeifle). Later, Bouazizi decided to douse himself with gasoline, and set himself on fire in front of the governor's office, in the middle of an intersection. This statement against the government and regime in Tunisia sparked the Tunisian revolution, and as the news of this incident spread to other countries, they were inspired to revolt, causing the 2011 uprisings. Pictures of Bouazizi were posted online, and followers gathered together on sites and pages dedicated to his death, inspiring other activists. Many of these activists were in Egypt, and the sacrifice made by Bouazizi inspired them to start their own revolution.

News of the Tunisian revolution was spreading, and personal accounts from the activists involved were being shared all over the web. There were PDF's and Facebook pages, dedicated to advice from the Tunisian activists about how to have a revolution. As Phillip Seib, a professor of journalism and public diplomacy, author of *Real-time Diplomacy: Politics and Power in the Social Media Era* explains, tips were posted such as "advice to the youth of Egypt: put vinegar or onion under scarf for tear gas" (Seib 51). This online interaction between the two countries resulted in Egypt taking a stand. David Faris, an associate professor in political science, and author of *Dissent and Revolution in a Digital Age: Social Media, Blogging and Activism in Egypt*, explains that in 2010 "the Egyptian political opposition, to a casual observer, would probably have seemed quite dead" (Faris 147). Egyptians were considered stereotypically apathetic, and the idea of a revolution seemed ridiculous. Hosni Mubarak had been the acting president since 1981, and his regime had been slowly trying to flush all of the opposition out of the political system. In 2010, Mubarak made the last effort to remove the Muslim Brotherhood from the political scene. The party fell from a reasonable representation of 88 seats won in 2005 to one seat in 2010. The National Democratic Party (Mubarak's party) was left with 93.3% of the seats, and the Muslim Brotherhood only 3% (Faris, 147). This dramatic decrease in representation left no doubt that Mubarak's regime rigged the

election. This decision of his resulted in a massive backlash from the public, who started retaliating.

#### **Increased Uses of Social Media**

It is commonly stated that social media could only have played a minor role in the revolution considering the fact that not all Egyptians used or even had access to social media. Yet, leading up to the revolution, the use of the Internet, specifically for social media, was becoming more and more prevalent in the region. Jeffrey Ghannam noted in his report to the Center for International Media Assistance, "Social Media in the Arab World: Leading up to the Uprisings of 2011," that an Arab Knowledge Report from 2009 "placed the number of Arabic-speaking Internet users at 60 million" (Ghannam 4). That number has only been growing since, and as Ghannam further explains, "the Arab world has witnessed the rise of an independent vibrant social media and steadily increasing citizen engagement on the Internet that is expected to attract 100 million Arab users by 2015" (Ghannam 4). Not only this, but Egypt, specifically, has a large number of internet users compared to the rest of the Middle East. In fact, according to the article "Egypt and Tunisia: The Role of Digital Media," Egypt has "the region's second-largest Internet-using population (only Iran's is bigger)" (Howard, Hussain 113). Considering this, the widespread use of social media can be considered a significant factor in the success of Egypt's revolution and removal of Mubarak as president. Another thing to consider is that most of the protesters were young Egyptians, frustrated with the conditions Egypt was in. The main concerns were "the Youth bulge, declining economic productivity, rising wealth concentration, high unemployment, and low quality of life" (Howard, Hussain 115). Because of this, the revolution was mostly comprised of young people, who due to the poor economy, and exceedingly large young population, struggled to find jobs. This situation was blamed on Mubarak and his regime, resulting in protests.

#### **Social Media as a Resource for the Revolution**

Many used social media as a way to come together, plan protests, and set agendas. The infamous hashtags "#jan25," "#Egypt," and "#Mubarak" circulated the web nonstop days before Tahrir Square, encouraging all to go out and protest (Ghannam 16). Locations like Twitter served as sources of quick communication, while on other social media sites, groups of people were formed.

One famous group was the Facebook group "We are all Khaled Said," which was "created to keep alive the memory of the 28-year-old blogger, whom police had beaten to death on June 6<sup>th</sup> 2010 for exposing their corruption" (Howard, Hussain 113). The page went viral, even before the uprisings began in January, and was one of the sparks that inspired many to protest. This is a clear example of people coming together for a common cause. Faris explains that people were "sharing private information about preferences and commitments"—meaning people who were on the fence about whether or not to join the protests were able to see that they were not alone in their thinking (Faris 146). It was easier for people to join a large group than stand alone, resulting in a larger turnout for protests, specifically the march on Tahrir Square, since with a larger group people felt safer and more comfortable. These sites also enabled people to organize and plan their protests. An article from the Pew Research Center states that "networks formed online were crucial in organizing a core group of activists, specifically in Egypt" (Pew Research 1). Once in the group, people could communicate easily, and having a safe place online, away from the eyes of the regime, made it easier to organize. It is true that social media is generally a public thing, but with closed Facebook groups and carefully worded posts, it was easy to confuse the regime monitoring the online activity. Not only that, but social media allowed plans to be changed quickly with messages sent to people's phones on short notice. This method of quick communication made it easy for protesters to change their route, and harder for the regime to predict their actions. Overall, social media sped up the revolutionary process. It was able to bring likeminded people together, and as Philip Seib explains in his book: "Media can accelerate the pace of a revolution and help build its constituency" (Seib 41). With this tool, the opposition was able to organize and communicate efficiently, aiding in the overall protests and overthrow of Hosni Mubarak.

Social media also served as many Egyptians' new source of news. The news stations and sources in Egypt at the time were biased and slanted in favor of the regime. This was true, and still is true for most news sources in the Middle East. In the book *Beyond the Arab Spring: Authoritarianism and Democratization in the Arab World*, it states: "All major Arab newspapers are politicized" and "Almost all major Arab satellite stations are either directly or indirectly affiliated with Arab regimes or with individuals who are connected to those regimes" (Arab Spring 249, 235). Because of



this, social media became the “Online alternative to state-run news media” (Seib 50). Average citizens of Egypt were assuming positions as independent reporters, using their smartphones to capture photos and video footage to post to social media sites and blogs. This constant flow of information allowed people to follow the events going on without the regime slant they usually endured. Mona Eltahawy, a freelance Egyptian American journalist, quoted in Ghannam’s piece, claims: “social media has enabled the masses to establish their own agendas” (Ghannam 6). The citizens were allowed to decide what they wanted to cover without any outside influence. “Indigenous social media platforms are striving to go beyond blogging, to bridge the virtual online world with the physical world by offering community-driven quality news, online video stories, and forums for greater interactivity around timely issues, as well as the showcasing of art and culture” (Ghannam 7). Of course, there was always a risk involved, considering the regime was watching social media sites, but with fake names and technology making posts difficult to trace, many were able to post undetected. This whole process enabled more people to get involved in general. With unbiased news sources came a more educated and aware population that recognized the injustice caused by the regime. The access social media gave the citizens of Egypt helped push for a revolution. Pierre Omidyar, founder of Ebay, expresses the idea in his article from the Huffington Post, “Social Media: Enemy to the State or Power to the People?”: “In countries where traditional media is a tool of control, these new and truly social channels have the power to radically alter our world” (Omidyar). With this new power, it is becoming harder and harder for regimes all over the region to control what information their public receives. Without the power of information, the regimes are becoming more and more vulnerable, and in the case of Egypt, a regime was overthrown.

With the interconnected nature of the Internet, people in Egypt were able to broadcast the events around the world, resulting in support from all over. This has been done before in the case of Joseph Kony. Pfeifle explains in his article: “In the Kony case, 850,000 Facebook users clicked the ‘like’ button. What resulted was the deployment of 100 U.S. advisers and 5,000 African Union troops whose mission was to hunt down Kony, achieving a goal that countless diplomats, non-government organizations, and journalists had failed to do in the previous 25 years” (Pfeifle). The fact that such a movement was caused by a mere video posted to

social media shows the power of these sites and the people that utilize them. A similar effect was used in the Egyptian revolution. A study released by the United States Institute of Peace (analyzing bit.ly links used in Twitter) claimed "the importance of social media was in communicating to the rest of the world what was happening on the ground during the uprisings" (Pew Research 1). It showed the world the atrocities occurring in Egypt at the hands of Mubarak's regime, and it resulted in support from all over. Other political leaders put pressure on Mubarak, and international media institutions increased their coverage of the uprisings, putting the revolutionists in a positive light. It focused on "young protesters mobilizing in the streets in political opposition, smart phones in hand" in an effort to show a young and vibrant revolution (Pew Research 1). In the case of the Iranian revolution this was definitely true. Social media connected people from all over the world: "For the first time young people in America were connecting with young people in Iran, and realizing they had far more in common than they'd ever thought" (Omidyar). This was similar to what happened with Egypt's revolution, in which the images posted by Egyptian citizens caused an outcry from other countries. Outside pressure on Mubarak made it much easier to overthrow him, and have a successful revolution.

#### **Restrictions by the Regime**

Of course, social media had its setbacks. To try to prevent its citizens from organizing, the Egyptian government made every effort to restrict online access and freedom of speech via social media. Other regimes also made several efforts to do so. The regimes used all sorts of methods to try to limit Internet access from basic monitoring of activity to multiple firewalls blocking access to sites. Ghannam explains the difficulty the bloggers and activists faced: "Arab governments' reactions to social media have given rise to a battle of the blogosphere as proxies or other means are used to bypass government firewalls only to have those efforts meet further government blocking" (Ghannam). The regime monitors looked for any suspicious posts or anti-regime comments. If a person was identified as a threat to the regime through their social media use, they were taken by police for questioning. This did not bode well for those who were taken and in one case, "In Egypt, blogger Abdel Kareem Nabil Soliman, known as Kareem Amer, was released in November 2010 after more than four years in prison and alleged torture for his writings that authorities said

insulted Islam and defamed Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak” (Ghannam 4-5). This brutality was enough to initially keep the anti-regime commentary online to a minimum, but as the opposition grew, and people became more and more frustrated with the position Egypt was in, more people began speaking out. After Tahrir on January 25th, “Mubarak shut off the internet access for the entirety of Egypt on January 29<sup>th</sup>, after the events in Tahrir Square” (Faris 158). This move caused an outcry in the country and outside of it. President Obama decided to apply political pressure, asking Mubarak to report on his country’s online status, forcing him to lift the shutdown in an effort to try to lessen the international pressure on Egypt. The continuous effort by the regime to limit Internet access and therefore freedom of speech made organizing challenging, but the revolution continued to grow, and eventually gained too much momentum to stop. The inability of Mubarak’s regime to stop the revolution shows the power of social media. Even with setbacks, social media was still used effectively to mobilize a substantial revolution, resulting in Mubarak’s overthrow.

Even with the constant threat of government brutality, and the many blockades put up by the regime, bloggers and activists continued to speak their minds online. Ghannam points out: “Although Egypt’s interior ministry maintains a department of 45 people to monitor Facebook, nearly 5 million Egyptians use the social networking site among 17 million people in the region” (Ghannam 5). Even when Mubarak made efforts to stop the use of social media by his citizens, they found ways around his obstacles. When Mubarak blocked the Internet for several days beginning January 29<sup>th</sup>, bloggers still found a way to access social media sites. “A team of cyber activists would collect content from Facebook for translation, putting it in context and re-posting on Nawaat and Twitter for journalists and others” (Ghannam 16). This aid from the outside world enabled the activists to continue their commentary and organizing even with the blockades. Similarly, when Mubarak banned the online service of the Muslim Brotherhood, one of his main political competitors, “servers were found in London and the organization continued to convey its views across the ether” (Howard, Hussain 113). The online activists found a way around every one of Mubarak’s methods. As Omidyar explains: “What the government fails to realize is that people will not stop communicating” (Omidyar). With Egypt in the state it was, people were no longer willing to stand down and let Mubarak’s oppression

continue. At a certain point people will do anything to fight back, and the threat of the regime will not stop them. Social media was a tool that facilitated this, demonstrating its crucial role in the Egyptian revolution.

#### **A Successful End**

The use of social media aided in the ultimate success of the Egyptian revolution. With the use of social media as a place to organize, a source of unbiased news, and a means to connect with the outside world, the revolution was able to happen quickly and effectively. Lawrence Pintak, founding dean at the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication at Washington State University, comments that "The lightning speed with which the Tunisian revolution spread to the streets of Cairo is evidence that the term 'digital revolution' has taken on a whole new meaning in the Middle East" (Ghannam 17). In his final efforts to quell the uprising, Mubarak dissolved his government and acquired a new vice president, the general intelligence director Omar Suleiman, who was a more popular candidate, but this was in vain. On February 11, 2011, Vice President Suleiman announced that President Hosni Mubarak was stepping down from his current position. The constitution was suspended, house of parliament dissolved, and the Supreme Council of Armed Forces assumed power. The military would run the government for six months to follow until the dust settled and elections could be held again.

#### **Conclusion**

The many uses of social media, such as providing a place to organize, serving as an unbiased source of information, and connecting the citizens of Egypt to the rest of the world, enabled it to play a key role in the outcome of the Egyptian revolution. Without such a tool, the revolution would have taken longer to occur, if it occurred at all. It may not have been as successful, and most likely would have been more violent. Without such a massive and speedy mobilization, the Egyptian people would have had a more challenging experience, but social media proved its use in their ultimate success. What scholars now look to is the future. Professor Marc Lynch from George Washington University comments that "The impact of the new media technologies will likely be best measured in terms of the emergence of such new kinds of citizens and networks over the next decades, not in terms of institutional political changes over months or years" (Ghannam

23). The world of social media has only just begun to open, and its uses down that line are unpredictable. It could essentially revolutionize relationships between governments' power and their people around the globe. The events that occurred in Egypt and the rest of the Middle East are already influencing other countries. People in China are starting to use social media in a similar way to comment on their own government, which restricts freedom of speech. The Chinese government is cracking down on activist bloggers and restricting general Internet use already, fearing the events of the 2011 uprisings. The battle between technologies on both sides is an ongoing one as regimes put up blockades and bloggers find their way around them. The future political influence of social media is unknown, but it is clear there will be one.

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**Invisible Wounds of the Lioness:  
Mental Trauma of Modern War for Female  
Combatants  
By Spencer Burton**

There is seldom a safe haven from mortars and enemy fire in the battle zone, but many veterans are not even out of danger when the war they have fought has ended. Mental stresses from being in constant danger and from seeing dead and wounded combatants and civilians often lead to mental trauma for soldiers fighting a war. These mental traumas cause soldiers to continually feel threatened and fearful of battle, even after they have returned home and are physically safe. This trauma used to mostly be restricted to male soldiers, since women were barred from military combat; however, with American women taking on roles closer to combat in modern wars such as the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, more women are displaying signs of mental trauma. The complications women face during warfare are different, and can exceed those of men in significant ways: women have added challenges and segregations as a minority in the military, such as prejudice from higher military personnel, and discrimination against women by the culture of the areas where they are deployed. Although some women escape mental trauma, and war trauma is not sex-specific, women's traumatic military experiences are often compounded because of their gender. Through an analysis of first-person accounts of American female combatants<sup>1</sup> who suffered from wartime stress, this paper will argue that women in the military suffer added obstacles compared to male combatants, challenges which contribute to and exacerbate their mental health problems. Specifically, it will examine the documentary *Lioness*, which investigates the experiences of female veterans who saw combat during their service in Iraq, and interviews of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans Nurse Avvampato, Captain Kim, and Lieutenant Roesler.

Combat-induced mental trauma is a stress-related condition soldiers can face after combat, but which is distinct from physical

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<sup>1</sup> Many of these accounts were by females who were not officially combatants, but were thrust into combat regardless, which will be explained later in the paper, pages 7-8.

trauma because of its source. Unlike the physical trauma of war, which ranges from bullet wounds to fragmentation injuries, the mental wounds of war come from both witnessing gruesome combat and the stresses of fighting to stay alive. In extreme cases, a soldier's exposure to stress can lead to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), where unlike physical wounds, "the site of injury for PTSD is experience itself" (Paulson xvii). Daryl Paulson, who has conducted extensive research on PTSD, specifically its appearance in modern conflicts since Vietnam, notes that these extreme trauma cases arrive because veterans go off to war and lose their sense of safety and security in the world (4). According to Paulson, American soldiers go overseas knowing their role at home and the privileges they hold in their work and country, only to enter a world where their roles are uncertain and all their freedoms are either gone or could be taken away by a single bullet. The journey through war, where an individual is faced with extreme physical danger, charged with protecting civilians and fellow soldiers, and potentially required to kill enemy targets, results in multiple kinds of extreme stress. Some combatants deal with stress better than others; those veterans who return with combat trauma typically trace the origin of their trauma to a particular event, known as an "initial catastrophic stressor" (3). The initial stressor could be witnessing the death of a friend, being nearly killed, witnessing gore, or an event where the soldier was the one who killed or otherwise did horrible acts in war. This "catastrophic stressor," or specific moment or incident that resulted in extreme psychological stress for the combatant, continues to be a "powerful influence on [that] person's behavior" long after the event itself has passed (3). This initial stressor not only causes the enduring trauma, but is revisited and continues to haunt the sufferers of PTSD even after they have returned home and are out of the immediate danger of combat.

In recent wars, women comprise a large portion of veterans returning home with PTSD, and the symptoms of PTSD interfere with their lives in multiple significant ways. According to Cave, "more than eight thousand female veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan are diagnosed with PTSD from the VA system" (Cave). Women with PTSD experience abnormal hormone levels because of how their bodies have been physically altered by the stress, which leads to problems functioning in "relationships, problems with employment," and physical and mental symptoms such as anxiety, nightmares, memory loss, hallucinations, hypervigilance,



detachment, and immune system problems (PTSD). They also experience periods of increased symptom intensity, owing to physical illness or reminders of their military service such as "reunions or media broadcasts at anniversaries," leading to outbursts in anger, difficulty falling or staying asleep, difficulty concentrating, and exaggerated responses to anything startling (PTSD). PTSD affects both men and women, and tests regarding gender and stress show no evidence that women are less able to cope with stress than men (Paulson 17). Nonetheless, the specific environment female United States military personnel face in modern wars provides many of the circumstances that lead to mental trauma and PTSD.

The modern wars that are discussed in this paper – the United States' military conflict in Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom) and the United States' military conflict in Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom) – provide a uniquely stressful battle environment for soldiers, and particularly for women combatants. Unlike previous wars where, excepting civilian bombings, there was a designated battlefield where combat occurred, such as World War One and World War Two, in Iraq and Afghanistan there "[was] no front line, the front line [was] everywhere" (Cave). Fighting often occurred in and around civilian homes and domestic cities. Insurgency could use buildings on the sides of roads as places for ambushes, and the rows of homes could be scaled easily, allowing for quick surroundings of United States troops during a firefight (Lioness). Specialist Rebecca Nava, a female army supply clerk, recalls that she would "close her eyes" as she went down a road because "something on the side of the road could be an attack" (Lioness). Unlike wars where there were allied and enemy zones, the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan offered no recognizable safe haven for those involved. Civilians with no ties or markings of military might even kill soldiers, such as the ambush SPC Nava experienced in an Iraqi civilian town after hearing local mosques call for the death of Americans over loudspeakers that were typically used for prayer calls (Lioness). Being at war in a civilian environment is not the sole cause of experience-based trauma, but the lack of a designated war front and not knowing which civilians to protect and which were trying to kill United States soldiers is a contributing factor to the amount of stress soldiers face, especially considering that losing safety and security in the world can lead to PTSD. Beyond the universal loss of safety and security during wartime, women

especially felt alienated in these wars when faced with the completely different culture of foreign civilians and the military.

Because Iraq and Afghanistan are Middle Eastern countries ruled by Islamic law, female soldiers must overcome additional resentment from citizens who disapprove of women taking on roles that they perceive to be outside of the Islamic culture's strict gender roles. In Islamic cultures, women are supposed to be mostly covered up, with the exception of their eyes, in a garment called a Burka (Roesler). Women are also not allowed to engage in masculine activities like driving a car (Roesler). Debra Roesler, a Lieutenant during Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, remembers not appreciating that there was a cultural difference until living in these Middle Eastern nations. She recalls that there were citizens who respected her as a soldier, but also that some Iraqi and Afghani males would yell and call her horrible names for being a soldier. Lt. Roesler recalled a man spitting on her because she was driving a car (Roesler). Paulson asserts that one of the challenging aspects of PTSD is that victims face a loss of their individual perspective, or their personal myth about the world (4). Typically that refers to a loss of safety, but in the case of women, they too faced a loss of freedoms and respect they would have otherwise in the United States. Compounding this cultural challenge, women also faced similar alienation amongst their own military.

Iraq and Afghanistan female war veterans' interviews relate that women entering the military have to overcome bias from other military personnel because they consider females weaker. Lt. Roesler claims that females in the military stand out, "whether in a good way or not," because of the lack of women in the profession (Roesler). The initial stigma held against women relates to the physical aspect of being a soldier. Being in the military requires strong physical fitness, especially for Army and Marine branches. Jaden Kim, a Marine captain during Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, recounts that she had great difficulty completing her physical fitness training and testing, and remained on base over breaks and weekends to learn to climb a rope, or improve the number of push-ups and sit-ups she could do (Kim). The military allows women to have lighter physical requirements, but male soldiers hold this against female soldiers. Lt. Roesler remembers that discrimination drove her to try and match physical fitness standards of men so she might be treated right by male teammates and officers (Roesler). Again, this demonstrates that

there is a challenge to personal identity for women in the military. While this challenge may not be as strong as being yelled at and spit upon, it nonetheless shows that women have to deal with a loss of security and respect because male military personnel push them especially hard and look down upon them when they fail.

Interviews also reveal the male military officers hold sexist biases against women in the military, primarily slowing women's careers and sexually assaulting women. The military was a completely male domain for a long time, and there are members of the armed forces who still believe it should remain that way. For example, early in her career, Lt. Roesler was told by an officer "you will always be number two to those gentlemen over there" (Roesler). Additionally, superior officers take advantage of lower-ranked women, leading to sexual assault and rape with little to no repercussions for the superior officer, but public shaming for the victim (Lawrence).<sup>2</sup> The actions of higher-ranking male officers reflect that women are neither fully welcomed nor supported in the United States military.

Individually, the resentment from the Middle Eastern culture, the burden from the physical training, and the sexist attitude against women lead to a loss of respect and security for military women, but the effects are worse when these factors are combined. In combination, these stressors result in female combatants perceiving no safe or secure positions while at war – either in military life or in combat. This lack of safety and security in some ways mirrors combatants' feelings of danger and insecurity in insurgence scenarios, although not to a life-threatening extent. In essence, the very environment these women enter into when joining the United States military during these modern conflicts is an environment that robs them of their safety and security – the same loss Paulson states as the primary reason why soldiers experience strong mental trauma. Thus, without even taking the

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<sup>2</sup> According to Lawrence "1 in 4 women who join the military will be sexually assaulted," often by superiors and the very people they would go to in order to report the assault (Lawrence). The United States Department of Veterans Affairs recognizes that because of "greater exposure to this type of trauma, women are particularly at risk for PTSD" resulting from sexual assault (PTSD). This sexual harassment and assault is an aspect of trauma that many military women are forced to deal with, but is beyond the scope of this paper. For more information, see Quil Lawrence, "Off The Battlefield, Military Women Face Risks From Male Troops," *NPR*, 20 March 2013. Web. Accessed, 15 April, 2014.

trauma of war combat into consideration, one sees that women are already set up for mental hardships.

Before addressing the nature of women's combat experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is important to distinguish between the combat roles women actually had in these modern wars and the non-combatant roles they were trained for. According to the United States Congress, at the time of these conflicts, the Pentagon rules restricted "women from artillery, armor, infantry and other such combat roles" (Bumiller). Even though eight hundred women were wounded in the two wars and more than one hundred thirty died, women were legally restricted to roles like mechanic, or supply clerk (Bumiller). Because women were not technically/constitutionally allowed to engage in combat, they did not receive nearly as much combat training as men; women's training only included basic firearms and self-defense instruction. This was the case for Specialist Shannon Morgan, who enlisted as a mechanic during the Iraq war and who never expected to see ground combat like what she experienced (Lioness). Male units feel burdened by military women in combat because they know that women do not receive training and would be a liability in a firefight, which adds to the alienation women experience (Lioness). In contrast, insurgents could not care less whether a soldier was a man or a woman so long as it was an American, and officers regarded women as just as likely a target in a firefight as any better-trained male soldier, emphasizing that women were in greater danger from not receiving training (Lioness). Women still experienced combat during these modern conflicts, but their lack of training and legality of their fighting are significant because they directly contrast both with what the women joined the military and came to war expecting to do, and how prepared these women were for what they actually experienced.

Although women were barred from combat roles, the reality of Iraqi and Afghan conflicts specifically required the use of women in combat operations, which is why there were women who experienced warfare, and how women witnessed the gruesomeness that accompanies war. Women were necessary when searching female Afghans and Iraqis during modern conflicts owing to Middle Eastern culture (Lioness). The culture of these Middle Eastern countries forbids men from laying their hands on civilian women, so these female soldiers, termed "Team Lioness," were recruited to do these personal searches and to pacify the civilian women (Lioness). The Lioness team regularly partook in

street searches and dangerous house-to-house clearing missions, which put these women directly into the danger zone; frequently these searches were at night, and involved breaching houses that possibly held insurgents (Lioness). Female soldiers were well trained in searching; however, they were not prepared for the combat that could potentially accompany the searches, such as the ambush that occurred while they accompanied a convoy of Marines in Ramadi, where enemy insurgents surrounded the convoy in minutes (Lioness). SPC Shannon recalls "Marines running all around" to the point where she could not shoot without hitting an ally (Lioness). During the same firefight, SPC Nava remembers her horror at seeing dead bodies in piles all over the streets (Lioness). Explosions from grenades and bullets hitting concrete walls were happening all around these women. The Lionesses are not the only women to experience combat, as women in other roles such as drivers of convoys ended up being part of combat too. For example, Iraq Staff Sergeant Stacy Pearsall of the Air Force was driving an armored vehicle with her convoy when it came under fire, and in the wake of the firefight she pulled a fellow male soldier to safety and pinched his torn carotid artery "as blood spurted all over" in order to save his life (Dao). These examples provide evidence that women were not shielded from the horrors of war just because of a law or their gender. Yet because they had not been properly prepared or trained for combat, these female soldiers were not physically or mentally ready to handle that experience.

While PTSD can arise from a loss of safety and security, PTSD has also been shown to affect soldiers who are not individually suited for military combat. Paulson states that an individual's personal history, culture, and social background are all influential factors in whether or not they are predisposed to get PTSD from engaging in combat (11). For example, Paulson asserts that a family man who performs office work, which demands communication skills rather than physical tasks, is more likely to develop PTSD from serving in the military than an individual whose cultural background and skill set is more physical and adaptable to military combat (Paulson 11). The women of Team Lioness were car mechanics, supply clerks, or charged with relaying military intelligence (Lioness). SSgt Pearsall was a combat photographer (Dao). They came from backgrounds not suited for military combat, and joined the military with no intention of being in direct combat; neither their previous work nor their military training prepared them to engage in combat. Arguably, because they were thus

predisposed to be affected by PTSD, when they began to be forced to kill soldiers and civilians and witness other war traumas, they were more acutely affected by such combat traumas than other soldiers. Interviews with female soldiers who were forced into combat situations in Iraq and Afghanistan reflect this postwar trauma.

Combat trauma manifests for these female combatants in various ways, even years after the war. Military women with PTSD commonly experience flashbacks and conditioned responses to trauma during moments that return them to a state of feeling as if they are back in the battle zone. Usually these reactions are triggered by an event that relates to their war experience, and more specifically to their initial trauma stressors. Firefights, military battles involving heavy gunfire, and mortar shellings, an attack involving bombs being fired into the air and raining down on targets, are two common examples of major trauma stressors. SPC Nava, who experienced firefights and mortar shelling in Iraq, "collapses to the ground" and takes cover whenever she hears an explosion because her time in the military trained her to throw herself to the floor whenever the Iraqi insurgents would attack (Lioness). Cookie, a Major in the Air Force medical team, still recalls the panic and shock that occurred during mortar attacks, including the startling feeling when the "giant voice" of the base's alarm sounded the attack (Avvampato). Shalimar Bien, who has been home for four years after serving in Iraq, "punches and kicks" her partner and once nearly attacked an Arab cashier because her aggression never went away (Cave). Just as Paulson describes, these women are reacting to situations as they should in a combat scenario, but in reality they are safe at home. They have been changed by combat in a way that is shared by other veterans returning from war, but women have gender-specific complications when going for help.

When women react to civilian life as they would in the military, they are violating their gender roles. Women are meant to be caring and nurturing, so women who come home with PTSD feel additional worry that they will be ostracized by society for being violent and paranoid (Cave). There is a struggle in holding down jobs because of the bursts of anger and trouble managing stress that comes with PTSD (Cave). Dr. Gibson, a veteran trauma doctor who treats female veterans, notes how in society "women aren't supposed to throw dishes, punch a wall, get aggressive with their spouse, have feelings to hurt their child" and other violent

behaviors that veterans suffering from PTSD experience (Cave). SPC Nava, for example, worries that people will think she is a "freak" for her combat-induced behavior (Lioness). Others remain more isolated, like SPC Morgan, who has no friends, wanders around shooting animals, and only talks to her uncle because he is a Vietnam vet with PTSD (Lioness). Prior to Vietnam, veterans with PTS used to be treated as sufferers from head wounds and "shell shock"<sup>3</sup> and were typically told by doctors to just "go home and get over it," which often made the veterans' cases worse and led to the development of PTSD (Paulson 8-11). Modern United States female soldiers are living in an age where PTSD is recognized as a mental illness and treated with therapy and medication, but they are avoiding treatment due to gender stigmas, so they are developing more pervasive and lasting disorders just like untreated veterans of the past.

Experiences from war haunt the women who were forced into combat that they were not physically or emotionally prepared for by the United States military, which further cements their trauma. SPC Morgan, for example, still questions her role in invading homes and searching women against their will (Lioness). SPC Morgan is a good shot, and when the Lioness team was caught in a firefight, her skills were used to kill insurgents to protect her team. Morgan knows that she has to stop thinking of the people she killed and wounded if she wants to have peace, but notes that "you are not shooting at a paper target, you are shooting back to protect yourself and those around you...when you take another person's life you kind of lose yourself too" (Lioness). She states that she can never forget her role in the war, because if she could, that would mean she "served for no reason," and thus killed for no reason (Lioness). Soldiers like Morgan experienced some of the worst aspects of being a soldier; now they are home and struggling to accept their actions.

Female combatants who served in Iraq and Afghanistan also experience greater difficulty than male combatants because they have returned home to an American public that has no idea what they did during the war. The fact that they are not supposed to discuss their illegal involvement combined with the public's lack of understanding causes the women to be further disassociated from

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<sup>3</sup> "Shell shock" was used to describe soldiers who had mental trauma from war, especially after experiencing mortar shellings. This term is from the time before PTSD was a recognized disorder.

their war experiences, and thus worsens their PTSD. The “disassociation” and not being able to talk about the traumatic experience means these women are missing a major part of trauma therapy. As a result, they may be prevented from being able to move on and heal (Paulson 14). Kate Guttorsmen, the Lioness mission commander, knows that there are people who still have no idea that women were involved in combat because at the time United States law did not allow women to fight in war (Lioness). SSgt Pearsall, who “sustained brain and neck injuries in Iraq,” has a hard time convincing people she was injured by combat because they assume she never fought (Dao). Also due to the illegality of female combat, the media very seldom covers female involvement. This was especially apparent to the Lioness team when they watched a History Channel documentary that directly covered the Ramadi firefights their team fought in but which did not mention female involvement once during the entire film (Lioness). Women lost part of their security and safety overseas, and the actions they did and witnessed gave them stress disorders. Now, they are not recognized as being a part of the war effort, and silencing their story furthers their trauma. Female combatants cannot feel secure after their trauma if no one even recognizes that it occurred, and family, friends, and colleagues cannot provide them with an understanding environment when they do not know what happened. By not acknowledging, recognizing, or rewarding female combatants for their service in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States military and government are preventing veteran female combatants from a chance at recovery.

Mental trauma brought on by combat stress, resulting in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, is a serious problem for returning veterans. About “30 percent of the men and women who have spent time in war zones experience PTSD,” with most of them experiencing serious stress reactions at some point in their lives (PTSD). When United States military personnel leave for war, death is part of their daily life. They kill, or face the threat of their own death, constantly. The United States already has a concern with trying to get these heroes to return to a state where they can function properly in civilian life. While there is progress in treating PTSD as a whole, the United States needs to take greater strides to improve the handling of female veterans. The military’s sexist attitudes and the frequency of rape of female recruits already indicate serious problems. The military has to start caring, and punishing officers responsible, if there is to be any hope of creating



a safe environment for women. Moreover, women need to receive training on par with men. Removing the ban on women's participation in combat is progress, but the military must prepare women physically and mentally for war. Finally, the American people need to recognize the service these women do. It is awful that modern conflicts are causing exceptional difficulties for women who are offering their lives for the United States, and this needs to change. Otherwise, more and more of these Lionesses will leave the military and never be able to come home to normal lives. These invisible wounds will continue to disrupt these female veterans' lives, and prevent them from enjoying the freedoms that they fought to protect.

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## Hiroshima Revisited

By Katy Hennen

On Aug. 6, 1945, at 8:15 in the morning, the first U.S. atomic bomb burst over Hiroshima. Three days later the second one exploded over Nagasaki. In both cities over 90% of all human beings within half a mile of ground zero simply “evaporated” and buildings were leveled for seven miles. No official death toll was ever agreed upon, although estimates run as high as 300,000. Now, on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the bombings, when rockets stand poised with payloads for a thousand Hiroshimas packed in their nose cones, it is worthwhile to ponder these scenes again.<sup>1</sup>

This passage, from an article in *Senior Scholastic* titled “25 Years Ago: Two Cities Two Bombs,” overlays a picture of the rubble of Hiroshima. That is where the article begins and ends – one of the deadliest single events in history, and no more than one paragraph and a photograph are spared in its remembrance. Such an article, with its lack of personal reflection or in- depth consideration of the tragedy, was not rare in 1970 and 1971. In fact, this article represented how the majority of mainstream media addressed the situation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – with distant, almost cold, reflection. Rarely, if ever, was the use of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima questioned. The state of affairs in the United States at the time fueled this inability or unwillingness by the mainstream media to take a deep look into the use of atomic bombs. With the U.S. still engaged in Vietnam, all of the country’s attention focused on its involvement in Indo-china. America’s policy was centered on power, a power founded on the United States’ use of the atomic bomb in 1945 and maintained through its effort in Vietnam. When the United States dropped the first atomic bomb in Hiroshima, the bomb became the nation’s greatest strength – perhaps too great a strength, because it also created a world where being without nuclear weapons was a country’s greatest weakness. In a moment, the United States changed the world of foreign relations from one

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<sup>1</sup> “25 Years Ago: Two Cities Two Bombs,” *Senior Scholastic*, no. 69:3 (1970): 8

of wartime alliances to one where the only options were ultimate power or nothing at all. In 1971, to question the use of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima would be to question the foundation of American policy, power, and the entire Vietnam strategy. The U.S. was not willing to pay the price of such a question. Unfortunately, this unwillingness to question and look closer at the basis of U.S. power left America oblivious to the cracks in its foundation. Such cracks, the errors in America's actions at Hiroshima, if addressed, would have mitigated America's risk of repeating such mistakes in Vietnam.

When one looks at the portrayal of Hiroshima in the mainstream media in 1971, the lack of true consideration of the subject becomes clear. It is not the quantity of material concerning Hiroshima that is lacking; instead, what is notable is the lack of quality, the lack of depth. Newspapers and magazines covered only fact, never considering the implications or moral issues associated with the bombing. One way in which the newspapers did this was in the manner depicted above – remembering Hiroshima, but purely as a historical event. Another way in which the mainstream press addressed the coverage of Hiroshima was through reporting on the medical repercussions of the bomb. One *New York Times* article discussed how "Hiroshima authorities...will conduct studies for the first time on the children of the surviving victims of the atomic bomb.... The authorities say they want to have the results for medical studies and for the establishment of Government measures for children of the victims of atomic bombs."<sup>2</sup> While this article does reference the victims, it does not do so in any meaningful way – in fact it only mentions Hiroshima officials' responsibility for aiding the victims. By not writing about the part America played in the suffering of the children of Hiroshima, the press was distancing itself from the complications of U.S. actions.

In another *New York Times* article, the newspaper finally addressed the concept of America being in the wrong by using the atomic bomb, but made no effort to justify this idea. This article discussed a book titled *The Day Man Lost*, by the Pacific War Research Society. In this book the Society, a Japanese group, asserted that the bomb was an unnecessary atrocity, arguing that Japan was on the verge of surrender when America dropped the

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<sup>2</sup> "Hiroshima to Conduct Study of Children of Bomb Victims," *New York Times*, Nov. 19, 1972, 4.

bomb. The paper quotes the book's preface: "We heard the victims express, time and time again the same thought – our agony that August day was nothing compared with the agony we have suffered in the long quarter of a century that has passed since then."<sup>3</sup> a viewpoint rarely expressed in the mainstream media. At the same time, the article minimizes the legitimacy of the book's argument, writing, "Through the accounts of survivors, however, the authors attempt to convey their conviction that the United States had no right to initiate the use of an immoral and inhuman weapon about whose ultimate effects on humans so little was known."<sup>4</sup> In this sentence, the phrasing is key. With the use of the phrase "attempt to convey their conviction," the author is removing all association between the view of the Pacific War Research Society and the *New York Times*. In its refusal to look too closely at the issue, the paper not only ignores the message behind the book, but it also delegitimizes it.

Ignorance of the victims of Hiroshima was prevalent throughout the mainstream media, but nothing revealed this as greatly as the media's depiction of the bombing as a success story. When the Emperor of Japan visited Hiroshima in 1971, the *New York Times* covered this story, but rather than emphasizing it as a time of reflection over one of the most destructive events in history, it focused on the positives of the situation, even titling the article, "Rebuilt Hiroshima Is 'Magnificent,' Hirohito Says."<sup>5</sup> By drawing attention to how "magnificent" or "splendid" the rebuild was, and to a monument to the victims rather than the victims themselves, it was able to minimize the U.S. responsibility for the tragedy, and still avoid questioning or doubting the foundation of American power.

Rather than questioning Hiroshima, mainstream America was concerned with the U.S.'s long-running involvement in Vietnam. America was not only so blinded by its preoccupation with Vietnam that it could not spend energy thinking about Hiroshima, but it was so oblivious to the lessons of Hiroshima that it began to consider using the atomic bomb again, this time in Vietnam. Whereas most of the coverage of Hiroshima in 1971 consisted of small stories on

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<sup>3</sup> "Japanese Book Says Bombing of Hiroshima Was Unneeded," *New York Times*, Aug. 13, 1972, 19.

<sup>4</sup> "Japanese Book," 19.

<sup>5</sup> "Rebuilt Hiroshima is 'Magnificent,' Hirohito Says," *New York Times*, Apr. 17, 1971, 12.

one of the later pages, the *New Yorker* published a ten-page spread concerning the use of the atomic bomb in Indochina. In this article the author spoke with government and military officials regarding the plausibility of dropping the bomb once again, and detailed the benefits and drawbacks of using nuclear warfare in Vietnam. For the benefits, the list was clear and concise – it was an efficient way to demolish the enemy. The strategies considered were the use of nuclear weapons “to close off mountain roads that are at present vital to the southward movement of enemy troops and equipment,”<sup>6</sup> or the more abstract “radioactive curtain” plan, which involved using radiation to keep the enemy out of the demilitarized zone.<sup>7</sup> To some extent calculations had even been made, with one Defense Department official stating, “400 one-megaton bombs would destroy every structure in North Vietnam and every one of the twenty-one million people there.”<sup>8</sup> Some even felt with the efficiency of the bomb’s destructive power, it was America’s duty to use the bomb in certain situations, with one civilian official saying, “If the Chinese invaded Vietnam the way they did in Korea, it would be a national disgrace if we didn’t clobber them with nukes.”<sup>9</sup> When looking at the situation purely in terms of numbers, the decision was a simple one, but numbers were not the only factor.

The reasons for opposition to the use of an atomic bomb were more complicated and diverse, but all the concerns shared one common thread – the possibility of damage to American power and security. As the author wrote, there was a fear of the “chain of ungovernable consequences” using nuclear force could unleash both domestically and internationally. Domestically there was an awareness of the precarious climate surrounding the Vietnam War – many of the people were no longer supportive of the Vietnam effort and such an event would cause much domestic turmoil. In the *New Yorker*’s article, one professor of foreign affairs was quoted as saying, “Even if it were only an unpopulated section of the Mu Gia Pass that was hit, there would be reactions – violent and nonviolent – here in the United States, the likes of which we have

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<sup>6</sup> D. Lang, “Reporter at Large: Atom Bomb in Indochina,” *New Yorker*, no. 46 (1971):52.

<sup>7</sup> Lang, “Reporter at Large,” 52.

<sup>8</sup> Lang, “Reporter at Large,” 52.

<sup>9</sup> Lang, “Reporter at Large,” 58.

never known."<sup>10</sup> His concern was not why the American people would be outraged if America used the atomic bomb in Vietnam, or what underlying issues in American policy might cause distress, but rather how such unrest would influence American power.

Concerns about the issues that using the bomb could create abroad were manifold. "Our alliances there would be devalued...nor would other nations fail to realize that once again we had used a nuclear weapon against a yellow people"<sup>11</sup> was one analysis of the situation. Here the concern was not over the impact such use would actually have on the people of the world, but focused entirely on how such an event would make America look. The last big concern was what would happen if there were any kind of reprisal: "Reprisal, or the imminent prospect of it...would surely set off a wave of bomb-building in countries that had not yet gone nuclear."<sup>12</sup> And should such reprisal lead to a nuclear attack by the Soviet Union, "the resulting casualties would be so appalling that, according to government officials, we, for our part, might not necessarily hit back even if a limited attack on our own mainland cost us as many as ten million dead."<sup>13</sup> Nuclear war would result in a "handful of miserable survivors contemplating the folly of man."<sup>14</sup> In this point of opposition, there is some thought as to the global repercussions of their actions – using the bomb could set off a chain reaction that would threaten the world. This moral obligation to police nuclear military power only goes so far, though, as a destroyed world would mean a destroyed America, and America did not want to pay such a price.

Such concerns are legitimate – after all, self-preservation is a strong instinct – and many of the points weighed were the same as those considered before Hiroshima in 1945. The statement from Secretary Stimson's diary in 1945 concerning the atomic bomb, "some way should be found of inducing Japan to yield without a fight to the finish,"<sup>15</sup> and the war department's 1945 memo warning of the possibility of "an armament race that may threaten

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<sup>10</sup> Lang, "Reporter at Large," 53.

<sup>11</sup> Lang, "Reporter at Large," 53.

<sup>12</sup> Lang, "Reporter at Large," 54.

<sup>13</sup> Lang, "Reporter at Large," 54

<sup>14</sup> Lang, "Reporter at Large," 54

<sup>15</sup> Stimson Diary Entry, June 19, 1945, as cited in Michael B. Stoff, Jonathan F. Fenton, and R. Hal Williams, *The Manhattan Project: A Documentary Introduction to the Atomic Age* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1991).

civilization,"<sup>16</sup> could just as easily be statements from officials in 1971. But in all this calculating and planning, there was one glaring omission – unlike in 1945, the United States had already used the atomic bomb once. The considerations behind using the bomb in Vietnam should not have paralleled those discussed in 1945, at least not in their entirety, because the U.S. now had a point of reference. American officials now had the advantage of knowing the immediate and long-term impact using the atomic bomb would have, yet they ignored this reference point and instead found themselves weighing the same options again. Mainstream America was bound to the policies enacted by the dropping of the atomic bomb in WWII, and simultaneously blinded to the impact this policy had. It was not until pushed by the reporter that any of the officials or representatives interviewed addressed questions of morality over the bomb – and even then, the moral perspective was not necessarily a reflective one. One official addressed the moral issue while removing all humanness from the argument, saying, "In diplomacy one prefers to say 'political' which I believe absorbs your word 'moral.'"<sup>17</sup> This implies the belief that American politics and policy is always representative of American morality, a philosophy that removes all responsibility to look back on American actions such as dropping the bomb on Hiroshima.

Though the author said that the question of morality usually "drew silence, some people eyeing [the interviewer] warily or waiting indulgently...to get on with the day's business,"<sup>18</sup> there were those that were more forthcoming on the issue of morality. These sources expressed a readiness, even an obligation, to question future use of the bomb on moral grounds: "if an atomic bomb were to fall in Vietnam, they said, it would destroy not only its target but the hope that Hiroshima bequeathed a life preserving taboo."<sup>19</sup> Former Secretary of State Mr. Rusk described the bomb as a "weapon of last resort, on which there lies a curse...the country that ends the interval [of refusal to use nuclear weapons] will carry the mark of Cain on his brow for the rest of history."<sup>20</sup> But even

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<sup>16</sup> Harrison's Memo to Stimson, June 26, 1945, as cited in Michael B. Stoff, Jonathan F. Fenton, and R. Hal Williams, *The Manhattan Project: A documentary Introduction to the Atomic Age* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1991)

<sup>17</sup> Lang, "Reporter at Large," 55.

<sup>18</sup> Lang, "Reporter at Large," 54.

<sup>19</sup> Lang, "Reporter at Large," 55.

<sup>20</sup> Lang, "Reporter at Large," 55.



moral imagery as strong as this does not question past use of the bomb or the policies that use of the bomb set in motion. Future use of the bomb will forever leave the aggressor in infamy, but America's use of the bomb left America unmarked.

When the scope of sources expands beyond the mainstream media, the point of view regarding the bomb and involvement in Vietnam shifts greatly. The fringe media, the smaller, local papers, did not hesitate to cover stories about Hiroshima, but unlike the mainstream media, they did so almost entirely in a questioning way, writing to point out the dissatisfaction with its use, even 26 years later. It was the fringe media alone that was able to draw the connection between what they felt was wrong in Hiroshima, and what they currently saw was wrong in Vietnam. For the *Sun Reporter*, Hiroshima-Nagasaki day on August 6, 1971, was a rallying call. The *Sun Reporter* quoted the protesters' call of "No more Hiroshima Nagasakis, and No more Vietnams"<sup>21</sup> and described how demonstrations such as these were intended to "force, through people's power, some sanity into the military-industrial complex to name the date of U.S. withdrawal from Indochina." Another article reported on this event, writing, "the nation may well turn its thoughts to the prophetic meaning of this horrible event 26 years ago,"<sup>22</sup> demonstrating its awareness of the impact that Hiroshima had on future U.S. policy, and its willingness to question both. Such sources focused primarily on the moral bankruptcy of the atomic bomb and Vietnam, and what this said about the institution of America. For some in the fringe media, this flaw was a flaw in war itself, which they described as a "sham and a fake to be utilized only in extremely limited operations by great countries to test new weaponry against small nations, as in the Vietnam 10-year debacle."<sup>23</sup> They also reflected on Hiroshima and Vietnam to express their dissatisfaction with American politics, the fringe media alone making the connection between their dissatisfaction with Nixon and the world the atomic bomb had created. One source explained Nixon's promise to remove America from Vietnam as "a campaign gimmick and merely the utterance of a cynical politician playing upon the conscience and the fervent

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<sup>21</sup> "The Realities of 1972 Facing the U.S. Peace Forces," *Sun Reporter*, Feb. 19, 1972, 10.

<sup>22</sup> "Hiroshima-Nagasaki -- 26 Years Removed," *Sun Reporter*, July 31, 1971, 7.

<sup>23</sup> "At the Crossroads," *Oakland Post*, Nov. 4, 1971, 12.

desire of the American people”<sup>24</sup> and writing, “Again the American people must replace a cynical president who has betrayed their trust.”<sup>25</sup>

On an even deeper level, the fringe media saw Hiroshima and Vietnam as a representation of everything they saw wrong in America, primarily the issue of racism. “Recognizing that our foreign policy is the mirrored image of our domestic policy, we know that the war in Vietnam is a racist war; if the Vietnamese people were not people of a color other than white, the U.S. government would never dare drop napalm and bomb a people in their quest for freedom”<sup>26</sup> was how one article described the Vietnam war. This different point of view of the fringe media came from the fact that it was fringe – it sought to represent the underrepresented in America, to speak on behalf of those who felt wronged, or could sympathize with those wronged, by the American system.

Because these reporters could see the issues with America at home, they were also aware of what they perceived as American failures abroad, and were able to reflect on the sources of these failures. To the people behind the fringe media, to improve America it was necessary to study the motivations, the successes, and the failures behind Hiroshima. The echoing between one article’s claim, “To protect humanity against future Vietnams, we must utilize our energies not only against war abroad, but against racism, poverty and oppression at home”<sup>27</sup> and another’s that “Humanity’s calls for ‘No more Hiroshimas, no more Nagasakis!’ will have no true meaning until the nation addresses itself in action to a society devoid of racism, cleansed of oppression and outlawing war as an instrument of national policy”<sup>28</sup> demonstrates the parallels that the fringe media was able to make between Hiroshima, Vietnam, and the failures in American policy. Yet, in spite of this awareness and willingness to question Hiroshima, the fringe media found itself falling into a similar trap as the mainstream media – it was unable to view the events beyond their relationship with American power.

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<sup>24</sup> “The Realities of 1972 Facing the U.S. Peace Forces,” *Sun Reporter*, Feb. 19, 1972, 10.

<sup>25</sup> “The Realities of 1972,” 10.

<sup>26</sup> “The Realities of 1972,” 10.

<sup>27</sup> “The Realities of 1972,” 10.

<sup>28</sup> “26 Years Removed,” 7.

The parallels between Hiroshima and Vietnam are easily recognizable in Richard A. Falk's piece, "What We Should Learn from Vietnam." In this essay Falk conveyed what he considered the interpretations of Vietnam, all of which look at Vietnam from the same America-centric perspective, and build upon the foundation of Hiroshima. One example of this is his description of those who "criticize Washington for seeking settlement over victory."<sup>29</sup> To represent this point of view, Falk quoted Colonel Moore, who said, "This willingness to escalate is the key to deterring future aggressions...if we continue to stand firm in Vietnam as they advocate, then the world will have made incalculable progress toward eliminating war as the curse of mankind."<sup>30</sup> This view believes escalation is the ultimate source of power, which is the same course of thought that led to the bombing of Hiroshima - yet those who believe this seem to be oblivious to the fact that while the atomic bomb did end the conflict, it did so at great cost, and in some ways paved the way for future conflict. The other views criticized America's involvement in Vietnam altogether, arguing that "the war was weakening [America's] ability to uphold more significant interests in Europe and the Middle East, or that the disproportionate costs of Vietnam deprived the country of energies and resources that were desperately needed to solve domestic problems."<sup>31</sup> In these complaints, the focus was once again entirely on the damage to American interests and power, yet there still was no real look into where American power came from, or what it represented.

In Falk's paper, he offered an alternative representation of the Vietnam War - that it was a failure, not because America did not do enough, or because it damaged American interests by doing too much, but because the American power the country was pursuing was a flawed one, and one that did not coincide with true American values. According to Falk, America's view was skewed, moving away from promoting freedom and self-determination to being caught up in a world of escalation and anti-communist fervor. Falk ended his paper with the statement, "In the period since World War II anti-colonialism probably would have been a better guideline for American foreign policy than anti-communism. And

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<sup>29</sup> Richard Falk, "What We Should Learn from Vietnam," *Foreign Policy*, no. 1 (Winter, 1970-1971), 99.

<sup>30</sup> Falk, "What We Should Learn," 100.

<sup>31</sup> Falk, "What We Should Learn," 102.

even now it would make better sense...because it accords more closely...with the dynamics of national self-determination in most non-Communist Asian countries, and because it flows more naturally out of America's own best heritage and proudest tradition."<sup>32</sup> Though Falk did not mention Hiroshima directly, he proposed looking back at American policy before the use of the atomic bomb and suggested questioning the policy of foreign escalation and considering the interests of countries beyond America.

In the years 1970-1972, America was fixated on Vietnam, on both its successes and failures, and in this fixation lost sight of its past actions in Hiroshima. Vietnam overshadowed any memories, any questioning of Hiroshima, yet what America did not realize is that the conflict in Vietnam was built upon America's use of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima, that the memory they had no time for was the motivation for most American action. In this ignorance America saw only its changing conflict but not its lack of philosophical growth over the past 26 years, and because of this did not understand where the changes should be made, where American policy fell short. In the mainstream media's depiction of Vietnam, the American tailspin becomes evident – Americans were in search of answers over their plight in Vietnam, and because of this they paid little attention to the past tragedy of Hiroshima, yet in the memories of Hiroshima hid the answers to the problems in Vietnam.

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