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978-0-521-71690-1 - Inventing Vietnam: The United States and State Building, 1954-1968

James M. Carter

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## INVENTING VIETNAM

This book considers the Vietnam War in light of U.S. foreign policy in Vietnam, concluding that the war was a direct result of failed state-building efforts. This U.S. nation-building project began in the mid-1950s with the ambitious goal of creating a new independent, democratic, modern state below the seventeenth parallel. No one involved imagined this effort would lead to a major and devastating war in less than a decade. Carter analyzes how the United States ended up fighting a large-scale war that wrecked the countryside, generated a flood of refugees, and brought about catastrophic economic distortions, results that actually further undermined the larger U.S. goal of building a viable state. Carter argues that well before the Tet Offensive shocked the viewing public in late January 1968, the campaign in southern Vietnam had completely failed and, furthermore, that the program contained the seeds of its own failure from the outset.

James M. Carter obtained his PhD from the University of Houston in 2004 and is currently assistant professor of history at Drew University, Corpus Christi. His research specialties include U.S. foreign relations, the Vietnam War, and the Cold War. His publications include several articles on nation building in Vietnam and private contractors in both Vietnam and Iraq, in addition to book reviews in *Itinerario*, the *Journal of Military History*, and *Education about Asia*, as well as on H-Diplo. In summer 2007, he was appointed a Fellow of the Summer Military History Seminar at West Point Military Academy.

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