

TURNING POINTS

The Role of the State Department in Vietnam (1945–1975)

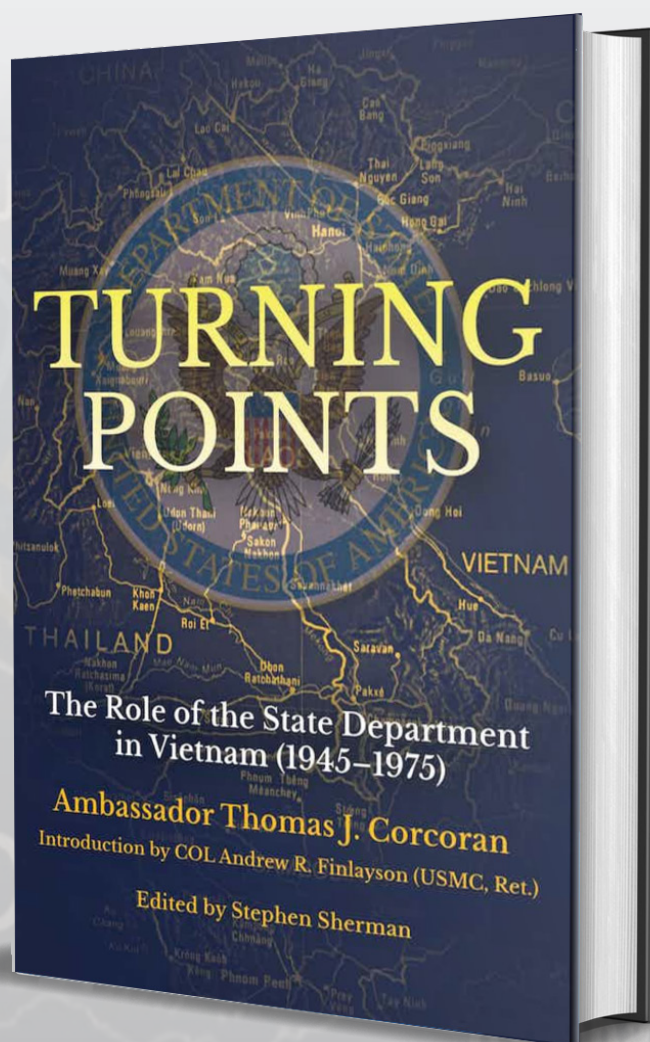
BY AMBASSADOR THOMAS J. CORCORAN

Edited by Stephen Sherman

Introduction by Col. Andrew R. Finlayson (USMC, Ret.)

Ten years after the end of the American involvement in the Vietnam War, a career Foreign Service officer, Thomas J. Corcoran, began writing his thoughts on the history of U.S. State Department policy during America's involvement in South Vietnam. Like many Americans of his generation, he was perplexed by the failure of America to achieve its goals in the region. As an ambassador and with over 30 years of diplomatic experience—beginning in 1948 when he was assigned to Hanoi and involving other postings in Southeast Asia—he brought to his analysis a long and rich personal experience with events in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

The result is a thoughtful, objective and well-researched study that chronicles the key policy decisions made by the U.S. State Department throughout the entire period from 1945 to 1975; decisions that ultimately led to the first war lost by the United States. In his extensive study, Corcoran does an excellent job of exposing many of the myths and falsehoods found in orthodox histories of U.S. involvement in Vietnam.



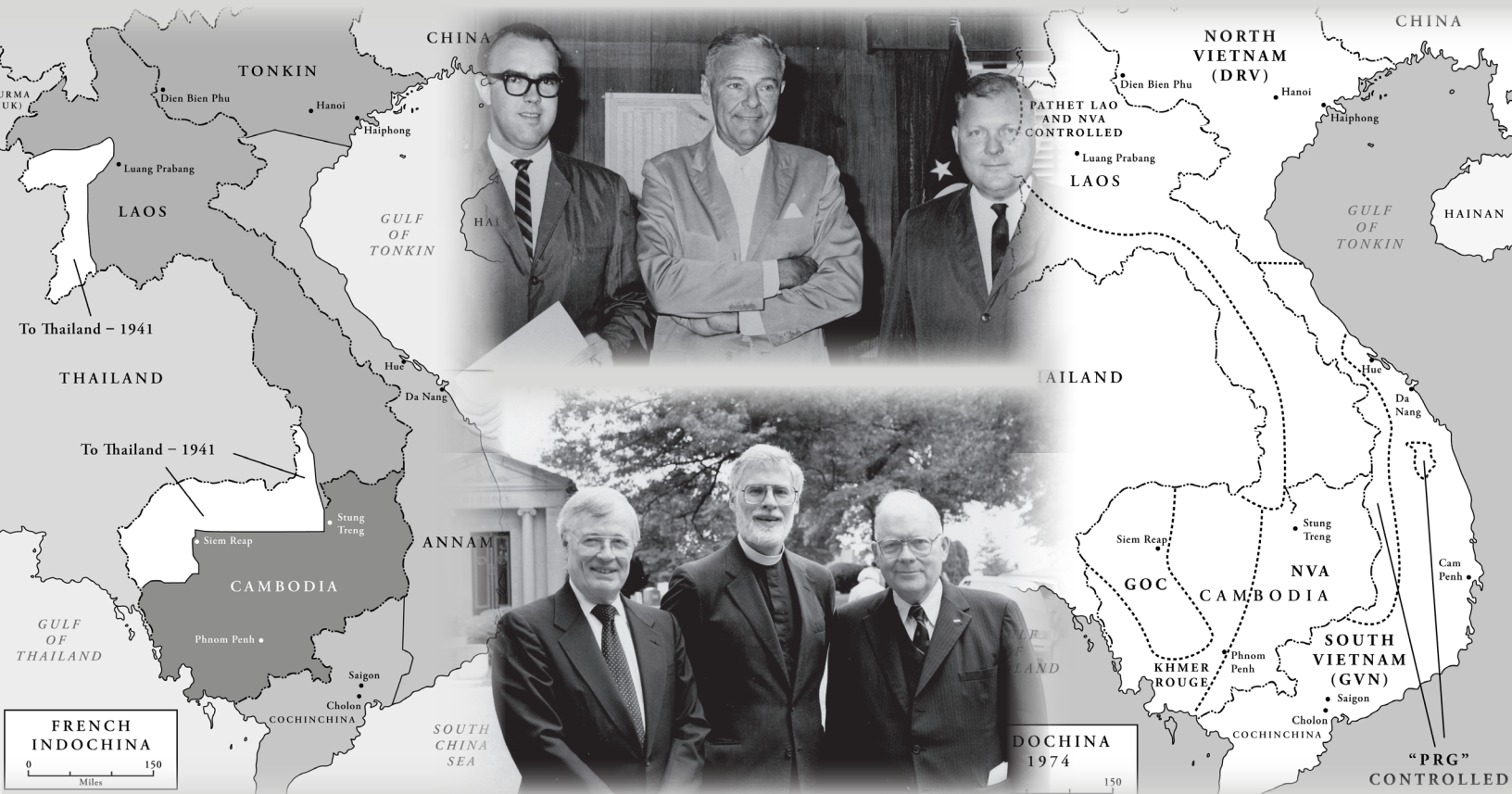
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thomas J. Corcoran began his Foreign Service career in 1948. His first assignments abroad were in Spain and then, in 1950 in Hanoi and Hue in Vietnam, which was then under French control. He became the Chargé d'Affaires in Vientiane, Laos and then Phnom Penh, Cambodia in 1952. He went back to Hanoi from the beginning of September 1954 until about December 12, 1955. He later served in Upper Volta, Haiti, and in Quebec, Canada and again in Vietnam for several years. He was Chargé d'Affaires ad interim (Laos) from August 1975 to March 1978 and he was ambassador to Burundi from 1978 until retiring from the State Department in 1980.



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