

VIETNAM AND THE SIX CRITERIA FOR THE USE OF MILITARY FORCE

by

DAVID T. TWINING

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On 28 November 1984, Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger delivered a speech which deserves attention both within and beyond the military forces and government of the United States. This historic document was personally written by Mr. Weinberger, endorsed by the National Security Council, and discussed with and approved by the President.¹ It represents a maturation and sophistication of our strategic judgment; more importantly, it adapts and clarifies defense policies of a different time and slower world to the exigencies of the present and the challenges of the future.

Questions concerning the role and use of armed force by a democratic state within a turbulent, pluralistic world are central, vital, and absolutely fundamental as never before. War has always been the ultimate political act, but threats to our sovereignty have now become increasingly gray, obscuring clear lines of war and peace by means of terrorism, uncertain alliances, and hidden intentions. It is the irony of the present era that assassinations, bombings, and technology theft are facilitated by the very freedoms totalitarian forces seek to destroy.

While strategic nuclear war remains a real concern, this is the least likely security

contingency we face. Instead, most challenges to US sovereignty and interests lie at the lower end of the conflict spectrum, the significance of which democratic nation-states have traditionally been unwilling or unable adequately to grasp. Added to the ambiguity of the ever-changing strategic environment is the fourth dimension of military affairs, space. In the days ahead, the all-enveloping nature of security challenges facing the West will increasingly intrude upon our lives, making us less rather than more secure.

The Weinberger policy statement represents an operational guide for a future in which purposefully cumbersome democratic states must coexist with totalitarian states unencumbered by public opinion and individual freedoms. As Mr. Weinberger has observed, the responsible use of military force is a moral issue, and military power is but one tool among many. For democracies, however, it is most appropriately the final political tool when all else fails.

In his speech, Mr. Weinberger enunciated six criteria to be met before the use of military power is considered appropriate. The quintessential significance of these standards is their role as a catharsis of past debates, doubts, and national trauma. Because of this

thoughtful and far-reaching analysis, these six tests provide positive guidance and direction for meeting future challenges to our security and national interests. The uneasy legacy of Vietnam, more than any single factor or event in this century, has demanded this reappraisal.

THE SIX TESTS

I. *"The United States should not commit forces to combat overseas unless the particular engagement or occasion is deemed vital to our national interest or that of our allies."*²

According to Mr. Weinberger, national interest—ours or our allies'—will determine if the application of force is indeed appropriate. US troops and national will are not to be substituted for those of our allies, nor will the United States become the world's policeman. Allies will be supported with economic and military aid to help in their self-defense, but national interest will be the measure by which this decision is made. Nor will the United States announce in advance, as with Korea in 1950, that particular regions are beyond our strategic perimeter.

From the beginning of the Vietnam War, there was no agreement on what was at stake and which US national interests, if any, were involved. The 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution explicitly stated that the peace and security of Southeast Asia were "vital" to US national interests. Many similar references to US "interests" and "objectives" led to a "verbal extravagance" which confused both American policymakers and the public at large as to the issues at stake and their priority.³

By being clear about whether a possible interest is vital—that is, a goal or purpose of such significance to justify the use of national power for its defense or attainment—the term provides a useful measure with which to evaluate critically the justification for and results of actions taken on its behalf.⁴ To those who led the nation in the early years of the Vietnam War, the conflict was viewed as essential to our security, to our allies, and to South Vietnam. Yet only the President can

truly define and defend that determination. In the end, the case was neither defined nor defended well.

By making it imperative that a national security problem be analyzed to determine if it indeed represents a vital national interest, Mr. Weinberger has made explicit a consideration which was never clear during the Vietnam era. This very important factor, seen over the litany of Vietnam pathos, is the first of the six criteria which validate the use of force in the current era.

II. *"If we decide it is necessary to put combat troops into a given situation, we should do so wholeheartedly, and with the clear intention of winning. If we are unwilling to commit the forces or resources necessary to achieve our objectives, we should not commit them at all."*

If a vital national interest requires committing US troops to combat, the force so committed must be of sufficient size and strength to assure victory. Once this decision has been made, there can be no question of our resolve to win. Military force will not be incrementally drawn into combat, a strategy "which almost always means the use of insufficient force."

In many respects, the conduct of the Vietnam War represented the antithesis of

Lieutenant Colonel David T. Twining is Director of Soviet and East European Studies in the Department of National Security, US Army War College. He is a Soviet foreign area officer and a strategist. Colonel Twining is a graduate of Michigan State University and holds an M.P.A. from Syracuse University and an M.A. in Russian Area Studies from Georgetown University. He has served as an Infantry officer in the Berlin Brigade and in intelligence assignments during two Vietnam tours. He has been a Soviet/East European political-military analyst in the Defense Intelligence Agency and Executive Officer of the National Military Intelligence Center. Colonel Twining taught Soviet area and strategic studies at the US Army Command and General Staff College, and in 1981 he was appointed Chief of the DIA Liaison Detachment, Canberra, Australia. Prior to his current assignment he was a US Army Senior Service College Fellow at Harvard University.



this policy. The United States won every major tactical engagement, yet lost the war. Because of a fear of direct Chinese and Soviet involvement, US objectives were cast in negative terms of preventing the fall of South Vietnam rather than in positive terms of defeating the source of the insurgency, North Vietnam. This produced what has been called an “unimaginative strategy of attrition and cautious escalation which yielded unsatisfactory results in the long term.”⁵

By restricting the military means in pursuit of limited objectives, the United States fought a war of attrition which corresponded to the enemy’s strategic doctrine, first published in 1947 and reissued by Hanoi in 1960. This doctrine sought a protracted war. According to Truong Chin, the preeminent North Vietnamese theoretician, “The guiding principle of the strategy of our whole resistance must be to prolong the war.” This would lower enemy morale, unite the North Vietnamese people, increase outside support, and encourage the antiwar movement to tie the enemy’s hands. “To achieve all these results, the war must be prolonged, and we must have time. Time works for us.”⁶ This strategy worked against the French and, with time, it would be effective against the Americans.

Colonel Harry G. Summers, Jr., author of the profound analysis of the Vietnam War *On Strategy*, has asserted that the United States failed to concentrate its efforts on the source of the conflict—Hanoi—and mistakenly pursued the symptom of the war—the guerrilla. Because of the failure of our strategic military doctrine, “It was four North Vietnamese Army corps, not ‘dialectical materialism,’ that ultimately conquered South Vietnam.” While guerrilla forces distracted US forces in a tactic of trading space for time, time ran out for an army committed to using restricted means to achieve limited, negative objectives. This permitted regular North Vietnamese forces to achieve a decisive victory following the US withdrawal.⁷

The failure of US military professionals to understand the dynamics of the Vietnam

War, Summers observed, has led to continuing confusion over tactics and strategy. By failing to achieve decisive victory over the source of the war, “North Vietnam’s tactical failures did not prevent their strategic success, and in strategic terms people’s war *was* a success.” The victorious strategy in this, as in all wars, has not changed. “Carrying the war to the enemy and the destruction of his armed forces and his will to fight through the strategic offensive is the classic way wars are fought and won.”⁸

III. *“If we do decide to commit forces to combat overseas, we should have clearly defined political and military objectives. And we should know precisely how our forces can accomplish those clearly defined objectives. And we should have, and send, the forces needed to do just that.”*

The failure to pursue victory—destroying the enemy’s forces and will to fight in order to achieve the political objective for which victory is sought—has been termed the essence of our strategic failure in Vietnam.⁹ Because the Clausewitzian political aim of war is the quintessential goal and war is its means, political and military objectives contributing to that end may never be considered in isolation of one another.¹⁰ Yet this was done in Vietnam in much the same way as it was during previous conflicts in which American forces were employed. In reviewing the mixed results victory had brought the United States following World War II, former Secretary of Defense James Forrestal declared, “The great mistakes were made during the war because of American failure to realize that military and political action had to go hand in hand.”¹¹

The essential unity of political and military objectives in pursuit of the ultimate political object of war was not readily apparent during the Vietnam era. The tendency of Americans to view military and political operations as separate, compartmented functions eventually proved fatal against an enemy with a clear understanding of its objectives and their contribution to the war’s ultimate political aim. Hanoi, which saw its

military struggle in the South as the intermediate stage of broader regional political ambitions, had little to fear from those who saw only the limited military struggle as threatening.¹²

Since US military and political objectives were never clear—largely because victory in the classic sense was not sought and the war's relevance to the national interest was clouded at best—the enemy retained the initiative. Until 1969, when the sanctuaries were first invaded, bombing became more aggressive, Vietnamization was emphasized, and pacification began to show real progress, the war was in “a state of perpetual motion. It could have gone on forever.” As S. L. A. Marshall observed, “Once the commitment was made, the war need not have been muddled through to indecisive and nationally convulsive conclusions in a manner wholly unworthy of a great power.”¹³

Because political and military objectives were not clearly enunciated, the United States was placed in a position of reacting to North Vietnamese political and military actions. This led to widespread confusion in Vietnam, among US allies, and among the American people. Even 20 years following the introduction of American troops at Da Nang, the misunderstanding and confusion over US objectives persist.

While Hanoi “skillfully combined political and military means in pursuit of clearly defined political objectives to exploit the problems of a democracy in conducting a distant war,” things were less satisfactory for Washington. After the war, former Vice President Hubert Humphrey wrote, “We seem to have gotten things in reverse order. We all know that knowledge is power, but in Vietnam we acted as though power gave us knowledge. Therein, possibly, lay our greatest mistake.”¹⁴ Because the United States failed to define and adopt consistent and clear strategic objectives leading to the political end for which the war was fought, we were condemned to tactical rather than strategic success.¹⁵

The failure to translate US tactical success, accomplished with such valor and sacrifice, to strategic success is our most

enduring failure of the war. Because we did not adequately define our objectives or comprehend the role of battlefield success in contributing to larger strategic goals, the aims for which the Vietnam War was fought were never within our grasp.

IV. *“The relationship between our objectives and the forces we have committed—their size, composition, and disposition—must be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary.”*

The conditions and objectives of a conflict inevitably change, and this requires that combat requirements be adjusted accordingly. National leaders must conduct a continuous assessment to determine whether the conflict is indeed in the national interest and if military force is appropriate for its resolution. If the assessment concludes this is the case, victory must then be sought. If not, as Mr. Weinberger states, “we should not be in combat.”

One of the major lessons of Vietnam is the necessity to conduct a continuous and honest review of the premises underlying a particular national policy. This implies a willingness to accept responsibility in the case of policy failure, when it becomes apparent that the price for a specific policy has become unacceptable. In Vietnam, the driving premise of containing communist expansion led successive Presidents to accept a growing commitment to South Vietnam without fully determining if US vital interests were involved or, if so, had changed. Once the United States became heavily involved, the need to preserve national prestige overrode any intrinsic importance of South Vietnam itself.¹⁶

A continuous assessment of objectives and requisite military forces requires a receptivity to a spectrum of possible ideas and views, particularly by the President. According to Townsend Hoopes, President Lyndon Johnson primarily relied on a small circle of advisors among whom the premises of US involvement were seen as a choice between appeasement or military resolve. Hoopes has said that no one saw the need to redefine US interests or to question the basic

requirement to counter communism forcefully. "To the President's men in early 1965," Hoopes said, "there seemed no logical stopping point between isolationism and globalism."¹⁷

This prevailing atmosphere led to the suppression of dissenting views, an attitude that originated not in the bureaucracies but with the President and his key advisors. According to Richard Holbrooke, "They knew what they wanted to hear, and they took steps which squeezed other points of view out of the reporting system." This prevented the bureaucracies from carrying out their role of promoting continuity in policy and noting the risks particular decisions hold for larger policy positions. Because broad strategic issues were not adequately debated, the President's ultimate vulnerability before history was vastly increased.¹⁸

When reflecting on the entire Vietnam experience, one must agree with David M. Abshire, who noted, "The foremost lesson is that wise decisions on foreign intervention require a constant accommodation of means to ends and of strategy to objectives."¹⁹ This constant assessment process, the adjustment of means to ends, forces to objectives, is culminated by a single act of courage and supreme statesmanship: admitting, when judged to be appropriate by the most senior authorities, that "we should not be in combat."²⁰

V. *"Before the United States commits combat forces abroad, there must be some reasonable assurance we will have the support of the American people and their elected representatives in Congress. This support cannot be achieved unless we are candid in making clear the threats we face; the support cannot be sustained without continuing and close consultation."*

No war—whether the tragedy of Vietnam or the quick victory in Grenada—can receive a guarantee of public support in advance of military action. What is desired, however, is the reasonable expectation that the American people and their elected representatives will understand the necessity

for action when the case for it has been clearly made. This requires effective, decisive action by a chief executive who acts in what he believes to be the national interest. This also requires a frank dialogue between the executive and legislative branches over the nature of the threat prompting the military intervention. The American people have always supported a President who acts in a timely manner to serve or protect what are perceived to be vital national interests.

The Vietnam War proved, if anything, the validity of this basic principle: that the domestic environment must be considered when troops are to be committed to combat in a foreign land and, once committed, that close, continuous, and candid consultation with the American people and with Congress must be maintained.²¹ If Grenada has shown the merits of the effective, responsible use of military power, Vietnam, according to Secretary of State George Shultz, "shows that public support can be frittered away if we do not act wisely and effectively."²²

In prosecuting the Vietnam War, President Johnson made the deliberate decision not to mobilize the national will of the American people by seeking a declaration of war from Congress. As a result, maintaining public support for the war and its rising costs became increasingly difficult—a strategic lesson that was lost on neither Hanoi nor many in Washington. In a 14 October 1966 top secret memorandum to Secretary of Defense McNamara, General Earle G. Wheeler noted that "communist leaders in both North and South Vietnam expect to win this war in Washington, just as they won the war with France in Paris. In this regard, the Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that there is reason for such expectations on the part of the communist leadership."²³ As General Lewis M. Walt later wrote, "American opinion has been as much a target in this war as an enemy soldier in the sights of a rifle."²⁴

While a reprehensible attack such as Pearl Harbor or some other clear act of war that inflames public sentiment makes the issue of public support less problematic, few national leaders expect future tests of the

national will to be this clear-cut. Instead, there are many less-distinct contingencies in which a President must act, where a *reasonable* assurance of support is sought. As Mr. Weinberger has observed, future challenges will be mostly gray, precisely the most troublesome national security problems with which democracies must deal. This uncertainty does not preclude a decisive response; it only makes it more difficult.

The burden of decision is never easy for a democracy, particularly a world power which is judged by both its action and its inaction.²⁵ History is replete with acts of courage, and the future will call for more. While the Vietnam era may not have been our proudest moment, it has inextricably linked the requirement of public support to the commitment of US troops for foreign combat.

VI. *"The commitment of US forces to combat should be a last resort."*

The resort to military force by a democracy, particularly its American variant, is not just a deliberate, rational decision, but a moral one as well. This stems not from the purpose for which a war is conducted, but from its nature. As Clausewitz has succinctly stated, "The character of battle, like its name, is slaughter, and its price is blood."²⁶

General John A. Wickham, Jr., US Army Chief of Staff, has said that in a future war soldiers must know that the conflict in which they are engaged is important to their country. Because the commitment of troops to combat is inevitably a moral decision, the nation has a moral responsibility to its troops. According to General Wickham, "Once we commit force, we must be prepared to back it up and win as opposed to just sending soldiers into operations for limited goals."²⁷

Until man's inherent propensity toward violence is more fully restrained, governments will continue to consider armed conflict an option of state policy. However, the maintenance of standing armies and their use in the course of relations with other nations is a necessity democratic governments would prefer to avoid. To state explicitly that

US forces will be deployed in combat as a last resort is to acknowledge John Keegan's assertion that the essence of armies lies not in what they "are," but in what they "do": the "infliction of human suffering through violence," of "combat *corps à corps*."²⁸

In this view, no responsible person starts a war without clearly knowing what is to be achieved—its political purpose—and how it is to be conducted—its operational objective. These, in turn, establish the "scale of means and effort" required to attain the ultimate political objective.²⁹ In Vietnam, the ultimate objective was never clear, its operational corollary was obscure, and the scale of effort was imprecisely defined.

This failure of strategic analysis during the Vietnam War produced a confusion of ends and means, of scale and utility. In an effort to limit US and South Vietnamese casualties, firepower was substituted for manpower. Over eight million tons of munitions—three times that dropped on both Europe and Japan during the Second World War—were expended in the Vietnam War.³⁰ In one extreme example, as many as 1000 sorties and the loss of 95 aircraft were required before laser-guided bombs downed North Vietnam's Thanh Hoa bridge on 13 May 1972, after more than seven years of effort.³¹ During the 1967-68 siege at Khe Sanh, more than 75,000 tons of ordnance were dropped from B-52 aircraft over a nine-week period—the most explosives dumped on a tactical target in history.³²

The war cost the United States \$165 billion, representing only direct costs of the war rather than the total expense of US military programs and indirect costs to the American government and society. Another \$24 billion was expended on aid to the South Vietnamese government between 1955 and 1975.³³ Robert Komer has estimated that the United States spent more on intelligence than North Vietnam spent on the entire war.³⁴ Soviet support to Hanoi is believed to have cost no more than one-thirtieth the sum the United States expended annually; for Moscow, it was a low-cost, low-risk strategy.³⁵

No statistics are more sensitive to a democracy than combat casualties. To those

affected by the deaths of over 58,000 Americans, the trauma of nearly 2500 missing in action, and the pain of 300,000 wounded, the cost will always be too high.³⁶ The scars of this war 8000 miles from the American mainland persist, yet it is the loss of its own to which each country, parent, spouse, and child is drawn. The number of North Vietnamese and Viet Cong dead is far higher, some 925,000,³⁷ but the difference in societal values and the manner in which the popular will is translated into national deeds of armed combat make Western nations particularly sensitive to casualties, especially their own. For democratic nations, it is this human cost and sense of individual worth it represents—more than any other factor—that makes the commitment of US forces to combat truly a last resort.

CONCLUSION: DEMOCRACIES AND LIMITED WAR

Implicit in most analyses of the Vietnam War is that democracies lack the will and the means required to maintain a protracted struggle under contemporary conditions. The usefulness of the six major tests enunciated by Mr. Weinberger is that they acknowledge that the spectrum of threat now faced by the United States has complicated but not negated the possibility of an appropriate, measured response. This is consistent with the Clausewitzian principles of war, which recognize that every period has its own unique form of conflict, with particular constraints and preconceptions. This requires that threats which give rise to hostile acts must be analyzed and, in the current era, accommodated by defense policy.³⁸

The contemporary spectrum of conflict with which we are confronted has as its source what Harlan Cleveland terms “the disintegration of national governance.”³⁹ The limited ability of many national governments to cope with social resentment and frustrated expectations has created new opportunities for those seeking radical change through widespread disorder and state-sponsored terrorism. The record of such change since

World War II reflects a declining number of democratic states amidst a growing number of centrally controlled, single-party, authoritarian and totalitarian states with disenfranchised, mobilized populations. To adapt to this new reality requires a forward-looking defense policy capable of recognizing military objectives within the larger political milieu and decisively responding to them.

Clausewitz taught that war is the continuation of politics and that armed force is but a means of state policy contributing to the ultimate political objective. It is this political purpose which determines the nature of the military instrument selected as well as its use. A vigorous and ambitious policy requires a more absolute and active military effort; a subtle policy requires a more precise military means. Policy will determine the character of the war but not its operational details; “the posting of guards or the employment of patrols” is best left to those responsible for securing the military objective.⁴⁰ The tailoring of military means to meet political aims is the challenge of contemporary defense policy. It was the strategic failure of policymakers and strategists of the Vietnam era that this was not appropriately done.

It is the political objective of our potential adversaries that lies at the heart of the current defense challenge facing the United States. Military weapons such as the 441 Soviet SS-20s and their vast destructive power mask the larger political challenge they represent. The uniquely pragmatic prism through which Americans view the world and interpret its events has obscured the more enduring, and perhaps more sophisticated, political aims of those intent upon our destruction. George Kennan has decried the “almost exclusive militarization of thinking” by which US officials view the Soviet challenge. At the same time, Norman Podhoretz has spoken of the “politically pampered American experience” as responsible for our strategic naiveté.⁴¹

Did the United States understand the political nature of the Vietnam War? Robert Komer has acknowledged that “Hanoi was far wiser than we in seeing the struggles as

essentially a seamless web, a political, military, economic, ideological, and psychological conflict."⁴² General Vo Nguyen Giap, in reviewing the Tet Offensive after the war, indicated much the same: "For us, you know, there is no such thing as a single strategy. Ours is always a synthesis, simultaneously military, political, and diplomatic—which is why, quite clearly, the Tet offensive had multiple objectives."⁴³ The failure to comprehend and counter Hanoi's political objectives, from which its subordinate goals flowed, led the United States to concentrate on the military challenge to the detriment of the larger political war.

The legacy of this failure has been the incremental expansion of a harsh mechanism of oligarchic rule supported by Soviet military power. To focus exclusively on that military power, however, will overlook Moscow's political objectives in the Western Hemisphere and in the larger world. The success of the USSR's low-cost, low-risk strategy during the Vietnam War and the subsequent consolidation of ties with Hanoi have undoubtedly convinced the Soviet leadership to pursue similar efforts elsewhere, in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. According to Jean-Francois Revel, this is an unprecedented period in which communist inefficiency does not prevent the expansion of a centrally directed and controlled system of power.⁴⁴

The political utility of the expanded Soviet military presence has given client states the confidence to act with relative impunity. In Central America, this has led Nicaragua to evacuate peasants from rural areas to create free-fire zones and strategic hamlets, and to conduct search-and-destroy operations against opposition forces with interior lines of communication and external sanctuaries.⁴⁵ Those who see this situation as "another Vietnam" would do better to identify whether Nicaragua is akin to Vietnam's North or South. To those who believe poverty and political oppression created the conditions leading to the political crisis in Grenada before the US intervention, a review of documents captured there should dispel the myth of revolutionary spontaneity.⁴⁶

Mr. Weinberger's reasoned and thought-provoking criteria for the use of military force acknowledge the growing political utility of Soviet military power in all its permutations. By placing the role of armed force in its proper strategic perspective, Mr. Weinberger addresses the larger political threat to our way of life posed by Soviet and proxy military power. He also acknowledges a future in which a proliferation of external unrest and the reality of Soviet global ambitions pose grave risks to our way of life at all levels of the conflict spectrum.

Mr. Weinberger's six criteria for the use of military force will not endanger American democracy, but will foster it at home and abroad. The criteria recognize that US military strategy must have a political aim and that this larger aim, for ourselves and for our potential adversaries, determines security or threat, friend or foe. As long as our basic freedoms remain intact, these guidelines will permit thoroughly democratic means to be mobilized properly and appropriately against those seeking anti-democratic ends. The will and the power for this purpose are thereby strengthened.

There have been in the 20th century two kinds of revolution: the totalitarian revolution and the democratic revolution. The first one has been an abysmal failure, the second a reasonable success—but only the people who live under totalitarianism know this.⁴⁷

NOTES

1. Richard Halloran, "U.S. Will Not Drift Into Combat Role, Weinberger Says," *The New York Times*, 29 November 1984, p. 1.

2. Caspar W. Weinberger, "The Use of Force and the National Will," *Baltimore Sun*, 3 December 1984, p. 11. All six tests and their detailed descriptions are from this source.

3. BDM Corporation, *A Study of Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam*, Vol. 3: *U.S. Foreign Policy and Vietnam, 1945-1975*; 8 vols. (McLean, Va.: BDM Corporation, 1980), p. 1-42.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-1 to 4-3.

5. W. Scott Thompson and Donaldson D. Frizzell, eds., *The Lessons of Vietnam* (New York: Crane, Russak, 1977), p. 15. Representative John McCain paid an emotional visit to Hanoi in early 1985, where he had spent 5½ years as a US prisoner of war. In discussing the major result of the trip,

he described it in terms of the loss of close friends with whom he had served. "My thinking about them again reinforces my opinion that the United States should not send its young men to fight and die in a conflict unless the goal is victory." "Inside Vietnam: What a Former POW Found," *U.S. News and World Report*, 11 March 1985, p. 34.

6. Truong Chin, *Primer for Revolt: The Communist Takeover in Viet-Nam* (New York: Praeger, 1963), pp. 111-12. Truong Chin at one time was the Secretary-General of the Vietnamese Communist Party and Vice Premier of North Vietnam.

7. Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War* (New York: Dell, 1984), p. 123; also pp. 114-28.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 130-31; p. 249.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 46. See also Sir Robert Thompson in *Lessons of Vietnam*, pp. 98-99.

10. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976), p. 87.

11. Anne Armstrong, "Shortsighted and Destructive," in *The Roosevelt Diplomacy and World War II*, ed. Robert Dallek (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970), p. 95.

12. Edward Lansdale, "Contradictions in Military Culture," in *Lessons of Vietnam*, pp. 42-43.

13. Robert Thompson in *Lessons of Vietnam*, p. 100; S. L. A. Marshall, "Thoughts on Vietnam," in *ibid.*, p. 55.

14. David M. Abshire, "Lessons of Vietnam: Proportionality and Credibility," in *The Vietnam Legacy: The War, American Society and the Future of American Foreign Policy*, ed. Anthony Lake (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1976), p. 396; Hubert Humphrey, "Building on the Past: Lessons for a Future Foreign Policy," in *ibid.*, p. 364.

15. Summers, p. 152.

16. BDM Corporation, *Strategic Lessons*, Vol. 3: *U.S. Foreign Policy and Vietnam, 1945-1975*, p. EX-6; pp. 3-56 to 3-57. Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt has written that Vietnam in the early 1960s was not vital to our national interests, but it later became so "because we had linked our sacred national honor to it." Elmo R. Zumwalt, "Costing the Vietnamese War," in *Lessons of Vietnam*, pp. 201-02.

17. Townsend Hoopes, *The Limits of Intervention* (New York: Longman, 1978), pp. 7-16.

18. Richard Holbrooke, "Presidents, Bureaucrats, and Something In-Between," in *Vietnam Legacy*, pp. 162-63. Holbrooke noted that the JCS probably raised strategic issues more than anyone, but that their rigid stance caused their positions to be discounted in advance. *Ibid.*, p. 163.

19. Abshire, "Lessons of Vietnam," in *Vietnam Legacy*, pp. 392-93.

20. Weinberger, p. 11.

21. BDM Corporation, *Strategic Lessons*, Vol. 4: *U.S. Domestic Factors Influencing Vietnam War Policy Making*, p. EX-9.

22. George Shultz, "The Ethics of Power," address at Yeshiva University, 9 December 1984, US Department of State, *Current Policy*, No. 642 (Washington: GPO, 1984), p. 3.

23. US Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Actions Recommended for Vietnam," Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, JSCM-672-66, 14 October 1966, p. 2.

24. Lewis M. Walt, *Strange War, Strange Strategy: A General's Report on Vietnam* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1970), p. 200. Former President Nixon has written, "In the end, Vietnam was lost on the political front in the United

States, not on the battlefield in Southeast Asia." Richard Nixon, *No More Vietnams* (New York: Arbor House, 1985), p. 15.

25. Shultz, p. 3.

26. Clausewitz, p. 259.

27. George C. Wilson, "War's Lessons Struck Home," *The Washington Post*, 16 April 1985, p. A9.

28. John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1978), p. 28. One former battalion commander in Vietnam said, "Remember, we're watchdogs you unchain to eat up the burglar. Don't ask us to be mayors or sociologists worrying about hearts and minds. Let us eat up the burglar our own way and then put us back on the chain." Wilson, p. A9.

29. Clausewitz, p. 579.

30. Robert Komer in *Lessons of Vietnam*, p. 96.

31. Robert Thompson in *Lessons of Vietnam*, p. 104.

32. Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 540.

33. Charles Mohr, "History and Hindsight: Lessons from Vietnam," *The New York Times*, 30 April 1985, p. A6, citing *The Vietnam Experience*, Vol. 1 (Boston: Boston Publishing Co., 1981, and US Defense Department).

34. Komer in *Lessons of Vietnam*, p. 270.

35. William Zimmerman, "The Korean and Vietnam Wars," in Stephen S. Kaplan, *Diplomacy of Power: Soviet Armed Forces as a Political Instrument* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1981), p. 355.

36. Tom Morganthau, et al., "We're Still Prisoners of War," *Newsweek*, 15 April 1985, p. 35; "Hanoi-U.S. Relations Still Icy," *U.S. News and World Report*, 26 August 1985, p. 27. See also Jeffrey Record, "Casualties," *Baltimore Sun*, 26 February 1985, p. 13.

37. Richard Butwell, "Vietnam War," *Encyclopedia Americana*, 1984 international ed., Vol. 28, p. 112b.

38. Clausewitz, p. 593.

39. Harlan Cleveland, "Defining Security: A Sober Threat Analysis," *The Inter Dependent*, (November-December 1983), p. 3.

40. Clausewitz, pp. 605-06.

41. Steven J. Dryden, "U.S. Says Soviets Adding SS20s Despite Freeze," *The Washington Post*, 18 September 1985, p. A23; Ronald Steel, "The Statesman of Survival," *Esquire* (January 1985), p. 72; Norman Podhoretz, "The Present Danger," *Commentary*, 79 (March 1980), 39.

42. Robert Komer, "Was There Another Way?" in *Lessons of Vietnam*, p. 211. Bernard Brodie, reflecting on the Vietnam War in 1972, wrote much the same: "Our failures there have been at least 95 percent due to our incomprehension and inability to cope with the political dimensions of the problem." Bernard Brodie, "Why Were We So (Strategically) Wrong?" *Military Review*, 52 (June 1972), 44.

43. Karnow, p. 535.

44. Jean-Francois Revel, *How Democracies Perish*, trans. William Byron (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), pp. 353-55.

45. "Sandinistas Forcing Thousands Out of War Zone," *The New York Times*, 19 March 1985, p. A11.

46. Paul Seabury and Walter A. McDougall, eds. *The Grenada Papers* (San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1984).

47. Jean-Francois Revel in "Letters from Readers," *Commentary*, 78 (October 1984), 22.

