



# Real Lessons of the Vietnam War: Reflections Twenty-Five Years After the Fall of Saigon

*John Norton Moore, Robert F. Turner*

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Twenty-five years after the fall of Saigon, two prominent scholars, Moore and Turner (who debated in the 1960s), assembled a distinguished group of Vietnam experts at the University of Virginia to reexamine the conflict and search for its "real" lessons. This resulting volume includes contributions by senior diplomats, retired military officers, experts on Vietnamese Communism, and senior scholars of history, political science, and law.

Given the diversity of the participants, the general consensus that emerges will surprise and enlighten many readers. The book corrects various myths that continue to influence American thinking about Vietnam. The idea that the U.S. military and CIA were intentionally engaged in "war crimes," such as the assassination of political opponents of the South Vietnamese government in the Phoenix Program, is laid to rest; and military legal experts address the tragic realities of My Lai and measures taken to prevent reoccurrence.

It is popular today to say that Vietnam "could not have been won." The message emerging from this new study, on the contrary, is that despite some horrible blunders and incompetent political leadership at the highest levels, by 1973 the war had essentially been won. Partisan politics and mutual mistrust in Washington kept that message from reaching the right people, and a misunderstanding of public opinion prompted Congress to outlaw further U.S. military involvement—essentially snatching defeat from the jaws of victory.



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