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Mission in Torment

R. A. Young

John Mecklin

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disarmament; the most significant is the failure to address the question of settling disputes in a disarmed world. The author points out that "It is difficult to accept the likelihood that the leopard will change its spots, that in a disarmed world there will be so significant a change in the behavior of states, so significant a diminution of their traditional rivalries, that they will be disposed to settle differences by negotiation and through acceptance of the recommendations of an international organization." Mr. Gotlieb considers that the major nuclear powers have taken the first few steps toward agreement in the field of disarmament but concludes on a somewhat pessimistic note. From a nonlegal viewpoint, one of the most valuable features of this book is an appendix containing a detailed comparison of the United States and Soviet disarmament proposals.

G.R. MYERS
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army

Mecklin, John. *Mission in Torment*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965. 318 p.

Mission in Torment by John Mecklin is a personalized account of the role of the United States Information Service in South Vietnam from May 1962 until March 1964. The book does not deal specifically with the efforts of the USIS to turn the Vietnamese people against the Viet Cong, nor is it a full record of the role of the press in reporting the Vietnam situation prior to the fall of the Diem regime. Rather, it is a narration of the author's experience as a reporter in Vietnam during the 1953-1955 time period and of his tour in 1962-1964 as director of the USIS office in Saigon. Much of the book reads like a fairy tale of political intrigue played at the highest level of the South Vietnamese government. Throughout the volume is woven an evaluation of newsmanship and its reporting of the state of affairs in Southeast Asia. Mr. Mecklin makes several observations concerning the influence of the press in the conduct of relations between the United States officials and the Diem regime. The most illuminating chapters of the work deal with the events preceding the demise of Diem and Nu. In total, *Mission in Torment* is an enlightening statement of the problems encountered by the USIS in implementing the Country Team concept in South Vietnam.

R.A. YOUNG
Commander, U.S. Navy