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Report on TTU Vietnam Center Conference

Jim Bruton

On April 28-29, 2017, I attended a conference at the Texas Tech VN Center entitled 1967: **The Search for Peace.** A new entity at TTU called the Institute for Peace & Conflict co-sponsored this conference. Though participants came and went, I estimate around 60 attendees total. Conference was symposium style with two panels per session, which means I attended only half the presentations. Some talks were less weighty that others. Being highly subjective about this, I'll comment just on the presenters who revealed something new or interesting (to me) or who made a salient point.

The entire first panel "**Understanding 1967 and the Search for Peace**" was excellent starting with retired
AF Colonel **David Lewis**, now a TTU professor. His topic was Understanding VN 1967 through Clausewitz's Trinity. He stated that Vietnam is central to our character as Americans, including both those who opposed and those who supported the war. He reviewed Clausewitz, employing two of the Prussian's trinities that, whether recognized or not, underlie the conduct of inter-state wars.
He compared these trinities of all three principals, the US, GVN, and NVN, to help identify the strength and weakness of each party. GVN, for example, failed to mobilize the passions of its own populace. Hatred and enmity – what if this existed on the US side but much of it was directed against the US government by the anti-war movement? I hope to get a set of his slides.

TTU **Prof Ron Milam** spoke on **1967: The Search for Peace**. This was an expansion of his recent NYT article, "1967: The Era of Big Battles in Vietnam" *(http://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/10/opinion/1967-the-era-of-big-battles-in-vietnam.html?ref=opinion)*. He spoke about Ops Cedar Falls and Junction City, both of which underperformed in terms of intended objectives. The units involved were unable to find COSVN because it was mobile, and the enemy did not allow its large units to engage US units. (As an aside, he mentioned that the Junction City jump of the 173rd Airborne was conducted partly for the folks at home, with WWII Europe in mind, to suggest we were taking the offensive.)

Prof **Kyle Longley**, LBJ scholar from ASU, spoke on **Around the World in War and Peace: Lyndon Johnson's Global Trip, December 1967**. In a fast paced account he described how President Johnson made numerous trips throughout the year to visit our allies, Australia, Thailand, Korea, and VN, and he included US troops along the way. LBJ began speaking of peace and suggested to President Thieu that he meet with the VC about a coalition government. Thieu said he would talk with VC individuals, but not with the organization itself. The long and short of it was that LBJ was looking for a way for the US to disengage.

From the panel "The Soldier Experience in the US & VN, Part I" Marine Col (ret) **Andrew Finlayson** spoke on **The North Vietnamese Planning for the TET Offensive of 1968**. The Communist leadership

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was split over to execute "Plan X, the Tet general Uprising." In a behind-the scene power struggle, hardliners Le Duan and Le Duc Tho sidelined "moderates" Ho and Giap. In this struggle, Nguyen Chi Thanh the VC commanding general and Le Duan protégé visiting Hanoi for planning purposes suffered a suspicious "heart attack." The allies were starting to inflict increasing damage on the communist forces and organization in the South. The ascendant leadership decided that the "correlation of forces" was right for the offensive.

One motivating factor may have been that Hanoi knew of Oplan El Paso, the plan for a multi-divisional operation for the allies to interdict the Ho Chi Minh Trail in the vicinity of Tchepone, Laos, which could have halted PAVN movement into the South. As Finlayson stated, that war was unwinnable unless we seized control of the communist sanctuaries. But until Hanoi archives become accessible there is no clear understanding as to why the Tet Offensive was launched. Though a military fiasco, it proved to be a psychological knockout to the US and change of fortunes for Hanoi.

Finlayson's 18-page paper is available at *http://www.vvfh.org/images/2017TTU/North-Vietnamese-Planning-1967.pdf* and is worth reading for an insightful analysis peppered with new information: i.e., CIA spies reported the Tet planning in December 1967.

From the panel, "The Soldier Experience in the US and VN, Part II", **James Sandy**, TTU Ph.D. candidate, spoke on "**They Were Definitely Looking for US..."; Operation Francis Marion and the False Hope of 1967**. In April '67, the 4th Infantry Division in the Central Highlands around Pleiku launched Operation Francis Marion. Though two brigades were involved, the division placed emphasis on its specially trained Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols. US Special Forces and CIDG also participated. Operation included resettlement of local Montagnards. The concept was for the LRRPs to locate PAVN undetected and for the brigades to engage the enemy forces. One problem was it was often hard for some LRRPs to remain undetected, as PAVN knew the terrain thoroughly. There were five major engagements of the 4th Division with enemy battalions: when the US used heavy firepower, the PAVN slipped across the Cambodian border. After May few enemy battalions were found. Operation Francis Marion ended in October with a supposed 6-to-1 kill ratio. Seen as a sign of progress, this op became a "metric" of sorts of how well the war was going overall. Few noticed that it was PAVN who was dictating when and where the major battles would ensue.

From the panel "Debating the War in the US," Prof **Robert F. Turner**, UVA professor of national security law, gave an extensive Power Point-backed presentation, **Reassessing the Factual Arguments about the Vietnam War as made in 1967**. He countered the oft-repeated "myths" of the war, one after the other. Recommend his slide show from: *http://www.vvfh.org/news-and-events/2017-texas-tech-conference.html* His slides are valuable for anyone wanting to re-argue the war with anyone.

Dinner keynote speaker **Gregory Daddis** (author of No Sure Victory), now at Chapman University, is a retired Army colonel and former West Point instructor. His topic: Words of War: **The Strategic Discourse of America's Vietnam Experience.** He defended Westmoreland against the generally negative assessment, namely that he employed a flawed attrition strategy with large maneuver unit operations while keeping ARVN in a secondary role. In this narrative, Abrams after taking command switched to small-unit saturation operations, enhanced the role of ARVN, and increased emphasis on local development. Abrams was said to promote "one war," not separate military and nation-building endeavors. Daddis stated the difference between Westmoreland and Abrams was not significant. Westmoreland had a tripartite strategy: 1.) defeat the main force enemy formations and keep them from the populated coastal, rice-growing regions; 2.) use ARVN mainly to pacify areas that the US forces had more or less cleared, though conceptually ARVN was not relegated to a secondary position; 3.) enable GVN with allied support to promote local development. Westmoreland viewed his as an integrated strategy. Daddis pointed out that the US had control only over parts 1 & 2 but not 3. There is little the US can do to get an allied government to govern better to increase popular support, and that proved to be a major weakness. Behind closed doors – his "light at the end of the tunnel" speech notwithstanding –
Westmoreland saw a long, hard war ahead.

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From the panel "Disrupting the War" **Roger Canfield**, independent scholar, spoke on **Hanoi's Unified Struggle and the Role of US Universities, Media, and Politicians.** Many of the anti-war movement collaborators parroted Hanoi's themes. Canfield said the "peace" movement affected US political leaders more than the public as a whole. After the US withdrew in '73, as PAVN continued its war against the South in violation of the Paris Agreements, Tom Hayden, as an example, called for South Vietnam to be made to comply with the Agreements. Canfield has a long detailed book available online How the Ameri-Cong Won the Vietnam War Against the Common Enemy – America at Americong.com. It's good reference for getting the lowdown on your favorite anti-war protestor, including a host of entertainers.

Kyle Horst, an independent researcher and fluent VN linguist who previously lived in Hanoi, spoke on **The Assassination (?) of General Nguyen Chi Thanh and the Effort to Stop the Tet Offensive**.
(Finlayson referred to this General Thanh's unexpected death.) Horst emphasized his paper was speculative, as no proof exists that that Thanh was assassinated. Since Thanh was close to Le Duan, Horst suggests that associates of Giap may have had a hand in his death as a way to forestall the Tet Offensive, which Giap thought would fail. Though one might think procedure and discipline to be paramount within the party leadership, Horst stated that everything in VN is personal, including policies and leadership selections. (Both Finlayson and Horst draw information about the intra-party power struggle from Merle L. Pribbenow, "General Vo Nguyen Giap and the Mysterious Evolution of the Plan for the 1968 TET Offensive," Journal of Vietnamese Studies, Vol. 3, Issue 2, pp. 1-33.)

From the panel "Rural Issues in SVN," **Martin G. Clemis**, Valley Forge Academy and College, spoke on **Agrowar in the Year of the Goat: Rice, Irregular Warfare, and the Search for Peace in South Vietnam, 1967.** [An aside: H.R. McMaster attended Valley Forge Academy.] The US employed the defoliant Agent Orange in VC areas to diminish Communist rice supply. This defoliation reduced civilian farmers' production, causing an overall rice shortage. But with the other hand, the US helped introduce "miracle rice" IR 8 which could be harvested in some areas thrice a year. After Tet national rice production began to exceed former levels. Farmers called IR 8 "Honda rice" because they could earn enough to buy a Honda.

From the panel "Technology and Development in the Vietnam War" British Prof. **Andrew J. Gawthorpe** spoke on **CORDS, Nation-Building, and the Search for Peace from 1967 Onwards**. His paper comes from research for a forthcoming book on CORDS. (Gawthorpe kindly sent me his paper.) "In May 1967, the U.S. created the Office of Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), a combined civil-military bureaucracy dedicated to helping the Government of Vietnam (GVN) extend both the capacity and legitimacy of its rural governing institutions." Discarding W.W. Rostow's modernization theory in vogue at the time, the CORDS model was more "Leninist." Influenced by VC defector Tran Ngoc Chau, it sought to replicate Communist methods by implementing local government participation and stimulating development at local level. "In an approach they called 'the village system', CORDS pushed to implement a system which provided villages with the authority and resources to carry out what they called the 'three selfs': self-defence, self-government, and self-development." Though once viewed as a general success up to the time of RVN's military defeat, fresh archival material shows CORDs fell short of its goals. One problem was that despite elections for hamlet chiefs and a local development budget, GVN still lacked legitimacy in the eyes of the people according to now declassified surveys. GVN remained a patronage system and the old guard, mainly military officers, remained in place at province and district levels and their loyalists remained as village chiefs. "By the time CORDS was dissolved in 1972, most advisors believed that another five or ten years would be needed to make a notable difference to the quality of GVN governance."

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The entire conference was recorded and is supposed to be online in June, along with the papers. The entire agenda is available at: https://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/events/#past. This summary commented on way fewer than half the presentations. As usual, nearly everything about the Vietnam War is subject to debate. Very little is really settled. That said, though smaller than other VN Center conferences I found this one informative and worthwhile. Next year's conference will be on the Tet Offensive.

Jim Bruton

CORDS, Nation-Building, and the Search for Peace from 1967 Onwards

ANDREW GAUTHORPE

Americans in Vietnam in 1967 were searching for peace in many different ways. While diplomats attempted to find a basis for negotiations, American soldiers tried to damage the enemy on the battlefield and force Hanoi to the table. These dramatic if unsuccessful peace initiatives and search and destroy operations tend to dominate our narratives of 1967. But at the same time, another element of U.S. efforts to force an acceptable peace was starting to show faltering signs of progress. This was the U.S. strategy of nation-building.

Many Americans in South Vietnam and back in Washington understood that the only basis of peace in Southeast Asia which would satisfy American interests was for the Saigon regime to one day be able to sustain and defend itself. South Vietnam would never have lasted for so long if it were not for U.S. support and aid; in fact, it might never have existed at all, so reliant was it on its "American power source" (1). American currency, military hardware and combat troops flowed into the country for over 20 years, sustaining the Saigon regime. But this flow was foreordained to one day stop. When it did, the GVN would need to be able to mobilize its own population and national resources to survive the continued battle with the Vietnamese Communist movement at a much-reduced level of American support. Successive generations of Americans and their counterparts in the Vietnamese regime worked to address this problem of nation-building even when their comrades prosecuted a brutal war. In the words of American President Lyndon B. Johnson, their goal was even grandiose, even noble—it was even "to build as well as to destroy (2)."

The year 1967 saw several dramatic developments in this effort. In May 1967, the U.S. created the Office of Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), a combined civil-military bureaucracy dedicated to helping the Government of Vietnam (GVN) extend both the capacity and legitimacy of its rural governing institutions. The basic aim of nation-building was to establish mutual ties of obligation between the GVN and its rural citizens, winning their support away from the Communist movement. CORDS was to become the largest nation-building agency in U.S. history, unsurpassed in its ambition or size even to this day. In the same year as CORDS was created, South Vietnam was undergoing a political transition which American observers hoped would lead to a more effective regime. In September 1967, the country held an election which laid the way for Nguyen van Thieu to consolidate his position as ruler of South Vietnam. Taken together, the creation of CORDS and ascendance of Thieu would create an unparalleled opportunity for American nation-builders to influence the South Vietnamese regime.

The paper I am presenting here today is based on research carried out for a book into U.S. nation-building during the Vietnam War which is forthcoming from Cornell University Press in early 2018. My paper describes in very broad strokes the trajectory of CORDS after its creation in 1967. In particular, it describes how the creation of the agency in this year created the space for a group of civilians headed by William Colby to bring about a drastic change in U.S. nation-building strategy later in the war. Colby and his colleagues adopted an approach to rural nation-building which they explicitly modeled on what they understood of the ways in which the National Liberation Front (NLF) operated. While CORDS eventually came to be the most sophisticated and comprehensive nation-building agency in U.S. history, it failed to achieve its goal of bringing into existence a sustainable South Vietnamese state with both legitimate and effective institutions across the rural areas of the country.

This research project aims to fill a lacuna in the historiography of the Vietnam War. The orthodox scholarship on the war regards the failure of U.S. nation-building in South Vietnam to have been predetermined based on unchangeable structural factors. The orthodox literature frequently claims that U.S. nation-building in South Vietnam was based on an agenda derived from modernization theory rather than a close study of local conditions (3). And while great progress has been made in moving away from this simplified viewpoint in work on the Diem years, much less has been done to probe the sources and course of U.S. nation-building in the latter years of the war (4). This lack of detailed attention has allowed questionable claims to be made about the progress made by U.S. nation-builders in the latter years of the war, with some authors claiming that the war had been effectively "won" by the early 1970s (5). By providing a thorough narrative of U.S. na-

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tion-building in the latter years of the war, my research strongly contests this assertion.

This new history of U.S. nation-building in South Vietnam has been made possible in part by the discovery and declassification of new archival collections covering the latter years of the war. These include large collections of CORDS papers which were only declassified ten years ago. Perhaps the most exciting of these collections are contained in so-called Pacification Research Reports, which are available in a huge collection in the National Archives at College Park. During the final years of the war, a branch of South Vietnamese inspectors produced Pacification Research Reports based on surveys of dozens or hundreds of rural villagers on a particular issue. Vietnamese inspectors would enter hamlets and villagers incognito, and unaccompanied by any American, and question the locals about their views towards issues such as taxation, the draft, and corruption. These reports provide an insight into the views of rural villagers, whose voice is often missing from the historiography of the war.

Another new collection surveyed in this research is a collection of oral debriefings conducted with CORDS personnel upon their return from South Vietnam. This collection in the Hoover Institution Archives, which runs to 112 interviews averaging 22 pages each, provides an unparalleled insight into the predispositions, views and experiences of U.S. nation-builders in South Vietnam. Crucially, these collections allow us to trace how U.S. nation-builders themselves perceived the course and progress of their efforts.

The creation of CORDS in 1967 unified in one agency all of the military and civilian personnel involved in nation-building in South Vietnam. Prior to the creation of CORDS, personnel from many different agencies – the military, CIA, USAID and State Department – had pursued sharply contrasting visions of nation-building in South Vietnam. They operated in what William Colby called "autonomous baronies", with little coordination between their activities. "Like the blind men around the elephant" he later complained, "the [Americans]… gathered about the Diem Government, each dealing with different pieces and sections of its problems and defining the animal accordingly (6). Hence, the military concentrated on developing the South Vietnamese military in its own image. USAID focused first on developing the Saigon regime's central political and economic institutions, and then dispatched representatives into the provinces and districts to advise Vietnamese local governors. USAID took a highly materialist approach to its work, believing that the key to nation-building was to respond to the "felt needs" of the rural population through the provision of economic and social benefits (7). Nor were these early nation-builders working according to a centralized doctrine or plan. One of the founders of USAID's Office of Rural Affairs sought out recruits who resembled the "BA generalists" favored in the Peace Corps, and sought to harness their "Can Do" spirit and individual "dedication, common sense and imagination (8)."

The CIA, meanwhile, was developing a different approach. Agency personnel had a keen interest in what they called "political action", the countering of the Communist movement's rural apparatus and the building of support for the GVN in its place. Colby, who served as deputy chief and then chief of station in Saigon between 1959, and 1962, was typically bullish about the CIA's expertise in this area. "Uniquely in the American bureaucracy," he later wrote "the CIA understood the necessity to combine political, psychological, and paramilitary tools to carry out a strategic concept of pressure on an enemy or to strengthen an incumbent". Colby and his colleagues closely studied both the deficiencies of the GVN and the organizational strengths of the Communist movement, and modelled their remedies accordingly. Colby believed that the GVN needed to copy the Communist model by "organizing the population into political groups, articulating a cause that would attract their participation and support, developing leadership and cohesion at the local rural community level, etc. (9)."

In copying the Communist model, CIA officers in South Vietnam were able to learn from former cadres. Foremost among them was Tran Ngoc Chau, a former Viet Minh battalion commander and political officer who had rallied to the anti-Communist cause. Chau's sympathetic participation in the Viet Minh had given him a largeness of vision which was unusual among other individuals in his class, as Americans who met him soon realized. Chau had seen first-hand how the Communists operated and how they responded to the genuine grievances of the rural population to win support for their movement. While he had been turned off when he realized that the Communists ultimately planned to establish a "dictatorship of the

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proletariat" which would abolish all property and religion – something rarely mentioned in its propaganda to the peasantry – he continued to see the value of its approach to local mobilization and politics.

Chau's nation-building concept was based around the concept of the cadre, and what Stuart Methven, one of the Americans who learned from him, would later call "parapolitics". In the Viet Minh and the NLF, the word cadre (*can bo*) referred to an operative in a revolutionary organization, not necessarily a Party member. While cadres had different functions, Chau focused on those through whom Communist movement attempted to solidify its influence among the rural population. Mobile groups of specialist agitprop cadres toured the countryside, making contact with sympathetic villagers and combining to orchestrate the overthrow of the old village authorities and the installation of ones allied with the front. They had been instrumental in consolidating the revolutionary wave which swept South Vietnam in the early 1960s. Because of their temporary but decisive political presence, Methven referred to their activity as para-political, or "political action (10)." A witness to the same methods when they had been deployed on behalf of the Viet Minh, Chau hoped to replicate them for the benefit of the GVN.

Until the creation of CORDS in 1967, programs like those the CIA jointly established with Chau existed only on a small scale, unable to make much difference even in one province, much less the nation as a whole. The efforts of other agencies were likewise piecemeal. But the creation of CORDS in 1967 created the organizational framework for a truly national nation-building effort for the first time. CORDS personnel had a presence at all levels of the GVN, from the Presidential Palace in Saigon down to each district in the country. For the first time, at least in theory, national plans for nation-building could be formulated and executed.

The question naturally arose of what the content of these plans would be. Because the military was by far the largest American organization in South Vietnam, personnel from civilian agencies worried that the creation of CORDS would mark a militarization of the nation-building effort. There were two main reasons for this concern. The first was that personnel from State, USAID and the CIA tended to view the military as insensitive to the political aspects of the war, and especially the need to develop ties of mutual obligation between the GVN and its citizens. Colby worried that the creation of CORDS would undermine the drive to bring about "some degree of engagement by the population as shown by a willingness to contribute to intelligence, local security and community development". He further warned of an "impatient desire on our part to impose 'pacification' and security on the population rather than engaging in a common effort" with them, as the Communists did (11)."

The second objection raised by civilian personnel was that the increased prominence of the American military in the U.S. nation-building effort would undermine the trend towards civilian rule which seemed to be underway in South Vietnam in 1967. They worried that putting American military officers in charge of strengthening the GVN would only reinforce ARVN's dominance over the GVN, and particularly its rural governance. It would also reinforce the position of the four ARVN corps commanders, who had come to exercise far-reaching control over rural government in their zones (12)."

Yet all of these fears proved to be unfounded. In fact, it was Colby and Chau's vision of a nation-building program which drew on the lessons of the Vietnamese Communist movement which came to dominate the U.S. approach to this issue. Following the consolidation of Thieu's rule after the Tet Offensive, CORDS worked with the GVN to carry out a decentralization of political power to the individual villages of South Vietnam. In an approach they called "the village system", CORDS pushed to implement a system which provided villages with the authority and resources to carry out what they called the "three selfs": self-defence, self-government, and self-development. Just as the Vietnamese Communists built their political movement from the ground up, focusing on the needs and ambitions of rural peasants, CORDS attempted to build political support for the GVN in the same way. This implied a radical transformation of the role of the village in Vietnamese life. "Rather than considering it the lowest of a series of bureaucratic levels through which authority descends from the Palace to the people," Colby claimed in 1970, "it became the first assemblage of the population to conduct its own affairs (13)."

As Colby told a military audience in 1971, he believed that the basis of "revolutionary war" as fought by the Vietnamese Communists was "the organization of the people and the use of the people (14)." Colby believed that the success of

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the Vietnamese Communist movement depended on their superior ability to motivate and organize the rural population in support of their movement, and that the GVN had to replicate this success to survive. The Vietnamese Communist movement engaged in what he called "political development from the ground up", mobilizing the rural population into functional groups focused on discrete tasks such as intelligence-gathering, land reform, women's affairs, and youth activities (15). Colby understood that Communist rule was a participatory experience for the villagers, creating a sense of political identification between them and the movement for which they worked against their shared enemy in the Saigon regime. This not only provided a means for the NLF to control the population; it also created a sense of joint enterprise. Colby wanted the GVN to organize the population in a similar way, believing that successfully replicating this Communist practice was key to the war effort. John Paul Vann had likewise come to believe in the importance of the "organization of the population" through his long association with Chau, and became an enthusiastic backer of Colby's ideas (16).

The "village system" has rarely if ever featured in the historiography of the Vietnam War. But by tracing its progress and development, we can see how the United States was from achieving its goal of nation-building in the latter years of the war. CORDS officials had hoped that they would be able to foster what they called a "friendly infrastructure" in each village which, much like the NLF's infrastructure, would act as GVN partisans and oppose the Vietnamese Communist movement actively. Yet the testimony of CORDS advisors and evidence from Pacification Research Reports indicates that this dream remained distant by the time of the Easter Offensive in 1972.

CORDS advisors frequently complained of the poor training they received before deploying to Vietnam and the steep challenges they faced in influencing the behaviour of South Vietnamese government officials. One advisor complained "When you first get out to a province you are bewildered, you don't know what on earth you're going to do. You really haven't been told, except in a general sort of way, exactly what it is you're supposed to do (17)." Meanwhile, the ability of CORDS advisors to achieve their goals was dependent entirely on how they managed their relationship with their GVN counterpart. They could not impose their will through coercion, and most believed it counterproductive to establish a belligerent or hectoring relationship with their counterpart. Instead, they likened their roles as akin to acting as diplomats, lobbyists or confidence tricksters (18).

The ability of advisors to change the behavior of their counterparts was very limited. Most province chiefs were field-grade ARVN officers who were unlikely to change their behavior or views simply because an enthusiastic young American came into their orbit. By the time CORDS was dissolved in 1972, most advisors believed that another five or ten years would be needed to make a notable difference to the quality of GVN governance.

Pacification Research Reports and CORDS assessments of the rural situation in South Vietnam in the latter years of the war also reinforce the impression that despite the eerie peace that settled over South Vietnam in the latter years of the war, no fundamental shift in rural political attitudes had taken place. GVN institutions remained ineffective and were viewed as illegitimate despite the reforms of the "village system", while the Communist underground organization had not been rooted out. "Underneath this smattering of government," noted CORDS officials who spent 90 days evaluating the situation in Binh Dinh in mid-1971, "is a society basically in enemy hands (19)." Dozens more such reports and testimonies can be found in the archive.

Despite failures of implementation, the genesis and development of CORDS and the "village system" deserve further study. Firstly, it gives us new insight into the many influences which shaped U.S. nation-building in South Vietnam beyond modernization theory. Given the extent to which Colby and other CORDS advisors studied the techniques of the Communist movement, we could argue that U.S. nation-building in Vietnam owed as much to Lenin's ideas on political organization as Rostow's on modernization. Secondly, we can see how the events of 1967 – the creation of CORDS and the consolidation of Thieu's rule – laid the groundwork for large innovation in U.S. nation-building policy in the years afterwards. Finally, by probing the exact contours and limitations of U.S. nation-building policy in the latter years of the war, we can move beyond orthodox interpretations that are overly-focused on structural explanations for the failure of U.S. nation-building in South Vietnam and color in the detail between the historiographical lines.

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Notes

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7. *USOM Provincial Representatives Guide*, December 1962, Larry Flanagan Collection, Texas Tech Virtual Vietnam Archive [TTVA], available at <*http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/virtualarchive/items.php?item=0880215001*>, pp. 1, 2.
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9. Colby, *Lost Victory*, pp. 85, 83.
10. Stuart E. Methven, *Parapolitics and Pacification*, folder "Special studies – Vietnam. [1 of 2]", Box 24, Komer-Leonhart File, LBJL, pt. IV.
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12. Memo, Johnson to Rusk, 1 October 1966, FRUS, 1964 – 1968, IV: pp. 680 – 2; Memo, Carver to Helms, 6 October 1966, *FRUS, 1964 – 1968*, IV: pp. 712 – 6, at footnote six; Memo, Carver to Helms, 28 September 1966, FRUS, 1964 – 1968, IV: pp. 668 – 672.
13. Document, folder "Opening statements / Amb. Colby", Box 15, HQ MACV, Office of Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support, Plans, Programs and Policies Directorate, Historical Working Group Files [CORDS History Files], RG472, National Archives II at College Park, Maryland [hereafter NACP], p. 6.
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15. William Colby and Peter Forbarth, *Honorable Men: My Life in the CIA* (London: Hutchinson, 1978), p. 262.
16. Attachment to Letter, Vann to all PSAs, 1 April 1968, folder "Vietnam assignments: Region III pacification reports. [1/2]", Box 44, Sheehan Papers, Library of Congress, p. 3.
17. Debrief no. 6683, Box 97, GP, HIA, p. 7.
18. Debrief no. 8664, Box 94, GP, HIA, p. 3 (lobbyist); Debrief no. 206612, pp. 9, 10 (diplomat); and Debrief no. 7666, p. 8 (con-man).
19. Report, "Binh Dinh Province", 12 June 1971, folder "Study / Binh Dinh", Box 32, CORDS History Files, RG472, NACP, p. 26.

Major General Viet Xuan Luong

Viet Luong has been confirmed by the US senate on 5/25/2017 to the rank of Major general
https://www.congress.gov/nomination/115th-congress/316/all-info#nominees

Anh La Ai: *Sung by Jennifer Lynn*

Anh La Ai (Who are You?) written by Viet Khang, a Vietnamese composer who was jailed for 4 years by the communists for having written this song and demonstrated against the Chinese on the anniversary of the loss of the Hoang Sa (Paracel) and Truong Sa (Spratly) Islands to the Chinese in 1974. At that time, the South Vietnamese Navy fought against the Chinese to try to hold on the Spratly which the Hanoi communists gave away to the Chinese.
Today, the Hanoi communists not wanting to antagonize their Chinese friends would send any Vietnamese demonstrator singing this song to jail.
The song is beautifully rendered here by the then 9 year old Jennifer Lynn. She should be 16 today.

Drawing of the battle of Truong Sa

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Anh La Ai...

May I ask who you are?
Why do you jail me
What have I done wrong?
May I ask you who you are?
Why do you beat me
without restraint?
May I ask who you are?
Why don't you let me demonstrate
to express my feelings?
my love for my country, these people
who have suffered so much

…Where do you come from?
Why do you volunteer to slave for the Chinese?
…..

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHDuDmf-734

Scraping out a living in Little Saigon: *Anh Do*

http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-ln-viet-meals-20170602-htmlstory.html

In the morning darkness, Hue Phan prepared to steam greens and fry meat in the improvised kitchen on her backyard patio in Garden Grove.

The ingredients will fill meal cartons to feed more than three dozen people, at $7 a pop.

Once an accountant in Vietnam, Phan, 55, now helps support her family by catering for those — including millennials and middle-aged professionals — with too little time and a taste for the old country.

Hue Phan flips the hunks of pork in a frying pan for one of the courses she's preparing in her backyard kitchen. (Mark Boster / Los Angeles Times)

To Phan, serving *com thang* — a popular practice in neighborhoods like Little Saigon that goes back generations in Vietnam — has been indispensable to earning an income.

"For refugees, a new economy requires you to be a new person," Phan said. "You take risks, you learn to adapt, you save a bit here and there to function as part of an immigrant community where most others are doing the same."

Com thang, literally "monthly rice, " fed soldiers during the Vietnam War and scholars who were far from their families but determined to eat as if they were home. To Vietnamese American subscribers, it's a serving of convenience in a sometimes frenetic life full of work and other obligations.

Sponsored by family members who had become American citizens, she arrived in the United States in 2001 with her husband and infant son.

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Scraping a living in Little Saigon...

After first living in Minnesota, they moved to California in 2008 to be closer to her father, who had Parkinson's disease, and to help her younger sister with a fast-food Vietnamese eatery.
Three years ago, after her dad's death, Phan found solace in feeding others.
Soon, it became a business.
She cooks on Mondays and Wednesdays, using Tuesdays and Thursdays for grocery shopping, scouring mom-and-pop stores and supermarkets for seasonal goods and sale prices.
Among her specialties is simmered catfish. Phan rinses pork four times to "get all the bad stuff and residue out" and then washes it with Coco Rico soda for a hint of coconut essence.
Dong and Chau Tran, a brother-and-sister team, avoid crackdowns and legitimized their meal delivery service by setting up in leased space in Garden Grove's Saigon Supermarket. For $300, their couriers will drop off meals for two, Monday through Friday, for a month. The caveat: Diners must live within a seven-mile radius of Little Saigon.
"Irvine, those folks call me a lot. But you must order 10 portions or more to make it worthwhile," Chau Tran said. "I wish there were a way we can serve everyone. Customers call us even from L.A., but it's out of our reach. The desire for home cooking does not have boundaries."
Customers can order online, and the Trans employ five cooks and three couriers. On a "successful" day, they will sell as many as 200 portions. Chau Tran, 58, who also manages an office downstairs at Saigon Supermarket, estimated they make 30 cents profit per portion.

Lengthy Jail Sentences for 2 dissidents upheld as crackdown continues

29/05/2017
https://www.fidh.org/en/region/asia/vietnam/lengthy-jail-sentences-for-two-dissidents-upheld-as-crackdown

(Paris) Vietnam must end the ongoing crackdown on dissidents, repeal its repressive laws, and immediately release all political prisoners, FIDH and its member organization Vietnam Committee on Human Rights (VCHR) said today. FIDH and VCHR's call followed the latest case of imprisonment of government critics to lengthy jail terms.
"Until Vietnam repeals its repressive laws, the country's prisons will continue to be the likely residence of government critics. It's time for Hanoi to dismantle its arsenal of draconian laws and release all political prisoners."
On 26 May 2017, the Court of Appeals in Hanoi upheld a lower court's conviction of Tran Anh Kim and Le Thanh Tung for conducting "activities aimed at overthrowing the people's administration" under Article 79 of the Criminal Code and sentenced them to 13 and 12 years in prison and five and four years' house arrest respectively.
On 16 December 2016, a court in Thai Binh Province jailed Tran Anh Kim and Le Thanh Tung for attempting to form a pro-democracy organization that authorities claimed was planning a coup to overthrow the government.
Both Tran Anh Kim and Le Thanh Tung are former army soldiers and long-time human rights advocates who have been repeatedly targeted by the authorities for their pro-democracy activities.

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Lengthy Jail Sentences for 2 dissidents...

In December 2011, Le Thanh Tung was arrested on charges of "conducting propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam" under Article 88 of the Criminal Code. Tung was released in June 2015, five months ahead of the completion of his jail sentence. Tung has been arrested more than a dozen times for his human rights activism.

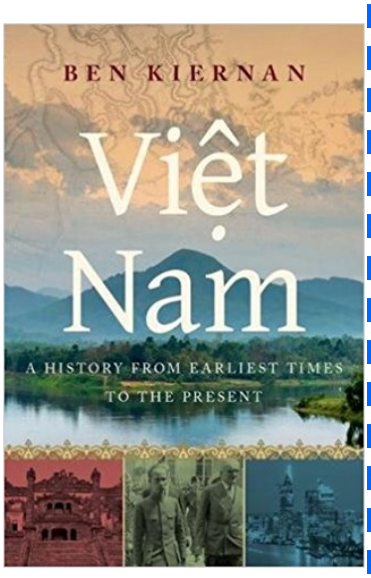
Prior to his latest incarceration, Tran Anh Kim was released from prison in September 2016 after serving a five-and-a-half-year prison term under Article 79 of the Criminal Code. Kim has been a persistent government critic and has been jailed several times for his activism.

"The case of Tran Anh Kim and Le Thanh Tung shows the government's callous determination to silence all forms of opposition and its total disinterest in upholding its international legal obligations. Stronger international pressure is urgently needed to end this human rights onslaught."

Vietnamese authorities have repeatedly used legislation inconsistent with Vietnam's obligations under international law to suppress the right to freedom of opinion and expression and to detain government critics. [1] Vietnam holds about 130 political prisoners.

Viet Nam. A History From Earliest Times to Present: *Ben Kiernan*

Despite the tragedies of the American-Vietnamese conflict, Viet Nam has always been much more than a war. Its long history had been characterized by the frequent rise and fall of different political formations, from ancient chiefdoms to imperial provinces, from independent kingdoms to divided regions, civil wars, French colonies, and modern republics. In addition to dramatic political transformations, the region has been shaped by its environment, changing climate, and the critical importance of water, with rivers, deltas, and a long coastline facilitating agricultural patterns, trade, and communications.



Kiernan weaves together the many narrative strands of Viet Nam's multiethnic populations, including the Chams, Khmers, and Vietnamese, and its multireligious heritage, from local spirit cults to Buddhism, Confucianism, and Catholicism. He emphasizes the peoples' interactions over the millennia with foreigners, particularly their neighbors in China and Southeast Asia, in engagements ranging from military conflict to linguistic and cultural influences. He sets the tumultuous modern period--marked by French and Japanese occupation, anticolonial nationalism, the American-Vietnamese war, and communist victory--against the continuities evident in the deeper history of the people's relationships with the lands where they have lived. In contemporary times, he explores this one-party state's transformation into a global trading nation, the country's tense diplomatic relationship with China and developing partnership with the United States in maintaining Southeast Asia's regional security, and its uncertain prospects for democracy.

Available on Amazon
https://www.amazon.com/Viet-Nam-History-Earliest-Present/dp/0195160762/