

External assessment 2023

Stimulus book

Modern History

General instruction

- Work in this book will not be marked.

Source 1

Excerpt from a Vietnam Ministerial Statement by Robert Menzies

[It] is our judgment that the decision to commit a battalion in South Vietnam represents the most useful additional contribution which we can make to the defence of the region at this time. The takeover of South Vietnam would be a direct military threat to Australia and all the countries of South and South East Asia. It must be seen as part of a thrust by Communist China ... The task of holding the situation in South Vietnam and restraining the [Communist] North Vietnamese is formidable. But we are conscious of the magnitude of the effort being made by the Government and people of South Vietnam in their own defence.

...

I make it clear that the Government has no desire to have Australian forces in Vietnam any longer than is necessary to ensure the security of South Vietnam. ... [This] is practically what President Johnson said quite recently about the presence of American forces in Vietnam. We and our allies are not seeking to take over North Vietnam. The North Vietnamese must not take over South Vietnam by armed force or subversion.¹

Source: Menzies, R 1965, 'Vietnam Ministerial Statement' (transcript), *Parliamentary Debates*, 29 April.

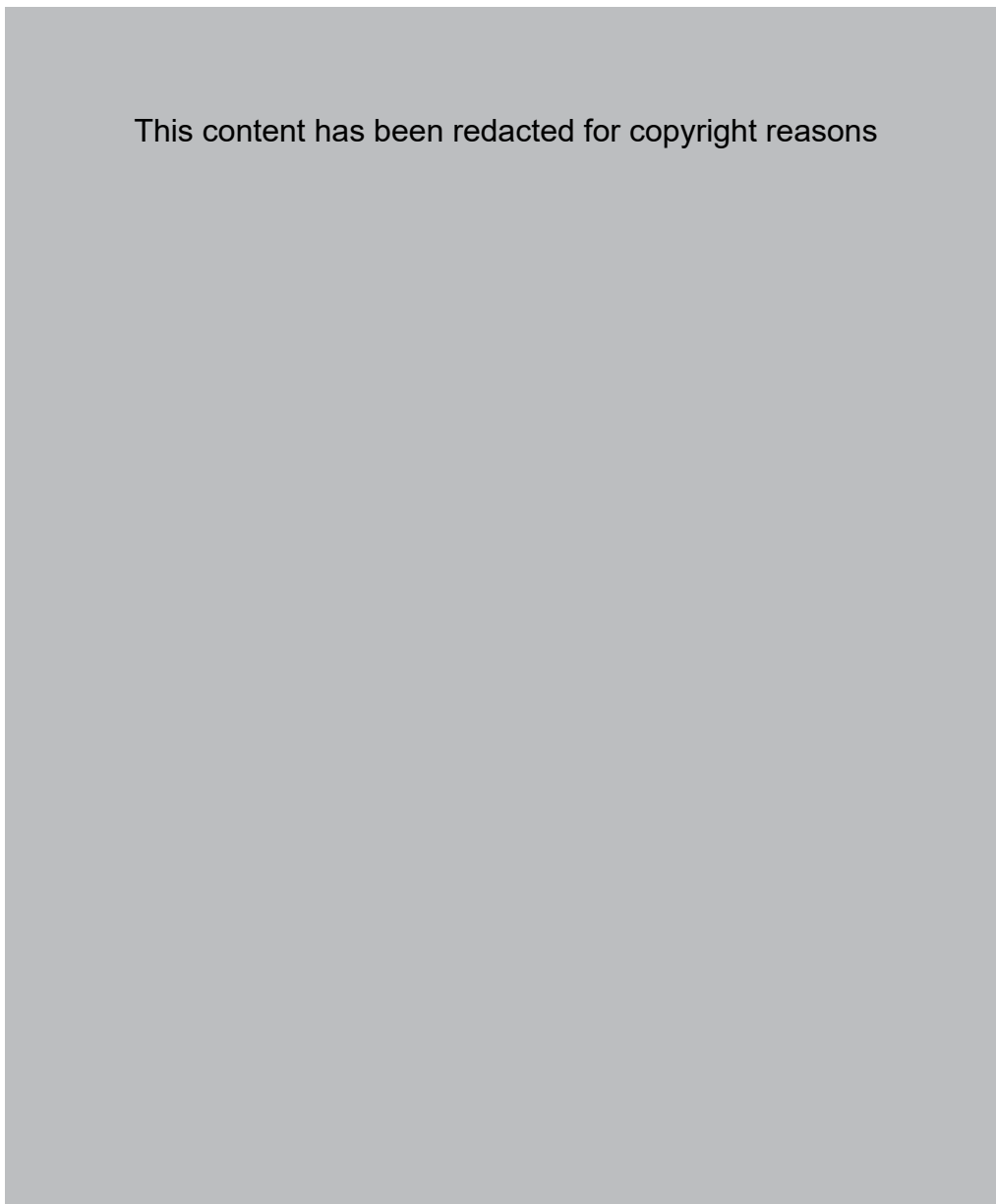
Context statement

Menzies was the Prime Minister of Australia from 1939 to 1941 and 1949 to 1966. Menzies made these remarks when announcing the deployment of Australian military forces to the Vietnam War. Lyndon Baines Johnson was the President of the United States of America from 1963 to 1969.

¹ undermining the power and authority of an established system or institution

Source 2

Poster titled *It's Your Choice* (adapted)



Source: Liberal Party of Australia 1966, *It's Your Choice: Where do you Draw the Line Against Communist Aggression?*

Context statement

The Liberal Party of Australia distributed this poster during the 1966 federal election. By 1966, Australian and allied soldiers were fighting alongside the South Vietnamese against North Vietnam. In the original poster, communist nations above the black pencil line, such as China and North Korea, are covered by shading (coloured red) to signal they are communist. Attached to these same nations are arrows, also coloured red, pointing downwards from the shading. The pencil line appears to cover much of North and South Vietnam, which are unshaded (although communism had already reached North Vietnam by 1966). All nations below the line, such as Indonesia and Australia, are also unshaded.

Source 3

Cartoon titled *They're carrying only flowers and olive branches. Rather heavy ones, I think*

This content has been redacted for copyright reasons

Source: Molnar, G 1967, 'They're carrying only flowers and olive branches. Rather heavy ones, I think', *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

Context statement

Molnar, a well-known and respected political cartoonist and social commentator, drew this cartoon in October 1967. The 'draft', also called conscription or the National Service scheme, was a military program established under the *National Service Act* of 1964. This program required 20-year-old men, if selected, to serve in the army for two years. This service could involve going overseas to participate in the Vietnam War. The title of the cartoon conveys the comments being made by the security guard on their communication device.

Source 4

Excerpt from article in *The Age*

New blanket censorship restrictions have been imposed on all correspondents reporting the activities of Australian armed forces in Vietnam.

In [the] future no correspondent will be allowed access to the Australian forces in Vietnam unless he first gives a verbal guarantee that he will not report any conversation with any member of the Australian forces until he has cleared his story with an army public relations officer.

The new regulations have been introduced as a result of instructions from the Defence Department.

They follow recent attacks by Government backbenchers² on the Australian press coverage of the war, and earlier approaches to newspaper editors and [owners] seeking a more 'sympathetic' press account of the war.

The new military censorship regulations will seriously [prevent] the reporting of Australian military operations ... in Vietnam.

Few Australian correspondents are likely to accept them. (This correspondent has already declined to do so.)

Australian military activities in Vietnam will go largely unreported in future as a result.

Source: Anonymous 1968, 'War censors get tough', *The Age*.

Context statement

The Age was a major newspaper distributed across most of Victoria when this story was published in the 1960s. The new censorship restrictions discussed applied to correspondents (journalists) working for newspapers (also known as the 'press') and/or television broadcasters. Prior to the restrictions, correspondents had greater freedom to report on Australian involvement in the Vietnam War.

² members of parliament who are not ministers or shadow ministers

Source 5

Excerpt from transcript of an interview on *ABC Radio National*

Antony Funnell: There is now a widely held perception that ... politicians got America and Australia into the Vietnam War, but that it was press reporting of negative developments in the war that changed public opinion and that eventually got us out of Vietnam. But am I right in saying that your book [*War and Words — The Australian Press and the Vietnam War*] indicates that at least from the Australian perspective, the press largely supported the war and continued to do so for quite some time?

Trish Payne: I think it was very interesting that in 1962 when the presence of [the USA's] Secretary of State Dean Rusk in Australia helped to set the agenda for Australia's entry in sending them [South Vietnam] advisers, that we had a very controlled political agenda in terms of media response, and a public that was completely uninterested and I suppose uninformed about what was going on in Vietnam. So it allowed for political dominance to frame the issues and why we should be there.

As the war developed, the media at that time, the editorials in fact, were quite strongly opposed to Australia's entry at that point, but not to the American alliance, which always weakened their arguments. But thereafter with the sending of the [first] battalion [in 1965] and the task force [1st Australian Task Force in 1966], the media supported the war, except for *The Australian*, which constantly opposed Australia's participation in it. And it wasn't until the late 1960s that you get a very definite voice in the media that challenged the political perspectives, and that had a lot to do with the weakening of political leadership and a number of other issues as well.

Source: Funnell, A (presenter) 2007, 'Interview with Trish Payne' (transcript), *ABC Radio National*.

Context statement

Payne is a lecturer in political and international political communications at the University of Canberra. Payne is especially interested in communication to, from and within Parliament House in Canberra, the Canberra Press Gallery and foreign war broadcasting. Radio National is an Australia-wide public radio network run by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC).

Source 6

Excerpt from conference publication 'The Cold War: An Australian perspective'

As far as the press was concerned, major ... newspapers did report uncritically, accepting the wisdom of Australian policy and taking stories from overseas news agencies. This meant that American operations dominated Vietnam War coverage in Australian newspapers. Editorials in papers such as *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* depicted Australia in the 1960s as locked into its defence alliances with the US. Other geographically close problem areas (such as Malaysia, under threat from Indonesian confrontation) attracted some attention, but there was little sign of independence from US policies in Asia. One distinctively Australian sentiment was fear that, if Australia did not fulfil commitments alongside her US ally, America might desert Australia in a future time of need; but on the whole ... the press largely followed public opinion and did not lead in setting any critical agenda.

There was, however, one exception among national newspapers: *The Australian*, the new national daily first published in July 1964. *The Australian* opposed involvement in Vietnam and saw Prime Minister Menzies' decision to commit troops as reckless; it emphasised Australian, rather than US, interests in the region and objected to Australia acting merely as a US satellite. As the war went on, this newspaper argued that it was impossible to win what was a civil and revolutionary war politically; and it continued to criticise American and allied involvement as indefensible. In 1971 it considered the withdrawal of Australian troops as merely righting a six-year wrong.

Source: Gorman, L 2008, 'The Cold War: An Australian perspective', P Dennis & J Grey (eds), *The Military and Media: The 2008 Chief of Army military history conference*, Canberra.

Context statement

Gorman is an academic with research interests including media history, in particular the emergence and development of media and its social political impact. Gorman's article was first published as part of a military history conference focused on the Australian military and media.

Source 7

Excerpt from *Defining Moments: Vietnam moratoriums*

At a national meeting in Melbourne in early 1970, anti-war groups from across Australia agreed to hold a moratorium. The word ‘moratorium’, in this sense, meant a halt to business as usual.

...

It was seen by those taking part as a non-violent protest and proved to be the largest and most sustained in Australia’s history. The two objectives were to withdraw Australian troops from Vietnam and to end conscription.

...

The moratorium movement drew in a disparate range of groups opposed to the war — clergy, teachers, academics, unions, politicians and school students. Donations poured in. While university students had led the anti-war movement up to this point, the moratorium involved thousands of everyday, middle-class Australians.

Not all Australians supported it; because of the unprecedented size and intensity of the protest many found it threatening ...

A total of 200 000 people took part in the first moratorium [8 May, 1970]. The largest event was in Melbourne where 70 000 marched peacefully down Bourke Street ...

The second and third moratoriums took place on 18 September 1970 and 30 June 1971 respectively ... [Fewer] people attended ...

...

It is unlikely that the moratoriums directly affected the government’s decision to withdraw troops from Vietnam, which Prime Minister John Gorton ... had already started to do [in 1970] and Gough Whitlam promptly completed when he swept to power in 1972. The stronger influence on Gorton was US policy.

However, it probably affected the government’s policy on conscription in that soon after the first moratorium, [Federal] Cabinet took measures to reduce the number of draft-resisters who went to jail.

The moratoriums were an indication of a broad collapse in public support for the war. They were both revealed, and fostered a new sense of unity among those opposed to Vietnam and conscription.

Source: National Museum of Australia 2021, *Defining Moments: Vietnam moratoriums*.

Context statement

The National Museum of Australia publishes research that contributes to excellence in research and scholarship that seeks to promote a better understanding of Australian history. Much of the academic work published by the museum is peer reviewed.

Source 8

Excerpt from article in *The Conversation*

The moratorium movement was important in a number of ways.

First, and most obviously, it galvanised many ordinary Australians to join the protest actions, making a powerful statement about the collapse of support for the nation's continued participation in the Vietnam conflict. Though the Liberal-Country Party government led by Prime Minister John Gorton [stubbornly] dismissed the demonstrations and insisted they would have no material influence on its policy-making, it was no coincidence that 1970 marked the beginning of the withdrawal of Australia's military forces from Vietnam. It was a policy reversal that mimicked the direction of the United States, which had witnessed its own massive anti-war moratorium demonstrations at the end of 1969.

Second, the demonstrations were a potent symbol of the larger culture of dissent that had flowered in the second half of the 1960s. The protests expressed a restless mood for change, and represented a key moment in the puncturing of the oppressive Cold War atmosphere that had dominated Australian public life for some two decades.

Source: Strangio, P 2020, '50 years on, the Vietnam moratorium campaigns remind us of a different kind of politics', *The Conversation*.

Context statement

Strangio is a political historian with particular interest in political parties and leadership. He is the author and editor of a dozen books on Australian politics. *The Conversation* is a not-for-profit media outlet publishing news stories with accompanying opinion and analysis. Articles are written by PhD candidates, academics and researchers.

Source 9

Excerpt from ‘The lasting legacy of the Vietnam Moratorium’

The Vietnam Moratorium in Melbourne was one of the most momentous events to occur in Australia in the post world war two era. It led to a seismic shift not only in [Australian] politics but also within society. The moratorium ... was a historic achievement in how it united diverse groups behind the goal of ending Australia’s role in the Vietnam war.

It embraced ... university activist groups, school students, trade unions, academics, pacifists, women’s groups, church groups and Labor politicians. They all sat down together in Bourke Street [Melbourne, Victoria] for fifteen minutes in the first mass protest of its kind in Australia on 8 May 1970. I was among the 100 000 protesters who brought the centre of the city to a standstill. It was the largest demonstration ever in Australia up to that time.

Nationally 200 000 people participated in the first Vietnam Moratorium staged in cities around Australia ... [It] was followed by two more Vietnam Moratoriums in September 1970, drawing a smaller crowd and in June, 1971 almost matching the 100 000 people who protested at the first Vietnam Moratorium [in Melbourne, Victoria].

...

It can be argued that pressure from the moratoriums laid the groundwork for the first withdrawal of Australian troops from Vietnam by [Australian] Prime Minister John Gorton in November 1970 ...

More lastingly, the legacy of the Vietnam Moratorium is reflected in the strong opposition to ... [the] Iraq War in 2003 when Melbourne’s protest was cited as the biggest demonstrations since the Vietnam War; and more recently in climate change protests. It convinced ordinary Australians that they could have a voice in government policy and foreign policy.

Source: Jackson, A 2020, ‘The lasting legacy of the Vietnam Moratorium’, *Eureka Street*.

Context statement

Eureka Street is published by Australian Jesuits, a branch of the Roman Catholic order of religious men established by Saint Ignatius of Loyola. *Eureka Street* aims to participate in public discussion and influence public opinion regarding the things that matter in Australia and the world. Jackson is a self-employed writer and award-winning refugee issue specialist.

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