



Edward Lansdale: The Unquiet American

By Cecil B. Currey

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The Village Voice called the complex life of U.S. Air Force major general and CIA agent Edward G. Lansdale one of "Technicolor fascination". The maverick military thinker's brilliant counterinsurgency tactics preserved democracy in the Philippines, but his subsequent efforts to create "a broad-based, open society" in Vietnam failed following his return to the United States in 1956. Lansdale later led an undercover organization dedicated to bringing down Fidel Castro. This important biography of the legendary intelligence operative and master of political and psychological warfare is now available as a Brassey's Five-Star Paperback.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

An Air Force officer and CIA operative, Lansdale devised tactics against the communist Huks in the Philippines in the early '50s, masterminded the first free elections there and soon afterward helped Ngo Dinh Diem form his fledgling government in South Vietnam. So much for his triumphs, which made him a legend in the Far East. The second half of this notable biography makes for painful reading, as the author describes Lansdale's struggles in Saigon to prevent the disintegration of the fragile nation he helped establish.

Convinced that counterinsurgency must have a social vision as well as military strength, he urged political-psychological programs as opposed to search-and-destroy missions and B-52 raids. Currey does an excellent job of summarizing Lansdale's ideas, arguing that many of them would have been effective. Lansdale's urgent warnings were virtually ignored by the U.S. high command, and he closed out his maverick career collecting soldiers' songs. He died in 1987. Currey wrote *Self-Destruction: The Disintegration of the United States Army During the Vietnam Era*.

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Mary Jacobs:

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