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The Army and Vietnam

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diligence, solve these machine cyphers himself. At each step, the mathematical justification is presented. In many cases, the authors have consulted primary sources in the development of their solutions. Such sources are technical papers of the actual participants and where possible, the actual principals have been interviewed.

Machine Cryptography and Modern Cryptanalysis is clearly a book for a special audience of scientists, engineers, applied mathematicians and of course, "cypher fanatics." While a knowledge of group theory and statistics is extremely helpful, the general reader can very profitably read this work, given concentration and patience.

For the general reader and the specialist this work provides a number of valuable insights:

- Simultaneous invention of methods, procedures and even hardware is a common occurrence even in a secret environment;

- Superiority in applied mathematics and science and at least a local environment of free expression and technical honesty are the enabling conditions for great technical achievement in general and cryptological breakthroughs in particular. The survival of one's nation can turn on the result;

- Secrecy is a necessary environment which must be creatively managed if interactions between secret developments are to be fully integrated, e.g., cryptanalysis and cypher machine development; and

- As activities grow and require industrial style organization, pro-

grams become managed by people who often do not have the depth of understanding of the technical issues which govern their programs. The bureaucratic imperative becomes operative, often with tragic results. The failure of the German and Japanese cypher systems can be laid fundamentally to such causes.

The specialist reader will find certain editorial mistakes in this book somewhat disturbing. This reviewer noticed several. In retrospect however, corrupted text is a constant in cryptanalysis. To Messrs. Deavours and Kruh, "very nicely done."

JAMES S. O'BRASKY
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Krepinevich, Andrew F. *The Army and Vietnam*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986. 318pp. \$26.50

Andrew Krepinevich is an Army major currently assigned to the Office of the Secretary of Defense. This book is an outgrowth of his doctoral dissertation and, as its title states, stresses the Army's role in the Second Indochina War.

The central question the author seeks to answer is how an army of the "most powerful nation in the world" failed to defeat the smaller force of a lightly armed opposition. At the outset he hypothesizes his answer: "The United States Army was neither trained nor organized to fight effectively in an insurgency conflict environment."

Krepinevich's methodology is to examine the question through documentation and interviews in three discrete time periods: the advisory period, 1954-65; the war years, 1965-68; and the withdrawal years, 1968-73. He then sets forth his argument and conclusions. The bulk of the book concerns the first two time periods; the withdrawal phase is seemingly appended.

From the outset it is clear that the book is primarily an analysis of Army doctrinal matters blended into a well-researched historical context. To the author it is clear that the struggle should have been a counterinsurgency effort rather than the conventional type of war the Army actually fought. For example, he concludes that in the advisory period the Army failed to structure its forces for counterinsurgency operations and that the major innovation it developed at that time, airmobility, had in reality been created for a NATO scenario. When such forces were employed in Vietnam it was as an attempt at a technological "fix."

The section on the war years describes the period beginning with decisions to commit ground combat forces in that fateful spring of 1965 until the bubble broke at Tet 1968. This is a particularly clear section which cuts through bureaucratic underbrush with precision and good insight. Two illustrations are the debate concerning the introduction of ground forces that Ambassador Maxwell Taylor eventually lost to his bureaucratic opponents in MACV, the Pentagon, and the White House; and the preoccupation

of MACV with "crossover" points and statistics, with which even Robert McNamara had had enough by the fall of 1966.

The author's observations concerning the attrition strategy of this period are damning. Two specifics are the excessive use of firepower and careetism in connection with the body count, which became the key for measuring progress in this war of attrition. One weakness of the book in this section is the relatively brief treatment given to pacification which was, after all, what the war was supposed to be about.

The withdrawal years are covered in a chapter resembling a long footnote. The author does make the point that there was no change in strategy except that occasioned by the troop removal itself.

The most provocative chapter is the concluding one which brings Krepinevich into the doctrinal dialogue with those who believe a true conventional strategy would have been successful, for example, a push by American, Vietnamese, and Korean forces across Laos to the Thai border. Harry Summers is currently one of the best known exponents of this hypothesis.

Some telling points the author makes in his conclusions: because of its doctrinal fix, the Army expended human and material resources in a profligate manner without results; most of the learning of what went wrong occurred at the junior officer level with those more senior playing the game to enhance their careers; subsequently the Army expunged the

Vietnam experience from its corporate consciousness and even now is unconvinced that low-intensity warfare represents the most likely area of future conflict.

This is an important book. It is well researched and clearly written, though it lapses into jargon at times. The author does set the stage for a doctrinal debate with the Army's conventional school by setting forth his conclusions in a provocative but plausible manner.

One caution: the book is, as the title indicates, about the Army. While the political/social milieu in which the war took place is alluded to, nowhere is it evident that in the final analysis this, and not doctrine, controlled the manner in which the war was fought. This is intentional on the author's part, but is an inhibiting factor for the general reader, considering the political nature of the war. Nevertheless, I strongly recommend this important book to both students of the war and to those interested or involved in current Army doctrinal debates. The outcome of these debates is vital not only to the Army's future but, more importantly, to the Nation's.

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Stanton, Shelby L. *Green Berets at War: U.S. Army Special Forces in Southeast Asia 1956-1975*. Novato, Calif.: Presido Press, 1985. 360pp. \$18.95

This book, about the exploits and accomplishments of Special Forces, is sure to raise the "hackles" of many in military and civilian circles. Shelby L. Stanton has provided a straightforward description of Special Forces organization and combat performance in Southeast Asia. He describes the individual exploits of Special Forces personnel in detail, bringing to the narrative a personal dimension and ground combat-level reality seen only in the better accounts of the wars in Southeast Asia. While his insights may offer little that is new to those who understand and are familiar with Special Forces, they are useful to those in the military mainstream.

Special Forces became involved in Southeast Asia long before U.S. policy made the area a major national security concern. As early as 1956, the 14th Special Forces Operational Detachment was activated for the purpose of "leading Asian resistance forces against Sino-Soviet forces expected to overrun the rim of Asia." Other Special Forces detachments were activated for operations in the Pacific. In 1959 Special Forces were operating in Laos, carrying civilian identity cards. In 1961 the U.S. Military Assistance Group in Laos was activated and the civilian cover discarded.

From such beginnings the author traces the development and expansion of Special Forces operations throughout Southeast Asia, with the major part of the book devoted to operations in South Vietnam. Using primarily operational after-action re-