The development and training of the South Vietnamese Army, 1950-1972 (Vietnam studies)

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First published in 1975. From the preface: ""In 1954 the Army of South Vietnam was a collection of former French colonial troops with little command experience and no support forces worthy of mention. Gradually and despite a considerable degree of political and social instability, the Army, with strong American assistance, was molded into an effective fighting force by the efforts of Vietnamese leaders. After 1960 the South Vietnamese Army also acquired a counterinsurgency capability, but by 1965 increased political turmoil had undermined its effectiveness and necessitated the intervention of strong US combat forces. From 1965 to 1968, while US forces bore the brunt of the fighting, the South Vietnamese slowly regrouped and, with increasing American advisory assistance and matériel support, once again became an effective fighting force. During this period the military provided security for the civilian population and administration and, in schools and training centers, laid the basis for a larger and more responsive military force. The battles of the Tet offensive of 1968 were followed by the general mobilization of South Vietnam and, one year later, by the decision of the United States to begin troop redeployments. These moves set the stage for the third phase in the Army's development, Vietnamization. The years from 1968 to 1972 saw a great expansion of South Vietnam's territorial security forces and militia, and the continual improvement and modernization of the regular Army as it once again assumed complete responsibility for the war effort. This monograph, covering the three stages in the growth and development of the South Vietnamese Army, highlights the role of the US Army, especially the MACV advisory system. Most of the material presented is based on official historical summaries prepared on a regular basis by the major US military commands in South Vietnam. Special attention is given to the expansion of South Vietnam's training base and her increasingly sophisticated military school system. While such a study can do no more than survey these activities, it does reflect the deep and continuous commitment by thousands of American soldiers to make the South Vietnamese Army a self-sufficient force capable of defending itself with minimum outside assistance".

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