

## Was John Kerry Ordered Illegally Into Cambodia?

Yes

17% (73 votes)

No

26% (117 votes)

That question is flawed

24% (107 votes)

You're Republicans, aren't you?

33% (145 votes)

Total votes: 442

Sat, 08/21/2004 - 15:56 | [digg](#) | [del.icio.us](#) | [permalink](#)

## Not illegal

Being in Cambodia wasn't illegal by any reasonable standard, only by the standards of 'international law'.

by [Alan Forrester](#) on Sat, 08/21/2004 - 18:15

## And Reasonable Standards meant you had to go over...

Kerry is not the only one who says he was in Cambodia. The late Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt Jr., who was chief of naval operations in the early 1970's, has **written** that his son, whom he commanded, was there also. Zumwalt writes:

"The major problem we faced was the continued infiltration of enemy arms and men into South Vietnam, primarily along the Cambodian border."

And his son writes:

"At dusk one day late in 1969, we slipped under the overhanging jungle growth along a canal bank. I knew we were a few hundred yards inside Cambodia. I also knew that just by crossing into Cambodia I was in violation of direct orders. But I disobeyed the orders because I was sure the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese were infiltrating along this particular river, even though Navy intelligence said they were not. I thought this would be the best

way to prove my point. Several hours later, we heard noises coming from downriver. The South Vietnamese had been warned not to be on the rivers at night, so we could be pretty damn sure it was the enemy. It was a convoy of sampans. When they drew to within 20 or so feet of our hiding place, we opened fire. We took some return fire, but then they fled, leaving behind some sampans loaded with weapons."

The Zumwalts also say that such missions were common and that "No serious thought was given to court-martialing..." (See their book "My Father, My Son", pg 90)

So it is not implausible that Kerry was in Cambodia. The navy evidently applied 'reasonable standards' and not the standards of 'international law'.

by a reader on Sun, 08/22/2004 - 00:22

## sheesh

guys, guys, read the question. it has little to do with whether kerry was in cambodia.

it asks about what his orders were. and it modifies them with the adjective illegal. if kerry was ordered into cambodia, and this order was illegal, vote yes. otherwise, vote no. simple.

-- Elliot Temple

<http://www.curi.us/>

by **Elliot Temple** on Sun, 08/22/2004 - 14:13

## editing comments

hey, whatever happened to editing comments? it was added but now it's gone?

anyhow, was gonna change "sheesh" to "look closely" and "guys guys read the question" to "look at the question closely"

also there is an alternative interpretation of the question: such orders would be illegal, and you're simply asked if he had them. but however you read it, the question is what he was ordered to do, not where he was.

-- Elliot Temple

<http://www.curi.us/>

by **Elliot Temple** on Sun, 08/22/2004 - 14:22

## Zumwalt example shows flaw in Kerry's story

Climate and topography work against the Kerry story. Zumwalt's example illustrates this.

Zumwalt made his ambush along the bank of a small canal near an

undisclosed river near the border. This was in October, during the height of the rainy season when the water levels would have been elevated throughout the Delta water routes. Also Zumwalt did this at night when tidal conditions were favorable for his relatively large boat. He probably was situated near the coastline northwest of Ha Tien and not in the normal inshore area of his patrol.

As a result of his successful ambush (unauthorized as it was), the Navy gained confidence in sending river boats (not Swift boats) to probe the canals and steams that they would previously block or surround. The PBRs had jet propulsion and could do 20-plus knots in less than a foot of water. The Swift boats needed water 4 feet deep and they had to be careful of damaging their screw propellers. So the Swifts would do the blocking and provide firepower support and the PBRs would poke around looking for the enemy. PBRs routinely setup ambushes in the shallow and narrow routes in the interior of the Delta. But there were several weeks each year that even PBRs could not navigate through the Vinh Te Canal to connect Chau Doc to Ha Tien via the Rach Giang Thanh. That would be the driest part of the dry season.

A year earlier Kerry patrolled in the vicinity of Cambodia during the peak of the dry season when water levels were about 3 meters lower than their maximum, the small streams and canals were shallower and narrower, and tidal conditions were less influential upstream in rivers that emptied into the Gulf of Siam side of the Delta.

The river that ran along the border in Kerry's patrol area was the Rach Giang Thanh and there were no routes navigable by Swift Boat from that stream into Cambodia. The only route he could have taken was via the Vinh Te canal to Chau Doc (and beyond) which was too shallow in Feb-March when Kerry was on that patrol.

The Rach Giang Thanh is not a tributary of the Mekong River. It is a relatively small stream that is widest close to the sea coast -- in fact there is a sea inlet at the coast -- and very narrow at its top farther inland. Kerry would have run out of water at that time of the year. At most, he might have towed a smaller boat used for insertion of SEALs but they would not have told him their objective let alone their destination.

Kerry just exaggerated and that turned into a fib that got bigger and bigger over the years. He had not transformative moment while on a Swift Boat in Cambodia, because he was not in Cambodia, at all.

by a reader on Tue, 10/19/2004 - 04:08

## **BUSH SUCKS**

I CANT STAND BUSH

by a reader on Thu, 11/04/2004 - 13:38

## **4 MORE YEARS**

4 MORE YEARS OF HELL....

HE'S NOT RUNNING THE COUNTRY ..HIS PUPPETS ARE...HE  
COULDN'T RUN A COUNTRY IF HE TRIED. HE'S OUT FOR HIMSELF  
AND HIS RICH "FRIENDS".

PEOPLE WHO VOTED FOR HIM...DONT KNOW WHAT ELSE TO SAY  
BUT..GOOD LUCK...WE'LL NEED IT...

by a reader on Thu, 11/04/2004 - 13:42

## Re: The two comments above

It is important to bear in mind that most people who voted for John Kerry are ordinary, decent people. People make mistakes: that is to be expected. There's nothing especially sinister in their motives or objectives. Yet ... there is no denying that idiotic **conspiracy theories** play a causal role in many of their world views. This is frightening.

Turning now to the comments above, note the poster's almost total lack of interest in the content of his or her own conspiracy theory: the assertion "[Bush is] not running the country ... his puppets are" is directly self-contradictory. But the poster is only interested in the narrow ground that the two opposite explanations have in common: that President Bush's purported motives, the ones that voters have just endorsed, are not his real motives; and that his overt actions as President, whose continuation the voters have just authorised, are a cover for secret actions with a different and incompatible purpose.

by **Editor** on Thu, 11/04/2004 - 14:18

## BUSH SUX

I'm sick of everyone thinking kerry was any better than bushy. . .  
THEY BOTH SUCK!

by Kellibellijelli on Sun, 02/13/2005 - 17:58

## Kerry and Bush - This arguement sounds way too familiar

Look. We're halfway into 2006; I'm no fan of Bush, nor of Kerry. I didn't vote for either of them. The lesser of two evils, to my mind, is still evil. At the same time, as long as we look back, we cannot look forward. We will NEVER get out of the quagmire that is Iraq, if we continue to rehash Vietnam, name-call Bush even though, to my mind, he should at least fire Rumsfeld, and bring in fresh military leadership for Mess'o'potamia, someone who understands how to lead troops in a situation involving urban warfare, guerilla tactics - which, basically, include suicide bombings, and the like. We either get down and dirty, and save lives, and fight this to the end, or we don't. But screwing around with the past, and obsessing about it, is useless, and a waste of time.

In my mind, we should have stayed out of Vietnam altogether, and

several presidents lied to the American people about our extensive involvement. On the other hand, it was yet another case of "shit or get off the pot". Leadership couldn't decide what our role there was, so... we did a lot of nothing and 58,168 (from [http://www.historyguy.com/american\\_war\\_casualties.html](http://www.historyguy.com/american_war_casualties.html)) American soldiers, Marines and others were killed, with well over 130,000 wounded. Untold thousands of Vietnamese were killed and wounded.

Is THIS what we want to happen in the Middle East now? Here at home we continue to argue two presidential elections that have been over for the better part of two years. This fatalism ill-becomes us as a people. I think we can do better. Let's focus on what we can change: the MAJORITY in Congress the next two elections, and the White House occupant in 2008. There ARE qualified men and women who are electable, and not beholden to big oil, or the big corporations. People power has worked in other countries. It can work here; it did 250 years ago; it can work now.

by **PSmith** on Mon, 05/22/2006 - 11:08

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