

Robert D. Schulzinger, **A Time for Peace. The Legacy of the Vietnam War.** New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. 252 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-507190-0

Schulzinger's *A Time for Peace: The Legacy of the Vietnam War* tells the story of how the American War in Vietnam has been remembered and the effects different memories have had on current events. Americans and Vietnamese who lived through the decades-long fighting remembered the war as an experience that shaped their lives, their outlooks, their beliefs, and their feelings. More than a generation in both countries viewed some aspects of contemporary war, politics, foreign affairs and culture through the prism of their memories of the Vietnam-American War. These memories have not been fixed, and they have altered over time. Nor did the world stop when the Vietnam War ended with the Communist victory in April 1975. International affairs went forward, and the United States and Vietnam adjusted to changing circumstances over the next twenty-five years. Some of these changes were among the most dramatic in modern history as the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union collapsed.

The book is divided into four parts. Part I, "International Affairs," tells how the United States and Vietnam went from enmity to reconciliation from 1975 to 2000. Along the way, international alliances shifted and ideologies changed and sometimes dissolved. Eventually, the United States and Vietnam found they had great incentives to reach common ground. Part II, "Veterans and Vietnamese Americans," recounts the ways in which American veterans of the Vietnam War and Vietnamese who fled their country for the United States in the years after 1975 assimilated their experiences in the present. The veterans' and Vietnamese experiences helped shape postwar beliefs and memories about the war. Part III, "Cultural Legacies," analyzes the most popular of the hundreds of movies, TV shows, novels and memoirs of the Vietnam era. These representations of the war helped determine the meaning of the war in the minds of Americans in the postwar era. Finally, Part IV, "Conclusion: Political Echoes of a War," consists of one chapter, "The Living Legacy of the Vietnam War," which explicitly explains the ways in which American policymakers and ordinary citizens learned a variety of different lessons from the Vietnam war and how they applied those lessons in the conduct of their current affairs.

A Time for Peace tries to consolidate the findings of much of the existing literature on the legacy of the Vietnam War. Schulzinger's interpretation of the legacy of the Vietnam War, like that of many of writers who have dealt with subject, is that it represented a national trauma for the United States, a psychological shock like the Civil War, the Great Depression, and World War II. Vietnam shook some of the basic shared assumptions Americans held about the honesty and competence of their leaders and the wisdom and morality of their actions in foreign affairs. But they disagreed about the memory, the lessons of the war, the integrity of public institutions, and their country's role in the world. Recollections of the war became focal points of many divisions over how Americans should conduct their affairs in the present.

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