

A Grand Delusion Americas Descent Into Vietnam

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a grand delusion is the first comprehensive single volume american political history of the vietnam war spanning the years 1945 to 1975 it is the definitive story of the well meaning but often misguided american political leaders whose unquestioning adherence to the crusading anti communist cold war dogma of the 1950 s and 1960 s led the nation into its tragic misadventure in vietnam at the center of this narrative are

seven political leaders dwight eisenhower john f kennedy lyndon johnson richard nixon j william fulbright mike mansfield and george mcgovern during their careers each occupied center stage in the nation s debate over u s policy in vietnam this is a piercing analysis of political currents and an epic tragedy filled with fascinating characters and antagonisms and beliefs that divided the nation

this book explores how and why vietnam loomed so large for humphrey as vice president from 1964 through the 1968 election campaign against richard nixon it assesses how humphrey s loyalty to lyndon b johnson who emerges as the villain of the story in many ways would negatively affect his political ambitions and it engages the disconnect between humphrey s principles and the intricate politics of his convoluted relationship with the president and his unsuccessful presidential campaign it is a complex and frustrating narrative the results of which would be tragic not only for humphrey s presidential aspirations but also for the war in southeast asia and the future of the united states

in his presidential inaugural address of january 1965 lyndon b johnson offered an uplifting vision for america one that would end poverty and racial injustice elected in a landslide over the conservative republican barry goldwater and bolstered by the so called liberal consensus economic prosperity and a strong wave of nostalgia for his martyred predecessor john f kennedy johnson announced the most ambitious government agenda in decades three years later everything had changed johnson s approval ratings had plummeted the liberal consensus was shattered the war in vietnam splintered the nation and the politics of civil rights had created a fierce white backlash a report from the national committee for an effective congress warned of a national nervous breakdown the election of 1968 was immediately caught up in a swirl of powerful forces and the nine men who sought the nation s highest office that year attempted to ride them to victory or merely survive them on the democratic side eugene mccarthy energized the anti war movement george wallace spoke to the working class white backlash robert kennedy took on the mantle of his slain brother entangled in vietnam johnson stunningly opted not to run again scrambling the odds on the republican side 1968 saw the vindication of richard nixon who outhustled nelson rockefeller ronald reagan and george romney by navigating between the conservative and moderate wings of the republican party the assassinations of the first martin luther king jr and then kennedy seemed to push the country to the brink of chaos a chaos reflected in the democratic convention in chicago a televised horror show vice president hubert humphrey emerged as the nominee and finally liberating himself from johnson s grip nearly overcame the lead long enjoyed by nixon who by exploiting division and channeling the national yearning for order would be the last man standing in american maelstrom michael a cohen captures the full drama of this watershed election establishing 1968 as the hinge between the decline of political liberalism the ascendancy of conservative populism and the rise of anti governmental attitudes that continue to dominate the nation s political discourse in this sweeping and

immersive book equal parts compelling analysis and thrilling narrative cohen takes us to the very source of our modern politics of division

when american and south vietnamese forces led by general creighton abrams launched an attack into neutral cambodia in 1970 the invasion ignited a firestorm of violent antiwar protests throughout the united states dealing yet another blow to nixon s troubled presidency but as john shaw shows the campaign also proved to be a major military success most histories of the vietnam war either give the cambodian invasion short shrift or merely criticize it for its political fallout thus neglecting one of the campaign s key dimensions approaching the subject from a distinctly military perspective shaw shows how this carefully planned and executed offensive provided essential support for nixon s decent interval and peace with honor strategies by eliminating north vietnamese sanctuaries and supply bases located less than a hundred miles from saigon and by pushing communist troops off the vietnamese border despite the political cloud under which the operation was conducted shaw argues that it was not only the best of available choices but one of the most successful operations of the entire war sustaining light casualties while protecting american troop withdrawal and buying time for nixon s pacification and vietnamization strategies he also shows how the united states took full advantage of fortuitous events such as the overthrow of cambodia s prince sihanouk the redeployment of north vietnamese forces and the late arrival of spring monsoons although critics of the operation have protested that the north vietnamese never did attack out of cambodia shaw makes a persuasive case that the near border threat was very real and imminent in the end he contends the campaign effectively precluded any major north vietnamese military operations for over a year based on exhaustive research and a deep analysis of the invasion s objectives planning organization and operations shaw s shrewd study encourages a newfound respect for one of america s genuine military successes during the war

revisits the largely forgotten story of how the mcgovern campaign represented the zenith of sixties style liberalism and how its historic defeat still haunts democrats to this day and in the process identifies what democrats must do before they can reassume their role as agents of progressive change

from the outbreak of the cold war to the rise of the united states as the last remaining superpower the years following world war ii were filled with momentous events and rapid change diplomatically economically politically and culturally the united states became a major influence around the globe on the domestic front this period witnessed some of the most turbulent and prosperous years in american history postwar america an encyclopedia of social political cultural and economic history provides detailed coverage of all the remarkable developments within the united

states during this period as well as their dramatic impact on the rest of the world a z entries address specific persons groups concepts events geographical locations organizations and cultural and technological phenomena sidebars highlight primary source materials items of special interest statistical data and other information and cultural landmark entries chronologically detail the music literature arts and cultural history of the era bibliographies covering literature from the postwar era and about the era are also included as are illustrations and specialized indexes

making sense of the wars for vietnam has had a long history the question why vietnam dominated american and vietnamese political life for much of the length of the wars and has continued to be asked in the decades since they ended this volume brings together the work of eleven scholars to examine the conceptual and methodological shifts that have marked the contested terrain of vietnam war scholarship editors marilyn young and mark bradley s superb group of renowned contributors spans the generations including those who were active during wartime along with scholars conducting research in vietnamese sources and uncovering new sources in the united states former soviet union china and eastern and western europe ranging in format from top down reconsiderations of critical decision making moments in washington hanoi and saigon to microhistories of the war that explore its meanings from the bottom up these essays comprise the most up to date collection of scholarship on the controversial historiography of the vietnam wars

the first major synthesis of the war since 2001 drawing upon a host of newly declassified documents presidential tapes and overlooked foreign sources to give the most comprehensive look to date of the war that still haunts america

from 1964 to 1980 the united states was buffeted by a variety of international crises including the nation s defeat in vietnam the growing aggression of the soviet union and washington s inability to free the fifty two american hostages held by islamic extremists in iran through this period and in the decades that followed commentary human events and national review magazines were critical in supporting the development of gop conservative positions on key issues that shaped events at home and abroad these publications and the politicians they influenced pursued a fundamental realignment of us foreign policy that culminated in the election of ronald reagan paving the way for reagan closely examines the ideas and opinions conveyed by the magazines in relationship to their critiques of the dominant liberal foreign policy events of the 1960s and 1970s revealed is how the journalists key insights and assessments of the us strategies on vietnam china the strategic arms limitations talks salt the united nations the panama canal rhodesia and the middle east applied pressure to leaders on the right within the gop who they believed were not being faithful to conservative principles their views were ultimately adopted within the conservative movement and

subsequently helped lay the foundation for reagan s peace through strength foreign policy incorporating primary sources and firsthand accounts from writers and editors jurdem provides a comprehensive analysis of how these three publications played a fundamental role influencing elite opinion for a paradigm shift in us foreign policy during this crucial sixteen year period

in this volume leading historians and political scientists examine the united states changing foreign policy president by president from 1789 to the present if knowledge of history makes it possible to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past this volume is not only a powerful warning against future errors it s also a study of successful proven policies that are worth repeating for students scholars and lay readers alike anyone concerned about the proper place of the united states in the world it offers a one of a kind one stop source of information on the whole of american foreign policy book jacket

this highly visual brief survey of western civilization provides an exceptionally balanced survey of the political social and cultural development of western civilization its strengths and weaknesses and the controversies surrounding it from 1650 to the present this volume provides a broad survey of western civilization for those interested in a lively account of western heritage

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