Global Power and Violence: Vietnam

"The myth of the good empire"

I. US Empire

1. Prior to WWII the globe had been organized in a system of oppression,

exploitation, and violence called colonialism

1. 75% of the globe was under the domination of

western Europe and the U.S.

a. resources, labor, markets

b. force to genocide

2. During WWII European countries were unable to maintain their

dominance

1. Allies had signed the Atlantic Charter during WWII guaranteeing self

determination

1. goal: former colonies would side with allies during

the war

2. It was a lie, US had already promised the French that

it could have its colonies in Indochina back

3. This promise to the French marked the extended

involvement of the US in Vietnam

4. this marked the beginning of what is called neo-colonialism or

economic imperialism

II. Neo-colonialism

1. Goal: organize the Third world for continued exploitation but now through

economic means

1. Foreign Aid

a. Truman Doctrine

b. Marshall Plan

2. global financial institutions IMF and World Bank

a. were controlled by US

b. would control "development"

3. propaganda "modernization" theory

B. Third World would play service role

1. natural resources, cheap labor, markets, investments

2. US and global financial institutions would aid those

governments and elites that were going to guarantee

the above.

C. Grand Area - each area had a role

1. Latin America and Middle East to US

a. England had controlled ME after WWI

b. created the countries out of Ottoman Empire

c. England conceded to US and US oil companies

2. Africa to rebuild Europe

3. Asia to rebuild Japan and for vital minerals for

First world

D. Imperial challenges

1. Wars of national liberation

a. countries wanting to determine their own

course - self-determination

b. conflict between former colonial power and

colony seeking independence

c. conflicts within countries between different

factions

2. US defined these as Communist aggression

a. Definition of communism for public consumption

1. global conspiracy to conquer world

2. totalitarian

i. thought

ii. behavior

b. domino theory

3. realpolitik terms I

a. govs that are responsive to popular pressures

for immediate improvement in the low living

standards of the masses

b. development resources for domestic needs

(NSC 5432/1) "These tendencies conflict with the demand for a "political and economic climate conducive to private investment and protection of *our* raw materials.

c. Rotten Apples

i. threat to Grand Area and US empire was any country that

pursued an independent path

ii. bad example or rotten apples

iii. US would use economic, political, and military power to

undermine or destabilize govs

\* Mossadegh regime in Iran

\* Guatemala

\* Greece

4. Real Politik II

1. Our attempt to control other countries reach a

"wall" in Vietnam