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Roundtable Review of *Quagmire* by David Biggs

Hamblin, Jacob D., ed.

Hamblin, Jacob D. (ed.), Roundtable Review of *Quagmire: Nation-Building and Nature in the Mekong Delta* by David Biggs. *H-Environment Roundtable Reviews* 2, no. 5 (2012) www.h-net.org/~environ/roundtables/env-roundtable-2-5.pdf .

In *Quagmire*, David Biggs explores the actual uses of land and water in Vietnam through its troubled history. He takes a long-term view, which attempts to understand the role of pre- and postcolonial experts, Vietnamese people, and the landscape itself, in making or breaking economic schemes and attempts at "modernization." French colonial administrators and American nation-builders tried to bulldoze and engineer Vietnam's way to economic prosperity. Their shortcomings have been traced to many causes, such as inattention to local knowledge, desires, and capabilities, but rarely, until now, has the natural world itself been featured in a starring role.

(Text adapted from Jacob D. Hamblin's introduction to the Roundtable Review.)

H-Environment's Roundtable Book Reviews provide multiple perspectives on books and allow the authors the opportunity to respond. This unique dialogue can be a valuable insight into recent scholarship.

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