

An Idea, and Bullets: A Rice Roots Exploration of Why No French, American, or South Vietnamese General Could Ever Have Brought Victory in

Vietnam

William Haponski



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This book on the Vietnam War is unique and critically timely. The author commanded a large armored cavalry task force in Vietnam and, having lost wonderful young men, needed to answer the question: What was this decades-long war about--really about? The answer is that it was about independence and unification. Vietnamese had struggled for 2,000 years to throw off the foreign yoke, and, since the end of World War II it was also about unification of the three parts of their country into one Vietnam. Independence and unification--they would not give up the idea, no matter what the sacrifice, no matter how long the struggle. Military historian Lieutenant General Dave R. Palmer said, "Haponski has examined the war exhaustively for half a century, at every level from his first-hand experience to post-doctoral research. The result is an absorbing blend ranging from the deeply personal to the academically professional. He has created a multidimensional narrative, at once alive and lucid." The highest-ranking officer in the French Army, a soldier who commanded and fought in Vietnam 20 years before the author, General of the Army Jean Delaunay said, "This is a magnificent work! Against a background of 2,000 years of Vietnamese struggle for independence, Haponski probes the causes of French, American, and Vietnamese foundering and the ultimate success of the North Vietnamese." The book is timely in that from the rice roots of the Vietnamese experience, readers will reach a better understanding of not just the war that so engulfed America and the world a half-century ago, but why in today's global war on terrorism our civilian and military leaders need to be well grounded in the basics of the tragic waste that was Vietnam.

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