

RECOMMENDED READING

The Vietnam War is the subject of a wide array of broadly cast accounts (with some especially helpful in giving Vietnamese a prominent place alongside Americans): George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950–1975* (3rd ed., 1996); William J. Duiker, *U.S. Containment Policy and the Conflict in Indochina* (1994); Marilyn B. Young, *The Vietnam Wars, 1945–1990* (1991); Anthony Short, *The Origins of the Vietnam War* (1989); William S. Turley, *The Second Indochina War: A Short Political and Military History, 1954–1975* (1987); George McT. Kahin, *Intervention: How America Became Involved in Vietnam* (1986); Gabriel Kolko, *Anatomy of a War: Vietnam, the United States and the Modern Historical Experience* (1985); R. B. Smith, *An International History of the Vietnam War* (3 vols., 1983–91), surveying 1955–1966; and the collection edited by Jayne Werner and Luu Doan Huynh, *The Vietnam War: Vietnamese and American Perspectives* (1992). Journalists have served as early and important chroniclers of the war. David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (1972); Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* (rev. ed., 1991); and Neil Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam* (1988), stand out for their rich and engaging treatment. Gary R. Hess offers a thoughtful, up-to-date survey of the literature in “The Unending Debate: Historians and the Vietnam War,” *Diplomatic History* 18 (Spring 1994).

Appraisals of Kennedy's policy are still sharply divided. John M. Newman, *JFK and Vietnam: Deception, Intrigue, and the Struggle for Power* (1992), makes the case for Kennedy as a reluctant interventionist who finally came to favor disengagement. Stephen Pelz, “John F. Kennedy's 1961 Vietnam War Decisions,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* [London] 4 (December 1981), and Lawrence J. Bassett and Stephen E. Pelz, “The Failed Search for Victory: Vietnam and the

Politics of War," in *Kennedy's Quest for Victory: American Foreign Policy, 1961–1963*, ed. Thomas G. Paterson (1989), present the alternative view—Kennedy as a Cold War activist who made a critical commitment. Ellen Hammer, *A Death in November: America in Vietnam, 1963* (1987), and Anne Blair, *Lodge in Vietnam: A Patriot Abroad* (1995), offer fine accounts of the Diem coup and its consequences.

Johnson's decision for war is easily traced thanks to the accessible and revealing holdings of the Lyndon B. Johnson Library (Austin, Texas). Notable studies drawing on those materials include George C. Herring, *LBJ and Vietnam: A Different Kind of War* (1994); David M. Barrett, *Uncertain Warriors: Lyndon Johnson and His Vietnam Advisors* (1993); Brian VanDeMark, *Into the Quagmire: Lyndon Johnson and the Escalation of the Vietnam War* (1991); and Mark Clodfelter, *The Limits of Airpower: The American Bombing of North Vietnam* (1989).

A picture of key figures in the deepening Vietnam commitment emerges from Cecil B. Currey, *Edward Lansdale: The Unquiet American* (1988); Thomas C. Reeves, *A Question of Character: A Life of John F. Kennedy* (1991); Robert S. McNamara, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (1995); Dean Rusk as told to Richard Rusk, *As I Saw It*, ed. Daniel S. Papp (1990); George W. Ball, *The Past Has Another Pattern* (1982); Paul K. Conkin, *Big Daddy from the Pedernales: Lyndon Baines Johnson* (1986); and Doris Kearns, *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream* (1976).

The domestic dissension spawned by the Vietnam War is developed by David W. Levy, *The Debate over Vietnam* (1991), a synthesis that contains a helpful guide to the literature; Tom Wells, *The War Within: America's Battle over Vietnam* (1994); Charles DeBenedetti assisted by Charles Chatfield, *An American Ordeal: The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era* (1990); Melvin Small, *Johnson, Nixon, and the Doves* (1988); Daniel C. Hallin, *The "Uncensored War": The Media and Vietnam* (1986); Kathleen J. Turner, *Lyndon Johnson's Dual War: Vietnam and the Press* (1985); and John E. Mueller, *War, Presidents and Public Opinion* (1973).

For broad attempts to make sense of the U.S. misadventure in Vietnam in terms of patterns in American society and culture, see Loren Baritz, *Backfire: A History of How American Culture Led Us into Vietnam and Made Us Fight the Way We Did* (1985); James W. Gibson, *The Perfect War: The War We Couldn't Lose and How We Did* (1988); Susan Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* (1989); and John Hellman, *American Myth and the Legacy of Vietnam* (1986).

The general Vietnamese perspective on the war emerges from William J. Duiker, *Sacred War: Nationalism and Revolution in a Divided Vietnam* (1995), with its helpful survey of the literature, and Frances FitzGerald, *Fire in the Lake: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam* (1972), a pioneering and prize-winning attempt by a non-specialist to give life to the "other side." Such key topics as Vietnamese nationalism and the appeal of communist doctrine are treated in Keith W. Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam* (1983); Truong Buu Lam, ed. and trans., *Patterns of Vietnamese Response to Foreign Intervention, 1858–1900* (1967); Alexander Woodside, *Community and Revolution in Modern Vietnam* (1976); Hue-Tam Ho Tai, *Radicalism and the Origins of the Vietnamese Revolution* (1992); David G. Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial, 1920–1945* (1981); and Huynh Kim Khanh, *Vietnamese Communism, 1925–1945* (1982). The best account of Ho's life is Jean Lacouture, *Ho Chi Minh: A Political Biography*, trans. Peter Wiles (1968).

For the southern opposition to Diem and the United States, see Truong Nhu Tang with David Chanoff and Doan Van Toai, *A Viet Cong Memoir* (1985), and Carlyle A. Thayer, *War by Other Means: National Liberation and Revolution in Viet-Nam, 1954–60* (1989). Three regional studies are critical to understanding rural politics and rural conflict during the period of deepening American involvement: Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province* (1972); James W. Trullinger, Jr., *Village at War: An Account of Revolution in Vietnam* (1980); and Eric M. Bergerud, *The Dynamics of Defeat: The Vietnam War in Hau Nghia Province* (1991).