

A  
333432

★ ★

# AMERICAN TRAGEDY

---

Kennedy, Johnson, and the  
Origins of the Vietnam War

---

DAVID KAISER



THE BELKNAP PRESS OF  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Cambridge, Massachusetts  
London, England  
2000

★ ★

---

---

# Contents



Introduction	1
1 The Eisenhower Administration and Indochina: 1954–1960	10
2 No War in Laos: January–June 1961	36
3 A New Effort in Vietnam: January–August 1961	58
4 War or Peace? September–November 1961	91
5 Limiting the Commitment: November 1961– November 1962	122
6 The War in Vietnam: 1962	150
7 A Gathering Storm: January–July 1963	186
8 The Buddhist Crisis and the Cable of August 24: 1963	213
9 The Coup: August–November 1963	248
10 A Decision for War: November 1963–April 1964	284
11 To the Tonkin Gulf: April–August 1964	312
12 Planning for War: September–December 1964	341
13 Over the Edge: December 1964–March 1965	382
14 War in Secret: March–June 1965	412
15 War in Public: June–July 1965	443
16 Bad History, Wrong War	484
Epilogue: Tragedy and History	494
Dedication	499
Abbreviations	502
Notes	503
Acknowledgments	557
Illustration Credits	558
Index	559

*Illustrations follow pages 182 and 374*