



**PAT PROCTOR**, PhD, is a US Army veteran of both the Iraq and the Afghanistan Wars with more than twenty-three years of service in command and staff positions. In 2009 he was operations officer for Task Force Patriot in Tikrit, Iraq. He most recently served as the battalion commander for the Gunner Battalion in Jordan, on the front lines of the war with ISIS.

“Impressively researched and cogently argued, *Containment and Credibility* sheds much new light on the prolonged and often angry debate between those who waged the war and those who opposed it.”

—**GEORGE C. HERRING**, ALUMNI PROFESSOR OF HISTORY EMERITUS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY, AUTHOR OF *AMERICA’S LONGEST WAR: THE UNITED STATES AND VIETNAM, 1950-1975*

“In this ‘mass political history,’ Pat Proctor offers an important reinterpretation of the contemporary debate over the American war in Vietnam. Based on extensive research in official and private archives as well as a vast secondary literature, *Containment and Credibility* contends that a strategic change in the arguments of antiwar leaders in early 1968 provided an acceptable reason for Americans to oppose the war, which hastened its end, while preserving the basic Cold War ideology on which the war was based. This is an engaging and nuanced argument, deserving of a wide audience.”

—**DR. GARY R. HESS**, EMERITUS DISTINGUISHED RESEARCH PROFESSOR, BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY



**Carrel Books**,  
an imprint of Skyhorse Publishing, Inc.  
New York, New York  
[www.carrelbooks.com](http://www.carrelbooks.com)

Jacket design by Rain Saukas

Jacket photographs: Library of Congress, LBJ Library

Printed in the United States of America



PROCTOR

CONTAINMENT AND CREDIBILITY  
The Ideology and Deception That Plunged America into the Vietnam War



# CONTAINMENT AND CREDIBILITY

The Ideology and Deception That  
Plunged America into the Vietnam War



PAT PROCTOR

History

Providing historical context that highlights how the decision to use force is made, as well as how it is “sold,” *Containment and Credibility* explores how the half-truths and deception of both the Johnson and Nixon administrations brought this country into a conflict that cost more than 50,000 American lives over eight years. As we consider how best to confront the growing threat of ISIS, it is increasingly important for the public to understand how we were convinced to go to war in the past.

In the 1960s, the domino theory warning of the spread of communism provided the rationale for war, followed by the deception of the Gulf of Tonkin Incident and the resulting resolution that essentially gave LBJ a blank check. This book shows how this deception ultimately led to the unraveling of the Johnson presidency and explores the credibility gap that led to the public political debate of that time. *Containment and Credibility* applies the lessons of the sixties to today’s similar debates regarding military involvement.