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Big Victory Great Task

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Iriye, Akira. *Across the Pacific*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967. 361p.

This is an outstanding hook and is highly recommended to anyone interested in relations between the United States and Japan and China. The relationships among these three countries from their beginnings in the 18th century until 1967 are treated exceptionally well and comprehensively. Not only are the major phases and incidents of the United States relations with China and Japan described, but the successive images that these three nations have had of one another during the last century of their association are analyzed. The most impressive aspect of the book is its objectivity. This is no doubt attributable to the unique qualities of the author, Dr. Akira Iriye. Dr. Iriye was born in Japan and received his first preparation for objective appraisal of international conflict from his father, who was educated in law at Waseda University in Tokyo; lectured and wrote on international law; served as a journalist in Geneva and Paris (1938-1941); spent 2 years in Nanking during the Japan War (1943-1945); and published books on Russia, China, Anglo-Russian rivalry in China, and the failure of the Versailles Treaty system. Dr. Iriye received his bachelor's degree in English History at Haverford College in 1957 and his doctorate at Harvard in 1961. He was a member of the History Department there until he joined the staff of the University of California in 1966. This background probably makes Dr. Iriye better prepared for writing this book than almost anyone else and certainly contributes to its unusual quality.

With the United States deep involvement in Asia today, it would be well for Americans to study this volume in order to see their past mistakes and some successes that they have experienced in dealing with Asians. Professor John K. Fairbank in the Introduction says, "Mr. Iriye's appraisal suggests that too often

we have leapt before looking and become partisan in feeling before making a serious intellectual effort to see all sides, including particularly our own side."

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Vo-nguyen-Giap. *Big Victory Great Task*. New York: Praeger, 1968. 120p.

This essay is a reprint from a series of General Giap's articles that appeared in September 1967 in two Hanoi periodicals that receive wide distribution among the populace of Vietnam. These articles are obviously designed to bolster the morale and fighting spirit of the population of North Vietnam and the troops and supporters of the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam. Giap's emotional articles are variations of the central theme that the NLF troops are supreme in fighting ability, doctrine, and tactics and therefore have won every engagement with the enemy and ultimately will crush and destroy him (the imperialistic United States aggressors and their Saigon puppet forces). The following quote from one of the articles outlines the victory motif which is repeated in a highly emotional style on practically every page of the book.

The puppet army and government have daily declined and will surely arrive at complete disintegration and collapse. This actually has happened and is happening in the South of our country [South Vietnam]. This proves that the U.S. imperialists have sustained heavy defeats on the path leading to the ultimate goal of their neocolonialist aggressive war.

While Giap generalizes about the many decisive battles that have been won by NLF troops, he never provides any specifics concerning places, dates, and casualties. In many often repeated statements in the book, he predicts with absolute certainty that the enemy will ultimately be destroyed and driven from South Vietnam; but, here again, he fails

to include any details on just how this feat will be accomplished. Since this type of propaganda is such an obvious departure from a realistic appraisal of the past and present situation in Vietnam, Giap, an experienced social psychologist, probably concluded that specifics would detract from the emotional appeal of the articles. He apparently believed that constantly reiterated slogans, broad generalizations about past, present, and future victories, and generously sprinkled accounts of

the defeat and destruction of the enemy were more effective than dates, places, and body counts.

General Giap's articles that are reprinted in this book are obviously propaganda documents. They should appeal to the reader who is interested in gaining some understanding of this Communist military tactician and political leader.

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'The habit of the arm-chair easily prevails over that of the quarter-deck;
it is more comfortable.

Mahan: Naval Administration and Warfare, 1903