

Research Report | XXVII Annual Session

---

# Historical Security Council (1967)

The Vietnam War



**MODEL UNITED NATIONS**  
THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF THE HAGUE

Mik Dijkman  
Maurits de Lint

<b>Forum:</b>	Historical Security Council (1967)
<b>Issue:</b>	The Vietnam War
<b>Student Officer:</b>	Mik Dijkman
<b>Position:</b>	President

---

## Introduction

The Soviet Union and the United States of America fought together as allies against the Axis powers during World War II. Their relationship, however, had always been a tense one. Americans had long been concerned about Soviet communism and Joseph Stalin, Russia's leader, and in particular his tyrannical, bloodthirsty rule of his own country. The American government had for decades refused to treat the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) as a rightful and legitimate part of the international community and was also responsible for the delayed entry of the Soviet Union into WWII. For their part, the Soviets blamed these American actions to lead to the deaths of millions of Russians. After the end of WWII, these grievances led to an overwhelming sense of mutual distrust and eventually enmity. Soviet expansionism in Eastern Europe didn't quite soften the situation, but rather fueled many American's fears of a Russian plan to take control over the world. In the meanwhile, the USSR perceived the American approach on society as a threat to the world. This hostile atmosphere led to the beginning of the Cold War. It is June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1967, 27 years after the beginning of the Cold War. After the end of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, a new conflict arose: the Vietnam War. A War between a communist North and a capitalist South. In this research report, information about the historical background as well as an overview of events leading up to this War can be found.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Communism

Communism is a theory or system of social organization, in which all property is collectively owned by a classless community. Each person receives and contributes according to their needs and ability. The biggest communist party in this context is the Soviet Union.



## Capitalism

Capitalism is an economic and political system in which profit-based private owners control a country's industry and trade. It's also a system based on the recognition of individual rights. The biggest capitalistic party in this context are the United States of America.

## Policy of Containment

With the Truman Doctrine, U.S. president Harry S. Truman promised that the United States would provide political, military and economic assistance to all democratic nations that felt threatened by internal or external authoritarian forces. The Doctrine effectively changed U.S. foreign policy from its usual stance of withdrawal from regional conflict to directly involving America to possible intervention in faraway conflicts. Truman's Doctrine led to the U.S. policy of Containment, which was set up to "dam" communism.

## The Geneva Accords

Issued on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 1954, the Geneva Accords set out several terms in relation to Vietnam. A provisional military demarcation line would run along the 17<sup>th</sup> Parallel to temporarily divide Vietnam into two parts, both North and South Vietnam were not allowed to join a military alliance or to receive military troops from other nations, within two years, the French would have completely left the country, and in 1956, divided North and South would peacefully reunite.

## General Overview

### Colonisation

The French began their conquest of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos in the late 1850s, and completely succeeded by 1893. For the next seven decades, the 1884 Treaty of Hue formed the basis for French colonial rule in Indochina. During World War II, Japan invaded and occupied French new-established Indo-China. After the surrender of Japan in 1945, they handed over control of public buildings and weapons under control of the French army to the Viet Minh, a national independence coalition led by Ho Chi Minh. The French, however, were not satisfied with the idea of Vietnam being independent. Which led to another conflict between France and Vietnam from 1946 until 1954. Due to the difficult circumstances, the French faced in Vietnam's jungle, they lost the guerrilla war against the Viet Minh. This happened in 1954 at Dien Bien Phu, a village where the French had placed a military airport.



The battle took a couple of weeks, but eventually the French were definitively defeated. Their loss also meant the end of French's interference in Vietnam. After the retreat of the French, there was a festive atmosphere in Hanoi.

#### Geneva Conference (1954)

Representatives from the United States, the Soviet Union, France, the People's Republic of China, and Great Britain came together in April 1954 to discuss and try to solve several problems related to Asia. Discussions on the issue in Vietnam started at the conference right after France suffered its military defeat in Dien Bien Phu. The Accords set out several terms, but was not supported by every nation present. South Vietnam, the non-communist government set up by the French, refused to sign the Agreement, but without support of the French this was of little concern at the time. The U.S. also refused to sign, but did commit itself to abide by the agreement. They felt that the Agreement, if to be put into action, was a disaster and that the national elections in Vietnam would result in an overwhelming victory for Ho. During the two-year period division of Vietnam stated in the Geneva Accords, Ho Chi Minh decided that he did not want to wait for the elections (which would thus take place in 1956), since he felt that his country was so damaged, it should quickly be reconstructed. He took measures, which for example led to redistribution of all agricultural land amongst the poor farmers. Former owners of the land couldn't find a place in society anymore, since they were accused of 'crimes against the people'. Minh used the five-year plan for the development of the national economy in the Soviet-Union as an example to bring the Vietnamese industry at a higher level. None of the various Vietnamese opposition movements against the French rule were ultimately as successful as Ho Chi Minh's Viet Minh. However, before such measures could have been taken successfully, the United States of America began to bomb Northern Vietnam.

#### The situation escalates

The American government was scared that Vietnam would nevertheless result into a communist nation and that this would lead to the Domino Effect, a theory launched by U.S. president Eisenhower. He claimed the fall of Indochina would cause a chain reaction in which all of Southeast Asia would fall for communism. They were scared that Burma, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, as well as countries on the American defence line such as Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand would fall. During the peace agreements in Geneva, the US saw Ngo Dinh Diem, a Vietnamese in exile, as the future political leader of Southern Vietnam. Diem was a fierce anti-communist and the Americans hoped that a united Vietnam with Diem as premier would lead to Vietnam becoming a strong, capitalistic



nation. Shortly after the appointment of Diem, it turned out that Diem himself was not such an advocate of democracy. He certainly was not planning to hold elections in 1956, stated in the Geneva Accords. President Eisenhower supported him in his plan. This, however, was to be kept secret from civilians, since this would lead to a damaged trust and thus the government told the people that Vietnam was not yet ready for democratic elections. A couple years later, Eisenhower acknowledged that, had elections been held, "Ho Chi Minh would have won 80% of the vote". Despite Ho's protests and demonstrations, the elections were never held. Diem rapidly became a dictatorial leader. Corruption was not tackled under his rule – in fact, it increased -, he appointed family members in influential posts, the opposition was heavily suppressed, and the Catholic minority was very privileged to the detriment of the Buddhist majority. South Vietnam turned into a police state. Tens of thousands of civilians were accused of communism and thereafter pained, tortured and locked up in concentration camps. Many citizens and Viet Minh warriors reached out for refuge in the North. Though it was commonly known that this leader brought the country cruelties, the U.S. kept aiding his government through financial and military support. The American government simply saw him as an ally in the battle against communism. On the 8th of May 1963, the situation in South Vietnam escalated. The government implemented a prohibition on the celebration of Buddha's birthday. This led to riots in the big cities all over the country. The army attacked Buddhist protesters and arrested thousands. There were Buddhist monks who put themselves on fire. Pictures of the blood mass became public and were used as front page of the newspapers worldwide. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 1963, a day after the overthrow of Diem's government by South Vietnamese military forces, Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother were captured and killed by a group of soldiers. His death caused celebration among most citizens, but led to political chaos as well.

#### American interference

The U.S. refused to leave South Vietnam seeing the situation as it was at that moment. The government felt that the instability of the country would ultimately result into a regime that would trade with the North. On August 2, 1964, almost a year after the assassination of Diem, a U.S. destroyer ship exchanged shots with North Vietnamese Navy torpedo boats in the Gulf of Tonkin. Two days later, the same U.S. ship reported that it had been ambushed, with enemy ships firing 22 torpedoes at it. The Tonkin incidents led to a broad coalition within the U.S. government to attack the North. On August 7, the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution passes in the House, leading to the use of conventional military force in Southeast Asia. The joint resolution's aim was "To promote the maintenance of international peace and security in Southeast Asia." In February 1965, as part of a strategic bombing



campaign, the U.S. launched a plan known as Operation Rolling Thunder. This plan is still on-going and leads to massive destruction all over Vietnam. Military aircraft attacks targets throughout North Vietnam to put pressure on the Communist leaders. It marks a big American assault on Northern territory and a major expansion of U.S. involvement in this war.

## Major Parties Involved

### **Communism-based parties, supporters of the North**

Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam, DRV) and the National Front for the Liberation of Vietnam (NLF or Viet Cong)

Vietnam has in recent years undergone a huge political reconstruction: The country is split up in a communist North and a capitalist South. North Vietnam, or the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, was formed in 1945 after Ho Chi Minh called for the independence of the state. Backed by the communist allies including China, Soviet Union, Laos, Cambodia and North Korea, they fight against the RVN and the USA. Resistance from the South rapidly grew since 1960, and Diem needed to deal with more and more guerrilla attacks. On the 20th of December 1960, representatives from the opposition groups gathered to discuss about the future. All together they decided to establish a new organisation: National Front for the Liberation of Vietnam, also known as the Viet Cong. The Viet Cong was mainly placed in South Vietnam but was supported and driven from the North. The Ho Chi Minh Trail, a logistic system that ran from North Vietnam to South Vietnam through Cambodia and Laos, was used to supply the Viet Cong. Because of the Trail, these South Vietnamese resistance warriors were able to control a huge part of the countryside.

### **Soviet Union**

After World War II, the Soviet government gave only marginal supports for communist movements in Vietnam, as dictator Joseph Stalin sought to maintain his alliance with the West. Stalin also had a great distrust of Asian communist groups, finding them weak, only self-interested, tainted by nationalism and undisciplined. In 1950, Ho Chi Minh travelled to Moscow and sought for military backing from the Soviet Union. Joseph Stalin's death and the stabilisation of the situation in Europe drew the government's attention to Southeast Asia. Now, in 1967, the Soviet Union's primary role in this conflict is supporting North Vietnam with both economic aid and the continuous supply of munitions. Though the actual involvement of Soviet-troops is limited to several thousand troops, mostly non-combatants, their economic



aid is significant to this war. It is useful to maintain their leadership of the worldwide Communist movement and to add credibility to their influence within developing country blocs.

### China

Chinese communists already have a history of working with the Viet Minh. They have provided each other with both material support and cover during times of struggles to gain control over their countries. For example, Chinese communist forces often retreated into North Vietnam territory and in return the Chinese provided training, weapons and munitions. Chinese communism had some influence on Vietnamese communist organization, policy and ideology, too. During the 1950s, Chinese advice and technical expertise influenced their programs of industrialization and land reform. The Soviet Union, as well as China, increased its aid to Hanoi after the US military escalation of 1965.

### **Capitalism-based parties, supporters of the South**

#### Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam, RVN)

South Vietnam, or the Republic of Vietnam, was formed the same as the DRV. Alongside the United States of America, the government fights against the DRV in an attempt to overthrow the communist leaders. The RVN is backed by anti-communist countries and members of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEASTO), including France, the United Kingdom, the USA, South Korea, Australia, the Philippines, New Zealand and Thailand.

#### The United States of America

The United States of America's role began after the Second World War and continued and escalated into full participation in the War from 1955, under leadership of several presidents with the same ideologies. The current president is Lyndon B. Johnson, keen to support South Vietnam against the North and a fervent supporter of president Eisenhower's domino theory. Even before he was president, his advisors encouraged him to take a position to take up a more forceful approach to the War. He won the presidential elections in 1964 with ease and it did not take long before the US troops were sent to South Vietnam. In early 1965, he authorised 'Operation Rolling Thunder', the wholesome bombing of North Vietnam and NLF-ground in South Vietnam.



## Timeline of Key Events

Date	Description of Event
<b>17 October 1887</b>	The establishment of French Indo-China
<b>19 May 1941</b>	The establishment of the League for independence of Vietnam (Viet Minh), which is a national independence coalition. The Viet Minh receives funding from the Soviet Union, the United States of America and the Republic of China, due to their opposition to Japan.
<b>2 September 1945</b>	Ho Chi Minh proclaims the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, after the nationalist organizations proclaim the independence of Vietnam.
<b>1 May 1950</b>	U.S. president Truman approves \$10 million in military assistance for anti-communist efforts in Indo-China, after the Chinese People's Liberation Army capture Hainan Island from Chinese Nationalist forces. This marks the beginning of formal U.S. personnel assignments in Vietnam.
<b>8 May 1950</b>	The United States of America agree to provide France with military and economic assistance.
<b>21 July 1954</b>	Geneva Accords are set up and signed by countries present at the Geneva Conference.
<b>9 October 1954</b>	France officially withdraws from Saigon, Vietnam's capital city
<b>1 November 1955</b>	U.S. president Eisenhower deploys the Military Assistance Advisory group to train RVN's army.
<b>2 November 1963</b>	Assassination of South Vietnamese president Ngo Dinh Diem.
<b>8 March 1965</b>	First U.S. combat troops arrive in Vietnam.

## Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

### Relevant UN Treaties

It should be noted that the UN Security Council has been minimally involved concerning the Vietnam War. The UN does however not support U.S. involvement in the conflict. They have limited power seeing Americans Veto power. There has been only one resolution adopted by the UNSC.

- Complaint concerning acts of aggression against territory and civilian population of Cambodia, 4 June 1964 (S/RES/189)





This resolution's main aim was to focus on the humanitarian crisis resulted during the Vietnam War. It requests all States and authorities to recognize and respect Cambodia's neutrality and territorial integrity. The government of Cambodia had previously complained about acts of aggression and intrusions by American and South Vietnamese troops into their territory.

## Possible Solutions

Solutions to the Vietnam War should be taken by the different parties interfering in the conflict. These actions should ultimately lead to Vietnam being a democratic, re-united, non-conflict, internationally participating state.

Seeing the U.S. Veto power, it is very important to not directly attack the USA for its participation in this conflict. It is nearly impossible to demand the USA to leave Vietnam. It is far more important to make proposals intended to facilitate negotiations. Building a framework for peace talks by organising peace conferences could lead to the United States and the DRV having a short term, or a long-term ceasefire. If a ceasefire is achieved, the issue of post-conflict reconstructions is to be debated in this Security Council. Post conflict areas often lead to refugee crises, (i.e. Germany post World War II), thus when a ceasefire is achieved, delegates should make sure that this issue will be debated upon and solved.

Due to the cruelties the War brings, people from Vietnam and Cambodia are leaving and searching for refuge. The War is yet another conflict in which human rights are violated. *"Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person"*, article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is a right that is always violated during war times. The solution to this humanitarian crisis could mark a turning point for this crisis.

After the crisis is solved, it is very important to solve the bridge between North and South. As we've seen in the Korean War, a divided North and South leads to an on-going conflict between two countries with opposing ideals. Reuniting the two Vietnams could be an example to the world that two divided idealistic counties can live together and be a peaceful society.

## Appendices

### Appendix A

<http://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/vietnam-war-history>



<http://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/gulf-of-tonkin-resolution>

<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/geneva-conference-begins>

<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/truman-doctrine>

<http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/vietnam-war/timeline-of-the-vietnam-war/>

<http://alphahistory.com/vietnamwar/geneva-accords-of-1954/>

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/history/asia-and-africa/southeast-asia-history/vietnam-war>

<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/ngo-dinh-diem-assassinated-in-south-vietnam>

[http://undocs.org/S/RES/189\(1964\)](http://undocs.org/S/RES/189(1964))

<http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/189>

<http://alphahistory.com/vietnamwar/chinese-and-soviet-involvement/>

## Bibliography

History.com Staff, "Vietnam War History." *History.com*. A&E Television Networks, 2009. Web. 13 June 2017.

History.com Staff, "Gulf of Tonkin Resolution." *History.com*. A&E Television Networks, 2009. Web. 13 June 2017.

History.com Staff "Geneva Conference Begins." *History.com*. A&E Television Networks, 2009. 13 June 2017.

"The Truman Doctrine, 1947." *U.S. Department of State*. U.S. Department of State, n.d. Web. 13 June 2017.

"Timeline of the Vietnam War." *History Learning Site*. N.p., n.d. Web. 13 June 2017.

Llewellyn, Jennifer. "The Geneva Accords of 1954." *Vietnam War*. Alpha History, 20 Apr. 2016. Web. 13 June 2017.

Oxford University Press. "Vietnam War (1960-1975)." *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*. Encyclopedia.com, n.d. Web. 13 June 2017.

History.com Staff. "Ngo Dinh Diem Assassinated in South Vietnam." *History.com*. A&E Television Networks, 2009. Web. 13 June 2017.

"Complaint concerning acts of aggression against territory and civilian population of Cambodia." *S/RES/189(1964)*. United Nations Security Council, n.d. Web. 13 June 2017.

"UNSCR Search Engine for the United Nations Security Council Resolutions." *Security Council Resolution 189 – UNSCR*. United Nations Security Council, n.d. Web. 13 June 2017.

Llewellyn, Jennifer. "Chinese and Soviet Involvement in Vietnam." *Vietnam War*. Alpha History, 11 Apr. 2016. 23 July 2017.

