

Eric Walz History 300 Collection

Dennis & Gwynn Miller – Life during Vietnam

By Dennis & Gwynn Miller

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Brigham Young University – Idaho

R: Today is March 2, and I'm interviewing Dennis and Gwynn Miller. What Year were you born?

D: 1951.

R: So how old were you when the war started?

D: That depends on what we considered started.

R: What do you consider the start of the war?

D: My first recollection of the war was around 1967. I would have been around 14, 15 years old.

R: Do you remember the President coming on and saying we're going to war? What do you remember as the surroundings of that?

D: I really don't. I don't remember the President. It wasn't like the Gulf War, or those kind of things. That war was entered into very, very gradually, with advisors first, and then larger task forces, and then combatants. So it was just what they call an escalation.

R: Kind of what we're doing with Haiti right now?

D: Anyway, I just remember that there was a daily digest of news on TV every single day, 24-7. This was when news was not 24-7. We didn't have cable TV. We did have 3 basic channels and they had their 6:00 news and the newspapers. Do you remember, Gwynn, that every single day there was bodies and so forth, pictures of bodies in the newspapers, and on TV?

G: But I was young enough from you that all I remember my childhood years was hearing about the Vietnam War. It seems all the while I was growing up we were in the Vietnam War. And you have to realize that from a young age to a point I didn't know anything. But when I started knowing and paying attention to the things being said around, it was the Vietnam War, we were in the Vietnam War for most of my childhood. Because it was a gradual, gradual thing. It wasn't something like Iraq, they can say we went to Iraq to war on February, whatever.

D: I remember Congress debating about it all the time as a teenager. And there were the Hawks and there were the Doves. And this is how they were called, Hawks and Doves.

R: The War Hawks.

D: and Peace Doves, um, so those battles were raging all the time in Congress?

R: According to your understanding what were America's goals in the war?

D: You know I don't think that was very clearly announced. It was to stop communism from spreading. I didn't understand the landscape that well at the time. It was to stop the North Vietnamese, the Viet Cong, from dominating South Vietnam.

G: And my parents explained it to me, the reason that we had the Korean War is that North Korea wanted to take over South Korea and we were trying to protect South Korean interests, and the same thing with Vietnam.

R: Did you as a teenager, as a child, did you have a fear about communism? Did you, when you were older, did you believe the government, did you think there was an actual threat from communism that we needed to be there?

D: Yeah I did, I believed them. As a teenager I was probably more on the Hawk side than the Dove side. As a grown adult I can see better, I think that there weren't any real clear goals. And they talked about not being able to use all of their military might because of the political ramifications of it, of using all their war might, not political might, all their war might. That didn't register with me very clearly. I didn't know one way or another.

R: So in high school the war was still going on right, so how did you feel about the draft and the whole process?

D: I was a teenager, I didn't think about it very much frankly, as a teenager. When I got closer to draft age I certainly did.

R: What was the draft age?

D: at 18 you registered.

R: So, what was about the age when they were taken?

D: 18, 19 years old and on up.

R: Did you have to be graduated from high school though?

D: Yeah.

R: But I remember something. I remember that we used to have practices for air rides.

D: in the 60's

R: and I was always under the opinion that it was because of communists coming to attack America, and we would practice, we would have to hurry and hide under our desks.

R: So did your teachers ever make the connection that we were fighting the communists back?

G: I don't remember that, them saying that, but I just remember that we had practices for air raids.

D: When I was in grade school, for nuclear fall outs, and that kind of thing.

G: and to me, and maybe I got it from my mom and dad, that to me it was because of the...

D: Communist threat.

G: anyway what was the last question that you were talking about?

R: The draft? How did you feel about the draft?

G: It was scary.

D: I certainly remember the draft and I studied the draft a little bit in debate, in high school debate. And the criticism of the draft was there was a local draft board made up of local citizens and they would bring people in for consideration for the draft and if you had a good excuse you could get a deferment, if you had good political ties you could get a deferment, whether you had good excuses or not. And the criticism was that the poor, unconnected were disproportionately drafted to those who were more connected and wealthy. Those young men went to college, and that kind of thing.

R: So there were deferments for college then?

D: Oh definitely deferments for college. Deferments for college, deferments for study, deferments for religious, for missions, there were...

G: That's why did gave up his opportunity to go on a mission.

D: The deferments were rationed within stakes. The stake got one deferment a month. So they could send out 12 missionaries under a deferment. That was the draft. Then there was a lot of debate regarding draft or whether to use a lottery system, so that by the luck of the draw rather than the connections.

G: I thought that was what it was.

D: Nope, nope the original draft was not the lottery. The lottery only came into existence about 1970, 71.

G: Which is what I would remember.

D: Right, that time period.

R: Did you get a lottery number then, how did that work.

G: You registered for the draft.

D: Yeah, you registered for the draft irregardless. And then they had a national lottery of all 18 year olds and it might have been 19 year olds, I can't remember. A freshman in college as I recall. There were 365 days in a year and there were 365 birthdays. You had to be born on one of those days. And so they drew like a ping pong ball or whatever, and they'd broadcast this on TV, lottery night. So that was the big night, and they would draw out the first ping pong ball. Number 1 would be June 2.

R: So the birthday.

D: Right, so it was random draws, 1 and they would match it with a day of the year, 2 and the day of the year, 3. And if you were within the first 100 draws you were almost guaranteed that you would be drafted. So I can remember being in the Manwaring building in the commons room with a large TV there. And lots of guys and lots of their girlfriends, all of that age, and they would start with the lottery, and they would start with number 1, and I don't remember if it was, if they took a birthday and then went to a number or visa versa, but anyway you would hear the oohs and the cries and so forth. April 30, my birthday came up like 335, 342, something like that, almost the tail end of the year and almost totally guaranteed that I wouldn't be drafted. I never felt guilty about that because I took my chance along with everyone else. I did have roommates whose numbers were 70, 85, and so they were assured to be drafted and they ran to the local Idaho national guard just as fast as they could go.

G: That's what happened to my best friend's boyfriend/husband.

R: Kathy?

G: No, Pam Marley, Pam Kurnutt, Pete Kurnutt's daughter. Her boyfriend, but then she married him right before he went in, had a very, very low number, like 11. And he went and joined the army. He joined the army...

D: Rather than be drafted you could join and then you would have more choice with regards what branch you went into.

G: And he got to pick where he wanted to go into and stood a better chance of not being sent overseas...

D: to be a foot soldier.

R: So what were the kinds where you could go? The National Guard, what were the other kinds?

D: It was the regular troops that were being deployed. The National Guard was a reserve. And the reserves don't go in first.

G: But I remember that they couldn't do that at that time because Mike couldn't go into the National Guard. He had to join. He actually went and joined the army. He could have chosen which service he wanted to choose, but...

D: You could choose National Guard if you wanted.

G: Maybe, but the war got over before Mike had a chance to be sent.

D: There were National Guard units that were sent to Vietnam, but it wasn't wide spread this was an engineering battalion up at Rexburg.

G: That's the big news this week, was that the Idaho National Guard got called up to go to Iraq, or they've been put on notice.

D: But we have a much smaller army today, or armed forces.

G: Yeah we had bigger armies back then because of the draft.

D: Now we have a volunteer army, and it's a smaller one. And so the National Guard is being used much more extensively than it was in the 60s, 70s.

R: Because we don't have a large regular army.

D: That's right, they don't have a large standing military force.

R: Did you have the draft or the lottery during peace time, could you still be drafted during peace time?

D: And you were, yeah.

G: And that's why it was so big.

R: Now it's a volunteer army, no lottery?

D: Now there were pluses and minuses to that. The pluses of having a draft and a lottery was that you got a very broad spectrum of people in the armed forces. You got educated people. You got poor people, rich people, middle-class people. To the extent that the draft boards and the lottery worked, you got quite a cross-section and that was considered healthy. What was not considered healthy was many of them didn't want to be there, and that was not healthy. Today's armed forces are pretty motivated, and they certainly want to be there. They have their motivations.

R: How did your parents feel about the war? Do you remember how they felt about it in the beginning, and how did they feel about it in the end with the possibility of you being drafted, or your brothers being drafted?

D: I remember my parents talking to adults, being worried about their sons being drafted.

G: My parents were worried, but they felt like it was your duty. My dad served. My dad was called up because of the draft. And my dad had to go serve in the Korean War. And he felt it was your duty as a countryman, and they were very staunch Republicans. And they felt like we were there for a reason and a purpose, to stop the communists.

D: In my case, I wasn't motivated to volunteer. But I wasn't looking to dodge a draft or a lottery pick. It was like if I'm called, certainly I'll serve.

G: But our parents did worry, just like any parent would worry. What if our sons get called up to fight a war?

D: And again they showed killings every night on TV.

G: And you heard of all the Americans soldiers over and over again that were being killed.

R: So did you have anyone close to you, or friends who went and didn't come back or who were affected by the war?

D: I didn't have anyone close. I had classmates at Bonneville High School who lost brothers. And I was telling your mom, I remember her name was Gail. I can't remember her last name now. She mentioned something about her brother, and I asked where was he, and I felt like crawling in a hole when she told me that he had been killed in Vietnam like six months earlier. It was just really, really sad, you can imagine.

R: When did you first recognize, or did you even recognize it in Idaho, anti-war sentiment?

D: There wasn't a lot of anti-war sentiment.

G: In Idaho.

D: There were more hawks than doves, we didn't have the peace marches...

G: We would hear about the peace marches in the news.

D: On the news all the time, the news hyped it up big time.

G: And all the draft dodgers going to Canada.

D: Do you remember Kent State?

G: Oh yeah.

D: Kent State students protested, the police came out. There were police clashes with campuses all the time. Peace marchers on campuses. And Kent State, they called it the Kent State massacre. There was a use of force that killed students. And it was a national outrage kind of thing. And they learned a lot about riot control in the late 60s, early 60s based on civil rights and late 60s based on the protests to the war. And there is an art to controlling crowds and they didn't have it down, and there were a lot of people killed. I remember saying very brashly as a teenager...they told them that they couldn't go beyond this area, this public area or whatever and they could anyway, and they would start throwing things and that whole thing, and I thought that they just needed to kill them all, as a youngster you did (laugh). You need to back them up. I don't think that now.

R: How did you feel about the government at this time? Did you feel that they were doing all that they could, or did you hold anything against the President for not getting us out?

D: President Johnson? President Nixon? President Johnson, I felt sorry for him in many ways. General Westmoreland was the general in charge of Vietnam. It was pro-government. You just have a natural inclination to support your government. I probably supported them and it was a simpler time that maybe the reality of it should have been. Because there were certainly some things going on that weren't right. But yeah, I supported the government.

R: What do you think about those who didn't support the government, draft dodgers, did you have feelings against them?

D: Yeah, I thought they were unpatriotic.

G: I really did have feelings against them. They didn't love America.

D: They went to Canada, and we would say, "Stay there, you don't deserve to be here." There were a lot of draft dodgers.

R: Were there a lot from Idaho?

D: I didn't know any. Of course I was living in my little conservative world here. It was in the big cities normally that that took place. I do remember the big news about Muhammad Ali, he was called up to fight, and he dodged.

D: Muslim religion, and because of his religion he wasn't going to fight, and he was stripped of his heavy-weight title at the time. That was very, very big news. And there was a lot of clash for that. He was stripped of that title, and I don't remember what he

had to do...to be a...what are they called to be a peace...I don't remember the name.
Peaceful dissenter.

R: So did you feel that that was deserved, that he was stripped of his title.

D: I probably did.

R: Did you like him?

D: I did like him, yeah. Stings like a bee, floats like a butterfly. He was quite the engaging fellow.

G: But I was raised to think that Cassius Clay was terrible. By my parents. And it wasn't until I married your dad or knew him, and your dad like him, that I saw good things in him.

D: And my father was a former fighter, and he liked his talent, he didn't like his loud mouth. But he thought he was sure good at it. I remember his saying, he's smart, he's a stage guy. And he does all of this for entertainment, and it attracts attention, and so I had more favorable thoughts about him.

R: Did you see more drug use from the people coming back?

D: I worked one of my first jobs out of college, and there were a lot of return Vietnam vets. And a lot of them had a lot of trouble readjusting. They had seen a lot of violence, and had done some corrupt things themselves. And I recall one of them that I had worked with had written stories and books and so forth that told about the mayhem, and villagers being actually soldiers, and women carrying guns in their skirts, and you couldn't trust any of them. And there was a lot of hate by American soldiers for a lot of those folks because it wasn't a traditional type of war, where there were uniforms and the enemy lines were this way and that way. They were everywhere. They were behind the enemy lines. And there were a lot of booby traps and those kinds of things. So I read some pretty gruesome things.

G: And you had a lot of drugs.

D: I had a roommate at Ricks College who was a Vietnam Vet, and not a saintly individual, who loved his wine and women, and did drugs while he was in Vietnam. And I remember him talking about hearing rounds come in, and they would just stick their gun up and fire, like this, without putting their head up there, but they would get the rounds discharged, so it was kind of cynical.

G: Well any woman that I have ever talked to who has been married to a Vietnam Vet, says you never, never, go up and shake them to wake them up. They stand far back from them and call their name to wake them up, otherwise they jump ya.

R: What do you remember about hearing about the Tet Offensive. Do you remember that as a time when feelings changed about the war, or did your feelings change?

G: About what?

R: After hearing about the Tet Offensive.

D: The Tet Offensive.

G: What's that, why didn't I hear about it?

D: It was a big campaign and a big push, military push, at the time. I remember it by name. I remember Westmoreland on TV. My history of it isn't very good about it frankly. So, no, it didn't impress me a lot.

R: Well I know in my history books that they make a big deal about it. And they say that that was a turning point, and that was when Americans really got up about it, so I think it's interesting that you don't remember it, but my history books make a big deal about it.

D: Well you have to remember that it was removed from day to day life. We lived normal lives. And it didn't seem real because it was just on this TV. And it was in this paper. And around here, I didn't know people who personally lost loved ones in that war. So to me it was headlines, and TV. It's just a perspective.

R: How did you feel about the final peace settlement when we withdrew?

D: You know I can remember thinking that it was a kind of shame that we lost so many American lives and we didn't really achieve what we were there to achieve. The Viet Cong came into... What was the Capital?

R: Hanoi?

D: Hanoi. And named it Hoi Chi Min City. So you know basically it was overtaken, and wasn't preserved as South Vietnam. So I can remember being disappointed about that. And gosh what was that all about?

G: And I can remember being really sad that we didn't win the war. It was broadcast all over that this was the only war that America has never won. And blah blah blah. And I was sad about that, but I also felt a great relief that it was over, that our servicemen were coming home, and I didn't have to worry about my brothers being called to go over there anymore.

D: I can remember the relief as well. I can remember Nixon talking about his campaign. And he had a troop withdrawal schedule. And then the news media would mark the withdrawal that so many thousands would come out a month until they were gone.

R: Why did they do it gradually?

D: I don't know.

G: I remember seeing pictures of the North Vietnamese coming into the cities and taking over, our servicemen hurrying, and I've read lots of stories since then of how they only had like an hour, of our servicemen to round up the children they'd fathered, or the orphans they were trying to get out that they were close to. They had to hurry quickly before the Vietnamese came in. So it seems to me that it was more of a hurried thing.

D: More like a retreat.

G: A retreat, yeah.

D: I do remember the scheduled withdrawal.

G: But I have read a lot of stories of children being taken out during our retreat and planes being full of these children coming to America. And there was so, so many children that were fathered over there.

D: From American servicemen.

G: And I don't remember reading or hearing about that in other wars. About all the children that were fathered in the Korean War or WWII.

R: Do you think that maybe it happened but they just didn't report it back then?

G: That's what I'm wondering.

D: I'm sure it happened. I don't know if it was as extensive or not. But certainly the reporting methods were heightened during the Vietnam War.

G: And you didn't talk about it.

R: You said that your mission was delayed? Did you go into that? Why was it delayed?

D: I was eligible for one of the deferrals. I'm trying to remember what it was. Scott Sanderson took my deferral and left in August. He took my deferral because I didn't need it because I wasn't going to be drafted anyway. That was just fine with the Stake President and so forth. And then I left in November. But I was older than he was. I was born in April and he was born in August. But I wasn't ready to go in April because I was still in school. And then I was the next oldest one to take a deferral. It was the stake deferral. And then Scott got it because I think his number was a low number. So that was how that happened.

R: So did you on your mission ever hear anything about it, or in Bolivia were you completely, isolated from the war?

D: Totally, totally isolated. I heard about it so little. And that was in 1971 and '72.

G: Well your mission was so isolated.

D: So when I came back from my mission...I would hear about the gasoline shortages. I think that was during the period. Yeah, it was. But I didn't experience it, didn't know it. There were actually lines of cars at the gas station pumps and gas was rationed because of the gasoline shortage. And it was the first time in America that that had happened.

R: Was that because of the war?

D: I don't know if that was because of the war or not, I don't remember. But I was so removed from all the worldly issues that it was kind of amazing. I didn't read newspapers in Bolivia, didn't listen to the radio.

G: I graduated in 1972 from high school. And it sticks in my mind that the end of '72 or the first of 1973 that we started seeing these, sad, sad, sad pictures, because they were starting to send our Vietnam POWs home. And it was just the saddest thing. I just sat every night and cried. And had these big tears. And I mean just really sobbed uncontrollably. To see these POWs, and they would bring them home, or they would get off a big plane at an Air Force base, and they would have all of their family waiting. And as they got off the plane one at a time, they would say the soldier's name and how long he had been a captive, how long he had been a POW.

D: Prisoners of War, right?

G: And then they would say this is his wife, his children, as you saw him running, and them all running up to hug him. And many of them six and seven years, many, many eight, nine, who had been POWs that long.

D: There were a lot of divorces.

G: Yeah, and they would say that. His wife divorced him. And you can't really blame the wives a lot. Because the wives lots of times didn't even know if they were alive or not. They thought they were dead.

D: Missing In Action, MIAs. Missing In Action mostly is what they thought they were. They thought they were dead. So they would get a divorce or probably a divorce because they couldn't even prove they were dead so that they could say they were a widow and move on. I think that after so many years you could declare someone dead.

G: But their wife would have married. And so sometimes it would be their parents and children, but they would say, I remember them saying that this man has his wife still waiting for him, but this man's wife didn't. It was...

D: Heart-wrenching.

G: So, so heart-wrenching. Because then you would just start hearing all these terrible things that happened to them and how mistreated they were in the POW camps. And there was a guy from Idaho who had been a POW, and he was very famous.

D: Fisher.

G: From like Arco or somewhere, and he came and talked in some firesides. And told of the things that happened to him.

D: He won a Congressional Medal of Honor.

G: And he wrote a book about his experiences, and it was probably Fisher.

D: No, no Fisher was a Congressional Medal of Honor winner, he wasn't a POW.

G: Well this guy from Idaho was a POW, and I think he was from Arco. You and I talk about how it would be to see The Passion because it was so real, and so personal and so violent, and that's what happened to these guys. And the way they had to survive year after year. It's like reading the Bataan death march with Children of the Promise. It was just awful the way they were treated, and the terrible, terrible things that they would do to them. And so they would come home and it was just...planeload after planeload of POWs. And they would also say where their plane went down, or where they were last seen when they became Missing In Action. And there still are many today who are still missing in action from the Vietnam War, but they haven't found a body. They don't know anything about them. And they are still trying to find them. I know that we have people that are working with the Vietnam government trying to find these missing men.

R: So does the government think that there still are men held captive?

G: They don't know.

D: For many, many years after the war, that was the thought. And the government did find that they have held some. And as I recall, Vietnam made some releases and that kind of thing, or produced bodies, or provided evidence of dog tags or whatever. So that was part in the news aftermath of the war.

G: Several years after the war.

D: And Rambo is based on Vietnam and that whole element that there are still captives there, and you are going to go in and rescue them. So it was part of the national conscience that a show like Rambo would become popular like that.

R: So you were talking about the POWs coming home. When we were actually retreating and the regular forces were coming home, was there any difference between the POWs and the regular forces coming home, and how they were treated?

G: I think so. But they will tell you today that they didn't have a hero's welcome and that's why they have so many problems.

D: It was that scheduled withdrawal, rather than a victory march.

G: And the people just wanted to forget about the Vietnam War, and so they just ignored you totally rather than welcome you home. And the POWs were different because they had been kept captive, and had gone through all this horrendous stuff. So the POWs were a little different.

D: The regular vets, many of them did have many problems adjusting.

G: Serious problems adjusting.

D: And part of that problem was the feeling of others not looking up to them.

G: And my mom and dad, if you were talking to them today, if they were listening to this conversation would be outraged, and they still are outraged, that the poor Vietnam vets, they had such a terrible time. They didn't have it any different that my dad coming home from the Korean Conflict. Because at the time it was called the Korean War, and now they have lessened it down to the Korean Conflict. And Dad says that wasn't a popular war. We just had gotten done with WWII, and no one wanted to send our guys over to Korea. It was an unpopular war, very, very unpopular. They didn't win the Korean War.

D: It was called the Line of Demarcation.

G: And he (her father) says we didn't come home heroes, like WWII guys came home big heroes, with the big bands and parades. And so he goes (her dad) I don't feel sorry for those little Vietnam vets who whine and boob. I did the same thing and I'm not whining and booping and letting it ruin my life. My dad is very, very unhappy with the Vietnam vets and why they got a big Vietnam memorial in Washington D.C. and the Koreans don't. They do now, they are working on it now. For years and years we heard about and still and do about the poor VN vets and how their lives have been ruined from the war. Well we have had guys who have served in wars and seen horrific, terrible things, and they're not the same, I agree, they're not the same. They're different people. I'm not saying all Vietnam Vets did that. Look at Richard Byington, Bruce Dobson, really cool guy, Denny Lowe. Good guys, good guys who saw lots of bad things and all of their wives say they never talk about it. You can't ask them questions like this, most

Vietnam Vets, maybe now they are going to start doing it, they are getting older, they are able to talk about it more. You wouldn't be able to talk to a Vietnam Vet, most of them.

R: I didn't want to talk to Richard Byington, that would scare me a lot.

G: And I don't think he would agree to talk to ya about it.

R: Do you think that WWII vets are more willing to talk about their experiences?

G: No, I don't. I watched a documentary and the WWII vets saying we didn't ever talk about what happened over there when we were fighting those wars. It's only now when they're getting old that they're starting to talk about it. And they're releasing some of the pent-up feelings that they've had when they go back to some of the places that they fought and so many of their comrades died, and it brings it all back to them for some reason, and they're sobbing and crying.

R: Okay, to wrap it all up a couple more questions. Do you think that your experiences and memories of the Vietnam era has impacted your look on government, politics, the world? Do you think it has impacted the way you see things?

D: I think that our performance in Vietnam hurt us internationally for a long period. Korea took the Pueblo. Do you know what that is?

R: No.

D: It's a battleship. This was years later, it was floating off the shores of North Korea and they boarded it, shot people, and towed it to Korea, and we didn't take it back. And they still have it today. And that just shows the lack of respect that the international community had for the United States and its will.

G: But partly because of our government and because of all the protestors that said we shouldn't be fighting a war, (the U.S.) became real, real soft. We don't want to cause any conflict with NK because we don't want to go to war. It's just like what we've just been through with Clinton. We don't want to go to any wars. And Bush is called a terrorist because he says, nope, we're going to be strong.

R: So do you think that this is the first time then that America is willing to show some willpower since that era?

D: Yes.

G: Oh no, because we had Grenada.

D: Reagan certainly had a strong posture. He built up militarily. He wasn't afraid to rattle the saber. He helped invade Grenada. Certainly influenced the bringing down of communism. Brought on the dialogue with Gorbachev. And those two made their peace.

And then the wall came down magically. But it wasn't because we were trying to be everyone's friend. And that has been a political policy that has been pervasive since the Vietnam War that we just need to get along and be friends with everyone, irregardless of their human rights records, how they treat their citizens, irregardless of their political aggression, military aggression, don't make them mad. Bush has had a different thought entirely. And Libya has determined to expose its nuclear plans. And how did that happen? It only happened after Iraq. North Korea is now talking multilaterally with the other nations, and it refused to do that. It only wanted to talk to the U.S., to basically leverage money out of it to surrender its nuclear programs. But it is now talking. I just think that the diplomacy of strength has worked better and will work better than the diplomacy of "we're just going to try to soft-shoe and soft-pedal everything." That diplomacy has been going on for decades. And what was produced? It has produced hateful, hateful nations that have festered terrorism.

G: We had 9-11 because we were soft.

D: I believe that.

G: And Bush went out and said, "We're not soft anymore." And so guess what, Libya is one of the countries that has said, "We don't want that to happen to us."

D: Started to cooperate.

G: And other countries have started to cooperate.

D: Pakistan, as soon as 9-11 happened it was either you're for us or you're against us. If you harbor Bin Laden and other terrorists, we will take you down. And Pakistan came right around.

G: A lot of countries have been back-pedaling as fast as they can.

D: And we have had a lot of international cooperation in rounding up terrorists. I think that the newspapers have underplayed it big time. Little tiny pieces, buried in the back pages, about this key person and that key person being trapped in Iran or Pakistan by local authorities. Some of the French have been able to gather them. There's been quite a cooperation of the international community in the European theatre to gather in terrorists. Only because of the leadership of the United States has that happened and will continue to happen as long as we provide strong leadership. I don't think that being nice has made friends, being nice has festered additional hatred, and contempt, and jealousy for America. Yeah there's lots wrong with our approach to the international community. There's things that we could improve on, definitely. But just backing off and being soft has not been a good thing.

R: Last question. Do you ever worry, like with Iraq, that it might escalate, and there might be a danger of us getting into another Vietnam situation?

D: No, because I don't think this country will let that happen again. There will be protests so big. I don't think the optical will of George Bush right now, is strong enough. We have invested, although not very much blood if you compare to 50,000 dying in Vietnam, 500 does not seem like very much for what we've done, although each death is personal for the survivors of those. But I think that George Bush is bending to political will to get out of there too soon. Such that the, it could very easily be swamped again with the influence and the horror and turning it over to the Iraqis way too soon. And again it's political. I think this is a great opportunity for America to have a strong foothold in that region and use that as a base to influence other countries for good with regards to democratizing them. But not if it's turned over to the Iraqis too soon. And that's too bad. So that's why it won't turn into a Vietnam. It won't.