

# NU Campus Opinion Divided on U.S. Viet Nam Effort

**By Wanda Hostetter**  
(Ed.'s Note: This story was a journalism assignment made in March of 1968, before any peace negotiations were begun. The opinions expressed are still believed to be representative of the diversity found on the University of Nebraska campus.)

The Vietnamese war and the controversy surrounding the war have helped to build the public's stereotype of college campuses as nests for doves and anti-war sympathizers. The supposed solid dove-front on the campuses has, however, some inconsistencies.

While most people feel that campuses have assumed a liberal anti-war stand, many professors and students are found in a middle no man's land, located somewhere between dove and hawk. These campus members seem to find it difficult to flatly accept simple yes or no answers to the problem.

An example of the irregularities of opinion occurred at the University of Nebraska when Dow Chemical Co., the holders of a contract for making napalm bombs, was on the campus to interview prospective employees. About 50 anti-war demonstrators picketed the Union while, at the same time, a group of students carried signs supporting the war.

This paradoxical situation would seem to indicate that the students have taken a black or white view of the war. Yet when 10 professors at the university, who said they approved more than opposed the administration's stand, were asked to explain their support for the war, their views seemed more gray than black or white. Even among a group of war supporters, a comparison of their opinions found few areas of agreement.

**Own Modifications**  
Their opinions became grayed because they did not accept the administration's views without first placing their own modifications on the Johnson stand. For instance, one professor interviewed supported the war but strongly condemned, on moral grounds, the bombing of the North. Often the opposing views can limit the tenuous support for the war, one professor said.

The professors were found in eight areas of study and sometimes held the minority

opinion of the war in their departments as their colleagues opposed the war. Philosophy professor Robert Anderson and English professors Stock and Stubblefield said they felt most professors in English and philosophy opposed the war on moral and ethical grounds.

In the history and political science departments, the professors questioned said most of their fellow faculty members were largely in a middle zone with but a few who were strongly for or against the war. The lack of common ground between the opposing views was given as a reason for the slight discussion of the war which occurs between those professors of different views.

**Dr. Rex Reckway**, who teaches secondary education classes, said he felt most of his colleagues were as indecisive concerning the war as he was. He said there was no one among a group of 10 to 12 professors who often discuss Vietnam over lunch who advocated pulling out or stopping the bombing.

Reckway said one professor became frustrated over the frequent discussion of Vietnam. The professor finally gave an ultimatum.

"He told us, 'I promise to eat with you, but lay off Vietnam,'" said Reckway. **Criticized Involvement**  
This feeling of uncertainty was also found when the professors were asked to explain reasons for the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. The reasons given show how different the shades of gray can be. Among the supporters of the war were found professors who criticized the U.S. for ever becoming involved in Vietnam.

One professor, Arthur B. Winter, who criticized involvement, was a strong war supporter and spoke in favor of the war at a teach-in on the situation.

"I don't think it is necessarily in the interest of the United States to engage in military activity on the Asian mainland," the political scientist said. Winter pointed to the large expense of the war and the general unreadiness of the Asian people to accept their role as citizens as reasons for his feelings. Still, he said that almost everyone realizes that the U.S. has to remain even though no one is happy about it.

"We'll be criticized unnecessarily," Winter said, "and will get little for what we give."

Philosophy professor Anderson saw the U.S. involvement as a policy of containment such as the one that was followed in Korea, Berlin and Greece.

"I see it as a part of the global strategy we've been pursuing since the 1940's," he said. This strategy was marked by the beginning of the Cold War and the end of the honeymoon with the Russians.

Those more strongly supported the U.S. action in Vietnam had a catalogue of reasons for doing so. The list included the leadership role of the U.S., treaty obligations, the defense of Asia, the commitment to the Vietnamese people and altruism. Four professors placed the commitment to the Vietnamese people as the main reason for U.S. involvement.

"The political alignment of Vietnam wouldn't bother me as much as the relative assurance that the people in Vietnam would have some

measure of self-determination," professor Stubblefield said. "That is why we are there". C. J. Kennedy, a professor of economic history, said that the commitment that the rest of the world thinks the U.S. has made is another part of involvement.

**Too Late Too Change**  
While the reasons for the U.S. being in Vietnam varied, most of the professors agreed that since the U.S. was in Vietnam, we should remain. Here was one of few areas where most of the professors seemed to agree on one shade of gray as they felt it was too late for the U.S. to make a drastic shift in policy.

**Asian authority Peter Cheng**, who received his bachelor of arts degree at Taiwan, said we should remain in Vietnam simply because the U.S. could not get out with a satisfactory solution at this time. He said, however, that the U.S. should review the situation frequently to see what is wrong and what can be done.

"Vietnam is an important spot because we are there and cannot get out," he said. He asserted that right or wrong is no longer the issue.

"This argument is out of date," he said. "The point now is how to end the con-

flict." He also said that the U.S. could have picked a more strategic location to fight. He proposed one where the local government had more support such as Thailand or the Philippines.

An example of a supporter of the war undergoing an almost complete change of opinion was professor Albin Anderson who teaches upper level Russian history classes. He explained carefully how he classifies himself apart from other hawks and doves.

"I've gone through not a complete change of view, but one of revision," he said. A month before the September elections in Vietnam, he said he believed the Communist threat and supported the war as it kept several options open to the Vietnamese people.

"I had been in Communist-dominated countries and once a decision to go Communist has been reached, it is irreversible," he said.

**Wrote To Rusk**

In August Anderson wrote to Secretary of State Dean Rusk suggesting that when the elections in Vietnam were over the Vietnamese government should begin assuming more complete military responsibility. He said he would favor a continuation of economic aid and the pacification programs but the United States should tell

Vietnam privately and publicly that within 'x' amount of months U.S. troops will begin leaving.

"In a period of three years, it is obvious that the Saigon government under Ky and now Thieu simply have not assumed responsibility militarily or politically," he said. "The South Vietnamese people should have an option, but they have never been told it is only an option."

The narrow strip of common ground that bound the professors was further limited when they gave their views on the type of peace settlements which they favored. It became evident, however, that the professors were uncertain how the conflict could and would be settled. Two groups were dominant — one favored a military victory while another would seek a more peaceful solution.

If a military step-up were needed, it would be approved by Stock (who teaches American literature). He said the U.S. should not be concerned about negotiation or setting conditions to bring Hanoi to the peace tables. Rather he claimed that the Viet Cong will just stop fighting when they are ready and a face-saving device will be employed at that time.

Agreeing with Stock, philosophy professor Anderson felt the United States will ultimately have little choice as to the final settlement. Either the U.S. will lose and be asked to leave or she will hang on, put more men in the conflict and stop the Communists. He said that negotiations at this time would only give the enemy a diversion to continue the war.

**Compromise?**  
Military victories were not viewed as the answer to a settlement in Vietnam by professors Cheng and Reckway. Compromise and the use of peaceful means were seen as the central avenue to peace.

"How to do this is the question," Cheng told a class in international relations on the campus. He said he agreed with Senator Robert Kennedy that another one, two or even five million men could not save Vietnam until the South Vietnamese government ends corruption, steps up reform and gets the support of the people.

In another lecture Cheng said that a peace negotiation could be forthcoming following a U.S.-Vietnamese win or loss at Khe Sanh. He suggested that the North Vietnamese are seeking a major victory so that they can negotiate from a position of strength.

The importance and effectiveness of pacification offered little area of agreement for the professors even though many of them felt it was an effective way to end the war. Cheng defined pacification as an attempt to gain the people's support in the villages through economic and social reform. The program introduces electricity, builds houses, and suggests agricultural reforms.

Pacification and a peace settlement were equated by political scientist Winter who teaches courses in European politics.

"The only satisfactory situation in one in which civil peace will reign in South Vietnam," he said. "This is what we are trying to do." Winter said that most problems with the pacification program occur when men are taken from it to the battlefield.

**Representative Government**  
U.S. Marine Combined Action Units had developed a long record of protecting villages in Vietnam with a squad of Marines and a platoon of South Vietnamese, but then the squads were sent to the demilitarized zone to fight, Winter said. He advocated a truly representative government in South Vietnam that could play a larger role in pacification.

Asian colleague Cheng, who frequently jokes with students over possible solutions, said that pacification could not secure the people in the villages until a political consensus was reached and this could not be done while the war continued. He said pacification would be a problem for the U.S. as long as the only thing the Vietnamese were united on was "Yankee go home."

"The Viet Cong have more support among the people," said Cheng. He drew a parallel between the support of the Viet Cong and the support the Chinese gave Mao in 1949. The Chinese wanted a change and the only choice available was Communist.

He used the recent attack on southern cities as an ex-

ample of the failure of the Vietnamese government. Cheng said that there should have been at least one informer to tell the Allies of the impending attack.

History professor Anderson also was disillusioned with the success of the pacification program. He advocated turning the program over to the South Vietnamese.

The rest of the supporters were uncertain as to how the program could be successfully implemented, but they felt it was important as it could help end the conflict. Stock said that the main purpose of the program was to help the people relate to the nation rather than to the land and their family as they usually do.

The professors varied views on pacification, peace settlements and involvement could suggest a large difference politically, but such was not the case as over half were Democrats. Only two of the professors, Stock and Kennedy, were Republican while philosophy professor Anderson was the only Independent. Four of the professors chose Richard Nixon as the Republican contender for the presidency who most closely agrees with their views on Vietnam.

**Feelings Representative**  
Many of those interviewed said that the confusion and uncertainty felt by them was representative of the feelings of the public. They said the war is clouded by the many divergent opinions and confusion surrounds the questions of who the enemy is, what or whom the U.S. is fighting to protect and are we winning the war.

Moral implications also fog the controversy. The professors disagreed on what the moral issue was. Dr. Eldridge of the College of Agriculture who fought in the Pacific in World War I said that the moral issues remained the same as they were in hat war while philosophy professor Anderson disagreed. He said the war can be upheld legally, but the atrocities used by both sides raise a new type of moral issue which make him oppose the bombings.

Anderson also said that he viewed draft-card burning as a simple dramatization of the protestor's view. He pointed out that even if the car were burned, a record would still be on file with the draft board.

Dr. Cheng summed up the controversy over the war that makes the professors see gray instead of black or white as a war with no solution or timetable.

"We don't know were we are in Vietnam," Cheng said. He said this means the people cannot see the end of the war and as the battles seem indecisive, the people lose faith in the military.

When Robert McNamara gave a six months deadline for ending the war in 1965, the people felt they had an opinion to rely upon. McNamara's view was "a great miscalculation," Cheng said, as the people are still waiting for evidence of a victory.

"I don't have the solution," Cheng said. "If you do, let me know and we can send a telegram to the White House." He said he knew they were seeking an end to the war, also.

## Public Will Be Informed By Simulated Accidents

**Mead—A tractor will be upset and three buildings will be set on fire at the Nebraska Tractor Power and Safety Day at Mead on July 25.** The emphasis of the demonstrations will be on safety, according to R. D. Schieder, University of Nebraska Extension safety specialist.

It took only 20 years for people to see the protective benefits of enclosing automobiles but it has taken 70 years to do the same for tractors, Schieder commented. Tractor manufacturers are now building cabs for operator protection in case of roll over.

The automotive industry has used the packaging concept as a means of protecting the operator. Padded dashes and visors, deep dish steering wheels, safety door latches and other safety concepts are being used by the automotive industry. Tractors have not gone quite this far; however, many of the same techniques are being used, Schieder said.

At the Tractor Power and Safety Day a tractor with a cab designed to protect the operator will purposely be run off a roadway twice.

On the first run, NU engineers will try to show that a tractor usually can be kept upright if it is allowed to correct itself or if the operator steers the tractor to follow the direction the tractor is headed, Schieder explained.

During the second run, the tractor will be run off the roadway and an attempt made to steer it back onto the roadway. In this case, centrifugal force will take over and the tractor should upset.

"The upset will be comparable to what could happen to any tractor. It is hoped that viewers at the Field Day will realize this and see how the cab can protect them in case of an upset," the NU

specialist commented.

The fire safety demonstration will include the use of chemicals not only to fight fires but also to treat construction materials so as to produce fire retardant characteristics.

The three buildings to be ignited are all small. One will be built of plywood which has been treated to be fire retardant. The other two buildings will not be treated.

The fire demonstration will show the self-extinguishing nature of the treated building, according to Dr. O. E. Cross of the NU Agricultural Engineering Department.

The blaze in the untreated buildings will be put out by two dry chemicals. One of the chemicals will permit combustible vapors to be given off; the other will not.

This demonstration will show the advantages and extinguishing characteristics of the chemicals used, Cross said.

"Tractors should not be upset—but if they are, the upset need not be fatal.

"Buildings should not catch fire—but if they do, the flames can be put out by using the proper chemicals," the engineers conclude.

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## All-Staters Perform Next Week

Continued from page one.  
On Sunday, June 23 the All-State Chorus which numbers over 200, will be presented under the direction of Raymond Miller of the NU School of Music. It will take place in the Union Ballroom at 3:00 p.m.

The All-State Orchestra, under the direction of Emanuel Wishnow, director of the School of Music, will be presented on Monday, June 24, at 8:00 p.m., also in the Union Ballroom.

The highlight of the concert season will be the All-State "All America Concert" to be presented on Wednesday, June 26, at Pershing Auditorium.

"We are trying to present what we consider is a proper image of today's youth with the 'All America Concert,'" Moran said. The concert will emphasize patriotic, spiritual and "protest" songs.

"When we say protest, we mean song which criticize social orders which the youth of America have widely associated themselves to," Moran said, adding that one of the features of the concert will be a special arrangement of the civil rights song, "We Shall Overcome."

"We have planned this program since January," he continued, "and it is frightening what has happened since then. We just adjust the concert to the new situations."

Moran said that the "All America Concert" will include a special tribute to the late Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

There are no admission prices for any of the All-State programs, including the plays and debates of the speech department.

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