

## READ BY THE AUTHOR

Vietnam became the Western world's most divisive modern conflict, precipitating a battlefield humiliation for France in 1954, then a vastly greater one for the United States in 1975. Max Hastings has spent the past three years interviewing scores of participants on both sides, as well as researching a multitude of American and Vietnamese documents and memoirs, to create an epic narrative of an epic struggle. He portrays the set pieces of Dienbienu, the 1968 Tet offensive, the air blitz of North Vietnam, and much less familiar miniatures such as the bloodbath at Daido—where a US Marine battalion was almost wiped out—together with extraordinary recollections of Ho Chi Minh's warriors. Here are the vivid realities of strife amid jungle and paddies that killed two million people.

Many writers treat the war as a US tragedy, yet Hastings sees it overwhelmingly as one for the Vietnamese people, of whom forty died for every American. US blunders and atrocities were matched by those committed by their enemies. While all the world has seen the image of a screaming, naked girl seared by napalm, it forgets countless eviscerations, beheadings, and murders carried out by the communists. The people of both former Vietnams paid a bitter price for the Northerners' victory in privation and oppression. Here we are given testimony from Vietcong guerrillas, Southern paratroopers, Saigon bar girls, and Hanoi students alongside that of infantrymen from South Dakota, Marines from North Carolina, and Huey pilots from Arkansas.

No past volume has blended a political and military narrative of the entire conflict with heart-stopping personal experiences in the fashion that Hastings's readers know so well. The author suggests that neither side deserved to win this struggle, and presents many lessons for the twenty-first century about the misuse of military might to confront intractable political and cultural challenges. In *Vietnam*, Hastings marshals testimony from warlords and peasants, statesmen and soldiers, to create an extraordinary record.

**MAX HASTINGS** chronicles Vietnam with the benefit of vivid personal memories: first of reporting in 1967–68 from the United States, where he encountered many of the war's decision makers, including President Lyndon Johnson; then of successive assignments in Indochina for newspapers and BBC TV. He rode a helicopter out of the US Saigon embassy compound during the 1975 final evacuation. He is the author of twenty-six books, most about conflict, and between 1986 and 2002 served as editor in chief of the *Daily Telegraph*, then as editor of the *Evening Standard*. He has won many prizes both for journalism and his books, which include *All Hell Let Loose*, *Catastrophe*, and *The Secret War*, all of them bestsellers translated around the world. He has two grown children, Charlotte and Harry, and lives with his wife, Penny, in West Berkshire, England, where they garden enthusiastically.

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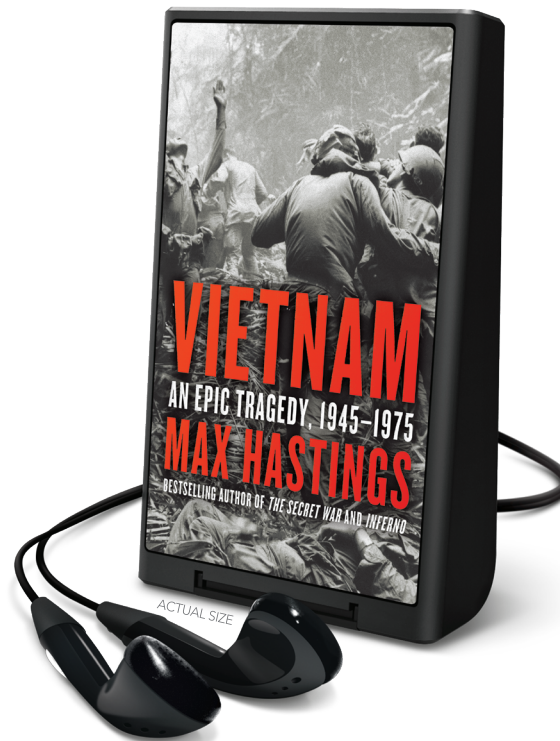
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**VIETNAM**  
AN EPIC TRAGEDY, 1945-1975  
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