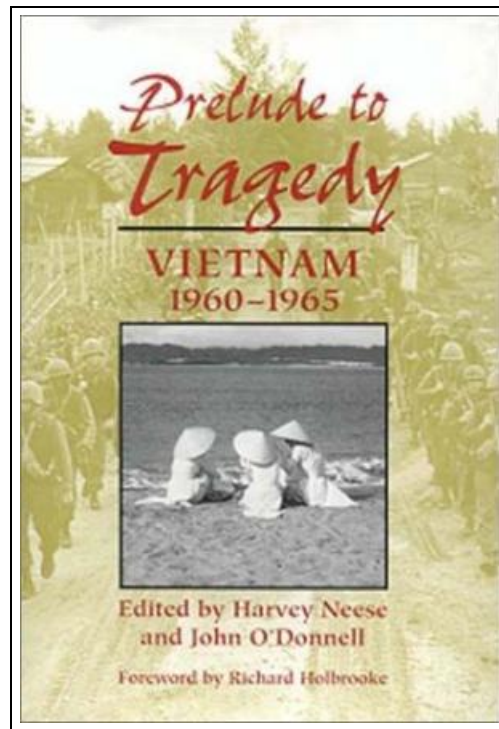


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Reviews

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Naval Institute Press, United States, 2000. Hardback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. Foreword by Richard Holbrooke Five American and three Vietnamese participants in the early days of U.S. involvement in southeast Asia compellingly argue that the failure of American policy in Vietnam was not inevitable. The common theme of their individual essays suggests that the war in Vietnam might have had a much different--and far less tragic--outcome if U.S. policy makers had listened to experts with experience in Asia and combating communist revolutionary warfare and pursued a coherent and consistent counterinsurgency strategy instead of militarizing and Americanizing the struggle. The authors point out that against the advice of experts and the proven success of counterinsurgency programs in Malaya and the Philippines, senior policy makers made the fateful decision to develop the South Vietnamese Army as a mirror image of the U.S. Army rather than as a counter-guerilla force. The authors, who were involved in all levels of the counterinsurgency campaign, also cite as key factors in American policy failure: support for the coup that overthrew President Diem in 1963, bureaucratic in-fighting, and the lack of appreciation for the complexities of revolutionary warfare and the practicalities of grass-roots programs to combat it. A vivid account of that coup is included in the book with fresh insight into the pivotal event. Two essays written by former South Vietnamese senior officers who once fought with Communist Viet Minh forces provide a unique perspective of how both sides thought and functioned. While this devastating portrait can do nothing to change what has already transpired, it does offer significant lessons for the future and should not be ignored.



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