

From Enemy to Friend: A North Vietnamese Perspective on the War

Bui Tin

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In a question and answer format that simulates an in-depth interview, Bui Tin, a former colonel in the North Vietnamese Army shares his insights into many aspects of the Vietnam War. Once a presidential palace guard for Ho Chi Minh and a participant in the decisive battle of the French-Indochina War at Dien Bien Phu, he later served as a frontline commander and war correspondent in the fighting against the United States. In 1973 Colonel Tin was an official spokesman for the North Vietnamese delegation that arranged the return of American POWs and rode a tank onto the presidential palace grounds in Saigon to accept the South Vietnamese surrender. In September 1990, he left Vietnam to reside in Paris, where he has become a leading critic of the Hanoi leadership.

Believing that a dialogue between old enemies is both desirable and necessary for the well being of the two nations, Bui Tin is open-minded and candid in his views about the policies and operations of the Vietnamese and U.S. governments. In the book he addresses such matters as the performance of U.S. military forces, varying strategies that might have yielded different outcomes, and the degree of involvement by the Soviet Union and Communist China along with a thought-provoking analysis of the long struggle that eventually brought his side victory but, ultimately, personal disappointment and alienation. To enhance the dialogue, some of his views are supported and others are challenged in a stimulating foreword by the Emmy Award-winning writer, former secretary of the Navy, and outspoken Vietnam War hero, James Webb. The result is a book that offers a rare glimpse into the mind of an enemy we never fully understood.



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