

April 16, 2015

American Experience Lyndon B Johnson Documentary

Johnson looked on helplessly as >150 cities went up in flames

- Detroit was the worst
- Army paratrooper and his own task force sent in

Johnson neglected needs of white

- Caught between Civil Rights and growing fear and backlash
- Lost control of economy and congress
- Losing war in Vietnam
- Jan 5, 1967 Lady bird Johnson said a miasma of trouble hangs over everything

End of 1967 Americans struck important Vietnamese cities

- People thought Johnson was holding back
- Johnson was afraid of triggering WW3
- Personally selected where the bombs would fall

Lying and persuasion was all Johnson did to get a good outcome

- This led to Credibility gap as people held him to his words
- Didn't understand why the American youth outside of the white house gates were protesting him
- Frustrated because he couldn't end it or win the war in Vietnam
 - o Not winning war and losing battle at home
 - o No good choices that anyone could devise for how to get out of Vietnam

Telling American people that they can have Guns and Buttery

War on Poverty killed by War in Vietnam

- Shooting war and killing field in Vietnam captured attention more than good
- More money spent in Vietnam
- More bombs drop on Vietnam than in all of WW2

Ho Chi Minh

- Vietnamese people will not yield
 - Knew that eventually US would go home and they could rebuild what the US destroyed

End of 1997 grim sent of siege laid over white house

- Whole political career hung on Vietnam
- Wise men (about 10) about 250 hours of political experience advised Johnson
 - Advice was contain communism don't let it spread
 - Voted Unanimously for Johnson to go on with his war in Vietnam
 - Gave him silly advice: "You out to improve your public relation"

Johnson expanded war in secret and set out to prove progress to the US people

- Called home the US Commander in Vietnam for press conference
- Glowing reports always came from pentagon
- Middle of December President flew across the Pacific
 - Inspired by photo opportunity ut moved by Americas fighting man
 - "We're not going to yield and we're not going to shimmy"
 - The enemy is not beaten but knows that he has met his master in the field
 - After a few hours in Vietnam he moved on to Pakistan and then Rome; like a campaign tour of old

Gift Exchange with Pope Paul the 6

- His holiness gave 14th century painting
- President gave ft high plastic bust of himself
- Wanted desperately to believe that America had turned the corner in Vietnam

Tet Offensive

- Was the roof falling in
- South Vietnam exploded
- Vietnamese holiday Tet Vietnamese caught American by surprise
 - Illusion of progress was shattered
- Went on for 3 weeks and failed to provoke popular uprising
- Tet changed trusted media figure's mind

Johnson felt more and more alone

- Many of those close to him had resigned
- Robert Mackemera Johnson's secretary of defense and original architect resigned his position
 - Pressure got so great the Rob couldn't sleep at night and thought he was a murderer

Clark M. Clifford replaced Robert

No plan for victory in Vietnam

Johnson hated Robert Kennedy

Clark Clifford couldn't change Johnson's mind so he told him to meet with the wise men again

- Tet had changed the minds of the wise men
 - They all turned around