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How to lose a war

Quadrant

Volume 25 Issue 12 (Dec 1981)

Elegant, Robert S

Abstract: In the early 1960s, when the Vietnam War became a big story, most foreign correspondents assigned to cover the story wrote primarily to win the approbation of the crowd, above all their own crowd. As a result, in my view, the selfproving system of reporting they created became even further detached from political and military realities because it instinctively concentrated on its own self-justification. The American press, naturally dominant in an "American war", somehow felt obliged

to be less objective than partisan, to take sides, for it was inspired by the engage "investigative" reporting that burgeoned in the United States in those impassioned years. The press was instinctively "agin the Government" - and, at least reflexively, for Saigon's enemies.

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