

Arthur Goldberg offers a devastating legal and moral critique of the British governments handling of the Libyan embassy shooting incident in 1984. Diplomats everywhere will cringe at his assertion that the so-called "People's Bureau" did not meet the legal criteria for immunities accorded to diplomatic premises and personnel and therefore could have been entered and searched. However, they will find it hard to refute his argument that the Vienna Convention is not a suicide pact wherein the security and safety of the host country and its citizens may be jeopardized at the whim of those who are prepared to abuse violently the privileges accorded by diplomatic status. Israeli Chief Justice Meir Shamgar sheds useful light on an important and contentious area: the legal distinctions between military forces (including guerrillas) and terrorists. The former wear uniforms, carry arms openly, operate in formed bodies under a designated commander, and are required to observe the laws and customs of war, particularly those conventions regarding treatment of non-combatants and prisoners-of-war. Terrorists, he points out, do not observe these criteria for the legal belligerency status they so often claim. At a time when the term terrorist is often widely misapplied to almost any act of violence by individuals or a government, these distinctions are important to keep in mind. Professor Yehuda Blum's exploration of the legal aspects of government responses to international terrorism, with particular reference to the United Nations Charter, bears close reading in view of the recent American action against Libya and the subsequent debate about the legal and moral aspects of reprisals.

Unfortunately, good as these essays are, they amount to very little wheat among a great deal of chaff. There is undoubtedly a case to be made for the prescription Netanyahu provides in his concluding essay — political pressures, economic sanctions, and military action — but it is not adequately explored in this book.

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William S. Turley. *The Second Indochina War: A Short Political and Military History, 1954-1975*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1986.

Though breath-taking in its brevity, William Turley's *The Second Indochina War* is an important new account of America's intervention in Vietnam. Originally intended as a three part study of the French, American, and Vietnamese-Cambodian phases of Indochina's half-century orgy of violence, Turley's work suffers from being exposed as a

big middle without much of a beginning and with an ending that lacks an overall message. For example, he plunges into the American phase of the Vietnam War with only eight pages of prior Vietnamese history.

Like Wallace Thies, in his *When Governments Collide* (1980), Turley provides a twin-foci, "tale of two cities" (Washington and Hanoi), history of the war. In a fairly straightforward chronology, Turley's chapters march through the decisions on both sides to join the war, the Communists' in Hanoi to launch an armed struggle and the Americans' in Washington to intervene by nibbles. From these "fateful decisions," the author describes the deepening Americanization of the war and the growing air war that culminated in the conflict's moment of truth, the Tet Offensive (1968). From Tet, Turley traces the paths taken by both sides to the Paris Peace Agreement (1973) and the continuation of the war afterwards for two short years, without the U.S., to South Vietnam's final defeat.

Unlike Thies, whose strength lay with his American side of the story, Turley's strong suit, as a Vietnam scholar of many years' standing, is the war as seen from Hanoi. He reveals for the first time, for instance, biographical details of many of the communist commanders (pp. 66-84). Turley further provides one of the best descriptions to date of the functioning of the Ho Chi Minh Trail (pp. 44-45). The Tet Offensive, for some time to come, will always be at the center of any analysis of the war's turning points, and the author's illuminating sketch of the communists' view of their attack does everyone an immense service. Finally, with respect to the Paris Peace Agreement, Turley restores some balance to the literature on this agreement by bringing out some of the extraordinary pressures members of Hanoi's politburo felt, similar to those of their American counterparts, to come to some form of agreement.

As is implicit in the preceding paragraph, the book gets better as it goes along. The two chapters near the end on "Tet" and on "The Road to Paris" are by far the best and form the core of Turley's scholarly contribution. Here the account is the most detailed, the documentation quite meticulous, and the analysis balanced and often insightful. Elsewhere, however, the author is less careful in the documentation of some of his assertions and even lapses into gratuitous opinions passed off as authoritative statements. For openers, in his Preface Turley insists that the myth that General Vo Nguyen Giap "singlehandedly plotted all of Hanoi's military moves from 1941 to 1975 ... [must] be laid to rest" (xiv). He lays this to rest with his simple and undocumented "say-so" that "Giap was not the grandmaster of strategy for the second war that he was in the first" (xiv). On the controversial question of whether the siege of the Khe Sanh prior to and during the Tet Offensive was a diversion or a principal communist attack, Turley supports the diversion thesis with an undocumented and skewed reporting of the numbers involved in the siege and on the uncritical acceptance of an interview with a communist official. Finally, regarding the darkest hour of the Tet Offensive from the communist side, the massacres in Hue, Turley offers the bizarre excuse that this carnage was the work of an American B-52 strike

(p. 107). This is not even a nice try as previous photographic evidence of these mass graves have revealed clear signs (for example, bullet holes in the foreheads) of systematic execution.

Though Turley attempts no grand interpretation of the war and makes no contention of conveying a messianic truth, there remains a clear thread to his narrative. In its intervention, the U.S. interrupted a natural historical evolution within Vietnamese society that was not moral and was ill-fated from the start. To preserve the essence of this myth, Turley must, and does, downplay the extent of foreign assistance to the communists, exaggerates the extent of the "strategic unity" of the communists, and deliberately highlights the darkest sides of the American intervention. With respect to the "strategic unity" of the communists, he takes no note of Truong Nhu Tang's *Vietcong Memoir* (1985), and its tale of division, and manages to ignore the ample record of tension in the *Vietnam Documents and Research Notes* that he otherwise relies on so heavily for his account. It is easy to pick on the air war to illuminate the worst side of the American involvement, but Turley's scholarship on this subject is meager and even a step down from Raphael Littauer's and Norman Uphoff's *The Air War in Indochina* (1972). Nowhere in this chapter does Turley cite anything from the growing literature on the air war coming out of the air force, and his assertion that U.S. planes in 1967 "were attacking just about any object" (p. 88) is an outright lie.

Despite such occasional lapses of scholarship, Turley's book is an important overview of the war from a new perspective that might become known as post-revisionist. The larger work of this new genre, for which *The Second Indochina War* can serve as an able preamble, is George M. Kahin's *Intervention* (1986).

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