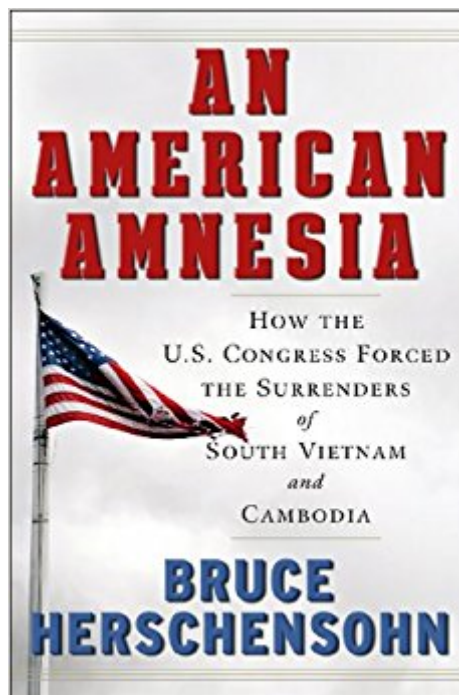




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An American Amnesia: How The US Congress Forced The Surrenders Of South Vietnam And Cambodia



Synopsis

January 27th, 1973: the United States, South Vietnam, North Vietnam, and the Viet Cong sign the Paris Peace Accords, guaranteeing the right of self-determination to the South Vietnamese people. April 30th, 1975: President Duong Van Minh of South Vietnam announces the nation's unconditional surrender to the North, ending the decade-long conflict and enabling the merger of both countries into the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. What happened in two short years to cause such a dramatic reversal? In *An American Amnesia*, respected political commentator Bruce Herschensohn re-examines the incredible actions taken by the 94th Congress and by many American citizens which forced South Vietnam's surrender, an event that brought about immense tragedy for Southeast Asians and haunts our political landscape to this day. Drawing on notes, speeches, and writings from his own experiences in Southeast Asia, as well as in the United States Information Agency and in the White House, Herschensohn fills in important facts in that period of history and warns against the danger of succumbing to a similar voluntary amnesia in the future.

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Customer Reviews

As a psychological operations officer who studied Vietnamese at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey California prior to my tour in Vietnam from July 1969 to July 1970, I can say with some confidence that we did indeed win this war. Our area of operations extended from Da Nang, Vietnam northward to the DMZ, so called "I Corps". During that year, I was attached to the 3rd Marine division in Dong Ha, the 101st Airborne in Phu Bai just outside of Hue City, and the 1st of

the 5th infantry division in Quang Tri. As most readers know, the Tet Offensive of 1968 was heavily fought in the cities of Hue and northward. Vietcong had dominated these areas. Hamlets throughout were intimidated by the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese regular army occupied the jungles. While combat raged in those jungles for the infantry units I mentioned above, the hamlets had become quite peaceful after Tet. We had three man teams consisting of an officer like myself, and enlisted man usually a specialist, and a Vietnamese interpreter. In the early evenings before we would venture out to the hamlets in our truck and interact with the people in the hamlets. For fear of ambushes or mines we spent the night in the hamlets. Amongst the three of us we had two M-16 rifles and a .45 pistol. Rarely, we would check out M-79 grenade launcher when we had heard there had been some activity in the area. I preferred to spend the night on top of the truck, gazing at the stars above unless it was the rainy season. During that entire year, sometimes no more than 7 miles from the DMZ where combat was raging, the hamlets were peaceful and friendly. The elders were very polite and often fed us; the children adored us. Not once were we ever harassed or injured.

If I could give this book the rating I wanted to, then I would likely give it a 3.5 stars because I liked it but with some reservations. Vietnam has recently become more interesting to me for a couple of reasons. 1. I am a new teacher. 2. My father was a navy man at the time who served in Vietnam two terms (64 and 66). While I have never been a fan of the war itself I am proud of my dad and other men like him who willing went to serve despite the policies of their government. So when I saw this book defending the U.S. government policy that led us into the conflict I thought this would be an interesting take on the history of the era. Herschenson was not only alive at the time of this event but was an insider in the Nixon administration and the inner workings of Washington. He writes a clear defense of government reasoning for the war and gives the reader food for thought concerning the role of the media in times of national crisis. While there are some admirable qualities in this work it is not perfect by any means and some things I had questions about. Herschensohn is a capable writer who writes in a very short and concise manner. He is not a man who minces words or attempts to hide his bias which is both refreshing and problematic. While this is a history book it is more of a treatise on the problems that lead us towards a weakened government. He stresses the involvement of the media and Hollywood in unduly influencing the public and oftentimes with false information. In a world where everyone bags on Fox for being too conservative it is hard for many to realize that most news outlets are liberal and have been for some time. He explains that the battle for a South Vietnamese government was achieved in 1973 and thus America did not lose the Vietnam conflict.

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