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# The Unending Debate: Historians and the Vietnam War

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The burgeoning literature on the Vietnam War testifies to its status as a defining event in American history. The early availability of a considerable body of documentation on U.S. policymaking in Washington and warmaking

in Vietnam, together with the intensity of controversies stirred by the war, help to account for this extensive writing. The duration of the war and its antecedents—a thirty-year process between Ho Chi Minh's 1945 assertion of independence in the name of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Ho Chi Minh campaign of 1975 that reunified the country—make this a lengthy story and one being told more in fragments than in its entirety. Hence, while much early scholarship was devoted to American policy and actions in World War II and the early Cold War, the more recent focus has moved to subsequent developments, with considerable attention...

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