

OUR “PRE-SPONSE”

**A SUPPLEMENT TO
THE LBJ LIBRARY
CONFERENCE**

VIETNAM WAR

SUMMIT

APRIL 26-28, 2016



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***Dedicated to all those who served
in the noble and valiant effort to turn back
the forces of aggression and tyranny
in Vietnam and Southeast Asia,
all the men and women of our armed forces –
and the many civilians too
who played important roles,
and of course our South Vietnamese allies
and those of other nations who joined in that effort,
and – perhaps especially – all their families.
Thank you, my brothers and sisters.***

And just one thing more: It didn't have to end that way.

Lewis Sorley, October 28, 2014

Adapted from an address at the Army Navy Club



"The Wall reminds us to be honest in our telling of history. There is nothing to be gained by glossing over the darker portions of a war ... that bitterly divided America. We must openly acknowledge past mistakes, and we must learn from past mistakes, because that is how we avoid repeating past mistakes."

– Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, in his 2014 Veterans Day remarks at the Vietnam Memorial.



A Supplement to the LBJ Presidential Library Conference: Vietnam War Summit

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INTRODUCTION

A Vietnam War “Summit” conference under the auspices of the LBJ Presidential Library should be a welcome event. **“Our goal is to shed definitive light on the war, and its lessons and legacy.”** This goal declares the last word, the end of the history of Vietnam. This goal demeans the Library, an academic institution dedicated to the pursuit of the truth and desecrates its namesake Lyndon Baines Johnson, a president of the United States, whose constitutional duty was to defend and protect the Constitution of the United States of America during the Cold War. A noble cause LBJ and others imperfectly waged in Vietnam and lost in Hanoi’s political war in the USA.

In conjunction with the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration, the organizers have pledged to honor the commitment made by the brave men and women who courageously served in the Vietnam War. While the accompanying ceremonies and some of the sessions do just that, there are other sessions which do the opposite, without balance and diversity.

There are three sessions each day over a four hour period, giving very little time for an in-depth discussion and/or audience participation. For these reasons, we have prepared this booklet, to express our concerns about some of the sessions and to suggest what, minimally, needs to be included. The “conventional wisdom” on what properly should be called the Second Indochina War is often wrong, extremely resistant to debate and has led to some mistaken “Lessons Learned.” We do not object to any of the speakers who have been invited, but we would like to see them defend their factual allegations from other speakers who can explain why resisting Communist aggression in Indochina was both a moral and a wise policy. Promoting the free exchange of ideas is a core responsibility of any functioning democracy and presenting only one side in any argument does not serve the public discourse.⁴

It seems ironic to us that the LBJ Library would host a panel made up predominantly of speakers who opposed the sacrifices of Vietnam Veterans and the policies of LBJ.



Series Editor: Stephen Sherman



⁴ Whether or not this document is allowed to be distributed at this conference, may reflect on how open the organizers are to Free Speech.