

opinion/editorial

Westmoreland dodges issues, blames protesters, press

Retired four-star Gen. William Westmoreland implied in his speeches at UNL that American forces lost the Vietnam War because of civil disobedience and irresponsible media coverage of the war. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Westmoreland did not address why the military conducted search and destroy missions that destroyed innocent villages. He did not talk about the use of napalm or other such weapons. Or why U.S. supplies such as clothing and weapons were taken to Saigon and sold, leaving U.S. forces desperately short of such needed supplies.

Rather the former commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam chose to

address other issues.

He said success depended on public support and that in the end there was no public support. He lambasted war protesting as being anarchy. He chastised newscasts for being slanted and bringing a distorted view into American homes.

Obviously the general has neglected to read a rather important document called *The Bill of Rights*. Simple grade school history teaches us that in the first amendment we are guaranteed freedom of speech and to peaceably assemble.

It was not the peace movement that caused the killing of students at Kent State. It was not the protesters that sent 8,744,000 individuals to serve in an immoral and

undeclared war.

Yet, it was the press that reported the death and destruction that caused 210,048 casualties including wounded from 1961 to 1973.

The general said the news showed, in a distorted view, such things as destroyed buildings and he pointed out that this is the first war the press didn't have to regurgitate news releases from the Department of War.

He charged that the media looked for sensational front page news.

Does the general think that in war there is time to do such light-hearted features as how wonderful the Red Cross is?

The media did show destroyed buildings and bodies. There will

always be questions that ask if that is necessary or tasteful, but it brought the reality of the horrors of war home. It did not let Americans believe everything was fine nor did it allow them to be swayed by U.S. propaganda such as was distributed in World War II.

Westmoreland blamed U.S. political leaders who he said were influenced by the media for the off and on bombings which were, in his opinion, an ineffective way to fight. He said when leaders commit us to war we should support the military.

But how can citizens support a military that mutilates, kills and rapes civilians? We can not deny Westmoreland his right to speak, and he can not deny it to us.



ERA ratification extension won't justify results

Gen. William Westmoreland never understood that student opposition to the Vietnam War did not attack his goal of defending freedom, but the methods used to do so. He did not comprehend that even for generals and presidents, the ends do not justify the means.

Nor do they for the Equal Rights Amendment. Yet Congress last week extended the ERA ratification deadline for three years, ignoring legal precedent, the Constitution and all sense of fair play and equal treatment.

Liberals perpetuate forces they deplore by stressing debate over physical action

By Krishna Madan

Editor's note: The author is a senior International Affairs major from Guyana, South America.

This is in response to the young lady who deplored the booing of Westmoreland's speech in the union on Friday afternoon. Her objection was based on hypocritical, effete liberal notions which ignore the realities of life and the equality of man.

She accused the boosers of being "ignorant." If by "ignorant" she meant that the boosers were stooping to dirty tactics, then I agree with her. However, why does the booing of a speech seem more repulsive to her than the genocide of an Asiatic people and the despoilation of their country?

Why indeed? One reason is that she is the one who is ignorant, ignorant of what is happening in the world. American liberals enjoy protected lives and have experienced neither the castrating effects

of repression nor the devastating results of war.

guest opinion

Liberals also love to agonize. They always seek to place themselves in the middle thinking that this puts them on top, in a sort of pyramidal relationship with the rowdy left and right wings. Thus liberals, finding themselves against fascist dictatorships and imperialist wards, feel that they must now find some people on the left with whom they disagree.

And what better candidates are there than the uncouth radicals who perversely refuse to read *Robert's Rules of Order* while Indochinese hamlets are being bombed? Or to make the issue current, while Iranian civilians are slaughtered?

Remember also that Jesus Christ did not petition the moneylenders to get out of the temple. He kicked them out! Westmoreland's crimes were even greater than those of the moneylenders, unless it is proposed that they were not because his victims were Asians.

Therein lies the crux of the problem. Liberals are hypocrites because although they outwardly profess race tolerance, they are subconsciously bigoted. I propose that that young lady and other liberals would have vociferously booed if Adolph Hitler had been the speaker Friday or if Westmoreland's war had been waged against Canadians.

But, fortunately, Westmoreland's victims were not white and thus it is bad form to get overly excited about the issue.

My point is not to condemn liberals for not being perfect, but to make them aware that they indeed are not perfect and in so doing hopefully impart a bit of humility to them.

michael gibson

Constitutional amendments are so important as to demand overwhelming support via approval by Congress and three-fourths of the states. This support cannot be made meaningless by spreading it out over decades; the proposal must be ratified within a "reasonable" time set by Congress.

Judicial affirmation

The Supreme Court upheld that requirement in *Dillion vs. Glass*, ruling the 18th Amendment would die unless approved within a seven-year Congressional deadline.

Later, Chief Justice Hughes wrote in *Coleman vs. Miller*, that "ratification must be sufficiently contemporaneous to reflect the will of the people in all sections at relatively the same period."

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Disrespectful audience intent on denying right to speak

By John Ortmann and L. Kent Wolgamott

William Westmoreland was wrong Friday when he said he may have come to a campus at the vanguard of a wave of activism and unrest.

What he encountered was a rude, disrespectful crowd intent on denying him the right to speak in order to express its own viewpoints.

The purpose of his speech was to examine the lessons which could be learned from Vietnam, and many of the points he made were valid.

But the crowd ignored what he was saying and continued to harass the speaker.

It seems that some members of audience had no intention of listening to Westmoreland and would not consider what he had to say.

Rather they were protesting an ended conflict about which Westmoreland was attempting to present his point of view; or

demonstrating about a totally unrelated issue with which Westmoreland is not connected.

The right to dissent and freedom of speech are necessary standards in a democratic society. But when the dissenters impose on an unwilling audience and deny another's right to speak, this is taking these freedoms farther than they were intended.

opinion

John Milton told us truth will be recognized and accepted when allowed to compete in the marketplace of ideas.

Own worst enemy

Westmoreland did not convert anyone with his speech. He was his own worst enemy; with each sentence he eroded his own position.

But the disruption of Westmoreland's

speech made it extremely difficult for him to present his viewpoint and allow it to be considered.

The distribution of leaflets before the speech and the holding of placards in protest aided in raising the awareness of the crowd to Westmoreland's past activities.

The audience's suppression of Westmoreland's speech raises a larger, more important question than that of the general's behavior in Vietnam.

Next victim?

If the mob is allowed to silence a speaker by the abuse of its first amendment rights, who or what will be the next victim of this syndrome?

In any event, members of the audience and literature handed out before the speech accused Westmoreland of helping wage a barbaric and illegal war.

This is curious because it presupposes a war that is not barbaric. During World War II, a war most Americans can look back on as a "good" one, the Allies, the good guys, bombed, shelled, burned and finally irrad-

iated millions of civilians in both Axis and occupied countries.

Until wars are outlawed, they will be barbaric.

If the Vietnam War was illegal, it was not the fault of the soldiers, buck privates and generals included, fighting it.

No army in the world is a democratic institution. Armies are handed basic strategy, along with the often impossible job of making it work, by politicians back home.

Soldiers, buck privates and generals included, follow orders. It could be argued that if every soldier disobeyed any order he found immoral, there would be no war. This would be fine if both sides played by the same rules.

None of which justifies U.S. conduct in Vietnam. The only things that can justify any nation's conduct in any war are 10,000 blood-soaked years of human history and all that is small and weak and evil in all men.