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THE NEW BOOKS

Vietnam: The nightmare that won't go away

THE UNFINISHED WAR

'Vietnam's Nightmare' Walter Cappe (Beacon)

Those solid citizens who are condemning Israel's war for survival are forgetting, as this book shows, the million men, women and children we eliminated in Vietnam. So Mr. Cappe asks us now what of American conscience? Has it affected a whole generation of the young to distrust the older people who sent them out for body counts, to chemical spray a country so that much of it will not grow anything for a hundred years. The author asks us not to be so damn omnipotent, and not to try to run the world by bribes in money and weapons. One historian quoted states: "The lesson of Vietnam is that our motives are not that different from those of other countries. It is of interest to note that both the Vietnam and Israel wars are the first to have full (and distorted) TV coverage. Showing the television world is a shallow surface of pattern making, full of false data, show - biz slanting, given mostly to propaganda, gun fire, and terrorist kissing kids. No war can be seriously reported on TV between commercials of rectal salve and dog foods. Pictorial journalism in a post - Vietnam world can become Big Brother's game.

By Stephen Longstreet, Weekender Columnist