

Book Review

by Stuart S. Malawer

TO OPPOSE ANY FOE—The Legacy of U.S. Intervention in Vietnam.

Edited by Ross A. Fisher, John Norton Moore and Robert F. Turner. (Carolina Academic Press, 2006)

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and success of liberty.

—From John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address, January 21, 1961.

How dated this quote now sounds: "To assure the survival and success of liberty." Didn't that attitude get us into Vietnam, and now Iraq? Isn't the foe today global terrorism, not another nation? This book examines the influences of the Vietnam War on contemporary policy issues. The editors intend that the reader assess the Zeitgeist of the Vietnam era and its implication for American foreign policy almost a half a century later.

Most of the book's essays were written for a fifteen-year University of Virginia Law School seminar on the Indochina War. Professors John Norton Moore and Robert F. Turner, cofounders of the U.Va. Center for National Security Law, taught the seminar.

The book contains three sections assessing the historical, legal and contemporary aspects of the U.S. intervention in Vietnam. The historical section of the Vietnam legacy contains essays on the Kennedy administration, global security, the Paris Agreement, and the Khmer Rouge and Cambodia. The legal legacy section has essays on early legal advice, naval interception and command responsibility (My Lai). The third segment on con-

temporary policies has essays on gradualism and Somalia.

The book could have benefited from a general conclusion about the implications of Vietnam on current policy. Nevertheless, the individual essays are uniformly excellent and present an informative interdisciplinary discussion of the Vietnam War's aftermath. Ross Fisher, in his insightful and chilling essay on the Kennedy administration and the overthrow of President Ngo Dinh Diem, concludes that had Diem lived, American involvement in Vietnam would have been substantially different. How many American lives could have been saved if that had been the case?