Bad Wars, Failed Nation-Building, and the Retreat from Globalism

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Although the years of conflict, persecution, and mass slaughter that spanned the long Second World War (1931–1945) were arguably the most brutal and destructive humanity has ever experienced, in the American imaginary it came to be officially commemorated and remembered by most of the citizenry as the "good" war.[1] Not only were the United States and its highly dependent allies victorious on all fronts, but the war also became a crusade aimed at the total defeat of the malevolently aggressive and brutally oppressive (and in the case of Nazi Germany, genocidal) Axis regimes. America emerged from the conflict as the crucial supplier of war materials to its British, Soviet, and Chinese allies through lend-lease programs, and the paramount liberator of subjugated peoples from the South Pacific to Paris. The war, credibly declared to be against palpable evil, bound together a nation that had been deeply divided, often bitterly so, during the Great Depression and years of fierce controversy over whether America should become involved in seemingly distant conflicts in Europe and East Asia.[2] Perhaps most importantly, national unity and shared patriotism were instilled by the fact that the nation's armed forces consisted mainly of servicemen inducted on the basis of a universal, compulsory draft. As Arnold Isaacs has persuasively argued,[3] the fact that significant numbers of able-bodied men (and behind the battle lines and along the assembly lines, women) from all social levels volunteered or were compelled to serve in the military, insured that fighting and dying in the conflict represented a genuinely national sacrifice. As Isaacs makes clear college graduates were actually overrepresented in fighting units involved in the most dangerous wartime missions:

> At (John F.) Kennedy's alma mater, only 11 men of
> the entire Harvard class of 1944 were present at
> commencement. All the others had left for military
> service . . . nearly 27,000 Harvard alumni, employees,
> and faculty members served in the armed forces; 691 of

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[1]   Though America's resounding victory and prosperous aftermath had much to do with this rather aberrant bit of collective memory, it was enshrined in popular culture by Studs Terkel's collection of interviews with wartime participants, entitled *The Good War: An Oral History of World War Two* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).

[2]   For the a revealing account of the latter, see William L. O'Neill, *A Democracy at War: America's Fight at Home and Abroad in World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), chapters two and three.

[3]   Arnold R. Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadows: The War, Its Ghosts, and Its Legacy* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), especially 38–40.

them lost their lives, including Kennedy's older brother
Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., class of '38."[4]

The extensive participation of individuals with advanced education in both planning and command positions as well as combat situations in World War II was also critically important because many of them would go on to assume major roles in government decision making in the decades of the cold war that followed. Prominent examples in the aftermath of the earlier conflict included George C. Marshall, who had also played a major logistical role in the European-North African theatre of the war. Marshall conceived and headed up the team that devised the vital plan for the economic recovery of Western Europe. Earlier Douglas MacArthur had assumed the role of proconsul who oversaw the surrender, rebuilding, and re-democratization of Japan. The postwar global standoff between the Soviet Union and its captive satellites and the United States and its allies, provided much of the incentive for these prodigious projects. Both represented not only remarkable responses to defeated enemy states, but also a reversion to the constructive side of the global mission of a nation that had emerged from the war as the preeminent economic and military force in world affairs.

It is ironic that even though many of the architects of America's interventions in Vietnam began their ascent to the top ranks of the government and military policymaking establishment in Washington D.C. through government or military service during World War II, their misreading and handling of the challenges posed by the liberation struggles in Vietnam shattered the consensus regarding approaches to foreign affairs shared by the overwhelming majority of their predecessors in both parties in the preceding four decades. Unlike John F. Kennedy, and decades later George H. W. Bush, who were both wounded in combat in the Second World War and witnessed first-hand the ordeal that soldiers sent into battle on all sides were compelled to endure, Lyndon Johnson and most of the advisors in his inner circle were spared the sobering lessons of actually engaging in battle.[5] The fact that their wartime service

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[4]　Ibid., 38.

[5]　Johnson was a Second Lieutenant in the Naval Reserve, and even though he was a U.S. Congressman, he had volunteered for active service on a number of occasions. He served on a survey team reporting to Roosevelt on the situation in the Pacific, and vigorously lobbied on a number occasions for better support for American servicemen in the region. Claims that he came under fire while serving as an observer with a bombing mission targeting Japanese forces in New Guinea remain contentious, but he was awarded a Silver Star for "gallantry in action." Secretary of State Dean Rusk joined the infantry reserve and served as a staff officer, also in the Pacific theatre. Robert McNamara analyzed bomber efficiency for the Office of Statistical Control, and W. W. Rostow plotted bombing runs in Europe for the Office of Statistical Service. McGeorge Bundy was in army intelligence and later an admiral's aide. His brother William was in the signal corps and later involved in the ULTRA operations at Bletchley Park in England. Both brothers were strongly influenced by the hyper-national security concerns of Henry L. Stimson, due to their father's position (and close friendship) with Stimson, Roosevelt's Secretary of War. David Kaiser, *American Tragedy: Kennedy, Johnson, and the Origins of the Vietnam War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), passim; and Andrew Preston, *The War Council: McGeorge Bundy, the NSC, and Vietnam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

was for the most part far from the battlefields had a good deal to do with their faulty estimation decades later of both the level of threat posed by the prospect of a unified communist state in Vietnam and seemingly incongruously their failure to take into account the determination and capacity of the Vietnamese to resist the American military interventions. None of the American war planners at the levels where critical decisions for those interventions were made knew anything beyond the superficial and misguided about Vietnamese society and its deeply embedded culture of resistance to outside domination that stretched back *millennia* to repeated rebellions against attempts on the part of powerful Chinese (and later Mongol) dynasties to colonize the Red River delta region. All viewed North Vietnam's responses through the lens of the very real global challenges and vital threats to American security posed by the Axis powers in the 1930s and World War II. Few were able to disconnect the situation in Vietnam from America's broader rivalry with international communism as projected by the Soviet Union and China.

The miscalculations embedded in the near unanimous resolve of Lyndon Johnson's foreign policy team to prevent North Vietnam's "takeover" of the South, and the assumption that America's vast technological supremacy would insure that if the communist deployed regular armed forces, they in the crudely-put estimate of General Wheeler, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, would be "cream[ed],"[6] is essential to understanding the disasters that resulted from the high tech U.S. military interventions in that small, impoverished, postcolonial society. I have dealt in detail elsewhere[7] with the hubristic assumptions regarding America's divinely appointed global mission to civilize supposedly "backward" peoples. These "development projects" informed the misguided notion—tirelessly championed by W. W. Rostow—that postcolonial societies were fundamentally alike and destined to pursue a path to industrial modernity along the lines pioneered by Great Britain and especially the United States. In what follows I seek to explore several of the enduring legacies of these assumptions that so profoundly shaped the decisions to commit the United States to a major war in Vietnam, and that have subsequently eroded the nation's standing in the global community and its domestic political and social stability. These trends suggest that America is a great power in perhaps irreversible decline.

As the pendulum swung in the mid-1960s from an emphasis on Peace Corps initiatives and economic assistance, offset by another round of covert interventions in Latin America, the newly installed President Johnson and his foreign policy advisors conspired to conceal successive military escalations in Vietnam from the American public. In collusion with Generals Maxwell Taylor and his successor, Earle Wheeler, Johnson managed to sideline the

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[6]   Quoted in George C. Herring, *LBJ and Vietnam: A Different Kind of War* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 35.

[7]   See Michael P. Adas, "The Aftermath of Defeat: The Enduring Costs of the Vietnam War," *Pacific and American Studies* 14 (March 2014): 7–20; and Michael Adas, *Dominance by Design: Technological Imperatives and America's Civilizing Mission* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), chapters five and six.

divided Joint Chiefs, whose recommendations for military measures were actually a good deal more aggressive than Johnson and his civilian team deemed politically manageable.[8] Responding to reports on the deteriorating military and political situation in Vietnam, and the statistics on all manner of quantifiable measures that McNamara's whiz kids churned out, Johnson ordered a succession of incremental raids and air strikes on targets in South and increasingly North Vietnam. Even before his landslide election victory in the November 1964 elections, the president had seized on alleged attacks on U.S. naval vessels in the Gulf of Tonkin to persuade Congress to give him a *carte blanche* in responding to purported North Vietnamese aggression against the South. Subsequent research has revealed that the torpedo boat assaults were imagined, and press releases at the time neglected to mention that the American destroyers that were their supposed targets had been engaged in covert operations against North Vietnamese bases in the preceding months.[9]

Until press and television coverage of U.S. Marines wading ashore near Da Nang in March 1965 made it abundantly clear that the military mission in Vietnam was growing steadily, Johnson and his McNamara-centered team sought to disguise troop buildups as simply more advisors or small units to guard American bases. The administration's spokesmen, most forcefully McNamara, routinely denied reports of incremental increases in press briefings, congressional hearings, and media broadcasts for the general public. When by late spring it became clear that a major commitment to combat in Vietnam was underway, these deceptions were a significant motivating force behind the early teach-ins and growing domestic resistance to the war. In the years of indecisive, but appalling wartime casualties and destruction on all sides that followed, the duplicity of Johnson and his spokesmen repeatedly undercut the administration's credibility and attempts to justify major military interventions into Vietnam's civil war. For segments of the citizenry who were politically engaged across the generations, but particularly those in the teenage and college cohorts, the implicit assumption that America's national leaders did not lie to them was increasingly no longer tenable. In major ways that have never been fully studied or even acknowledged, this realization fed the rising mass protest among moderates as well as more radical splinter groups against the Johnson administration's futile escalations of the war.[10]

The fact that Lyndon Johnson's successor, Richard Nixon, was literally obsessed with the need to conceal and deceive, even to the point where he encouraged his subordinates to resort to criminal acts to ward off his rivals and bolster his agendas, confirmed and broadened the distrust of presidents and their spokespersons on the part of what had become a majority of the voting public who opposed to the war. From his secret and deliberately deceptive promises to the Thieu regime in Saigon in 1968 (that derailed peace negotiations underway in Paris), and

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8)　H. R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, The Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Led to Vietnam* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998).

9)　Kaiser, *American Tragedy*, 331–39.

10)　Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadows*, 48, 50, 59–60.

his much touted campaign "plan' to end the war "honorably" that turned out to be invasions of neutral Cambodia (that enabled the rise of the genocidal Pol Pot regime), and punitive bombings of Laos and Hanoi-Haiphong, Nixon intensified suspicion of the government across the left-right spectrum of the American electorate.[11] As early as 1970, two years before the formal American retreat from Vietnam, which was feebly disguised as a process of "Vietnamization," efforts on the part of a remarkably bi-partisan Congress sought to put an end to U.S. military involvement in Vietnam. These culminated in June 1973 in the Case-Church Amendment that, despite fierce opposition from President Nixon and his Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, was passed by overwhelming majorities in both the House and Senate. In November, again supported by veto-proof majorities in both houses, Congress approved the War Powers Resolution that restored the long-standing mandate that required presidents to have congressional approval before declaring war against foreign adversaries. Although covert operations, particularly those aimed at populist movements in Latin America, sustained America in efforts to shape political outcomes and historical trajectories in the developing world, in the decades that followed both presidents and congressional majorities exhibited a pronounced wariness towards overt foreign military entanglements. Successive administrations also supported legislative initiatives for modest increases in civilian-directed development projects in the postcolonial nations of Africa and Asia.[12] Compared to their predecessors and successors, both Presidents Ford and Carter were quite forthcoming in admitting embarrassing setbacks in responses to crises, particularly in Korea and Iran. But in the Reagan era that followed concerns regarding duplicitous government handling of overseas interventions were again revived by the Iran-Contra scandal and subsequent congressional investigations

In the George H. W. Bush presidency (1988–92) entanglement in yet another major overseas military quagmire was averted by his policy team through its skillful leadership of an American-led international police action to expel Saddam Hussein's Iraqi forces of occupation from neighboring Kuwait. Despite excessive destruction of Iraq's civilian infrastructure and the draconian embargo that followed, the assault displayed the effectiveness of the order of battle developed by the Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, and Colin Powell, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. What came to be known as the Powell Doctrine was explicitly aimed at correcting the mistakes that made for the debacle in Vietnam. Once Bush and his advisors decided that "Operation Desert Storm" was necessary to address a major national security threat, they determined that requisite military operations needed to be limited to defeating Iraqi forces and forcing Saddam Hussein to abandon his attempt to annex Kuwait. Allied air and land forces were amassed to apply overwhelming force, and a clear exit strategy

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[11]   William Shawcross, *Side-Show: Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979); and Brian Balogh, "The Domestic Legacy of the War in Vietnam," in *After Vietnam: Legacies of a Lost War*, ed. Charles Neu (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 38–41, 46–49.

[12]   Adas, *Dominance by Design*, 376–80.

was devised in advance of the plunge into combat.[13] A quick and decisive victory, which H. W. Bush effusively proclaimed had "kicked the Vietnam syndrome [behind America]," deflected a relieved nation's attention from an alternative take on the outcome that stressed the fact that Saddam Hussein and his generals had foolishly elected to fight the high tech, conventional war that U.S. forces had been armed and trained to fight in northwest Europe ever since the beginning of the cold war.

Just over a decade later, George W. Bush, prodded by his overweening Vice President, Dick Cheney, and the latter's Neo-Conservative cabal, launched a second invasion of Iraq that was justified by blatant lies and phony rationales that exceeded even those designed to conceal the escalation of American military interventions in Vietnam. The false claims (in this case most egregiously those relating to Saddam Hussein's non-existent nuclear arsenal), arrogant assumptions, and misguided strategies that paved the way for the Second U.S.-Iraq war made it clear that America's leaders, or those then in power at any rate, had forgotten or never learned the lessons of Vietnam. As the Iraqi army dispersed among the general population and guerrilla resistance mounted, it was readily apparent that none of the Weinberger-Powell criteria for overseas interventions had been met and a prolonged conflict was inevitable. The second Bush administration's revival of America's nation-building mandate for the allegedly underdeveloped state of Iraq was soon revealed as a mission impossible to accomplish as the country beyond the Green Zone disintegrated into sectarian strife, terrorist bloodshed, and massive human misery akin to that visited on the people of Vietnam. As was the case with Vietnam, and virtually all of the Americans' forays into the nations of the developing world, the premise that they were launched to spread democracy, or at least the institutions associated with their version of democracy, has usually meant dictatorial regimes amenable to the U.S. broader cold war or anti-terrorist agendas.

The accumulation of deception and lies from the highest levels of the American government, which not coincidentally peaked in frequency and magnitude in the decade of full-scale U.S. warfare in Vietnam and later the seemingly endless years of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, inevitably reduced the citizenry's trust in presidents, their advisors, and the congressional representatives who so often rallied to their calls for overseas military operations. Not purely coincidentally, popular distrust of public officials, which steadily increased with successive wars, was paralleled by the dubious accuracy of many of the rapidly proliferating sources for news of current events and a consequent intensification of social divisions. As cable networks, newsprint, and websites multiplied that specialized in reporting that was purposefully formulated to advance the agendas of one or the other major political parties, partisan standoffs over social issues from birth control to gay rights rigidified in ways that made compromise, or even civil debate, less and less possible.

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[13] Richard P. Hallion, *Storm Over Iraq: Air Power and the Gulf War* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), chapter four.

The often-strident ideological exchanges that resulted from the growing influence of "alternative" news outlets were fed by sources that have largely gone unnoticed, but deserve a good deal of serious examination. At the corporate level amenable scientists were enlisted by—most infamously—cigarette manufacturers and the fossil fuel industry to debunk scientific evidence that the products they marketed on a mass scale were harmful to the health of individual consumers and society as a whole, as well as the environment of the entire planet. This assault on legitimate scientific research at the corporate level was unwittingly abetted by academic scholarship of the post-modern persuasion that peaked in influence in the decades on either side of the millennium. Admittedly, the citizenry beyond academe was unlikely to attempt to decipher the tortuous, nearly impenetrable, disquisitions of Homi Bhabha or Gayatri Spivak. But post-modernist challenges to the validity of "facts" or the possibility of arriving at scientific "truths" (or more correctly informed understandings arrived at through extensive empirical research and testing) have filtered down to the purveyors of phony news and "alternative" facts. They have also compromised research by bowdlerized versions of scientific and academic debates to legitimize fake news and popularize phony science in the service of corporate and political agendas. The utter irrelevance to the conduct of foreign affairs of prominent post-modern thinkers was perhaps the most revealingly exposed by the appallingly vacuous responses of a panel of the self-styled cognoscenti of the moment who had nothing useful to say in opposition to the second, unilateral American invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Another fault line between the "white' working and lower middle classes, and the affluent middle and upper strata of American society opened during, and especially in the years after the Vietnam War. It has loomed ever larger since the second U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. In contrast to the victorious Second World War that was fought by a draft army drawn from a reasonable cross-section of eligible young and middle aged males, the "grunts" or infantrymen who did the bulk of the fighting and dying in Vietnam were recruited or drafted from the laboring classes, including blacks and Hispanics, from urban and rural America. Because Johnson quite deliberately refused to call up the National Guard and the Reserves, they functioned as alternatives to military service or "safe places"[14] that precluded the draft and were accessible overwhelmingly for youths from the upper middle and better educated social strata who, along with their well-heeled parents were perceived by U.S. policy makers as more likely to mount resistance to the war.[15] In contrast to the 691 Harvard students who died in World War II, only 19 were killed in Vietnam, and all but four were commissioned officers. In contrast, these numbers were exceeded by many neighborhood high schools in working

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[14] Arnold Isaacs quoting Robert Coles, a working class father who lost his son in Vietnam, in *Vietnam Shadows*, 37.

[15] Ironically this pattern was also present in both South Vietnam and, more inexplicitly, the communist North. See, Michael Adas and Joseph Gilch, *Everyman in Vietnam: A Soldier's Journey into the Quagmire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 82–83, 170–171.

class and poor districts.[16] With LBJ's approval, Robert McNamara devised a program, dubbed Project 100,000, to draft high school dropouts and disadvantaged students in the lower tiers of those taking aptitude tests. McNamara opined that those drafted (the total mounted to nearly 350,000 by the war's end)[17] under the auspices of the program would gain skills in training that would provide good jobs after service. But most draftees were funneled into infantry combat units, and if lucky enough to survive without serious injuries, spent their lives in low paying, hard or menial labor.[18] As I can personally attest, draft boards in most areas were readily inclined to grant deferments to college students—but also to induct them swiftly if they dropped out.

As if it were not enough to be compelled to fight in what many draftees soon realized was an unwinnable, and for significant numbers was an unjust war,[19] when those who survived returned home they very often found themselves reviled by anti-war protesters ("baby killers" became a standard epithet), and unable to work through the traumas that most endured with even family and close friends.[20] Though some of those who returned from the war joined and a few, most famously John Kerry, became prominent leaders in the anti-war movement, the great majority sought to find ways to recover some semblance of a normal life making a decent living and raising a family. Limited outlets, such as the "rap" sessions that the psychiatrist Robert J. Lifton conducted with Vietnam Veterans Against the War over two years beginning in late 1970,[21] enabled small numbers of veterans to cope with post-traumatic stress disorders, war crimes witnessed or abetted, and loss of comrades. But most lacked access to these sorts of outlets. Many more survivors (particularly the physically disabled) than most observers have been willing to admit struggled to make ends meet through part time jobs, while others faded into the ranks of homeless vagabonds.[22]

The "hippie" lifestyles of many, especially the leaders, of the anti-war protesters drove other veterans and often their working class parents and siblings into counter-protest movements that sought to legitimize the war and bolster the resolve of America's leaders to

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[16]　In *Vietnam Shadows*, Isaacs provides one of the most candid overviews of the selective recruitment for the war and its enduring impact on those who fought it. See Issacs, *Vietnam Shadows*, 35–47.

[17]　Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadows*, 39–40.

[18]　Christian Appy, *Working Class War: American Combat Soldiers & Vietnam* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 32–37.

[19]　Adas and Gilch, *Everyman in Vietnam*, chapters five and six.

[20]　Including parents of more than a few undergraduate students in my classes at Rutgers who confided that their fathers refused to ever talk about their wartime experiences. See also, Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadows*, 9–12, 15–19, 27–34.

[21]　Analyzed with sympathy and in great depth in *Home From the War: Vietnam Veterans: Neither Victims nor Executioners* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973); and see also, Myra MacPherson, *Long Time Passing: Vietnam and the Haunted Generation* (New York: Doubleday, 1984), especially Parts Three and Four.

[22]　A fate movingly depicted in Larry Heinemann's *Paco's Story* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1979).

stay the course until victory was achieved.[23] From the deeply contested run-up to the 1968 political conventions and presidential election onward, pro-war veterans and their supporters clashed on numerous occasions with the growing numbers of protestors staging mass marches demanding an end to American military operations in Vietnam. The overt animosity between those supporting anti- and pro-war demonstrations widened the divide between the college-educated and more affluent participants that dominated the former and the heavily working-class supporters of the war. In the following decades pro-war conservative leaders, most effectively Ronald Reagan insisted that the war was both necessary and a noble cause. Reagan and other politicians, as well as political pundits who championed the revisionist versions of the war, tended to be drawn from the conservative wing of the Republican Party.[24]

Without question the sources of America's relative decline as a global power extend well beyond the ones I have focused on in this essay and the talk for the fiftieth anniversary CPAS forum. But most are related to the proclivity of U.S. presidents and policymakers since the war in Vietnam for military interventions in postcolonial societies. Excessive spending on weapons and making war, and ironically reconstruction projects abroad after America's multiplying not so "small wars,"[25] have directed vital national and state funding and resources away from our mostly depression era public works and post-World War II infrastructures that continue to rust and crumble. The nation's decades of outsourcing heavy manufacturing have led to pervasive de-industrialization, which as we came to realize in the 2016 elections has meant endemic job losses and reliance on occupations in the service sectors for the working classes and the multitudes of laborers who struggle to reach even that level of opportunity.[26] Alternative facts and phony news, which a significant segment of the population regards as the real thing, are wielded to discredit journalists and broadcasters who are dedicated to spending the time and taking the risks to verify the information behind the events they cover and weigh the broader lessons to be learned. The unprecedented scale of successive drug epidemics, which have been linked to the hundreds of thousands of American soldiers funneled in and out of surreal battlefields in wars abroad from the infusion of heroin from Southeast Asia during and after the Vietnam conflict to more recent forays into Afghanistan and Iraq, have divided and demoralized local communities, sapped productivity at all social levels, contributed significantly to rising national crime and costly incarceration rates, and taken a devastating toll on those addicted. Ever growing expenditures on the military have led to decreasing government funding for education, health care, and other human services, depriving a significant portion of citizenry of

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[23] Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadows*, 56–58.

[24] For an encyclopedic treatment of the arguments for this take on the war, see B. G. Burkett and Glenna Whitley, *Stolen Valor: How the Vietnam Generation Was Robbed of its Heroes and its History* (Dallas, TX: Verity Press, 1998).

[25] In which the Vietnam conflict is implausibly included in Max Boot's survey of *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and America's Rise to Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

[26] Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadows*, 57, 59–61

the benefits of participation in the booming cyber sector of a globalizing economy.

The deep social divisions, structural decay, and debasement of public discourse that have made for America's growing isolationism and reliance on force to maintain a semblance of global relevance have been cumulative and building for over half a century. But the gestation of these and the other factors leading to the nation's decline can be traced back to the decade of the unnecessary, devastating and unwinnable war in Vietnam. That conflict and its domestic fallout have not only exposed Americans' hubristic, exceptionalist assumptions regarding our mission "as the last best hope" for the rest of humanity as a facile conceit, they demonstrate that we are "as fallible as the rest of humanity; [that] we could do evil as easily as we could do good."[27]

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[27]　Quoting Abraham Lincoln's iconic assertion, ironically in the midst of the civil war, in his annual message to Congress in 1862, and Neil Sheehan's corrective based on America's very different involvement in another civil war a century later in *After the War Was Over: Hanoi and Saigon* (New York: Random House, 1992).