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No Exit From Vietnam

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predicament. A brief glance at recent American commitments raises the primary question in this volume, whether the decisions of war shall be made almost exclusively by the President or by the President and with the consent and support of Congress. Mr. Pusey then proceeds to establish the necessary background to answer the query. He points out the fundamental principles of the Constitution with regard to Congress and war power and traces the decline of the restraints that the Founding Fathers put upon warmaking. A detailed discussion of several recent examples (Korean conflict, Formosa, Cuba, Tonkin Gulf) demonstrates the author's concern about the awesome power which the President can wield in committing U.S. forces, if he is not checked by the Congress.

The author states that although "Declaration of War" as previously known may now be obsolete, it is apparent that a need exists for a new format which will properly delineate the exercise of this power in keeping with the realities of today. What follows is an argument for a War Power Act which would correctly stipulate and implement the respective powers of the Commander in Chief and Congress in the warmaking sphere. Such an act would, he feels, "bury the bizarre concept of inherent executive power to make war. . . ." Mr. Pusey presents a strong case for the dangers of executive power beyond those established in the Constitution. His discussion of the subject appears to be correct, valid, and sound; his writing style is comfortable; and the text is of interest to all readers of this review.

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Thompson, Sir Robert G.K. *No Exit from Vietnam*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1969. 208 p.

This is one of the most dispassionate,

objective, and valid criticisms of the U.S. conduct of the war in Vietnam to come on the scene. Sir Robert Thompson's commentary on the war in Vietnam covers the period February 1965 to November 1968, when "it was fought mainly as an American war." A noted authority on counterinsurgency warfare, Sir Robert directed the British operations in Malaya from 1948 to 1960 and headed the British Advisory Mission to the Government of Vietnam from 1961 to 1965. In discussing the purpose of the book, he notes that he is not offering a judgment for or against American involvement in Vietnam. Rather, "The main theme of this book is whether or not the war was fought in the right way and the power correctly applied."

In criticizing American aggressiveness and impatience, Sir Robert says, "If we plan for a long haul we may get quick results, but if we go for quick results we may at best get a long haul." He expresses the view that the United States sacrificed quality for quantity, attributing this to the basic characteristic of the American people, that of impatience. He is particularly critical of the military command for permitting Vietnam "to become a veritable witch's brew for half-baked ideas." Sir Robert levels his criticism at two major areas: "The failure to understand the nature of the war and the lack of a clear precise aim at limited cost had reduced the options under United States control to escalation or unilateral withdrawal." The contents of the book support clearly and concisely the title (*No Exit from Vietnam*) in that from a policy point of view the United States has no option but to stay in Vietnam for the long haul. In one of his major points, the author indicates the belief that the United States has ignored the political aspects of the Vietnamese war. "Basically the problem in Vietnam was, and still is, that of government in its broadest sense of organization, both in the

116 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

military and civilian administrative structure. This was a problem which the Americans refrained from tackling." Further, he expresses the view that the main reasons for the failure of the U.S. policy in Vietnam during the period 1965-1968 were an obscurity of aim, a failure of strategy, and a lack of control. From these, all other errors stemmed. Sir Robert's solution is simple and direct, requiring clear-cut objectives, constructive aims, and patience—both political and military in nature.

Sir Robert's most biting commentary is that the United States has failed to understand the nature of the conflict in which it is engaged. He describes it as "a People's Revolutionary War" rather than an insurgency or a civil war. The basic misconception, he says, is that the war can be won militarily. He describes U.S. aims in Vietnam as vague; this in turn makes it difficult to provide direction to its efforts.

Sir Robert suggests that the only way out is a long-haul, low-cost war to which the impatient, aggressive Americans will have difficulty accommodating. Yet the costs must be brought into acceptable limits. It is not enough to win the war; it must be won in an acceptable way.

It is my view that now, more than at any time in the past decade, it is vital for the United States to keep its pledge and stand by South Vietnam. There is no exit and the new President does not really have much choice as far as policy is concerned. He does, however, have the opportunity to change the strategy. The American aim should be revised to read: "To establish, at a cost acceptable to the United States, South Vietnam as a free, united and independent country which is politically stable and economically expanding." This does not require a defeat of the North but only that its design to take over the South

should be frustrated. To achieve this aim does, however, leave a long-haul, low-cost strategy as the only option.

This indictment of the American strategy in Vietnam must not be taken lightly; it is extremely perceptive and offers insights into what must be understood and controlled in the American character. This could easily be the most valuable "Lesson Learned" from the United States experience in Vietnam. Sir Robert has written a significant work which is must reading for anyone associated with Defense/State activities.

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Werner, Herbert A., *Iron Coffins*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969. 329 p.

Iron Coffins is a personal account of the war years by one of the very few German U-boat commanders to serve in the submarine force throughout World War II and survive the experience. Herbert A. Werner was a member of the class of 1939 at the Naval Academy in Annapolis. Following a brief period in command of a small minesweeper, he underwent submarine training and reported to his first submarine, U-557, in mid-1941. From that time until the end of the European war in May 1945, he served continuously in submarines, commanding both U-415 and U-953.

It may still be too early, even after more than 25 years, to view the Battle of the Atlantic with detachment and impartiality. It may even be that we should not view it with detachment, for the questions of morality and the rightness and wrongness of causes were inextricably involved, and there is little virtue in moral neutrality. Yet we are at least far enough from the event to recognize that good men fought well, even on behalf of bad causes. In writing the story of the Battle of the Atlantic as it appeared to the men who served in