



ERÜNAL SOCIAL SCIENCES HIGH SCHOOL
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STUDY GUIDE

VIETNAM CONFLICT

AGENTA ITEM
Open Agenda

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Letter From Secretaries General

Honourable participants of ERUNALMUN'25; as the secretariat of this glamorous conference, we are highly welcoming you to this journey. And extending appreciation of ours by thanking all of you one by one for choosing The Legacy of Legend.

Our marvelous academic and organization teams worked intensively and spent months preparing the best MUN experience that you could ever see.

Throughout this journey, you will have the chance to debate your ideas by being a part of the discussion, improve your negotiation skills, learn new diplomatic terms, and enhance your leadership and communication qualifications. And most importantly you will be able to Lead the Light of our future.

We hope you all a wonderful committee experience, if you have any issues you are free to contact us

via ozcanramazanrahmi@gmail.com

or seloosesn@hotmail.com

Kind regards, Selin Esin & Ramazan Rahmi Özcan

Secretariat of ERUNALMUN'25

Letters From Under-Secretaries General

GOOD MORNING VIETNAAAAAMMMM!!!!

I am one your Under-Secretaries General, Başar Naci Açıkalin. I am a fourth-year student at Hacettepe University, studying Actuarial Sciences. I am so pleased and honored to be sharing this insightful study guide with you for ERÜNALMUN 2025 conference. All

of you are esteemed generals who served in this conflict, so act like it. With guerilla warfare, the boys with the stars and stripes, vicious booby traps, and many more, a never-seen-before crisis committee experience awaits you, while your troops are waiting for your command!

I am blessed to be working with amazing people such as Ramazan Rahmi Özcan, Selin Esin, Metehan Yıldırım, and more. If you have any questions about the committee, please do not refrain from asking any kind of questions through my e-mail address, naci_acikalin@outlook.com.

Sincerely,

Your Under-Secretary General,

Başar Naci Açıkalin.

Dear Delegates,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the JCC Vietnam Conflict. In this study guide, my co-committee secretary, Başar Naci Açıkalin, and I have prepared all the information you need to know before participating in the committee.

In Joint Crisis Committees, regardless of your previous conference experience or current level of procedural knowledge, you can succeed, learn, and most importantly, have fun and we will do our best to make this committee a unique experience for you!

Co-Under Secretary General: Metehan Yıldırım

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1. Introduction to the Vietnam War

Vietnam War, or “War Against the Americans to Save the Nation” as the Viet Cong called it, is a series of devastating battles against Northern Vietnamese freedom fighters,

and South Vietnam with their primary ally, the United States, and could be stated as a manifestation of the Cold War (U.S.A versus U.S.S.R).

1.1. Cause

The main cause for the war was the desire for freedom and the unifying of the state as one nation under the communist regime of North Vietnam, against the intention of South Vietnam which was a proximately Western-related Vietnamese state.

1.2. History

The roots of the war date back to the Indochina wars in the 1940s and 50s, where nationalist groups fought the colonial rule of Japan and then France, thus, the French Indochina War started in 1946. The U.S. mainly funded the actions of France. However, they lost the war at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in May 1954 when one of the nationalist groups called Viet Minh defeated French colonials. With that, the French rule ended in Indochina, and negotiators attended the Geneva Conference to finalize the Geneva Accords in July 1954.

The accords established an imaginary line separating Vietnam from the 17th parallel (latitude 17° N). North of the line was the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, a.k.a. North Vietnam controlled by the Worker's Party (Vietnamese Communist Party), led by Ho Chi Minh, and its capital was Hanoi. South of the line was controlled by the State of Vietnam, under the authority of Emperor Bao Dai, and its capital was Saigon. The French gave away most of their authority to the State of Vietnam. In the span of 300 days, the remaining forces left the 17th parallel, and citizens were given the chance to cross which side they preferred. National elections were to be held place in both North and South Vietnam to determine the future. U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower came up with a program to help South Vietnam get back on its feet as they called for it. The newly attended Ngo Dinh Diem took the charge in South Vietnam.

Leaders in Washington D.C. were mildly pleased with Diem's regime, and this opened a path for the U.S. military aspects to pour into South Vietnam day-by-day, while American forces kept training and providing equipment for Diem's army. However, Diem was having issues in which situations he needed to share authority since he was highly suspicious of anyone who was not a part of his family.

The offensive against the communists by Diem in 1955 resulted in the arrest of thousands of people which temporarily disorganized communist infrastructure. Opposed to this, by 1957, the Viet Cong was officially named and started preparations for terrorism, the assassination of government officials et cetera. Armed Viet Cong occasionally engaged with the South Vietnamese in regular firefights, and North Vietnam officially called for the use of force to overthrow the Diem government by 1959, and the war had begun. (Spector, 2025)

1.3. Key Terms and Definitions

1.3.1. Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN)

ARVN was the main force in South Vietnam. Even though they were trained and equipped by the Americans, the ARVN was not meeting the expectations against the Viet Cong. Their high-ranking officers were put together from the family members and their connections, thus, they were not reliable. Their high ranks were penetrated by the Viet Cong agents, who held nearly every important position in the war. Also, the ARVN was not capable of fighting in the mud, swamps, jungles, and other various environments like these since they were mostly road-bound forces. (Spector, 2025)

It was established in 1955 to defend the Republic of Vietnam from communist threats, both from outer nations and inner groups. The ARVN was heavily supported by the United States, which provided training, weapons, and financial aid. Despite having significant resources, the ARVN faced issues such as corruption and weak leadership,

which undermined its effectiveness, especially in the final years of the Vietnam War. Even though the ARVN was the main strength of the anti-communist forces and continued to defend their people against the communist threats until the end of the war. (Collins, 2006)

1.3.2. Viet Cong

Viet Cong was a North Vietnamese guerilla force organization that fought South Vietnam and the U.S. forces in the war. Even though they started in the 1950s as a force in order to overthrow Diem, they later became an official part of the National Liberation Front in 1960. This name was given to them and first used by none other than Ngo Dinh Diem to belittle the rebels but later it stuck among them. (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1998)

1.3.3. Guerilla Warfare

A type of warfare where an irregular group of often revolutionary fighters battle against the forces with more organized, orthodox, and well-put armies and military strategies. Guerilla fighters are often called rebels, irregulars, insurgents, partisans, and mercenaries and frustrated war generals often cursed them by calling them barbarians, savages, terrorists, brigands, outlaws, and bandits. An example other than the Viet Cong for guerilla forces could be given as; Kuvâ-yı Milliye (Turkish Liberation Army against Ottoman Empire and European Invaders (1919)). (Asprey, 2025)

1.3.4. National Liberation Front (NLF)

National Liberation Front is not a force specified to the Vietnam War. It is a title that has been used by nationalist and socialist movements throughout history in different states since World War II. In Vietnam, the National Front for the Liberation of the South was established in 1960 to overthrow Diem as mentioned before. For example, in Algeria, the NLF was the successor to the organization that directed the War of Independence, and

it was the only legal party between 1962 to 1989. (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2010)

2. The Components Used in the War

2.1. Anti-Communist Forces

The military of anti-communist forces mainly included the Army of the Vietnam Republic (ARVN) (Clause. 1.3.1), the Montagnard Forces (Clause 5.1), the United States Marine Corps (USMC) (Clause 5.2), the United States Army (Clause 5.3), the United States Air Force (Clause 5.4), and the United States Navy (Clause 5.5). These groups used mostly American weaponry and US technology during the war against the communist forces.

2.1.1. Weapons

2.1.1.1. General Firearms

2.1.1.1.1. M16 Rifle: The M16 was the primary weapon of the US Army, and it was given to the inventory of ARVN. The rifle was first introduced in the mid-60s to take the place of the M14. The M16 was a light rifle, and this helped it to be used in jungle warfare.

2.1.1.1.2. M14 Rifle: The M14 rifle was the main weapon in the US Army until the M16 rifle, and it was used in the first phase of the Vietnam War. The rifle was light and usable for counterinsurgency operations, and it was produced a lot and used by both the US Army and ARVN in the battle.

2.1.1.1.3. M60 Machine Gun: The M60 machine gun was used by the US military during the war. The M60 was a heavy and hard-controlled weapon. Due to its heavy weight, it was mostly mounted to helicopters or bunkers for carrying and using it.

2.1.1.1.4. M1 Garand: The M1 Garand rifle was the main service weapon of the US Army in World War II. It was old technology, and because of this, it was still used in

the war, but not as much as M14 and M16 rifles. Also because of its cheap production costs, it was given to the ARVN soldiers and was used by ARVN mostly during the Vietnam War.

2.1.1.1.5. M1 Carbine: Same as the M1 Garand rifle, the M1 Carbine was one of the primary weapons of the US Army in World War II. It was used by the ARVN soldiers during the Vietnam War due to its cheap production costs.

2.1.1.1.6. Thompson SMG: The Thompson submachine gun was really efficient, and it was useful for jungle warfare. It was one of the main guns used by ARVN, which was given by the US Army.

2.1.1.1.7. Colt 1911: The Colt pistol was first used in 1911, and it was in service from the Great War till our present day. It was a masterpiece of the US industry, and it was mostly in all soldiers' belts during the Vietnam War. It is really light and could be used fast.

2.1.1.1.8. M79 Grenade Launcher: The M79 grenade launcher fired long-range hand grenades at defensive structures like bunkers, trenches, walls, and other buildings. It had variable ammunition to use because of its engineering design. It was efficient for US soldiers during the combat.

2.1.1.1.9. Remington 870 Shotgun: The Remington shotgun is an important weapon for short-range combat, and it was used effectively against communist guerillas during the conflict. The weapon was mostly used by the US Army and US Marines in the war.

2.1.1.2. General Explosives

2.1.1.2.1. M26 Fragmentation Grenade: M26 Grenade, is also known as the "Lemon Grenade" by soldiers because of its shape. It was the primary explosive carried by the troops and used in close combat with enemy troops.

2.1.1.2.2. M18 Claymore Mine: The M-18 was primarily used for detecting enemy troop positions and was deployed by landing it on the ground with a detector line attached to a tree or a device attached to the mine, which exploded when an enemy passed through. It was not particularly useful because a careful troop could detect the mine before it exploded.

2.1.1.2.3. C4 Plastic Explosive: C4 explosives were useful during the war. It helped to destroy defensive structures and enemy vehicles, and it was also used as a trap against enemy troops. It was easy and simple to produce a C4 explosive, and because of it, there were huge amounts of C4s used in the war.

2.1.1.2.4. M72 Light Anti-Tank Weapon (LAW): The M72 AT weapon was used by the US Ground Forces in order to destroy enemy tanks and armored vehicles during combat. It was a useful and high-tech weapon against the AT that communist forces used.

2.1.1.2.5. MK82 General-Purpose Bomb: The MK 82 bomb was used by the US Air Forces for bombardments against enemy territories, and it was able to cause huge destruction.

2.1.1.3. Chemical Weaponry

2.1.1.3.1. Napalm: Napalm is an incendiary mixture of gelling agent and gasoline. It was a destructive bomb, and when it was used, the Napalm caused huge fires and heavy casualties on the land it dropped. It was one of the main ammunitions used by the US Air Force in the war.

2.1.1.3.2. Agent Orange: Agent Orange was the most widely used and impactful chemical following the war. A toxic defoliant herbicide used extensively by the U.S. military under Operation Ranch Hand. It contained dioxin, a highly carcinogenic substance. The primary aim was to strip away foliage, depriving the Viet Cong and North

Vietnamese forces of cover and food sources. It caused lots of health problems in war and after the war.

2.1.1.3.3. Agent Blue: An herbicide used to destroy crops, particularly rice, to deny food resources to the enemy. It was part of the U.S. military's defoliant program alongside Agent Orange. This caused huge damage to the corps and environment.

2.1.1.3.4. Agent White: Another herbicide used by the U.S. military during the war. It was a mixture of herbicides used for defoliation, often applied in combination with Agent Orange.

2.1.1.3.5. Agent Purple: An herbicide similar to Agent Orange was also used in the defoliation campaign. It was used during the early stages of the United States' herbicide programme.

2.1.1.3.6. Tear Gas: A chemical agent used by the U.S. military primarily for riot control and flushing out enemy soldiers from bunkers or tunnels. It causes severe irritation to the eyes, respiratory system, and skin.

2.1.1.3.7. Chloroacetophenone: An herbicide similar to Agent Orange was also used in the defoliation campaign. It was used during the early stages of the US herbicide programme.

2.1.1.3.8. Phosgene: Although there are limited reports of its use, phosgene (a toxic gas that can cause severe lung damage) was occasionally mentioned in the context of chemical warfare during the war. It's more often associated with World War I.

2.1.2. Navy

The navy of anti-communist forces was mainly the US Navy Forces. The United States used its navy in the war for lots of purposes. The first forces of the US Navy came to land the US Marines in Vietnam for the first support in the war. The process continued with the arrival of the aircraft ships and more battleships with the escorts of small patrol

ships. The navy blockaded the North Vietnamese ports and made heavy bombardments on the shores. (Marolda 1994) Also, aircraft ships were vital for US Air Forces during the war.

2.1.3. Air Force

The air force of the anti-communist forces was mainly the US Air Force. The United States Air Force impacted the course of the war with their everyday bombardments against enemy territories and close air support to the ground forces' invasions and defenses during the war. (Clodfelter, 1995) With the bombardments, they both saved their soldiers' lives and made communist forces suffer heavy casualties. The US Air Force planes used US aircraft Carriers and Ground Air bases in South Vietnam for supply.

2.1.4. Ground Forces

2.1.4.1. M48 Patton Tank

The M48 was widely used by American and South Vietnamese forces for direct fire support and armored assaults. It was involved in infantry support and offensive operations, particularly in the southern and central regions of Vietnam. Its role was crucial during large-scale battles and in providing firepower against enemy positions.

2.1.4.2. M113 Armored Personnel Carrier (APC)

The M113 was widely used to transport infantry across battlefields while providing protection from small arms fire and shrapnel. It was used in various combat roles, including troop transport, fire support, and reconnaissance, and proved highly versatile in different terrains.

2.1.4.3. M60 Patton Tank

The M60 was used for armored assaults, direct fire support, and infantry support. It was particularly effective in tank-on-tank battles and in providing heavy firepower

during larger U.S. and South Vietnamese operations, especially in the later years of the war.

2.1.4.4. M551 Sheridan Armored Reconnaissance/Airborne Vehicle

The M551 was used by airborne and light infantry units for reconnaissance, fire support, and armored assaults in difficult terrain. Its lightweight design made it suitable for rapid deployment, and its missile capability gave it anti-tank abilities in addition to its conventional firepower.

2.1.4.5. Landing Vehicle Tracked (LVT)

The LVT was used for amphibious assaults, troop transport, and supply movement, particularly in coastal and riverine operations. Its amphibious capability was key for landing forces and operating in wet or flooded terrain.

2.1.4.6. M2/M3 Bradley Infantry Vehicle (IFV)

Although developed after the Vietnam War, Bradley's design was influenced by lessons learned during the war. It was intended to provide mobility and fire support for infantry while also possessing anti-tank missile capabilities.

2.1.5. Intelligence

The intelligence of the anti-communist forces was mainly the CIA. The CIA gave lots of information about enemy troop amounts, the weapons they used, and lots of other things that would change the course of the war.

2.2. Communist Forces

The Communist forces of the Vietnam War contained many coordinated and uncoordinated warfare tactics and manpower during battles opposing the anti-communist side. Most of these lower-lever tactics such as tunnels, booby traps, guerilla warfare, and help from locals were used with the help of coordinated armies such as the Red Army,

Chinese Army, etc. (*Vietcong Military Tactics - the Vietnam War - National 4 History Revision - BBC Bitesize*, 2023)

2.2.1. Booby Traps

There were 8 mainly used terrifying booby traps on the battlefield, carefully put together by the Viet Cong fighters to neutralize or even end the life of the Anti-Communist soldiers. Some of these traps were too graphic to the point that they left their prey paralyzed, amputated, and left for dead, not killing them, and leaving severe PTSD on those who survive. Because of this reason alone, we can safely say that these traps were one of the most important aspects of the war.

2.2.1.1. Punji Sticks

Made with sharpened bamboo stakes, often covered in bodily fluids such as urine and feces, and any other substance that would infect the wound, these traps were one of the most effective and cruel ways to neutralize an enemy. Viet Cong would dig up a pit long enough to make it impossible for a soldier to climb back up (considering their gadgets were already too heavy for the 100 degrees Fahrenheit Vietnam weather), and cover the bottom with these spikes, with a disguise on top.

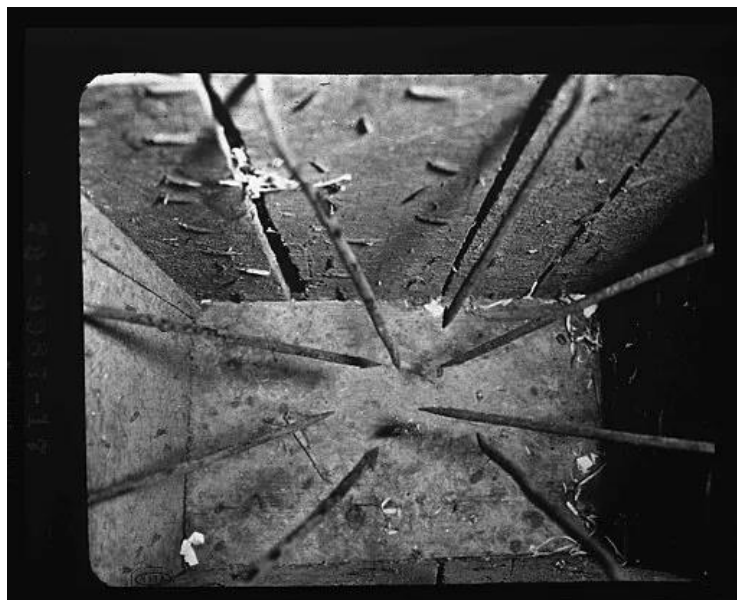


Figure 1: Image of a Punji stick trap. ¹

2.2.1.2. Snake Pits

Viet Cong carried Bamboo Pit Vipers (Three-Step Snakes), in their gadgets to eliminate anyone who searched their bags. They would also tie these snakes to bamboo and hide them in the tunnels in case of infiltration. The U.S. Army trained special infiltrators called “tunnel rats” to disarm these kinds of traps. The reason that these snakes are called “three-step snakes” is, that their fatal venom could kill a person after they can only move three steps from where they were.

2.2.1.3. Grenade-In-A-Can

Along the sides of the paths, the Viet Cong put two cans opposing each other, they removed the safety pins, waited for the right amount of time, and put them inside the cans. (F.y.i.; grenades do not explode until the safety pin is pulled and the striker lever is let go. The cans prevented them from exploding since they held the safety lever.) They then tied each end of a tripwire to the explosives, and when the wire was tripped over, the grenades launched and exploded instantly.

2.2.1.4. Flag Bombs

The U.S. troops made a habit of collecting war trophies from the battles they had won, mostly capturing flags, so the Viet Cong rigged their flagpoles. Whenever a flagpole is disturbed, moving the pole, lowering the flag, et cetera, an explosive charge would set off. They rigged everything that the U.S. troops considered a war trophy.

2.2.1.5. Cartridge Trap

This trap is more annoying than lethal and hard to detect. They rigged cartridge boxes so that they fire a bullet through the foot of a soldier. This worked by putting the

¹ Booby-trapped box (MIS 72-9987-17), National Museum of Health and Medicine. View from the top into a box which is booby-trapped with punji sticks. Wikimedia Commons. (2024, January 31). WeAreTheMighty. <https://www.wearethemighty.com/popular/8-of-terrifying-booby-traps/>

box and lowering it down into a shallow hole with a nail at the bottom. When the victim steps on top of the box, the nail activates a firing motion and sends a bullet.

2.2.1.6. Bamboo Whip

Sharpened sticks of bamboo are rigged on an arched bamboo stake with a tripwire. When the trap is activated, the arched bamboo stake throws these approximately 30 cm spikes through the victim's chest at high speed, leaving almost no chance of surviving. This is one of the most simply put together but at the same time one of the most lethal traps used in this war.

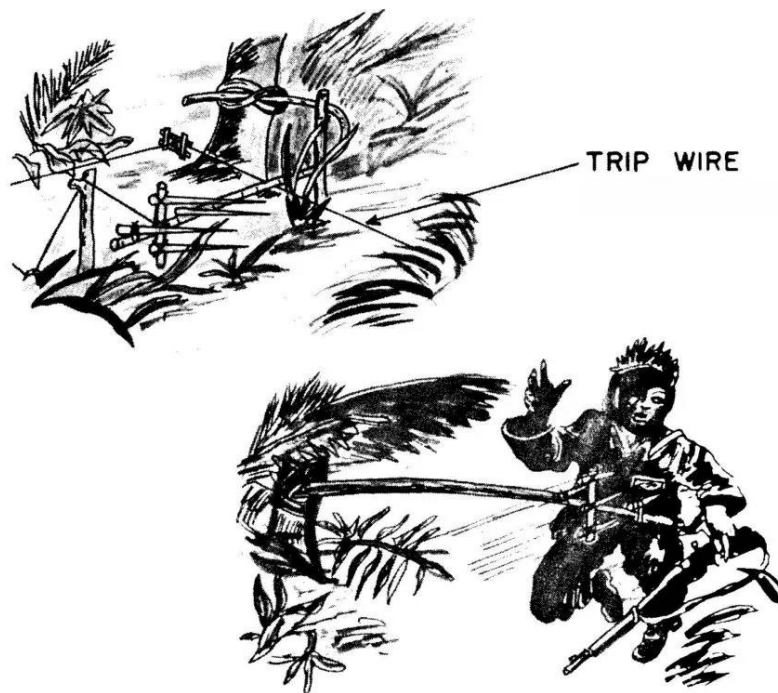


Figure 2: Image of the mechanics behind the Bamboo Whip trap.²

2.2.1.7. The Mace

This is probably the most graphic and devastating of all the traps used in Vietnam. A tripwire is connected to a wooden ball that hangs from a tree and has spikes all over it. When it is activated said ball would come down from the tree with an enormous impact.

² Museum of Military History. (n.d.). *Whip trap*. WeAreTheMighty.
<https://www.wearethemighty.com/popular/8-of-terrifying-booby-traps/>

2.2.1.8. Tiger Traps

Similar to the mace, it unleashed a man-sized plank weighted with bricks covered in barbed metal spikes on its victim when the tripwire is tripped. (Stilwell, 2024)

2.2.2. Weapons

2.2.2.1. General Firearms

Most of the weapons used by the Communist forces and Viet Cong were manufactured by either the Soviet Union or China, alongside the weapons taken from the U.S. soldiers. SA-7 Grail, which was a portable missile against the air force, 7.62mm DP LMG, AK-47 and other AK variants, and SKS Carabiner DMRs were some of the specified weapons (War, 2019), also, according to a declassified CIA directorate, and it specifies these weapons as, a few Soviet sniper rifles, carabiners, and Chinese 57-mm recoilless rifles manufactured before 1950.

2.2.2.2. General Explosives

From the same CIA report, we can see that the Viet Cong had, rifle grenades provided by China, RPG-2s, RPG-7s provided by China, North Korea, and the USSR, 50-mm grenade launchers, various and vast amounts of mortars and rockets mostly provided by the USSR and China.

2.2.3. Navy

According to the CIA directorate, North Vietnam Navy consisted of, SO-1 class Subchasers, Poluchat-1 class PGM Motor gunboats, and P-4 class Motor torpedo boats provided by the USSR. Shanghai and Swatow class PGM Motor gunboats, P-6 class motor torpedo boats, Huchwan class PTH Hydrofoil motor torpedo boats, LCM armed mechanized landing crafts, and Cua Cam class YP Patrol crafts provided by China.

2.2.4. Air Force

The CIA directorate dictates that almost all of the North Vietnamese Air Force and pilots were from the USSR alongside a trace of Chinese Aircraft. They had, MiG-15, MiG-17, and MiG-21 fighter jets, UMiG-15 trainer jets, IL-28 bomber planes, AN-2 light transports, AN-24, IL-14, IL-18, and LI-2 transports, MI-1, MI-4, and MI-6 Choppers.

2.2.5. Ground Forces

The ground forces of North Vietnam were specified in the CIA report and are as stated below.

2.2.5.1. Tanks and Armored Vehicles

PT-76 Amphibious light tanks, T-54, T-55 T-34, and/or T-85 medium tanks, BA-64 armored vehicles, BTR-40 and BTR-50p armored personnel carriers, AT-S and AT-T respectively, medium and heavy tracked artillery tractors, K-61 tracked amphibian, SU-76 assault guns, and last but definitely not least ZSU-57-2 twin 57-mm self-propelled automatic anti-aircraft guns.

2.2.5.2. Ground Equipment

SAM firing battalion (SA-2) surface-to-air missile systems, radars, fire control teams, communication devices, and ground control interceptors.

2.2.5.3. Field and Anti-aircraft Artillery

12.7-mm, 14.5-mm, 23-mm, 30-mm, 37-mm, 57-mm, 85-mm, and 100-mm heavy machine guns on anti-aircraft mounts for antiaircraft artillery and 57-mm, 76-mm, 85-mm, 100-mm, and 130-mm anti-tank field guns, 70-mm and 152-mm Howitzers, D-30 and Type 56 class 122-mm Howitzers, and lastly 122-mm Corps guns for the field artillery. (Central Intelligence Agency [C.I.A.], 2010)

3. Outposts and Structures Used

3.1. Underground Tunnels (Cu Chi Tunnels)

Viet Cong could be crowned as the most unique, organized, and creative guerilla force in history. To fight against better-equipped Americans, the Viet Cong came up with the idea of overly complicated underground tunnels that went on for hundreds of kilometers under Cu Chi, a district near northwest of Saigon in South Vietnam. These tunnels allowed them to sneak behind the enemy lines, set up booby traps more easily, and use them to retreat and disappear underground when needed. The U.S. created the “Tunnel Rats”, special forces which were trained to infiltrate these structures, to determine the places of the booby traps and enemy locations.

Communist forces began the works for these tunnels in the late 1940s, during the revolution against the French. They were mostly dug by hand for short distances at a time. By the U.S. intervention in the war in the 1960s, these tunnels were expanded to nearly 250 kilometers long, from Saigon all the way to the Cambodian border. In heavily bombarded areas, considering U.S. force against a guerilla this is expected, civilians and freedom fighters used these tunnels to escape from destruction and started to live underground, using them as a shelter. In specific areas of the tunnels, there were rooms big enough to create living quarters, hospitals, kitchens, factories, and even large theaters and music halls for entertainment.

With the means to provide shelter for the needy, Cu Chi tunnels were also used for battles. In January 1966, a force of Australia and the U.S. of a combined 8000 soldiers orchestrated an operation to sweep the Cu Chi region altogether. This was called “Operation Crimp”. After American B-52 bomber planes hit the area with vast amounts of bombardments into the jungle, Troops searched the area for any survivors and fighters. However, this operation was embarrassingly unsuccessful since all the communist forces

had already retreated back to the tunnels before the disaster. A year later, the U.S. sent 30000 troops to a communist stronghold north of Saigon with “Operation Cedar Falls”. The main objective was to move towards intelligence data from the region regarding the tunnels. After bombardments and sweeping of the topside, U.S. tanks and bulldozers swept the tunnels forcing several thousand people to leave the places they vacated, most of them refugees. Months after the sweep, however, North Vietnamese found their way back into the tunnels in 1968 and used them against the opposition forces as a stronghold for attacks towards Saigon. (Onion, 2019)

4. Terrorism Front of the War

Murder, kidnapping, torture, and intimidation were routine parts of the Viet Cong (VC) and People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) operations during the Vietnam War. They were intended to liquidate opponents such as officials, leaders, military personnel, and civilians who collaborated with the South Vietnamese government, erode the morale of South Vietnamese government employees, cow the populace, and boost tax collection and propaganda efforts. (Gunther, 1978)

During the early years of the war, assassinations and similar activities were organized by the Viet Cong agents. As the conflict continued, efforts were centralized under the Viet Cong Security Service, estimated to number 25,000 men by 1970 (Terrence, 1986). This extensive use of terror received comparatively little attention from Western journalists.

Similar terrorism was done by the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) and American forces on villagers through sniping, raids, or placing mines and booby traps in and near villages. Some of these crimes were used as VC propaganda in order to gain support from the local villagers (Douglas, 1970). We see this method in an article by Japanese journalist Takashi Oka reported: *“The VC entered a village and harangued the*

local populace about supporting the Revolution, before digging in and passing word to the district capital that they were active in the community. The next day, U.S. planes bombed the village and its Catholic church. VC operatives emerged after the destruction to tell survivors about the perfidy of the U.S. imperialists." (Christian Science Monitor, 1965). Such methods could sometimes backfire, with villagers blaming VC forces for the destruction and death brought to their communities. (Terrence, 1986)

In December 1960, the South Vietnamese government reported to the International Control Commission (ICC) that during the year, *the VC destroyed or damaged 284 bridges, burnt 60 medical aid stations, and prevented 25,000 children from attending school.* In October 1961, a U.S. State Department study estimated that the *VC were killing South Vietnamese civilians at a rate of 1,500 per month.* In October 1964, U.S. officials in Saigon reported that *from January to October 1964, the VC killed 429 Vietnamese local officials and kidnapped 482 others.* In June 1965, South Vietnamese officials reported that the rate of assassinations and kidnappings of rural officials had doubled in June compared to May and April, with *224 officials being either killed or kidnapped.* On May 11, 1967, State Health Secretary Dr. Tran Van Lu-Y told the World Health Organisation in Geneva that *more than 200 doctors and medical workers* in South Vietnam had been victims of the VC in the previous ten years. He said that *211 members of his staff had been killed or kidnapped; 174 dispensaries, maternity homes, and hospitals destroyed; and 40 ambulances mined or machine-gunned* (Douglas, 1970). By 1969, nearly 250 civilians were being murdered or kidnapped each week. VC terror squads committed over *36,000 murders* and almost *58,000 kidnappings* from 1967 to 1972, according to a U.S. Department of Defence estimate in 1973 (Cragg, 1993). Statistics for 1968–72 suggested that *"about 80 percent of the terrorist victims were ordinary civilians*

and only about 20 percent were government officials, policemen, members of the self-defense forces, or pacification cadres." (Gunther, 1978).

A Rand Corporation report from April 1970 titled: Under the organization and direction of the Viet Cong Security Service, repression methods played a vital role in the VC efforts to extend control over the population and to bring about the collapse of the government (Elliott, 2010). The report stated that the official estimate of civilians assassinated and abducted was ***"44,000 for 1966-1969, of whom about 4,000 were government officials or employees,"*** but that this was likely an underestimate because it did not include those killed in military attacks. The report estimated that if the communists took control of South Vietnam, ***at least 100,000 people from all levels of the civilian and military structure would be executed*** (Elliott, 2010).

R. J. Rummel estimated VC forces killed around ***164,000 civilians between 1954 and 1975***, with a range of between ***106,000 and 227,000*** (Rummel, 1997). In conclusion, the war between the South and North had an unforgettable impact on human history with the violations it included. The people were killed in numerous and horrible ways, and still today the impacts of the war stay in the country, and in the hearts of people, the unhuman massacre remains as a scar.

5. United States of America (U.S.A.)

5.1. Montagnard Forces

The Montagnards were tribal groups from the Central Highlands of Vietnam who were drawn into the war because of their distrust of the communist government in the North. The United States and South Vietnam recruited and armed Montagnard militias, who were skilled in guerrilla warfare and had extensive knowledge of the terrain. These forces were used for counterinsurgency missions and to gather intelligence in distant areas.

The Montagnard militia's involvement was vital in controlling strategic regions in the Central Highlands (Collins, 2006).

5.2. U.S. Marine Corps (USMC)

The US Marine Corps was among the first American combat forces deployed to Vietnam, arriving in 1965. The Marines focused on counterinsurgency operations, defending key military bases such as Da Nang and engaging in major battles, including the Battle of Khe Sanh. The USMC also ran pacification programs aimed at winning the support of local populations, although these efforts often clashed with the high-intensity military strategies of other US forces (Westheider, 2007). The corps was really crucial because they were the first main forces that helped ARVN during the deployment of the first defense lines.

5.3. U.S. Army

The US Army was the largest American military force in Vietnam, handling both large-scale operations and smaller "search and destroy" missions. A significant engagement involving the Army was the Battle of Ia Drang in 1965, which showed the intensity of combat against North Vietnamese forces (Clodfelter, 1995). The Army also carried out pacification programs to stabilize South Vietnam similar to the USMC, but its operations were often hindered by the guerrilla tactics of the Viet Cong and declining troop morale as the war progressed (Herring, 2002).

5.4. U.S. Air Force (USAF)

The United States Air Force played a crucial role in the Vietnam War, primarily through strategic bombing campaigns. Operations such as "Rolling Thunder" (1965–1968) and "Linebacker" (1972) aimed to cripple North Vietnam's war-making capacity by targeting infrastructure and supply routes. The USAF also provided close air support for ground forces and executed logistical missions. However, the heavy use of air power

caused huge impacts on the civilians, which made them lose local support in their controlled areas.

5.5. U.S. Navy

The US Navy carried out lots of missions during the Vietnam War, including enforcing naval blockades, providing air support from aircraft carriers, and organizing coastal patrol. The coastal patrols continued under "Operation Market Time." The Navy's riverine units nicknamed the "Brown Water Navy," patrolled rivers and waterways to disrupt the Viet Cong's logistics and combat activities (Marolda, 1994). Additionally, naval bombardments and amphibious operations supported ground forces, highlighting the Navy's vital role in both offensive and defensive operations.

5.6. The Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.) Involvement

The CIA's involvement dates back to 1950. Central Intelligence Agency participated in almost every aspect of the war, including the Indochina wars, according to declassified agency reports. John Prados, a senior in the National Security Archive (N.S.A.) revealed eight new histories of the CIA regarding activities in South and North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia with details. Said histories highlight new material and CIA aspects never seen before. These histories represent how poorly understood the stance of the CIA was. These six detailed histories are stated in the paragraphs below.

First history indicates the CIA and U.S. Embassy exchanging top secret deals with the National Liberation Front of North Vietnam with the approval of South Vietnam governors. **[Document 2: Thomas L. Ahern, Jr., *CIA and the Generals: Covert Support to Military Government in South Vietnam*, Center for the Study of Intelligence, October 1998, 243 pp. pp. 58-63].**

The second one states that in 1954 Ngo Dinh Diem lost the favor of the U.S. and the South Vietnamese people, meanwhile, the CIA proceeded to craft a relationship with

Diem's brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu in early 1952, during the war against the French in Indochina wars. **[Document 1: Thomas L. Ahern, *CIA and the House of Ngo: Covert Action in South Vietnam, 1954-1963*, Center for the Study of Intelligence, June 2000, 231 pp. pp. 21-2, 31].**

Third history contains a raid into North Vietnam that took place in 1970 by the CIA. **[Document 5, Thomas L. Ahern, Jr., *Undercover Armies: CIA and Surrogate Warfare in Laos, 1961-1973*, Center for the Study of Intelligence, 2006, 593 pp. SOURCE: FOIA pp. 349-372].**

Fourth history claims that in 1965, the South Vietnamese regime stood against the Buddhist majority, CIA secretly funded the Buddhists. **[Document 2: p. 38].**

Fifth history mentions the CIA involvement in South Vietnamese elections. **[Document 2: pp. 51-58].**

Sixth one refers to the late periods of the war, stating that CIA historian and Saigon leader Nguyen Van Thieu's mistrust towards the U.S. is focused upon in the agency. **[Document 2: p. 87].**

In the seventh history, there are neo-orthodox statements about U.S. and South Vietnamese failures and lack of investments in the conflict. **[Document 3, Thomas L. Ahern, Jr., *CIA and Rural Pacification in South Vietnam*, Center for the Study of Intelligence, August 2001 SOURCE: FOIA p. xv-xvi].**

The last history suggests that the CIA was aware of the Laotian drug traffic and took no actions and did not report this back until the Nixon administration declared war on drugs. **[Document 5, p. 535]. (Home, 2025)**

6. South Vietnam

South Vietnam was on the side of anti-communist forces against North Vietnam. The government changed the regime in 1955 to a republic with a referendum instead of a

monarchy. With the fall of Saigon (capital city) in 1975, the South Vietnamese government collapsed, and modern Vietnam was established under communist North Vietnam's rule.

6.1. The Assassination of Ngo Dinh Diem

On 2 November 1963, Ngo Dinh Diem, the president of South Vietnam, was arrested and assassinated in a CIA-backed coup led by General Duong Van Minh. Following nine years of autocratic and nepotistic family rule in the country under Diem's rule, the Buddhist protest reached a climax due to the ban on the Buddhist flag and the execution of Buddhist protestors (Howard, 2003). Because of the chaotic events, General Duong Van Minh staged a coup and arrested Ngo Dinh Diem. After Diem was arrested, he was shot in the head while on his way to the headquarters with a convoy. The killer was Captain Nhung, and the purpose of the murder is said to be his anger. Diem's hands were tied, preventing him from defending himself while he was being shot sitting in the vehicle. Shortly after the murder, the new government covered it up.

7. Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN)

The COSVN was established in 1951 to command communist operations in the South Vietnamese region during the Indochina wars. It was taken down in 1954 by the Geneva ceasefire agreement but was reestablished in 1961 with the rekindling of the war in Vietnam. COSVN controlled the People's Revolutionary Party, the NLF, and the Viet Cong. (*COSVN | Vietnam War Dictionary*, n.d.)

American soldiers thought and made news about the COSVN base being in the shape of the Pentagon, but this was not true. According to Deputy-General Tran Van Tra, COSVN was a semi-mobile HQ that represented the party and conducted all military and political activities in South Vietnam. (*Central Office for South Vietnam - Citizendium*, n.d.)

8. P.R. China and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.)

Much like the U.S., China, and the Soviets also got involved in the conflict by taking North Vietnam as an ally. They lent moral, military, and logistic power to the communist forces of Vietnam the most powerful communist forces in the world, with the mindset of expanding communist territory in Asia. Russian involvement nudged the start of the Cold War between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. They were both secret about the involvement. Between 1965 and 1971, 320.000 Chinese troops were located in Vietnam. Soviets mostly informed them in 1964 when Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev was in office. However, when he was removed, the man who took his place, Aleksei Kosygin, was keener on Soviet involvement since he wanted to assert his dominance and power over the headliners in the Soviet Union military. A press release from Kosygin read,

“The Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), the outpost of the socialist camp in Southeast Asia, is playing an important role in the struggle against American imperialism and is making its contribution to the defense of peace in Asia and throughout the world. The governments of the USSR and DRV have examined the situation... Both governments resolutely condemn the aggressive actions of the USA on August 5th, 1965, and especially the barbaric attacks by American aircraft on DRV territory on February 7th and 8th 1965... The USSR will not remain indifferent to ensuring the security of a fraternal socialist country and will give the DRV necessary aid and support.” -Aleksei Kosygin.

With this Moscow became North Vietnam’s most valued manufacturer and benefactor. The full scale of this support is not yet revealed but no one can deny that it was highly important. (History, 2018)

9. Other Relative Parties

9.1. Australia

Australia's involvement in the war first began with 30 military advisors in 1962. After the elections, the new government of Australia sent 7,672 Australian personnel in order to bring aid and upgrade the defenses of South Vietnam. By this time, several other military forces had arrived in Vietnam. Australian troops were withdrawn from Vietnam in 1972, as the war's course changed.

The Vietnam War became the longest military campaign in Australia's history and also Australia's largest force contribution to a foreign conflict since the Second World War. The final records are 60,000 Australians served in the war: 521 were killed and more than 3,000 were wounded.

9.2. South Korea

South Korea, which was at the time an authoritarian regime under its right-wing military dictator Park Chung Hee, took a major active role in the Vietnam War. The first Korean units arrived in February 1965, in a brigade group known as Dove Force. These included engineers, a medical unit, military police, a navy LST, liaison staff, and other support personnel. The Brigade group helped South Vietnam build schools, roads, and bridges. Medical teams are reported to have treated over 30,000 South Vietnamese civilians. The civilian operations in the early southern part of the campaign are reported to have had some success. In addition to combat and non-combat forces, South Korea had sent around 100,000 civilian workers to South Vietnam, employed in technical and civilian tasks.

In 1969, the South Korean army accounted for 9% of the foreign troops stationed in South Vietnam (US Army 475,200, ROK Army 49,755); by the end of 1972, they comprised 60.5% of foreign troops (US Army 24,200, ROK Army 37,438). By the

beginning of 1973, most American forces had been withdrawn from Vietnam, but the Korean army remained with the ARVN and continued to fight against the North. South Korean troops also withdrew from Vietnam in late 1973 as a result of the Paris Peace Accords.

Final records are approximately 320,000 military personnel, with an average of 48,000 per year. Total casualties were 5,099 killed and 10,962 injured.

9.3. North Korea

Little is known about the involvement of North Korea in the war. It was the year 2000 when North Korea accepted that they in fact were involved in the war with their pilots. One Vietnamese newspaper read that up to 87 North Korean pilots served in the war but the exact numbers and the credibility of this are unknown. Some articles suggest that North Korea also sent some surveillance in the form of non-military aid to North Vietnam to observe and take a close look at the operations of the South Korean military forces in South Vietnam. (Oh, n.d.)

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