

Hanoi's Road to the Vietnam War, 1954-1965 (From Indochina to Vietnam: Revolution and War in a Global Perspective)

By Pierre Asselin

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Hanoi's Road to the Vietnam War opens in 1954 with the signing of the Geneva accords that ended the eight-year-long Franco-Indochinese War and created two Vietnams. In agreeing to the accords, Ho Chi Minh and other leaders of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam anticipated a new period of peace leading to national reunification under their rule; they never imagined that within a decade they would be engaged in an even bigger feud with the United States. Basing his work on new and largely inaccessible Vietnamese materials as well as French, British, Canadian, and American documents, Pierre Asselin explores the communist path to war. Specifically, he examines the internal debates and other elements that shaped Hanoi's revolutionary strategy in the decade preceding U.S. military intervention, and resulting domestic and foreign programs. Without exonerating Washington for its role in the advent of hostilities in 1965, *Hanoi's Road to the Vietnam War* demonstrates that those who directed the effort against the United States and its allies in Saigon were at least equally responsible for creating the circumstances that culminated in arguably the most tragic conflict of the Cold War era.

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Review

"Highly recommended."
(*CHOICE* 2014-06-01)

"Excellent new [work] on the Vietnam War."
(Geoffrey C. Stewart *Cross-Currents* 2014-03-01)

"Outstanding. . . . Illuminating."
(*Proceedings* 2014-04-01)

"A valuable contribution to any discussion of North Vietnam's road to war, and the origins of the American stage in the Vietnam War."
(Tal Tovy *H-Net* 2015-02-01)

"Asselin's excellent study . . . will remain an indispensable source for students of Vietnam, the Cold War, and twentieth-century world history for many years to come."
(Jessica Elkind *The Journal of American History* 2015-06-28)

From the Inside Flap

"Splendidly researched, chock-full of fascinating new information and insights, *Hanoi's Road to the Vietnam War* is truly a path-breaking study, far and away the best book to date on that crucial topic." —George C. Herring, author of *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1900–1950*

"Pierre Asselin has done an admirable job of marshalling French, Canadian, and British records to supplement the available Vietnamese evidence and illuminate Hanoi's road to the Vietnam War. Asselin shows that the conflagration was inevitable not only due to American goals and actions but because North Vietnam specifically chose war. This is an important contribution to lifting the veil that has long prevented an understanding of Hanoi's approach to the war." —John Prados, author of *Vietnam: The History of an Unwinnable War, 1945-1975*

"An illuminating account of how North Vietnam's leaders moved from a peaceful reunification strategy to a policy of all-out war. Asselin's stress on Vietnamese agency and on Hanoi's ability to manipulate its Soviet and Chinese allies makes his book a major contribution to the history of Indochina." —Odd Arne Westad, author of *Restless Empire: China and the World Since 1750*

About the Author

Pierre Asselin is Professor of History at Hawaii Pacific University in Honolulu and the author of *A Bitter Peace: Washington, Hanoi, and the Making of the Paris Agreement*.

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