

The Twenty-Five Year Century: A South Vietnamese General Remembers the Indochina War to the Fall of Saigon

Lam Quang Thi

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For Victor Hugo, the nineteenth century could be remembered by only its first two years, which established peace in Europe and France's supremacy on the continent. For General Lam Quang Thi, the twentieth century had only twenty-five years: from 1950 to 1975, during which the Republic of Vietnam and its Army grew up and collapsed with the fall of Saigon. This is the story of those twenty-five years.

General Thi fought in the Indochina War as a battery commander on the side of the French. When Viet Minh aggression began after the Geneva Accords, he served in the nascent Vietnamese National Army, and his career covers this army's entire lifespan. He was deputy commander of the 7th Infantry Division, and in 1965 he assumed command of the 9th Infantry Division. In 1966, at the age of thirty-three, he became one of the youngest generals in the Vietnamese Army. He participated in the Tet Offensive before being removed from the front lines for political reasons. When North Vietnam launched the 1972 Great Offensive, he was brought back to the field and eventually promoted to commander of an Army Corps Task Force along the Demilitarized Zone. With the fall of Saigon, he left Vietnam and emigrated to the United States.

Like his tactics during battle, General Thi pulls no punches in his denunciation of the various regimes of the Republic, and complacency and arrogance toward Vietnam in the policies of both France and the United States. Without lapsing into bitterness, this is finally a tribute to the soldiers who fell on behalf of a good cause.



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