a conference organized by the U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, and held from
29-30 September 2010 in Washington, D.C.
http://history.state.gov/conferences/2010-southeast-asia/videos-transcripts

URL: http://h-diplo.org/reports/PDF/AmericanExperience-SEAsia-Introduction.pdf

Introduction by Thomas Maddux, California State University, Northridge

The U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian hosted a conference on “The
American Experience in Southeast Asia, 1946-1975” in Washington D.C. on

The conference recognized the completion of over two dozen volumes in the *Foreign
Relations of the United States* series covering Indochina from 1946 to 1975. The conference
featured a number of officials who participated in the Vietnam conflict such as former
Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and a number of panels of historians. They have online
videos of each session as well as transcripts for each participant. The Program and panels
are listed below.

**The American Experience in Southeast Asia, 1946-1975**

- Opening Address by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton
  <http://history.state.gov/conferences/2010-southeast-asia/secretary-clinton>
- Address by Dr. Henry A. Kissinger <http://history.state.gov/conferences/2010-southeast-asia/secretary-kissinger>
- Keynote Address by Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke
  <http://history.state.gov/conferences/2010-southeast-asia/ambassador-holbrooke>
- The View from Hanoi: Historians from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
  <http://history.state.gov/conferences/2010-southeast-asia/view-from-hanoi>
- Senior Scholars’ Interpretations of the American Experience in Southeast Asia
  <http://history.state.gov/conferences/2010-southeast-asia/senior-scholars>
H-Diplo Conference Reports and Reviews

- Media Roundtable Discussion <http://history.state.gov/conferences/2010-southeast-asia/media-roundtable>
- With Friends Like These: The United States and its Allies <http://history.state.gov/conferences/2010-southeast-asia/with-friends-like-these>

H-Diplo invited Mark Moyar and Jeffery Kimball to review and comment on the online materials from the conference. They disagree at times with the assessments presented, the wisdom of policies pursued and as well as those not implemented, and the consequences for the United States of the Vietnam conflict. They also offer somewhat different perspectives on the lessons to be learned from Vietnam. The value of the FRUS series for historical scholarship is recognized by Moyar who suggests that some of the officials and historians need to rely more on the contemporary primary sources in FRUS and less on questionable hindsight opinions, such as the question of whether the U.S. ever had a chance to achieve its main objective in Vietnam. Kimball, however, concludes that historians need to draw more lessons from past experiences like Vietnam and current policy-makers should consult more with historians who have studied past wars before launching the next one.

Participants:

Jeffrey P. Kimball is Professor Emeritus of History at Miami University (Ohio, USA). He is the author of many scholarly articles and book chapters on diplomacy, war, peace, and historiography from the early nineteenth century to the Vietnam War and its legacy in the twenty-first. His books are To Reason Why: The Debate About the Causes of American Involvement in the Vietnam War (1990); Nixon’s Vietnam War (1998), which was a History Book Club selection and received the Ohio Academy of History Book Award and the Robert Ferrell Book Prize; and The Vietnam War Files: Uncovering the Secret History of Nixon-Era Strategy (2004), which won the Arthur Link/Warren Kuehl Prize and has also been published in Vietnam. Kimball is presently completing a book with William Burr on the history of nuclear threat-making.