



A War Too Long: The USAF in Southeast Asia 1961-1975: Vietnam War, Laos and Cambodia, Communist Challenge, LeMay Ignored, Kennedy and Johnson, Escalation, Rolling Thunder, Pathet Lao, Linebacker

U.S. Government, U.S. Military, Department of Defense, U.S. Air Force (USAF)

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Professionally converted for accurate flowing-text e-book format reproduction, this U.S. Air Force (USAF) book is an exceptionally readable and interesting overview of the role of air power in the Vietnam War and the conflict in Southeast Asia. The Air Force instinctively disliked the slow, gradual way the United States prosecuted its war against the Vietnamese communists. While Americans undoubtedly delayed a communist victory in South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia long enough to spare Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries a similar fate, the American public grew very tired of this war years before its dismal conclusion. Due to questionable political policies and decision-making, only sporadic and relatively ineffective use had been made of air power's ability to bring great force to bear quickly and decisively. The United States and its Air Force experienced a decade of frustration made more painful by the losses of its personnel killed, wounded, or taken prisoner. Fighting resolutely and courageously, the Air Force played the decisive role in forcing North Vietnam to the peace table in 1973. The demands of the Vietnam War forced new developments such as laser-guided-bombs that would eventually radically transform the shape of air warfare.

Kennedy and his advisers concluded that, in comparison to Laos, South Vietnam afforded a more favorable battleground in what they viewed as a worldwide struggle against communist-inspired insurrections. President Diem, despite challenges by armed political factions and mutinous army officers, had remained in power since 1954 as prime minister or president, and American military advisers already were in place with the South Vietnamese armed forces. Moreover, Kennedy believed, incorrectly as was soon revealed, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization had a special interest in the independence of the Republic of Vietnam. Logic therefore persuaded the youthful Kennedy to choose the more stable nation of South Vietnam as the site of a major American effort to contain communism.

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