



The Soviet Union and the Vietnam War

By Ilya V. Gaiduk

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Despite hundreds of studies and analyses of the Vietnam War, we still have scant knowledge of deliberations and actions on the other side of the lines—in North Vietnam, China, and the Soviet Union. In this pioneering book, a Russian historian with exclusive access to newly opened Soviet archives on the war offers a compelling account of the Kremlin's role in Vietnam. Ilya Gaiduk shows that while Moscow sought to strengthen its position in Southeast Asia by providing its allies in Hanoi with substantial aid, Soviet leaders also feared an armed dispute involving the United States and worried about the breakdown of detente. In unexpected ways and to a surprising degree, the Soviets pursued a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Indochina on conditions that would be acceptable for the North Vietnamese and, in the long run, for Moscow. Privy to formerly secret documents, Mr. Gaiduk focuses on the trends and motives that influenced the Kremlin's decision-making process, and analyzes the USSR's position on Vietnam in light of its complex relations with the Communist world and the West. His eye-opening history will force a rethinking of many Western assumptions.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Based partly on recently released archival documents, this noteworthy, nuanced study challenges previous views on Soviet policy toward the Vietnam War. Gaiduk, a Russian historian based in Moscow, reveals that in 1971, the Kremlin drew up plans to make Vietnam the U.S.S.R.'s main channel for Soviet influence in Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, the Kremlin was apprehensive that the conflict might spread to other regions and develop into an East-West confrontation or a nuclear disaster. Consequently, Soviet leaders adopted a two-pronged policy, supplying economic and military aid to Hanoi on the one hand, but also making strenuous behind-the-scenes efforts to convince both North and South Vietnam of the need for a negotiated settlement. Another revelation is that North Vietnamese communist leaders, fearful of jeopardizing aid from Moscow, clandestinely kept Soviet diplomats in Paris informed of the contents of private meetings with Henry Kissinger.

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From Library Journal

Gaiduk, a research fellow at the Institute of World History in Moscow specializing in Soviet-American relations, has written an absorbing analysis of the Vietnam War from the Soviet perspective. He shows how the Soviets sought to support North Vietnam while at the same time keeping China from gaining any more political strength in the area. Moreover, the Soviets wished to promote detente with the United States while defeating it in Southeast Asia. How the Russians would react to U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War was always a chief concern of American strategists. Often, what they really thought was not known. For the first time, formerly classified Russian documents have become available, resulting in this fascinating look into the diplomacy of the Soviet Union near the height of its power in the 1960s and 1970s. For academic and most public libraries.

Edward Goedeken, Iowa State Univ. Lib., Ames

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Review

This book moves beyond what has come before it...an insightful analysis of the famous U.S. conflict and the Soviet's role in it. (Thomas R. Maddux *The Russian Review*)

An important contribution to historical understanding of the Vietnam War, and it marks a major advance in Russian scholarship on Soviet foreign policy. (David S. Foglesong, author of *America's Secret War against Bolshevism: U.S. Intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1917-1920 The Historian*)

Penetrating analysis...Gaiduk is to be commended for tackling a subject that is deserving of attention. (Frederik Logevall *Political Science Quarterly*)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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