

A photograph of three Navy Riverine Group sailors in Iraq. They are wearing tan combat uniforms and green helmets. The sailor in the foreground is holding an M4-style rifle and looking down. Two other sailors are visible in the background, one standing and one partially obscured. The terrain is a mix of green grass and brown earth.

Navy Riverine Group Sailors
conduct joint operation in Iraq

Vietnam and Iraq Learning from the Past?

By BRENT C. BANKUS *and* JAMES KIEVIT

1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) Soldiers advance on Viet Cong bunker near Bong Don, Vietnam, Operation Masher

U.S. Army



Periodically, articles in both the mainstream media and “blogosphere” have compared operations in Iraq to previous U.S. operations in Vietnam. Sometimes, these articles are written by military analysts, but more often they are produced by journalists.¹ Occasionally, the motivation of members of the media in seeking similarities seems to have been mostly to discredit the current U.S. involvement in Southwest Asia in much the same fashion as did some members of the media for Southeast Asia in the late 1960s. Dr. Jeffrey Record and Dr. Andrew Terrill of the Strategic Studies Institute, on the other hand, have published an extensive analysis arguing that a comparison of the Vietnam War and the Iraq War in the areas of U.S. military commitment, war aims, nature and scale of operations, loss rates, pacification and state-building activities, role of allies, and domestic political sustainability reveals more differences than similarities between the two conflicts.²

Certainly, in one aspect the two conflicts *are* similar, and indeed this similarity may be said to hold true for all conflicts, conventional or unconventional: whatever the time and place, warfare is complex—that is, a dynamic mix of traditional combat activities, including pitched battles between heavily armed, well-organized

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warfare is complex*

forces and unconventional combat activities involving smaller units, occurs, while more often than not simultaneously and in close proximity, the competing hostile entities are conducting—and attempting to disrupt opponents’—governance or nation-building activities.

Beyond that perhaps “blinding flash of the obvious” (even if, for many, it unfortunately is not), all who would attempt

Lieutenant Colonel Brent C. Bankus, USA (Ret.), is a Regional Security Analyst in the National Security Issues Group at the U.S. Army War College. Lieutenant Colonel James Kievit, USA (Ret.), is a former Research Analyst in the Strategic Studies Institute at the U.S. Army War College.

U.S. Army (Adelita Meard)

to draw analogies between Vietnam and current conflicts, or lessons from the former for application to the latter, would do well to first read carefully the article “Lessons of History and Lessons of Vietnam” by then-Major, now-General, David Petraeus. Originally published in 1986 but recently republished in the U.S. Army War College’s *Parameters*, the article begins, “[I]t is important to recognize that history can mislead and obfuscate as well as guide and illuminate. Lessons of the past, in general, and the lessons of Vietnam, in particular, contain not only policy-relevant analogies, but also ambiguities and paradoxes;”³ and concludes, “Study of Vietnam—and of other historical occurrences—should endeavor to gain perspective and understanding, rather than hard and fast lessons that might be applied too easily without proper reflection and sufficiently rigorous analysis.”⁴

Keeping that caution in mind, the remainder of this article attempts to contribute to analytical efforts comparing U.S. military involvement in Vietnam with that in Iraq, particularly regarding efforts to create effective indigenous armed forces capable of defending the national interests of a U.S.-supported local government.

Similarities

The major objective in any counterinsurgency or unconventional type of war is gaining and then maintaining the support of the population and not simply attriting the enemy’s armed forces. Furthermore, it is of course true that it is difficult to gain and maintain support of a population unless you can guarantee a reasonable degree of security against hostile acts. Equally true is that determining and creating the proper balance among security-focused activities and population-support activities are no easier in Southwest Asia today than they were in Southeast Asia in the 20th century; nor are they likely to be easy in any future conflict irrespective of locale. The conduct of war will remain an art, not a science.

There are other similarities between former operations in Vietnam and present-day operations in Iraq. The original U.S. strategy for each included a focus on eliminating “incorrect ideologists” within the existing indigenous armed forces as a mechanism to help build reliable and effective armed forces for the U.S.-supported national government. In Vietnam, the first

step taken by the United States to create more reliable armed forces for the South Vietnamese government was to insist upon the demobilization of 25 percent of the existing regular army.⁵ Just as in Iraq almost five decades later, this proved to be “an act both psychologically destructive and detrimental to the combat potential of the [indigenous] armed forces.”⁶ In each case, subsequent efforts had to be made to rectify the situation by enticing those who had been dismissed—in particular, experienced officers and noncommissioned officers—to return to the service.⁷ Meanwhile, the enemy also “got a vote” on the

*Viet Nam toward that objective may very well be the most complex problem ever faced by men in uniform anywhere on earth.*¹⁰

Unfortunately in Vietnam, America’s early failure to focus on the population due to the perceived need to defeat large units of Ho Chi Minh’s army of North Vietnam enabled the Viet Cong to become more deeply entrenched in the 44 provinces of South Vietnam, firmly establishing shadow communist cells in the hamlets and villages. Aiding the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese effort was the political weakness of the government in South Vietnam. Thus,

successful counterattacks by the United States and its allies during Tet in 1968 resulted in the Viet Cong largely ceasing to exist as a viable fighting force

future course of each conflict, and in both cases chose to continue hostilities with an emphasis on guerrilla or insurgency style combat activities.

The initial U.S. response to this action by the enemy, in Vietnam in the 20th century and in Iraq in the 21st, was conducting traditional kinetic operations with U.S. forces as the principal way to neutralize the insurgents. In Vietnam, General William Westmoreland (U.S. ground commander, 1964–1968) initiated a “big unit” strategy of attrition. These “body count” or “search and destroy” U.S. military operations were expected to establish a secure environment while simultaneously protecting the fledgling South Vietnamese armed forces and allowing them time to develop.⁸ In Iraq, American generals lacked the large numbers of troops that Westmoreland was able to call upon, but nonetheless attempted to use their available units to hunt down and eliminate the enemy’s armed elements.⁹

Eventually, in both Vietnam and Iraq, American leaders recognized the need to have the military execute a more population-centric program over an extended period. As General Westmoreland stated:

Viet Nam is involved in two simultaneous and very difficult tasks. Nation building, and fighting a vicious and well-organized enemy. If it could do either alone, the task would be very simplified, but it’s got to do both at once. . . . It won’t, can’t reach maturity overnight. Helping

although U.S. units were never defeated in engagements with the enemy’s large-scale forces and established an ability to maneuver freely throughout the area of operations, the overall security situation was not actually significantly improved for most of the population of South Vietnam. Similarly in Iraq, the weaknesses of the new federal government of Iraq and the shortage of U.S. forces in country prior to the 2007 surge meant that enemy forces could always find a municipality or neighborhood in which it was fairly safe to base or operate.¹¹

After more than 3 years of intensive U.S. operations in Vietnam, growing dissatisfaction in the United States with the human and financial cost of the war exploded domestically when the forces of North Vietnam and the Viet Cong launched the Tet Offensive, attacking most of the population centers in South Vietnam in January–February 1968. This offensive demonstrated to the American people that the enemy was *not* yet defeated, in contrast to the strategic communication messages of the Lyndon Johnson administration. In reality, of course, successful counterattacks by the United States and its allies during Tet in 1968 resulted in the Viet Cong largely ceasing to exist as a viable fighting force and destroyed the combined enemies’ ability to wage offensive war for several years. Mainstream media stories of the day, however, generally ignored or glossed over those hard-fought battlefield successes of U.S. and allied forces, instead focusing on how the Johnson



Army medic adjusts pediatric wheelchair provided by nonprofit group to children in Baghdad, Iraq

U.S. Army (Breeanna DuBuke)



U.S. Information Agency

USAID military health team member inoculates refugee against cholera, Vietnam, 1969

administration had deceived the public. The resultant domestic political turmoil undermined the ability to capitalize on the enemy's weakened state.

Vietnam Reform: The CORDS Program

Nonetheless, as General Creighton Abrams (Vice Chief of Staff of the Army and deputy to General Westmoreland) took command later in 1968, positive steps toward greater success began to be taken. Fully cognizant of the importance of a supportive population for the South Vietnam government, Abrams aggressively implemented an increasingly effective security sector reform campaign in the hamlets and villages. This campaign's principal—but not exclusive—focus was on building security sector capacity in local forces to defend areas against residual Viet Cong elements or small unit actions of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA).

Furthermore, in order to create a more effective and coordinated whole-of-government approach, the military's security sector reform and civilian development programs were combined under

one command, called the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program. The CORDS concept was instigated by National Security Advisor Robert Komer; upon its adoption he was assigned as a deputy to Abrams specifically to implement the program, to help ensure military and civilian unity of effort during execution.¹²

Although similar to France's *sections administratives spécialisées* (SAS)¹³ program during its Algerian experience a decade earlier, CORDS was both a much larger and a more diversified program. In its time, the SAS was a groundbreaking concept consisting of small units of primarily French army officers charged both with restoring order and with initiating rural development projects. SAS activities in Algeria included conducting adult literacy and primary education programs, building and repairing the regional feeder road system, undertaking local market and irrigation projects, and initiating a preventive medicine and dispensary program. The SAS effort was credited with successfully reducing the number of attacks on French troops.¹⁴

In Vietnam, CORDS coupled the military and civilian development programs under one unified command. In addition to security sector reform, CORDS focused on infrastructure development and humanitarian assistance and education projects as well as programs to manage natural resources in the rural provinces of South Vietnam. For example, under the auspices of CORDS, the U.S. Agency for International Development helped establish numerous schools, hospitals and health clinics, highways, hydroelectric plants, and farming cooperatives.¹⁵ Through CORDS programs, essential services such as sanitation, access to clean water and medical treatment, in addition to assisting farming practices and road improvements and other natural resource management activities, improved the quality of life for the people. As important, the Regional Force and Provisional Force security elements developed under CORDS gained acceptance among the population and their local security activities subsequently often yielded positive results beyond expectations. CORDS seemed to show promise that the South Vietnamese population might be won over to support of



U.S. Army (Danielle Hendrix)

Children gather at market built with assistance of Vietnamese government and U.S. Agency for International Development

Iraqi children wait to receive book bags from Army Advise and Assist Brigade Soldiers during humanitarian aid mission, Ramadi



U.S. Information Agency

U.S. objectives in Southeast Asia and—more important—of the still weak South Vietnamese government itself.¹⁶

Although the entities hostile to the new Iraqi government and U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq never managed to execute anything like a full-scale Tet Offensive, they nonetheless initially succeeded in conducting episodic violent activities and inflicting increasing U.S. and Iraqi military and civilian casualties. As in Vietnam, the perceived inability of American, coalition, and Iraqi security elements to control and reduce the level of violence led to an upsurge in U.S.

domestic political opposition to continuing the conflict.¹⁷ The theater strategic response was also similar, combining increased population-focused military security efforts (by both U.S. surge forces and repatriated indigenous militias) with better coordinated whole-of-government population support activities led by combined military and civilian reconstruction teams advising and assisting the local governance efforts at multiple levels.¹⁸

With respect to creating viable indigenous armed forces, even while focusing on counterinsurgency small unit tactics in training of local forces, the United States and its allies in Vietnam simultaneously worked to train the regular armed forces of South Vietnam to perform conventional combat operations. These activities further increased in the late 1969–1971 timeframe as recognition grew that, while the CORDS strategy might ultimately prevail against the diminished Viet Cong insurgent threat in the South and associated attacks by infiltrated small unit NVA forces, there still existed a significant conventional threat to the South Vietnamese state from the potential combined arms maneuver capabilities of North Vietnam's large and reasonably modern regular army.¹⁹

By the early 1970s, all levels of the South Vietnamese security forces were demonstrating reasonable effectiveness as counterinsurgency elements; however, despite significant U.S. training and equipping

leaving only the relatively small number of 50 military and 1,200 civilians assigned to the Defense Attaché Office in Saigon and approximately 5,000 American contractors. Together, these individuals provided technical assistance essential to the South Vietnamese armed forces' modernization and expansion programs, but were specifically directed to avoid providing advice on military operations, tactics, or techniques of employment.²² Still, in 1974, Brigadier General James L. Collins, Jr., concluded the Army's study of the Vietnamization effort by writing that "the U.S. approach in training [the ARVN] has been successful."²³

In Iraq, due to the unexpected decision in May 2003 to disband the entire existing Iraqi armed forces,²⁴ advisory and training efforts focused on creating effective indigenous Iraqi military forces had an even steeper hill to climb than had been the case in Vietnam. Initial efforts concentrated on having civilian contractors train nine light infantry battalions. It quickly became apparent that this approach was both insufficient and ineffective, and April 2004 saw the establishment of Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq and the transfer of responsibility for advising and training to the U.S. Armed Forces. At the same time, it was recognized that the number of Iraqi troops required was two to eight times greater than previously thought. Between 2004 and 2007, the mission of U.S. advisors and

Petraeus, simultaneously emphasized the need to protect the population.²⁶ The focus for both U.S. combat elements and Iraqi forces became counterinsurgency capabilities writ large, including the full integration of other governmental and nongovernmental lines of effort with military activities. U.S. elements advising and training the Iraqi army, which actually had never expended much effort toward developing traditional combat capabilities, abandoned those activities completely and focused solely on creating an effective small-unit counterinsurgency force, neither equipped nor expected to engage in combined arms maneuver operations against a conventional enemy.

By mid-2010, the situation in Iraq supported a conclusion that the surge of forces in 2007 and a focus on protecting the population succeeded in decreasing the violence and setting the stage for a U.S. withdrawal of forces.²⁷ At the same time, the advisory and training effort was able to begin concentrating at least partially on equipping and preparing some Iraqi army battalions and brigades for conventional operations (for example, issuing M1 Abrams tanks).²⁸ Thus, regarding countering the enemy insurgent or guerrilla forces, Iraq in 2011 appears to bear a significant similarity to Vietnam at the time of the American withdrawal in 1973.

Unfortunately, of course, in 1975 the North Vietnamese launched a full-scale conventional military invasion of South Vietnam:

On 1 March the [North Vietnamese] 968th Division attacked several small outposts west of Pleiku, focusing ARVN attention on the threat to that city. On 4 March the [North Vietnamese main] offensive kicked off with an attack by Regiment 95A which overran several small ARVN outposts guarding Route 19 in the Mang Yang Pass, thereby severing ARVN's main supply route to its forces in the Central Highlands. Farther east on Route 19 the 3^d [North Vietnamese] Division launched its own offensive, making further cuts on this vital road and tying down the ARVN 22^d Division. The next day the [North Vietnamese] 25th Regiment cut Route 21, the only other road from the coast to the Highlands, between Ban Me Thuot and Nha Trang. ARVN forces in the Central Highlands were now isolated and completely dependent on aerial resupply.²⁹

On March 10, the NVA attacked Ban Me Thuot with 12 regiments supported by

U.S. elements advising and training the Iraqi army focused on creating an effective small-unit counterinsurgency force, neither equipped nor expected to engage in combined arms maneuver operations against a conventional enemy

efforts and even actual support activities by U.S. elements during combat operations, the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) units were not consistently successful in actions against NVA regular forces.²⁰ Nonetheless, the successful ARVN counterattacks that reversed the widespread initial gains of the NVA during the April 1972 conventional Easter Offensive²¹ helped convince the North Vietnamese government to agree to the terms for a ceasefire in the war, signed in January 1973. In accordance with the terms of that agreement, all U.S. combat forces and military advisory teams were withdrawn from Vietnam within 60 days,

trainers was to get Iraqi soldiers and units certified as quickly as possible so that they could accompany and then replace U.S. or coalition organizations on strike operations against insurgents, in support of the objective of allowing coalition and U.S. forces to stand down and withdraw from Iraq. As had been true in Vietnam, the results of this approach varied—some Iraqi units performed well and others performed poorly—and the enemy was generally able to adapt his activities.²⁵

In January 2007, President George W. Bush announced his decision to surge additional U.S. forces into Iraq, and the newly appointed U.S. commander, General David

armored, artillery, and engineer units; 32 hours later, the defending ARVN division's headquarters was overrun and captured.³⁰ This was conventional combat in every sense, and success at Ban Me Thuot was followed by the commitment of additional divisional and even corps-size elements by the North Vietnamese across the breadth and depth of South Vietnam. ARVN leaders were unable to react effectively to the NVA actions, and, just 55 days after the offensive began, South Vietnam ceased to exist when columns of NVA tanks rolled into Saigon.³¹

Conclusion

While no two wars are ever the same (rather, each is unique—and certainly this is the case of Vietnam and Iraq), three important insights are readily discernible from the preceding brief comparison.

First, every conflict requires both military operations aimed at eliminating hostile threats and also whole-of-government activities aimed at establishing or restoring essential foundations (physical, psychological, cultural, and moral, among others) of good governance and civil stability. While it may be possible—even required—to prioritize between those two lines of effort, there is no choice between doing one and doing the other—both always must be accomplished. This is because in any operation, whether so-called traditional combat operations or any of the many various types of stability operations, security and protection are always important to the population at risk. A safe environment is an essential precursor to reconstruction of an affected area. If security is *not* achieved early and then sustained in any operation, the second- and third-level effects are usually disastrous. At the same time, no peaceful interregnum between conflicts will last long unless the operations that eliminate direct hostile actions also are accompanied by activities that address existing or potential underlying catalysts of future conflict.

Second, and in a similar vein, outside military advisory and assistance efforts cannot focus solely on preparing indigenous armed forces for counterinsurgency activities on the one hand, or for conventional large-scale combat operations on the other. Armed forces must possess both those capabilities if they are to successfully protect modern nation-states in the 21st-century national security environment, just as was required in the 19th and 20th centuries. An army that can

do counterinsurgency but not multi-echelon combined arms maneuver, or vice versa, will almost certainly discover that its opponent always chooses to fight the fight for which that army and that nation are unprepared.

Third, despite perceptions to the contrary arising from the difficulties of counterinsurgency operations, it takes a longer time and a greater effort for an army to be prepared to fight on the multi-echeloned, combined arms maneuver battlefield. This is because the security operations of the counterinsurgency conflict are largely prepared and executed by battalions and companies, and the synchronization of military activities to conduct those operations frequently can be accomplished by headquarters operating from fixed facilities with assets also prepositioned within the theater. Successful company commanders can be educated and trained in a few years at most, and battalion commanders in less than a decade during actual operations. Multi-echelon, combined arms maneuver operations, on the other hand, demand preparation

and execution by multiple brigade-, division-, and even corps-level commanders, synchronizing the repositioning and application of diverse elements of combat power being brought to bear dynamically on the move, often while the headquarters themselves are moving to address or avoid specific threats. Company and battalion commanders still can be developed and made ready for this type of combat within relatively short timeframes, but the skills and abilities required at the higher (brigade, division, corps) echelons that success at multi-echelon combined arms maneuver demands take far longer to develop through actual experience or experiential education.

Thus, the United States was instrumental in helping the ARVN become a successful counterinsurgency force; it even managed to develop multi-echelon combined arms fighting capabilities within selected ARVN battalions and brigades, some of which fought very effectively during the final offensive of the Vietnam War in 1975. What the assistance effort in Vietnam could not do was develop



Airman patrols outskirts of Joint Base Balad, Iraq

U.S. Air Force (Quinton Russ)

truly effective division and corps commanders—only extensive education and experiential learning over time regarding the specific problems associated with multi-echelon, combined arms maneuver can do that. The U.S. withdrawal in Vietnam came too early for the ARVN to be fully ready to take on the defense against a large-scale conventional multi-echelon combined arms attack. The fate of the South Vietnamese army in 1975 provides ample evidence that courageous, battle-tested, and well-led battalions and companies cannot overcome the inability of brigade, division, and corps commanders to visualize and then synchronize the necessary actions of their dispersed commands across a fluid and dynamic kinetic battlespace.

Today, it appears that the United States has had reasonable success in Iraq in organizing, educating, and training indigenous security forces to undertake counterinsurgency and stability operations. This perception is encouraging discussion of a rapid withdrawal of all U.S. forces. But while it seems unlikely that Iraq's potential enemies will pose a multi-echelon combined arms maneuver threat in the immediate future, the same cannot be said for the longer term. Therefore, withdrawing U.S. advisors, support, and the possibility of U.S. intervention with combat capabilities, until at least another decade has passed, potentially invites a repetition of the “real” lesson of Vietnam in Southwest Asia.

Similarly, any failure on the part of the U.S. military to maintain professional military institutions that can and do focus their educational and experiential activities on both counterinsurgency and conventional combat operations—particularly for senior-level leaders—would make the risk a global one. **JFQ**

NOTES

¹ See, for example, Robert Freeman, “Is Iraq Another Vietnam? Actually It May Become Worse,” April 19, 2004, available at <www.commondreams.org/views04/0419-11.htm>; Danny Schetcher, “The Unreported Vietnam-Iraq Parallel,” May 1, 2005, available at <www.commondreams.org/views05/0501-32.htm>; Melvin Laird, “Iraq: Learning the Lessons of Vietnam,” *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 6 (November–December 2005), available at <www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/61195/melvin-r-laird/iraq-learning-the-lessons-of-vietnam>; Warren Wilkins, “Iraq: The New Vietnam,” May 1, 2008, available at

<http://threatswatch.org/commentary/2008/05/iraq-the-new-vietnam/>; and Oliver North, “Vietnam and Iraq: Myth vs. Reality,” December 2010, available at <www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,225911,00.html>.

² Jeffrey Record and Andrew Terrill, *Iraq and Vietnam: Differences, Similarities, and Insights* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army Strategic Studies Institute, May 2004).

³ David Petraeus, “Lessons of History and Lessons of Vietnam,” *Parameters* (Autumn 1986, republished Winter 2010), 48, available at <www.carlisle.army.mil/USAWC/Parameters/Articles/2010winter/Petraeus.pdf>.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁵ Cao Van Vien, *Leadership* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1981), 25.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ John H. Hay, Jr., *Vietnam Studies: Tactical and Material Innovations* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1989), 169–178, available at <www.history.army.mil/books/Vietnam/tactical/chapter15.htm>.

⁹ Specific information regarding an extensive number of U.S. and coalition pre- and postsurge military operations can be accessed at <www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraq_ongoing_mil_ops.htm>.

¹⁰ Quoted in the cover story in *Time* 87, no. 1 (January 7, 1966), available at <www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,834900,00.html>.

¹¹ See LTG Raymond Odierno's speech, “The Surge in Iraq: One Year Later,” March 13, 2008, The Heritage Foundation, available at <www.heritage.org/Research/Lecture/The-Surge-in-Iraq-One-Year-Later>.

¹² Jeremy Patrick White, *Civil Affairs in Vietnam* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, January 2009), 1–2, available at <http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/090130_vietnam_study.pdf>.

¹³ Michael Thompson, *Lessons in Counterinsurgency: The French Campaign in Algeria* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air Command and Staff College, 2008), 12, available at <www.afresearch.org/skins/rims/display.aspx?moduleid=be0e99f3-fc56-4ccb-8dfe-670c0822a153&mode=use r&action=researchproject&objectid=5f3da6fe-bb22-4d23-9fe3-5223add0e96c>.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁵ M. Leepson, “The Heart and Mind of USAID's Vietnam Mission, Most USAID personnel in Vietnam, including State FSOs labored in obscurity. Here are some of their stories,” *American Foreign Service Association*, 2000, 2, available at <www.afsa.org/fsj/apr00leepson.cfm>.

¹⁶ White, 10–11.

¹⁷ See, for example, Kevin Zeese, “Republican Opposition to Iraq War Growing,” July 23, 2005, available at <www.lewrockwell.com/zeese/zeese11.html>.

¹⁸ Odierno; Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Fact Sheet, U.S. Embassy, Baghdad, June 16, 2006, available at <www.usaid.gov/iraq/contracts/pdf/AI2-ProvincialReconstructionTeams-FACTSHEET.pdf>; and the reports of the Iraq PRT Experience Project, U.S. Institute of Peace, available at <www.usip.org/files/file/resources/collections/histories/iraq_prt/4.pdf>.

¹⁹ James L. Collins, Jr., *Vietnam Studies: The Development and Training of the South Vietnamese Army 1950–1972* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, April 15, 1974).

²⁰ For an example of success, see “Cambodia: A Cocky New ARVN,” *Time*, June 8, 1970; for an example of failure, see the description of Lam Son 719 in Laos in Andrew A. Wiest, *Vietnam's Forgotten Army: Heroism and Betrayal in the ARVN* (New York: New York University Press, December 2007).

²¹ See Frederick Lash, Jr., “Tet with Tanks—The NVA Easter Offensive, 1972,” *Military History*, September 11, 2007; and also G.H. Turley, *The Easter Offensive: The Last American Advisors, Vietnam, 1972* (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 1995).

²² William Le Gro, *Vietnam: Cease Fire to Capitulation* (Washington, DC: United States Army Center of Military History, 1985).

²³ Collins, 129.

²⁴ “The Continuing Challenge of Building the Iraqi Security Forces,” Report from the U.S. Congress Armed Services Committee, June 27, 2007, 13, available at <www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/congress/hasc_iraq_sec_forces_27jun07.pdf>.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Peter D. Feaver, “The Right to Be Right: Civil-Military Relations and the Iraq Surge Decision,” *Small Wars Journal*, April 2011.

²⁷ Emma Sky, “Iraq, From Surge to Sovereignty,” *Foreign Affairs* (March–April 2011).

²⁸ Michael D. Barbero, “Growth of the Iraqi Security Forces,” *DODNews*, August 5, 2010, available at <www.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/08/growth-of-the-iraqi-security-forces/>.

²⁹ Merle L. Pribbenow, “North Vietnam's Final Offensive: Strategic Endgame Nonpareil,” *Parameters* (Winter 1999–2000), 58–71, available at <www.carlisle.army.mil/USAWC/Parameters/Articles/99winter/pribbeno.htm>.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ John Pilger, “The Fall of Saigon 1975: An Eyewitness Report,” April 16, 2005, available at <www.lewrockwell.com/pilger/pilger25.html>.