



# Bridges

## Lessons of Vietnam



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### "Do All the Good You Can"

By Brittany Macon



*LOV speaker Mrs. Larry Hines shares a personal artifact from her Vietnam experience.*

As she stood in front of our *LOV* class, in her off-white satin shirt, her eyes started to tear as she tried to explain the horrible tragedies of war...but no words were needed. As one student summed it up, "She put the emotion into the war and her presentation." From the expression she held on her face, we could experience the emotions she felt. Our speaker was Mrs. Larry Hines, a former ARC-

the death list the next day, being the last person to speak to a someone in the hospital—knowing that death was very near, seeing boys as young as seventeen disfigured for life.

Not only did she share memories about her defining year in Vietnam, but also *lessons* that could help us become better people. She shared a quote of her dad's, "Don't look in the mirror fifty years from now and ask, 'What happened?' and let there be silence." She is a testimony to the saying, 'No matter what life may bring, you can make the best of it and let those trials help you become a better person.'

Through a personal link exchange, she left me with this quote by John Wesley, founder of the Methodist religion:

*"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in every place you can, at all the times you can, to everyone you can, as long as you ever can. Do all the good you can."*

Mrs. Larry Hines has tried to live by this quote everyday of her life—through war, through service, and through family. And, as the lunch bell rang and her visit with our class ended, many of us stood up, inspired to *do all the good we can!*



### Women in War

By Kimberly Paxton

Over the years, the role of women in the United States military has drastically changed. Women no longer sit on the sidelines and nurse soldiers back to health. In 1970, women made up only 1½ percent of the total military population; today, they comprise more than 13 percent, which is reflective of the more diverse roles they are taking on.

In 1992 and 1993, the Congress annulled the female combat exemption laws through the National Defense Authorization Act. Later, President Clinton opened up 250,000 positions previously closed to women. Today, women serve as pilots, medics, and even work in construction, as more than 90 percent of all career fields in the armed forces are now open to them.

Even though women have been given more job opportunities in the

military, some restrictions still exist. They still are not officially allowed to serve in combat or to join infantry units or the Special

Forces. They are excluded from other combat-related specialties such as artillery, armor, or forward air defense. When women were allowed to join, many of the physical requirements for enlistment had to be lowered to enable them to be able to pass tests originally designed for male candidates.

In the First Gulf War, an astounding 40,000 women served our country overseas; today, 29,000 are currently serving. War is not a discriminator, however. In Iraq and Afghanistan, women, like their male counterparts, have suffered the tragedies of combat, as 75 have been killed and 462 wounded. In war, everyone pays a price.



*Artwork by Kristen Yakamavich*





## Darfur 60 Day Cease-Fire Shattered

By Emma Mazur



Just when we thought the situation in Darfur could not get any worse, it did. During recent weeks, the situation radically deteriorated, demonstrating an urgent need for increased international action. To the relief of many in the international community, a meeting conducted in Sudan began on January 7th, 2007 to discuss ways to secure peace in the Darfur region, as well as guarantee the protection of all civilians.

Attending this meeting were New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, the *Save Darfur Coalition* (the leading U.S.-based Darfur peace advocacy organization), Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, and many citizens from the Darfur region. All participants agreed that ending the conflict in Darfur is the highest priority of Sudan and the international community. An agreement was presented recommending that the Sudanese government and rebel groups cease hostilities for a period of 60 days while they work towards a lasting peace.

Before the month of January came to an end, the African Union confirmed reports that Sudan's air force had bombed a village by the name of Anka in Darfur. The bombing breached UN Security Council resolutions and the peace agreement. President Bashir said that his forces had carried out bombings in

northern Darfur, but that rebel forces first broke the agreement.

One of the first benefits of the cease-fire was that it would have immediately begun to save lives. The agreement could have created an improved environment to settle this political situation. Although these attacks have been confirmed, the agreement included a number of concessions to improve humanitarian aid and media access to Darfur. In past months, it has been extremely difficult for anyone to enter this region. President Bashir agreed to allow journalists from all over the world to travel to Darfur. Although this statement was made, journalists would enter the region of Darfur at their own risk. Sudan made promise of a cease-fire, but instead the government has been attacking aid workers. Several UN staff members were seriously injured when a police assault took place on 20 UN staff and humanitarian workers in Nyala, the South Darfur capital. Also, two women who are part of *Action Against Hunger*, a French agency, were raped in Darfur. If aid workers were subjected to leave, the provision of food, water, and medical aid would be wiped out completely, while 2.5 million civilians in camps would be left to scatter.

The *Darfur Awareness Club* at Millbrook High School continues its efforts to inform students about the extreme hardships in Sudan. To keep students focused on the situation, the club plans to show students a preview of the documentary, *The Devil Came on Horseback*. This film, planned to be released in early 2007, is a behind-the-scenes view of the continuing Darfur conflict. Club members hope to start off the year strong by educating students about the situation and allowing more students to get involved in this important cause.

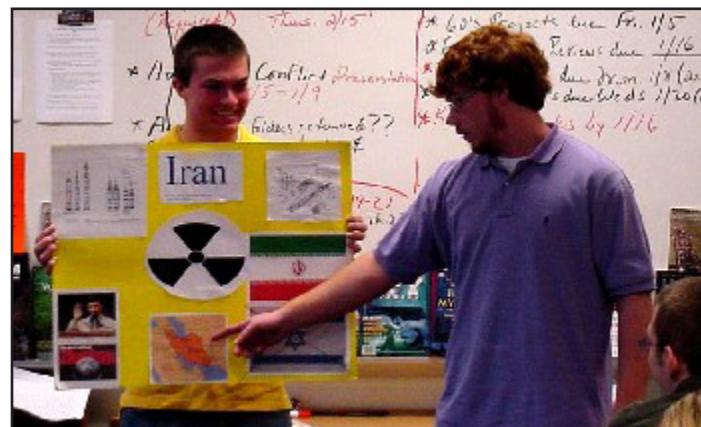


## World Hot Spots Projects

By Emily Mealor

While Ms. Poling's *Lessons of Vietnam* class is known for its study of the Vietnam War, some tend to forget there is another part to the class: *Recent International Relations*. One of the main assignments for studying current global issues is the *World Hot Spots* project, in which students select an important world issue or area of conflict such as Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, AIDS, Darfur, or Chemical and Biological Weapons. Students research their topics very carefully and then present them to their classmates.

Another part of the project involves submitting a proposal that might solve the problem. Jordan Pearce researched the World Court. As an aspiring parole officer, she said this project gave her insight into an unknown subject. It also provided her with ideas for law-related internships. Brian Garner, who researched landmines, exclaimed he is astounded that landmines still remain a major problem in the world. Quinn McGarvey stated, "My partner and I chose Kosovo as our project. Even though the issue seems to be resolved, we thought of another way the situation could have been handled. We decided that Kosovo should be split in half with the southern half going to Albania and the northern half to Serbia. Hopefully,



Eric Carstens and Myles Rogers present their World Hot Spots project.

with each country receiving a part, they would stop fighting."

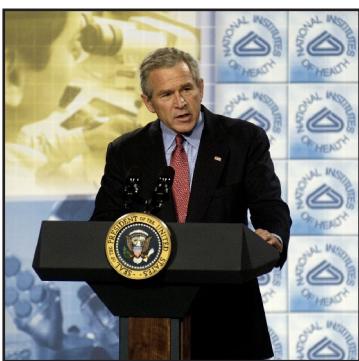
This project gives America's next generation a real chance to look at important issues in our world and then analyze them. Leanne Miles summed it up by saying, "We have to prepare for our future as adults. This is a great way to learn what is happening and have fun doing it!"





## Point/Counterpoint: The President's Surge Plan for Iraq

By Michael Funderburk



Emerson once wrote, "None of us will ever accomplish anything excellent or commanding except when he listens to this whisper which is heard by him alone." It is hardly a stretch to say that President Bush is standing alone as he undertakes one of the biggest political risks anyone in Washington has taken in recent memory.

For months, generals have been asking for more troops to fight the war in Iraq. On January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007, President George W. Bush made a very difficult and controversial decision to send those troops, 21,000 of them, into battle to help win the war. However, as soon as the President took the initiative to send these troops, politicians who have yet to devise a clear or practical plan of their own for Iraq, criticized his proposal. The overwhelming consensus seems to be that we should leave Iraq whether or not victory is achieved. There are countless reasons as to why abandoning Iraq without first insuring its stability is not a good option for the future of the United States. First, should the U.S. cut and run, a substantial power vacuum within Iraq would result—the likelihood that the ensuing chaos would work to America's favor is minuscule. If one considers the foothold Iran has recently procured inside Iraq, the notion of leaving becomes all the more frightening. Allowing Iran to gain control of Iraq seems on par with giving Cuba long-range missiles. Secondly, we have not given the Iraqi government sufficient time to fortify and establish itself. We must grant this new government more support and further commitment if we are to expect any degree of success.

By no means should President Bush's plan go unquestioned. However, the idea of simply negating the plan without offering any viable alternative seems to suggest that some 'opponents' are playing politics for the sake of playing politics. Let's give this plan a chance to work; if it does not, then at least we will know we did everything possible to save Iraq.

### Students Speak Out on Iraq!

*"Iraq is like a long dark tunnel...It may be dark in the middle, but there is light on either end...President Bush's plan should be put into action!" ~ Greg DiBenedetto*

*"I feel that the decision to go into Iraq was a rash decision. The administration tricked the public into supporting the war...We should pull out immediately." ~ Jason Linzer*

*"In times of war, the Commander-in-Chief may use any means necessary to pacify a dangerous situation that may compromise national security. We cannot leave Iraq with unfinished business, for the 3,000 plus and counting deaths will have died in vain..." ~ Peter Floyd*

*"The fact is nothing has been accomplished so far...Over 3,000 US troops have died and 300,000 Iraqi civilians. We need to pull out and focus more on areas such as Darfur. In the end, there are never any real winners in war." ~ Nesren Elhertani*

*"I believe that the President should be allowed to send as many troops as it's takes to finish the job and get the job done right." ~ Melissa Poston*

*"As President Bush increases the number of troops, so does the chaos in Iraq. We should leave Iraq for our benefit and try to handle the problems at home first." ~ Hector Gallego*

By Antony Burton

Thomas Jefferson compared the American institution of slavery to "holding a wolf by the ears"—meaning that if we let it go, it may come back to bite us; but if we fail to release it, we are all in serious danger.

I believe this situation is similar to the one facing us in Iraq. Because of all the pain and violence that has resulted from the U.S. occupation, the majority of the American people, as well as many members of Congress, feel it may be time to let the wolf go, hoping the Iraqi government can prevent chaos from ensuing. President George W. Bush, on the other hand, wants to take the wolf, slit its throat, and finish the job, thus preventing in Iraq the suffering that occurred following our departure from Vietnam.

At first glance, the President's goal seems to be one that is absolutely necessary, for we cannot let those in Iraq suffer the consequences of a possible civil war. But, I believe such a goal is idealistic. For in transitioning from holding the wolf's ears to focusing on cutting its throat, one will most likely be unable to kill the beast. As a result, the would-be slayer will only further suffer the beast's wrath. For the President, there will be more American casualties on his conscience and continued criticism by the press.

During the past year, a non-partisan group led by former Secretary of State, James Baker, and former Congressman, Lee Hamilton, assembled to make recommendations regarding the difficult situation in Iraq. This *Iraq Study Group* advised the Bush administration to reduce the amount of troops, while also encouraging the president's advisors to engage in discussions with Iraq's neighbors, Syria and Iran.

Despite this advice, as well as declining support by a Democratic majority Congress, President Bush announced to the American public on January 10<sup>th</sup> his intention to increase our troop levels by 21,000. Even the President admits this is "a strong commitment." For such a commitment to be effective, Mr. Bush must rely on the help of the Iraqis. The Iraqi government's cooperation is particularly important, as the President has also decided not to negotiate with Syria and Iran until they agree to support a non-sectarian, democratically-elected government.

President Bush is a risk taker. The result of this particular risk will tell how future generations of Americans remember him.



Artwork by Kevin Im





## MHS LOV Program Highlighted in Major Publication

The *Arts of War* section of the Sept./Oct. 2006 *VVA Veteran*, the official voice of the Vietnam Veterans of America—with over 55,000 readers, highlighted Millbrook High School's *Lessons of Vietnam* Program as follows:

*"Lindy Poling continues to run one of the nation's top high school Vietnam War history classes, titled Lessons of Vietnam, at Millbrook High School in Raleigh, NC. Two of the noteworthy aspects of the course: an annual trip to Washington, DC, where students visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (among other things) where the names of men from Wake County, NC, who perished in the War are read, and the publication of Bridges, a high-quality, student-produced newsletter. The 2006 Special Edition includes articles by students on The Wall, on Arlington National Cemetery, on the Iraq War, and on the situation on Darfur in Sudan. To learn more about this informative program, go to: [www.wcpss.net/community\\_in\\_the\\_classroom](http://www.wcpss.net/community_in_the_classroom)"* ~ Marc Leepson, *Arts of War* Editor



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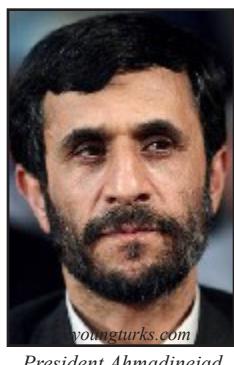
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## Cold War Revisited?

By Eric Carstens

If you asked American students a year ago who Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was, few would have known. But, despite only having been elected a year ago last August, Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has quickly become one of the world's most recognized bullies. Not only does he pose a huge threat to America, he is quickly assembling all the necessary components to create havoc throughout the world.



*voungturks.com*  
President Ahmadinejad

President Ahmadinejad has called for the destruction of Israel, denied the Holocaust, and berated many of the world's powers as "false." It's scary to think about what he is capable of doing during his four-year term. He is a strong supporter of nuclear research in Iran, and already has a dangerous arsenal of missiles under his control. In 2001, Iran purchased twelve X-55 cruise missiles from the Ukraine capable of carrying nuclear warheads and striking targets as far away as Italy. It also has a variety of Shahab missiles possessing a nuclear warhead capability as well. While none of Iran's missiles currently can reach the United States, it is only a matter of time before they have that capability as well. Israel and other American allies are clearly in danger. That is why the U.S. is so concerned.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been keeping a close eye on Iran. While President Ahmadinejad insists all of Iran's nuclear research is peaceful, limited IAEA inspections suggest otherwise. After much negotiation to get Iran to stop its uranium enrichment program, the U.N. Security Council finally took action. It demanded in March 2006 that Iran suspend this program and pass UNSC Resolution 1737, which banned UN members from engaging in nuclear and missile-related trade with Iran.

Looking back on history, the current situation in Iran has many parallels to the Cold War. In the '60s and '70s, Americans were concerned that the Soviet Union had developed a vast arsenal of military arms. This "arms race" caught the attention of Americans, and our country became almost obsessive about Communism. Tensions were high, and although the Cold War did not result in any devastating actions, it lasted over 40 years. Will this hold true for the conflict in the Middle East? Iran clearly poses one of the most dangerous threats we have at this time. Unlike our Cold War enemy and based on the serious threats voiced by Mr. Ahmadinejad, we may well not have four decades to mitigate the Iranian threat. That gives us motivation, therefore, to pay close attention to whom we elect to the office of President in 2008.



## Websites:

[http://www.wcpss.net/community\\_in\\_the\\_classroom](http://www.wcpss.net/community_in_the_classroom)

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<http://www.nationalhistoryclub.org>

