

### **Study Questions for Michael H. Hunt, *Lyndon Johnson's War*, Chapters 1-3**

1. How did *The Ugly American* influence the ideas of American policy makers? What model of the ideal “cold warrior” did it offer?
2. How did the United States first become involved in Indochina? What policy did the Roosevelt administration pursue?
3. Why did the United States oppose independence for Indochina? How did Cold War considerations contribute to this decision?
4. Why did U.S. support for Ngo Dinh Diem prove problematic?
5. What was Edward Lansdale's approach to Vietnam? What difficulties did he encounter in trying to implement his strategy?
6. How did American preconceptions about Asians and other “brown people” shape our policy? Why does Hunt choose the term “American paternalism” to describe American attitudes?
7. Why is it important to be aware of Vietnam's history when trying to comprehend that nation's understanding of the conflict with the United States?
8. Why did Ho Chi Minh embrace Leninism? Why did he believe that it was useful in the Vietnamese context?
9. What was Ho's populist program? What were its goals its and tactics for achieving them?

10. Why was the battle of Dien Bien Phu a significant turning point in the history of U.S. involvement in Vietnam?
11. What was the NLF? What role did it play in the Vietnamese struggle for unification and independence?
12. Why was the battle of Ap Bac (pp 37-39) a sign of things to come?
13. "American policy makers preoccupied with dominoes and monoliths," Michael Hunt writes, "saw no reason to pay any attention to brocade bags." What does he mean? How did American leaders' assumptions about the nature of Communism lead them to pursue ineffective policies in Vietnam?
14. What are some of Hunt's criticisms of the "learned academics on the Potomac?" How did the "best and the brightest" mishandle the problem of Vietnam?
15. How did broader Cold War concerns influence JFK's Vietnamese policy?
16. Why did some critics believe that Kennedy's "pacification" policy and his support of Diem did more harm than good? Were they right?