



No Lessons Learned: Vietnam: the Fighting, the Dying, a Legacy Replayed in the Middle East

Alfredo Bonadeo

The Ewings Publishing
(176pp)
979-888640352-7

No Lessons Learned is a scathing history book that draws parallels between the US's military actions in Vietnam and Iraq.

Drawing on military history to support its claims, literature professor Alfredo Bonadeo's posthumously published book *No Lessons Learned* claims that the tragedies of the Vietnam War repeated themselves in the Middle East.

This is a book-length exploration of the idea that those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it. Suggesting that diplomacy is not often enough used in resolving international differences, the book critiques the foreign policies of Vietnam and the United States, expanding its criticisms of the latter into discussions of US policies following the attacks of September 11, 2001. It also muses on the psychological toll of war for veterans and the citizens of invaded nations.

The book's analyses are wide-ranging. It dissects the ideals of heroism and speaks on topics including dangerous conceptions of manliness; it notes technological advancements in weaponry as well. Still, it does all of this work in a limited space, making its coverage of the root causes of war, and of battlefield failures, less than comprehensive.

Quotes from others also consume considerable page time in this slim book, obscuring Bonadeo's own voice. The war literature of Philip Caputo, Michael David Herr, and Tim O'Brien is surveyed for their accounts of combat and of the battlefield. But the book also moves beyond its central wars to consider war as it is represented in the works of Homer and Leo Tolstoy, waxing philosophical about the true nature of war. It cites statistics, news stories, and Nobel lectures as well.

The prose is analytical. It probes the ramifications of war; it parses the platitudes of military leaders. Space is devoted to breaking down the accounts of combatants to extract broader meaning from them. And all of this diverse work feeds into the book's damning, erudite conclusion, which asserts in bold terms that US military aggression runs counter to international interests—and which recounts the massive loss of human life involved, tallying the dead and lamenting the germination of new conflicts. Bonadeo's wife also speaks in the book's epilogue, echoing her husband's concerns about the "arrogance and folly" of military leaders—and chronicling the difficulties that she faced when it came to getting this book published after his death.

No Lessons Learned is a scathing historical survey that draws parallels between the US's military actions in Vietnam and Iraq.

JOSEPH S. PETE (September 14, 2023)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.