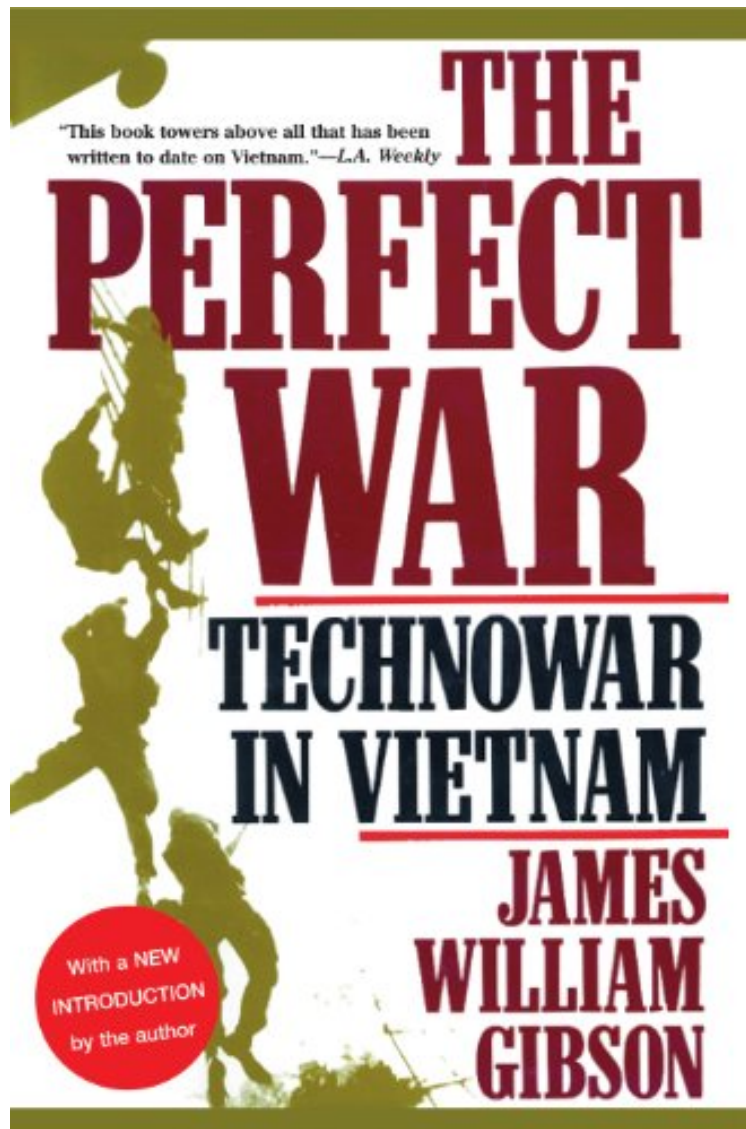


[Free] The Perfect War: Technowar in Vietnam (Military History Series)

The Perfect War: Technowar in Vietnam (Military History Series)

Von James William Gibson

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Von James William Gibson : The Perfect War: Technowar in Vietnam (Military History Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Perfect War: Technowar in Vietnam (Military History Series):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. The First Honest Autopsy of America's Failure in VietnamVon Tye JohnsonWilliam Gibson's analysis of the America's failure in Vietnam is conducted with the precision of a surgeon weilding his penetratingly sharp knife. Unlike most histories of the confict, which chronical the events, Gibson is interested in finding the answer to why we failed. His answers

will startle most readers, conservative or liberal. Massively documented with official reports and first hand accounts, Gibson's work points the finger at the war managers, military and political. Their easy acceptance of their own self delusions about the nature of our enemy and ally, led to policies which failed to take account of what was really happening on the battle field. When enemy activity was at an ebb, it was interpreted as evidence of the success of our strategies and tactics, even though, time after time, such periods of quiescence were followed by vigorous enemy action. Gibson documents the knowledge that senior war planners had, that the bombing wasn't and couldn't achieve its goals; that casualty rates, American and Vietnamese, were never under the control of the American military; that the CIA refused to take part, after a period, in target selection for bombing raids because they could determine no level of bombing which would achieve our goals. Gibson explains why military estimates of the amount of forces necessary to achieve our goals were never accurate. This book should be required reading for anyone who wants the answers to why we failed in Vietnam. I am pleased to see it has been re-issued.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Flawed Concepts for a "Perfect War" Von Steven S. Berizzi In preparation for and during the era of the Vietnam War, according to sociologist James William Gibson, the United States developed what he calls "Technowar," a series of concepts in which war was waged "as a kind of high-technology, capital-intensive production process." But Gibson argues that even overwhelming military force could not produce solutions to political problems. Summarizing the experience of Vietnam, Gibson writes: "It should be amply clear that Technowar has the capacity to destroy, but it cannot persuade political leaders and entire societies to simply give up and submit to American will." This was a disastrous, perhaps fatal, flaw in the United States' approach to this conflict and largely explains why the U.S. lost the Vietnam War without being beaten on the battlefield. Gibson writes that the United States should have learned from France's defeat in its Indochina War in the early 1950s, in spite of massive infusions of American aid, that "[w]hat the Vietminh had lacked in techno-capital they made up for by mobilizing people." However, Gibson quotes Henry Kissinger that, "since 1945, American foreign policy has been based 'on the assumption that technology plus managerial skill gave us the ability to reshape the international system.'" According to Gibson, Kissinger devised a strategic doctrine in which, "[b]y virtue of its technological production system, the United States [could] achieve its foreign-policy objectives by limited wars fought as wars of attrition." John Kennedy, the first president born in the 20th-century, and his advisors naturally embraced the ideas that became Technowar: "With the appointment of Robert S. McNamara as secretary of defense in 1961, the 'managerial' approach to warfare soon permeated the entire military apparatus." Vietnam served, Gibson writes, as "the laboratory for weapons development and military science." According to Gibson, a "deep belief in technology [characterized] the war-managers' approaches to virtually all questions," and "United States military officers conceived of themselves as business managers rather than combat leaders." Gibson quotes one of Gen. William Westmoreland's principal subordinates that the Vietnam War "was comparable to an assembly line." Gibson asserts that "[a] great many soldiers...saw war-managers as directly responsible for their deaths. Management did not care whether labor lived or died, only about producing a high enemy body count." Gibson explains that "middle-management officers used their troops as the human 'bait' called for in Technowar strategy." According to Gibson: "Enlisted men were seen as a kind of migrant labor force of only marginal importance. They were marginal in that artillery, jet fighter-bombers, and helicopters were official responsible for producing enemy deaths, while infantry and armored cavalry became the 'fixing force.'" According to Gibson: "War-manager pressures for high body counts led to both systematic falsification of battle reports, routine violation of the rules of engagement and regulations covering treatment of prisoners, and systematic slaughter of Vietnamese noncombatants." According to Gibson, the "massive killing of civilians drove Vietnamese toward the Vietcong." Nevertheless, according to Gibson, American leaders believed they were invincible: "Technowar must produce victory." In August 1966, a report prepared by an American civilian official in Vietnam stated: "Wastefully, expensively, but nonetheless indisputably, we are winning the war in the South...[O]ur side now has in presently programmed levels all the men, money and other resources needed to achieve success." According to Gibson, American leaders "believed they had beaten the Vietcong by the autumn of 1967," so the Tet offensive, which began on January 31, 1968, "came as a surprise." In early 1969, National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger asked the Rand Corporation to prepare a list of policy options for Vietnam. Daniel Ellsberg, then a Rand employee, prepared the list, which did not include any U.S. action leading to victory. When Kissinger asked why, Ellsberg responded: "I don't believe there is a win option in Vietnam." According to Gibson: "Many crucial studies demonstrating Technowar failure...came to the attention of leading war-managers" in 1968 and 1969. Gibson asserts that, by this time, the war-managers had created "a double-reality: a war at ground level and a much different paper edifice for Saigon and Washington headquarters." Gibson explains: "The idea of low-tech peasants either defeating or offering major support to the most advanced technological power on earth was unthinkable to Americans." In his chapter on the Tet offensive, Gibson goes into what appeared to be a long digression concerning racial and class conflict in the U.S. military in Vietnam. At first, I failed to see how it was relevant to Gibson's main premise, Technowar. But Gibson then made the point that, during the Vietnam War, "class conflict between 'working-class' grunts and war-managers centered on the soldiers' unwillingness to die for the war-managers. For some soldiers, Vietnam duty became a deeply radicalizing experience. Such men later founded Vietnam Veterans Against the War in Vietnam." Today, twenty-five years after

Saigon fell in the spring of 1975, with the United States and Vietnam moving toward reconciliation, one might ask: What difference does it make? The answer, of course, is that Technowar did not expire when the final helicopter left Saigon. The United States has, to borrow Gibson's term "reproduced" Technowar on several occasions since then. For instance, according to Gibson: "The 1991 war against Iraq at first seemed like a complete validation of Technowar - images of advanced technological weapons in action dominated reporting." Gibson writes that Technowar killed "Iraqi troops by the thousands, and bombing destroyed the industrial infrastructure of Iraq. But the Iraqi political and military regime remained intact." More recently, NATO's air war against Serbia caused great destruction without dislodging President Slobodan Milosevic and his band of thugs. Whether one believes that the Vietnam War was a noble cause or the most tragic episode in American history since the Civil War, it never was "The Perfect War." We must learn its lessons or we will be condemned to repeat its errors. This book is not the final word on the Vietnam War, but it is a provocative interpretation.

Kurzbeschreibung In this groundbreaking book, James William Gibson shatters the misled assumptions behind both liberal and conservative explanations for America's failure in Vietnam. Gibson shows how American government and military officials developed a disturbingly limited concept of war -- what he calls "technowar" -- in which all efforts were focused on maximizing the enemy's body count, regardless of the means. Consumed by a blind faith in the technology of destruction, American leaders failed to take into account their enemy's highly effective guerrilla tactics. Indeed, technowar proved woefully inapplicable to the actual political and military strategies used by the Vietnamese, and Gibson reveals how U.S. officials consistently falsified military records to preserve the illusion that their approach would prevail. Gibson was one of the first historians to question the fundamental assumptions behind American policy, and *The Perfect War* is a brilliant reassessment of the war -- now republished with a new introduction by the author.