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Lessons in Disaster: McGeorge Bundy and the Path to War in Vietnam

Gordon M. Goldstein

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"A compelling portrait of a man once serenely confident, searching decades later for self-understanding."?Richard Holbrooke, *The New York Times Book Review*

I had a part in a great failure. I made mistakes of perception, recommendation and execution. If I have learned anything I should share it."

These are not words that Americans ever expected to hear from McGeorge Bundy, the national security adviser to presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. But in the last years of his life, Bundy?the only principal architect of Vietnam strategy to have maintained his public silence?decided to revisit the decisions that had led to war and to look anew at the role he played.

In this original and provocative work of presidential history, Gordon M. Goldstein distills the essential lessons of America's involvement in Vietnam, drawing on his prodigious research as well as interviews and analysis he conducted with Bundy before his death in 1996. *Lessons in Disaster* is a historical tour de force on the uses and misuses of American power, and offers instructive guidance that we must heed if we are not to repeat the mistakes of the past.

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