



people died in the raid including my mother, sister-in-law and three nephews”.

The pilot's tone is happy, victorious and triumphant. “We sure are pleased”, “so they die anyway”. It would also appear to be racist in that he refers to “gooks”, though this is a term that the American forces would have routinely used for the Vietnamese. The tone is also vindictive and cruel: “So's to make it burn better”.

Question 2 (b): Would you consider the views of the peasant and the pilot objective? Explain your answer.

Answer: Both accounts are probably accurate but whether they are objective is questionable. Both are participants in the war; the peasant as a victim and the pilot as a serving member of the US forces. If we believe the peasant's statement, it would appear she is objective as she just gives the details of the scene: “Bodies had been torn to pieces.” She does not refer to the Americans in a derogatory way; only the result of their actions.

The pilot appears totally subjective: he is jubilant about devising more effective means of killing the enemy and he refers to the Vietnamese in a derogatory way. He does not consider the situation from the enemy perspective.

Criticism Questions: 20 marks

Question 3 (a): As a historian of the Vietnam War, how valuable would these sources be to your study? Refer to at least two. (Remember there is no correct answer here: you just have to argue effectively using examples to convince your examiner. Tip: If asked for usefulness or effectiveness of sources, refer to weaknesses and strengths.)

Answer: All of the sources appear to be located in secondary accounts by historians. Source A is valuable as it contains a comment by a historian who explains why the South Vietnamese would resent the Americans and the Vietcong: “American bombing forced many peasants to move away from their homes.” The eye-witness account of the peasant in source B gives us insight to the suffering of the Vietnamese, “bodies had been torn to pieces”. It describes the weapons used against them, such as napalm, and the paltry defence tunnels. Even though the account is recall and may be subject to memory loss, it appears very factual.

The biased statement by the nun in source C gives us insight as to why it was impossible for the Americans to win over the Vietnamese – “a beautiful country until you arrived”.

For a historian of technological developments in the Vietnam War, both source B and E would be particularly useful as there is detailed information about the weaponry used:

“mother bombs”, “white phosphorous”. Through the pilot's description we learn of the effectiveness of the American war machine. This source can also be used to identify racism and callousness “if the gooks . . . so's to make it burn better”.

Question 3 (b): What other sources would help your understanding of the period?

Answer: The American body counts and kill ratios would give us numerical statistics that could be compared.

The letters home from the soldiers would give us personal insight into the attitude of the serving soldier to the Vietnamese and the belief amongst the forces as to the possibility of success.

The phone transcripts of Lyndon Johnson to Robert McNamara, his defence chief, might give us an insight into what the president and his aides planned and thought.

Film footage would give us graphic imagery of the horror of the war. The newspapers of the day might give us some indication of public support for the war.

Contextualisation Question: 40 marks

Question: 4 Why and how did Lyndon Johnson escalate US commitment in Vietnam?

Answer: The Vietnam War was seen as a Cold War conflict, not a nationalist uprising, and thus the US opposition to communism played a role. Johnson, like his predecessors, supported the domino theory, and American prestige was at stake. In congress, Johnson said: “The South Vietnamese cannot alone stand the grasping might of Asian Communism, US commitment must increase.”

Johnson did not want to be seen as “the first president to lose a war”. He was aware of his place in history and said: “We learned from Hitler at Munich that success only fuels the appetite of aggression.” This explains why involvement continued to increase, even after the Vietcong put forward a four point declaration for removal and re-unification in 1965.

Johnson had inherited this war from president Kennedy. The tragic circumstances of Johnson's accession to power caused him to “reaffirm president Kennedy's policies”. Knowing he had no real popular mandate, the new president hesitated to abandon any Kennedy commitment. This helped to ensure continued involvement in Vietnam.

In the 1964 election, Lyndon Johnson campaigned against Barry Goldwater who was accusing Johnson of being “soft on communism”, so the president wanted to appear firm. Johnson claimed that the North Vietnamese made two unprovoked attacks on the *Maddox* and the *Turner Joy* in the Gulf of Tonkin. Believing that the lives of innocent American sailors had been jeopardised, the congress willingly passed the Gulf of Tonkin resolution. The resolution gave the president the power to wage war in Vietnam: as Johnson said, it was “like grandma's nightshirt – it covered everything”.

Johnson, as commander-in-chief, felt duty-bound to listen to his generals. As Vietnam was the only war the generals had, they wanted to continue with it and escalate it in order to win. The results and significance of the passing of the Tonkin resolution were great. Johnson appeared to have the nation behind him.

Now, the war could really be taken to the North: American aircraft bombed North Vietnam for the first time. This escalation made Johnson look tough. His public approval rating rose from 42 per cent to 72 per cent, helping him win the presidential election.

Another major cause of escalation was that the Saigon regime was not winning the war. In November 1964, 100 Vietcong had attacked and greatly damaged a US air base near Saigon. The consensus among Johnson's advisers was that something must be done. Dean Rusk said: “Somehow, we must change the pace at which these people move and I suppose that this can only be done with a pervasive intrusion of Americans into their affairs.”

These Vietcong attacks, which the Saigon regime seemed powerless to halt, nudged the Johnson administration towards escalation. It seemed necessary for the safety of Americans in Vietnam.

Johnson took the first major escalatory step after an attack on a huge American camp near Pleiku in which eight Americans were killed. Such was the intensity of the air strikes, they were known as “rolling thunder”; 67 per cent of Americans approved.

During 1965, polls showed 70 per cent of the nation was behind Johnson: 80 per cent believed in the domino theory and 80 per cent favoured sending US soldiers to stop South Vietnam falling. By late 1965, as nearly 200,000 American soldiers poured into Vietnam, the administration and military could not agree on what they should be doing there. Most, however, agreed that they should be there.

Get to know your history syllabus

You should have a copy of your syllabus so that you can check what you are expected to have studied.

Know what topics you are answering: know their names and know their numbers.

This is very important as you could waste valuable time in your examination if you start to answer the wrong topic.

Every topic has three perspectives: politics plus administration; society plus economy; culture, religion and science.

Remember the examination paper must examine at least two of the three perspectives in every topic.

Be prepared for the overarching question, where one question examines two perspectives.

For example, in the Leaving Certificate 2006, Wilhelm's naval policy (politics) was coupled with Bismarck's church policy (religion).

Students were not expecting this type of question, so be warned.

Remember how the essay questions are marked

There are 60 marks for relevant information (cumulative mark) plus 40 marks for overall evaluation.

At this stage of the course you may not have covered the entire topic. The key at this point in your preparation is overlap. How can I use the same information for more than one perspective so that I don't have to revise every part of the topic?

There are many approaches. Choose one that is easiest for you.

You may study:

- ◆ An important personality and all related aspects;
- ◆ A country and all related aspects;
- ◆ A case study and all related aspects;
- ◆ An event and all related aspects.

Example

Topic 3: Dictatorship and democracy in Europe, 1920-1945

If you choose to take a specific country and to study all the relevant aspects, then studying ‘Nazi state in peace’ (politics), you should widen to include:

- ◆ Anti-Semitism and the

Holocaust (society);

◆ Nazi propaganda, state control and the use of the mass media (culture);

◆ The Nuremberg Rallies (culture, which will include special personalities Leni Riefenstahl and Joseph Goebbels);

◆ Church-state relations under Hitler (religion).

Or if you choose to study the Stalinist state in peace (politics) then you should widen it to include:

◆ Lenin (politics);

◆ Stalin's show trials (politics);

◆ The Soviet alternative (economics).

If you choose to take a specific event and to study all the relevant aspects, then studying the second World War – Hitler and Stalin (politics) should be widened to include:

◆ Wartime alliances 1939-1945 (politics);

◆ The technology of warfare (science);

◆ The Vichy state (politics);

◆ Society during WWII: collaboration and resistance (economics and society).

If you choose the case-study approach and study all relevant aspects, then the option of studying Stalin's show trials (case study, politics) should be widened to include:

◆ Communism in Russia;

◆ Lenin and Stalin (politics);

◆ Stalinist state in peace (politics);

◆ The Soviet alternative (economics).

Meanwhile, if you choose to study the Jarrow March October 1936 (case study – economics and society), you should consider widening to include:

◆ Economic and social problems of the inter-war years with particular reference to Britain and Germany (economics, which will include key personality JM Keynes).

The Nuremberg Rallies (case study – culture) should be widened to include:

◆ Nazi propaganda – state control and use of the mass media (science, which will include key personalities Leni Riefenstahl and Joseph Goebbels);

◆ Church-state relations under Hitler and Mussolini (religion).