



A Bitter Peace: Washington, Hanoi, and the Making of the Paris Agreement (New Cold War History)

By Pierre Asselin

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Demonstrating the centrality of diplomacy in the Vietnam War, Pierre Asselin traces the secret negotiations that led up to the Paris Agreement of 1973, which ended America's involvement but failed to bring peace in Vietnam. Because the two sides signed the agreement under duress, he argues, the peace it promised was doomed to unravel.

By January of 1973, the continuing military stalemate and mounting difficulties on the domestic front forced both Washington and Hanoi to conclude that signing a vague and largely unworkable peace agreement was the most expedient way to achieve their most pressing objectives. For Washington, those objectives included the release of American prisoners, military withdrawal without formal capitulation, and preservation of American credibility in the Cold War. Hanoi, on the other hand, sought to secure the removal of American forces, protect the socialist revolution in the North, and improve the prospects for reunification with the South. Using newly available archival sources from Vietnam, the United States, and Canada, Asselin reconstructs the secret negotiations, highlighting the creative roles of Hanoi, the National Liberation Front, and Saigon in constructing the final settlement.

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By Pierre Asselin Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #7550828 in Books
- Published on: 2002-11-25
- Released on: 2001-11-01
- Format: Bargain Price
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: .93" h x 6.02" w x 9.76" l,
- Binding: Hardcover
- 304 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

Pierre Asselin has made good use of both American and Vietnamese sources. This is the best study I have seen of the process that produced the Paris Peace Agreement.

(Edwin E. Moise, author of *Tonkin Gulf and the Escalation of the Vietnam War*)

Asselin makes an important contribution in helping us understand what happened in the secret 'Nobel Prize-winning' negotiations between Le Duc Tho and Henry Kissinger. Two years later South Vietnam no longer existed. Asselin makes a powerful case that the outcome of the war was determined not on the battlefield, but at the negotiating table.

(Larry Berman, author of *No Peace, No Honor: Nixon, Kissinger, and Betrayal in Vietnam*)

Review

Asselin is a part of a new generation of Vietnam scholars who are defying the academic taboo against addressing the torturous war period from perspectives both north and south of the seventeenth parallel. . . . Asselin's work will undoubtedly advance the discussion on the Vietnamese-American War enormously. *A Bitter Peace* is an excellent contribution to the literature that will hopefully encourage present and future scholars of Vietnam to finally address issues of that most taboo war.--*Journal of Asian Studies*

A well-researched, beginning work of scholarship that should be read by all interested in the Vietnam War.--*Journal of American History*

A Bitter Peace is a welcome addition to the burgeoning literature on the last stages of the Vietnam War.--*International History Review*

This is an impressive work of diplomatic history and an important contribution to the growing body of 'new Cold War history.'--*Virginia Quarterly Review*

Making use of extraordinary new documents from archives in the United States and Vietnam, Pierre Asselin makes an important contribution in helping us understand what happened in the secret 'Nobel Prize-winning' negotiations between Le Duc Tho and Henry Kissinger. Two years later South Vietnam no longer existed. Asselin makes a powerful case that the outcome of the war was determined not on the battlefield, but at the negotiating table.--Larry Berman, author of *No Peace, No Honor: Nixon, Kissinger, and Betrayal in Vietnam*

As good an account of the 1972 negotiations and the resulting agreement as we are likely to get.--*American*

Historical Review

Pierre Asselin has made good use of both American and Vietnamese sources. This is the best study I have seen of the process that produced the Paris Peace Agreement.--Edwin E. Moise, Clemson University

About the Author

Pierre Asselin is assistant professor of history at the Kapiolani campus of the University of Hawaii.

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