

# THE VIETNAM WAR



# The USA In Vietnam : Key Words.

 **Discover** : key unit vocabulary. **Explore** : key word meanings. **Skill** : vocabulary development.

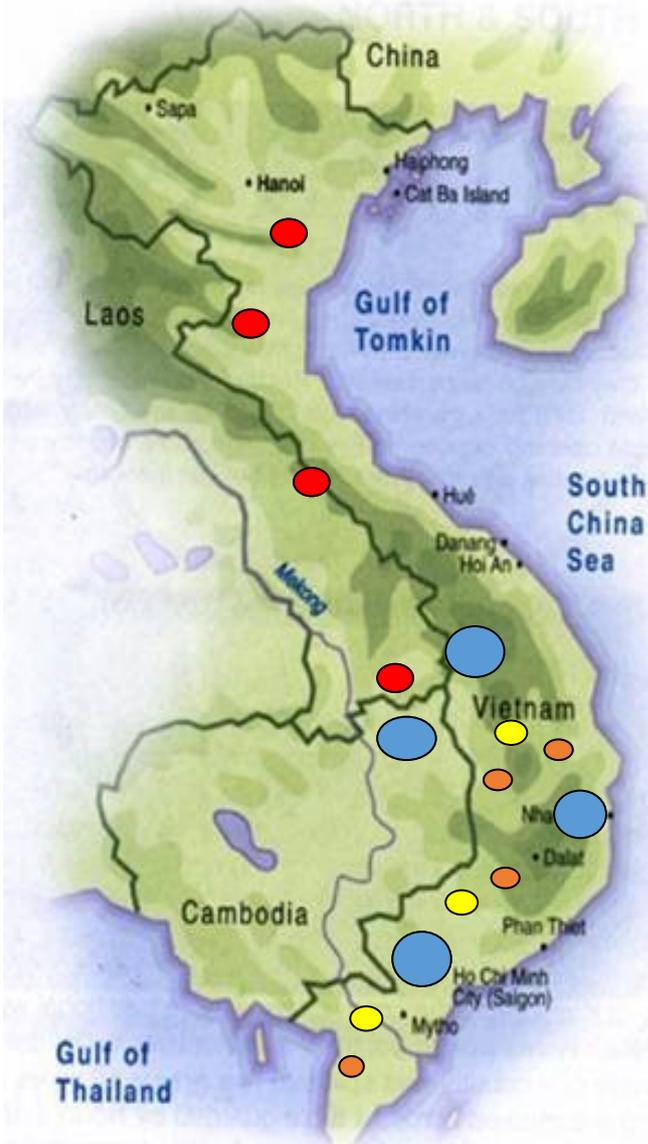


Word	Definition	Similar Word	?
	To be free from control of another country.		A
	To argue against something.		B
	A way of fighting using surprise, hit and run tactics.		C
	A person not involved in the army or fighting.		D
	Feelings, emotions state of well being of an individual or group .		E
	The 'communist' North Vietnamese Army, made up of the Viet Minh.		F
	Working together.		G
	An American policy to stop the spread of communism.		H
	US President Nixon's policy to leave fighting to the ARVN forces.		I
	A trap.		J
	To ask for something.		K
	Communist soldiers loyal to Ho Chi Minh..		L
	A powerful, poisonous chemical used to destroy crops + jungle.		M
	The South Vietnamese army allied with the USA.		N
	The feelings / views of the civilian population.		O
	Killing or violence that is unjustified even in times of war.		P
	The US fear that communism would spread between countries.		Q
	To go on the attack.		R
	Southern Vietnamese who fought against the USA.		S
	A US weapon - fire bombs.		T
	National Liberation Front : Another (earlier) name for the Viet Cong.		U
	A leader who is put in place because they can be easily controlled.		V
	The murdering of their own officers by US soldiers.		W
	Someone who is new and lacks experience.		X

# Taking Sides : who is who, what is what?

**Mission :** to understand the geography, places, groups and people in the Vietnam war.

There was a number of groups involved in the Vietnam conflict. The map and activities below should help you understand the differences between them. The **Ho Chi Minh Trail** was a complex web of jungle paths that allowed the North Vietnamese to move soldiers and supplies into the south. In 1965, it took six months to travel from North Vietnam to Saigon, by 1970, the journey was cut to six weeks. From the air, the Ho Chi Minh Trail was hard to see. The Americans tried to destroy the trail with bombs, napalm and Agent Orange, a powerful chemical. This had little effect and the trail stayed operational.



Taking Sides.			
	USA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	North Vietnamese Army : NVA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Viet Cong VC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	National Liberation Front : NLF	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Army Republic of Vietnam : ARVN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	People's Army of Vietnam : PAVN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	USSR, China, North Korea Support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	South Korea, Thailand, Australia Support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
True or False?		T	F
	The NVA and PAVN are essentially the same thing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Ho Chi Minh learned about guerrilla tactics from China.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Most Americans supported their involvement in Vietnam.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	The cost of killing one VC soldier was calculated at 400,000 dollars.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Bombs killed more people than disease on the HCM trail.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	The NLF and VC are essentially the same thing,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	The VC and the NVA are essentially the same thing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	More bombs were dropped in Vietnam than all the bombs in WW2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Research where needed and complete tasks / questions below.**

1: Mark the Ho Chi Minh Trail on the map above.?

2: Which bordering country / countries did the Ho Chi Minh Trail cut through?

3: Why did the USA spray Agent Orange onto the jungles of Vietnam?

4: What effect do you think Agent Orange had on the local Vietnamese population?

5: What other American military tactics would have lost the 'hearts and minds' of Vietnamese civilians?

6: How did the Viet Cong try to gain the support of the southern Vietnamese people?

7: Devise a question of your own based on the information provided.

# Picking sides : who is who ?

USA

Viet Cong

NVA

Bao Dai

South Korean Support

Chinese Support

Thailand Support

ARVN

General Westmorland

Viet Minh.

Diem

General Giap

Indochine Communist Party

Soviet Support

National Liberation Front.

People's Army Of Vietnam.

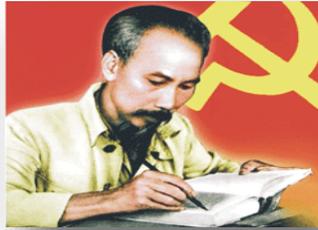
Canada



# Why Did The USA Get Involved In Vietnam?

**Discover:** 4 reasons why the USA got involved in Vietnam. **Explore :** the problems caused by Ngo Diem. **Skills:** knowledge + constructing text.

**START:** At the end of WW2, Ho Chi Minh (right) appealed to the USA. He wanted Vietnam to be granted independence from France. Afraid of the domino theory the USA planned to...



.. try and contain Communism by supporting South Vietnam against Ho Chi Minh. Intent on unifying north and south the **Viet Minh** defeated the French at the Battle of **Dien Bien Phu**. France and...

... the Viet Minh agreed to the **Geneva Peace Accord** in 1954. Vietnam would temporarily be divided north and south with free, national elections scheduled for 1956. Former....

.. Emperor Bao Dai (right) controlled the South. Bao Dai was essentially a French puppet. The USA supported Bao Dai, but the Vietnamese people did not. In 1954 President Eisenhower wrote....



*"Possibly 80 percent of the population would have voted for Communist Ho Chi Minh as their leader rather than Chief of State Bao Dai."*

In the south of ...

...Vietnam groups known as the **Viet Cong** fought against Bao Dai. Fearing the loss of the south, the US backed the Catholic, anti-communist, Ngo Dinh Diem, (right). In 1961, US Vice...



...President Lyndon Johnson wrote:

*'President Diem is the Churchill of the decade.. He will fight Communism in the streets and alleys, and when his hands are torn he will fight it with....*

*his feet. President Ngo Dinh Diem is in the vanguard of those leaders who stand for freedom.'*

Ngo Dinh Diem was the first 'democratically' elected president of South Vietnam but....

.... the election was fixed. The only choices were Bao Dai and Ngo Diem. Voters complained that they were forced to vote for Diem and some of those that did not were ...

...beaten by American backed Southern Vietnamese soldiers. The result of the election was 98.2% for Diem. In 1956, Diem broke the promise made at the Geneva Peace Accords by ...

cancelling the national elections.

**Why do you think Diem cancelled the national elections as agreed?**

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After cancelling the national elections, Diem became increasingly unpopular. He imprisoned anyone who opposed him including communists, journalists and intellectuals, and even ...

.. children. Another reason for Diem's unpopularity was that approximately 70% of Vietnam was Buddhist. Diem, a Catholic ignored the rights of Buddhists. In 1963, in protest to this...

..... Quang Due, a sixty-six year old Buddhist monk, committed suicide by setting himself on fire. ( see following 3 images )



In response to Quang Due's and five other similar suicides a member of Diem's government response was: *"Let them burn, and ....*

*we shall clap our hands."*

The USA feared that Diem was becoming too dangerous, arrogant and increasingly ....

... unpopular. In 1963, Diem was overthrown by a US backed army coup. After his arrest, despite promises to allow Diem to leave Vietnam he was...

...killed (see image) in November, 1963.

Even though the USA had been sending aid and military advisors to Vietnam, the real start of the war began with the **Gulf Of Tonkin Incident** when...



..... a US warship was allegedly attacked by a North Vietnamese torpedo boat. This attack gave the US Congress and President Lyndon Johnson the excuse to attack ...

.....North Vietnam without a declaration of war. On March 2, 1965, US aircraft began bombing targets in North Vietnam and soon after the first troops arrived. They were ....

..Commanded by General William Westmoreland, US troops won early victories over Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces. The numbers of US soldiers increased and the unpopular draft introduced. The draft was ....

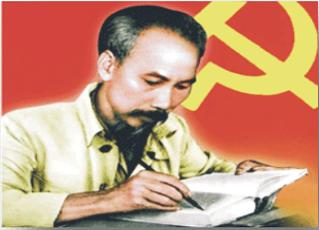
..a kind of lottery in which US men of fighting age were randomly selected to join the army. In reality it was often the poorer (many black) men who were sent fight against 'communism' on the other side of the world.

Give four factors that led to US got involvement in Vietnam.

1: \_\_\_\_\_  
 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
 3: \_\_\_\_\_  
 4: \_\_\_\_\_ **END.**

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# Summary: Why Did The USA Get Involved In Vietnam?

 : to create an effective revision method that explains why the USA got involved in Vietnam.

Point :
Example 1 :
Explain :
Example 2:
Explain :

Point : Vietnamese Pressure
Example 1 :
Explain :
Example 2:
Explain :



Point :
Example 1 : Cancelled elections.
Explain :
Example 2:
Explain :

Point :
Example :
Explain :
Explain :



# Tunnel Defence : being the Viet Cong.

**Mission :** to design, build and defend a tunnel system.

You are going to take on the role of a Viet Cong ( NLF ) soldier/s. Your tunnels have been a very good weapon against the superior firepower of the Americans. However, as the war has progressed the Americans have become more skilled at finding and destroying your tunnel systems. They have new specialised soldiers who they call Tunnel Rats who they send down into your tunnels to kill you and destroy your tunnels. Your mission is to design, build and then defend a tunnel entrance / system and protect your injured soldier in the infirmary..

- Create your tunnel system : show this by cutting up white paper and sticking onto the A3 diagram.
- Choose 15 items from the list of 20 below.
- Think of ways to use these items that will help you live, hide, survive and fight in the tunnels.
- Draw out traps / mine items onto small pieces of paper and place onto your tunnel system.
- Place yourself and other soldiers onto the diagram.

**This and many more resources available with full teaching pack. Free for subscribers.**

	Viet Cong Soldier x 1. Place into tunnel system.		Viet Cong Soldier x 1. National Liberation Front member.
	Viet Cong Soldier x 1. National Liberation Front member.		Russian Tokarev 7.62 x 2. Pistol.
	Thin Metal Wire. 10 metres.		Bamboo Sticks x 8. Each is 50 cm in length.
	Knife x 1 Handmade.		Cobra Snake x 1. Aggressive, poisonous snake..
	Shovels x 3		Empty Tin Cans x 4
	Square Pieces of wood x 4 Flat : 60 cm x 60 cm		Small Wooden Box x 4 30 cm x 30 cm.
	Metal Bucket x 1.		Rope. 3 metres in length.
	Unexploded American Bomb x 1. Very large and very heavy.		Long Metal Pipe x 1. 4 metres long.
	Metal Spikes x 5. 20 cm in length.		AK 47 x 1 Machine Gun.
	Grenade x 1.		A large coconut x 1.



**Private Vasquez**  
 20  
 Hispanic  
 Height- 160 cm  
 Weight 140 Lbs  
 Single,  
 Poor service record



**Private Johnson**  
 23  
 African American  
 Height- 180 cm  
 Weight 200 Lbs  
 Married.  
 Good service record.

Choose Your Tunnel Rat.



Johnson



Vasquez

**This and many more resources available with full teaching pack. Free for subscribers.**

Kitchen.

Infirmary



# The TET Offensive, Jan, 1968.

'65 -'68



After 3 years of fighting US / ARVN forces were locked in a 'cat and mouse' stalemate with NVA / VC guerrillas.



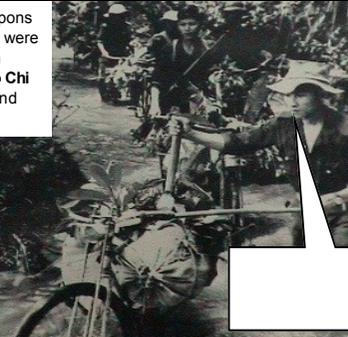
He hoped to create an uprising from the southern Vietnamese masses.

1967

NVA General Giap believed it was time to launch a surprise, large attack on the south.

Troops, weapons and supplies were moved south along the Ho Chi Minh Trail and tunnels.

1967



Jan 1968

The attack was planned during the TET lunar New Year holiday. A ceasefire had been agreed and Giap knew the Americans would not expect an attack at this time.

21st, Jan 1968



The North Vietnamese launched a diversionary attack on the American air base at Khe Sanh. This drew some American soldiers out of major cities and towns.

The real offensive began with NVA and VC attacking Saigon and over one hundred other cities and towns in the south.



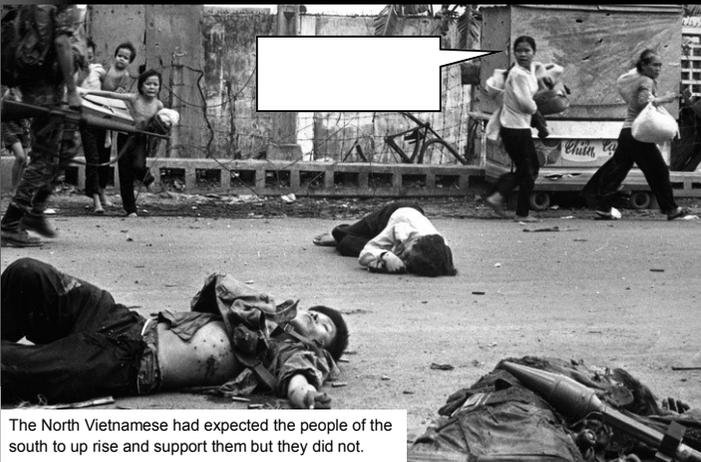
30th Jan 1968

In some towns and cities the attacks failed after only a few hours. In others eg Saigon the fighting lasted for months.



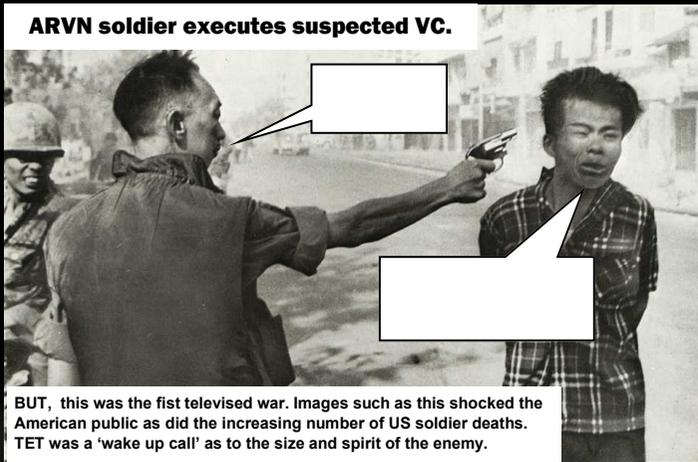
In military terms the TET offensive was a failure. They did not take control in the south and lost 45,000 NVA and VC soldiers.

This and many more resources available with full teaching pack. Free for subscribers.



The North Vietnamese had expected the people of the south to up rise and support them but they did not.

ARVN soldier executes suspected VC.



BUT, this was the first televised war. Images such as this shocked the American public as did the increasing number of US soldier deaths. TET was a 'wake up call' as to the size and spirit of the enemy.



The TET attack shocked the US public, military and politicians. President Lyndon B Johnson announced that he would scale down involvement and he would not stand again for election.

# Investigate : Why did the USA 'lose' the Vietnam war?

**Discover** : four reasons why the USA lost the war. **Explore** : the strength of these reasons. **Skills** : source analysis and evaluation.

A father shows his dead child to ARVN ( southern Vietnamese) soldiers.

How do you think the child died?

Why do you think the father did this?



## What factors led to the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam?

In 1973, during peace talks in Paris, it was agreed that the USA would begin the process of removing its combat troops from Vietnamese soil. At the time the U.S. president Richard Nixon described this as an “honorable withdrawal”. In reality this was a humiliating defeat for the USA. How had this happened ?

**1 : Vietnamese Military Strengths.**

**2 : American Military Weaknesses.**

**3 : The Battle For Hearts and Minds.**

**4 : Public Opinion In The United States.**

25 May, 1968.

Dear Roberta,

Today is probably the worst day I have ever lived in my entire, short life. Once again we were in contact with Charlie, and once again we suffered losses. The losses we had today hit home, as my best friend in this shit hole was killed. He was only 22 years old and was going on R&R on the first of June to meet his wife in Hawaii. I feel that if I was only a half second sooner in pulling the trigger, he would still be alive. If there is a place called Hell this surely must be it, and we must be the Devil's disciples doing all his dirty work.

Love,

Stan.

**A**



*"We could here them coming. The big Americans cannot move quietly.' Sometimes we could smell them before we heard them. They dropped thousands of tons of bombs on us, be we weren't even scratched. It was more difficult for them to suffer the hardships of the battle front. We could suffer the hardships much better than they could."*

Accounts of a VC guerrilla.

C

*" The first time I killed an American I felt more enthusiasm and hatred. I thought, I would like to kill more Americans to make my country peaceful again. Many of my people were killed by bombs. 10 people in my own village were killed by a napalm bomb. We pulled the bodies out and they only had burned and crooked limbs. These things fuelled my hatred. I did not think of my own hardship. The Americans considered the Vietnamese animals. They wanted to destroy us all and everything we had. "* **Vi Thi Mo. (Female VC).**

D

1969. A woman grieves her dead husband. She identified him only by his teeth.

E



A U.S. medic tries to save a dying comrade at 'Hamburger Hill', 1969.

F

*'The tour in Vietnam was one year. Soldiers were most likely to die in the first month. The large majority of deaths took place in the first six months. Just as a soldier began gaining experience he was sent home. A rookie army that constantly rotated inexperienced men was pitted against experienced guerrillas on their home ground.'*

From *Four hours in My Lai*, Michael Bilton , 1991.

G

**What was found and learned in Vietnam, by John Kerry, Major Veterans association, in a speech to US Congress, 1971.**

*"... We found most people (southern Vietnamese) didn't know the difference between communism and democracy. They only wanted to work in rice paddies without helicopters strafing them and bombs with napalm burning their villages and tearing their country apart. They wanted everything to do with the war, particularly with this foreign presence of the United States of America, to leave them alone on peace. They practised the art of survival by siding with whichever military force was present at a particular time, be it Vietcong, North Vietnamese, or American. We found also that American men were dying in those rice paddies for want of support from their allies. We saw first hand how money from American taxes was used for a corrupt dictatorial regime. We saw that many people in this country had a one-sided idea of who was kept free by our flag, as blacks provided the highest percentage of casualties. We saw Vietnam ravaged equally by American bombs as well as by search and destroy missions, as well as by Vietcong terrorism, and yet we listened while this country (the USA) tried to blame all of the havoc on the Viet Cong. We rationalized destroying villages in order to save them. We saw America lose her sense of morality and refused to give up the image of American soldiers who hand out chocolate bars."*

H

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=LDAd8i7dAWs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LDAd8i7dAWs)





*"You can kill ten men for every one I kill of yours. But even at these odds I will still win and you will lose."*

**Ho Chi Minh, 1954.**

**J**

'The problem with the American strategy was that, although the suffering of the enemy was great it was not enough to make them concede (give up). Throughout the war the capacity of the Vietnamese to absorb pain outstripped that of the Americans to inflict it. For the Americans, that war was a 'limited one' far from home. For the Vietnamese it was total: they were fighting to defend their homeland.'

**A modern Historian's view.**

**K**

*"I had heard of the dedication of the enemy before but to actually see it on the battle field was a mind blower. It was the moment where I solidified my opposition to which the old men in government had put us in. We had no prayer of doing anything positive in this country because the enemy is everyone -everyone either hated us or just be left alone to grow their rice. We should just fold up our money and go home.*

**Marshall Darling, 1968.**

**L**



**M**

*I needed a job so I could live unnoticed in the South. I decided to open a noodle shop. Most of my customers were US diplomats and military. I'd be smiling and serving soup to the Americans while the high command upstairs were planning their victory over the United States.'*

**Viet Cong Spy, Toai, speaking in 1991.**

**N**

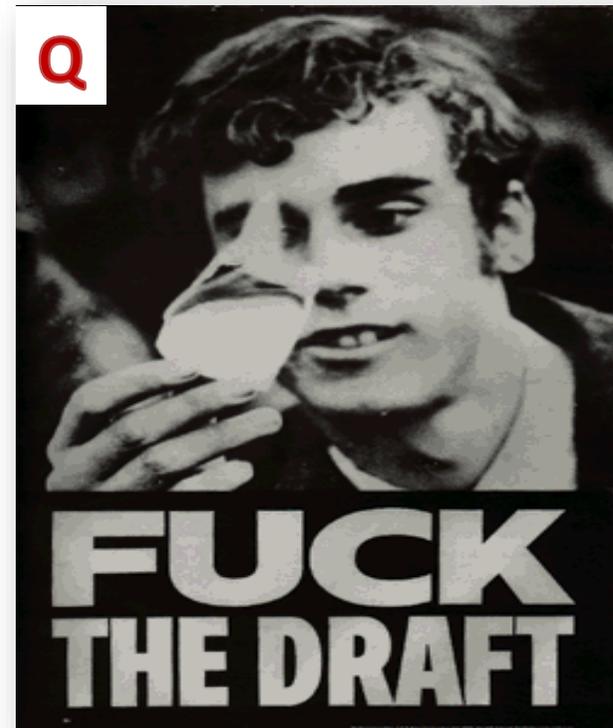


**O**

... over 150 very highly decorated veterans testified to war crimes committed in Southeast Asia, crimes committed on a day-to-day basis with the full awareness of officers at all levels of command....They told the stories at times they had personally raped, cut off ears, cut off heads, taped wires from portable telephones to human genitals and turned up the power, cut off limbs, blown up bodies, randomly shot at civilians, razed villages in fashion reminiscent of Genghis Khan, shot cattle and dogs for fun, poisoned food stocks.....In our opinion, and from our experience, there is nothing in South Vietnam, that realistically threatens the United States of America. And to attempt to justify the loss of one American life in Vietnam by linking such loss to the preservation of freedom, it is that kind of hypocrisy which we feel has torn this country apart.

**John Kerry : Vietnam Veteran, 1973.**

**P**



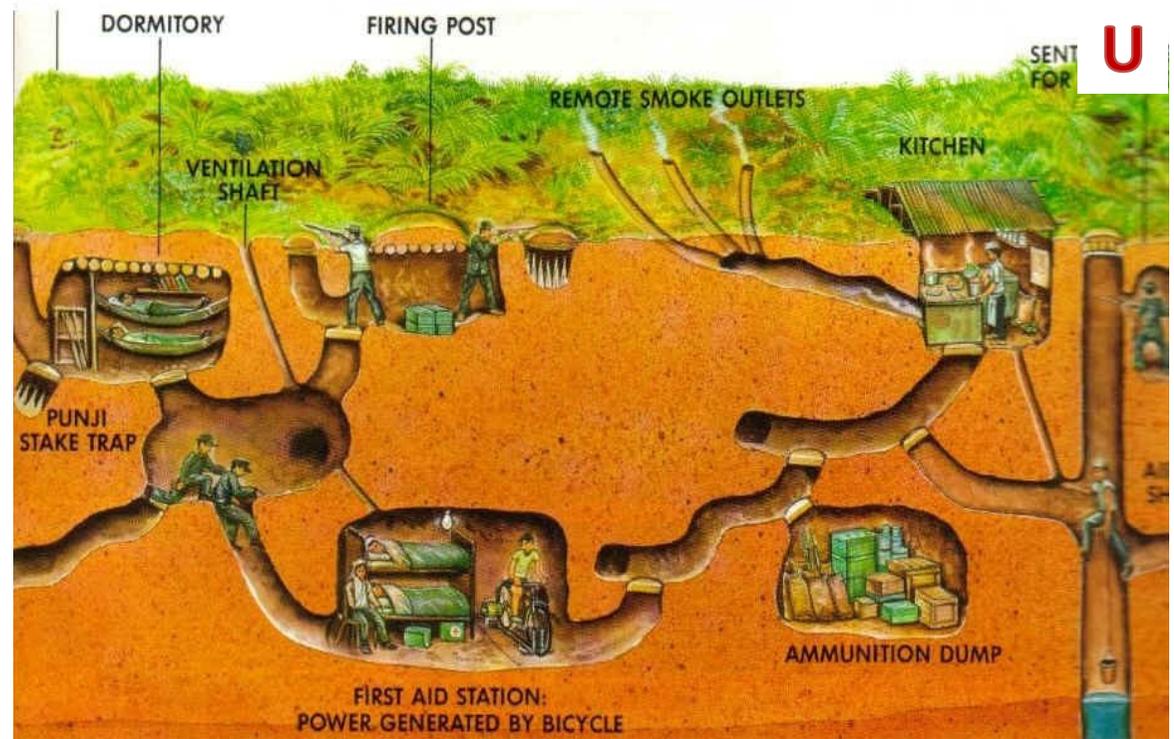
**Q**

After a peace treaty was signed in January 1973, South Vietnam made major advances. Hanoi returned POWs and for a time almost everything the U.S. had fought for was achieved. But in March 1973, Congressional leaders in the USA told Nixon that they would not support further U.S. military involvement even if the communist side resumed its aggression. Nixon concluded that Vietnam was a lost cause, although the military situation was otherwise favourable. [www.wiki.answers.com/](http://www.wiki.answers.com/)

R

S 'You just work and work and work, and blow up and blast but the tunnels are still there. They are so vast and deep and there are so many of them, destroying them was like trying to fertilise a forty acre field with a fart'. Brigadier General, Ellis Williamson.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=uKORCSk2hvw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uKORCSk2hvw)



V

U.S. planes spray Agent Orange onto the jungle.



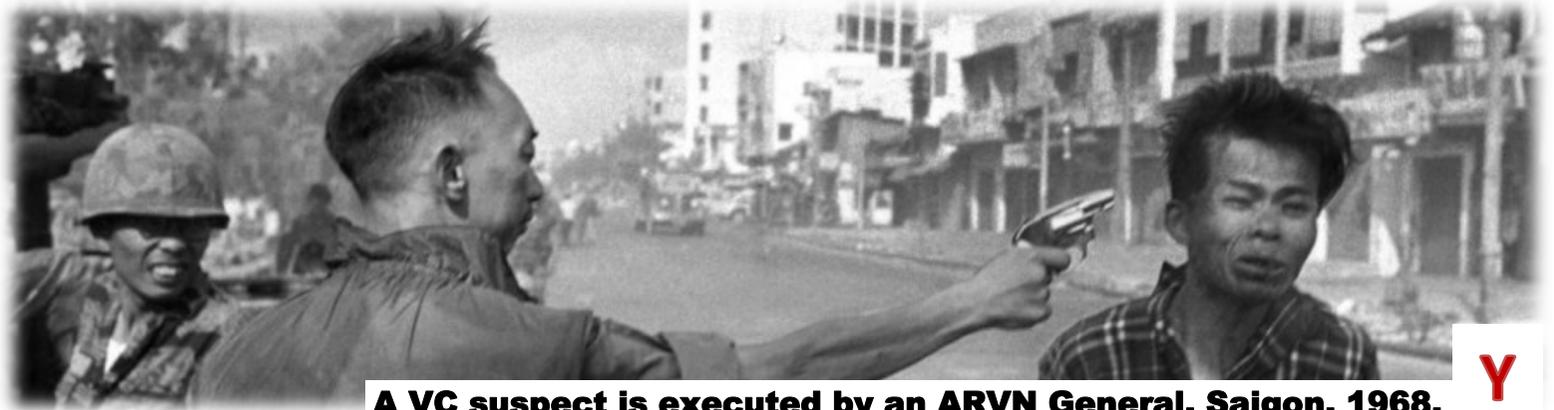
( Perform a web search for Agent Orange )

W

*'I didn't make it all the way through my second tour because I was wounded. When I got back home to California, I was treated like someone who had the plague. I was spit on, yelled at, threatened and looked upon as a mass murderer. I wouldn't do it again..'*

**Gerald Cooper, Ex U.S. Marine, 1986.**

**X**



**A VC suspect is executed by an ARVN General, Saigon, 1968.**

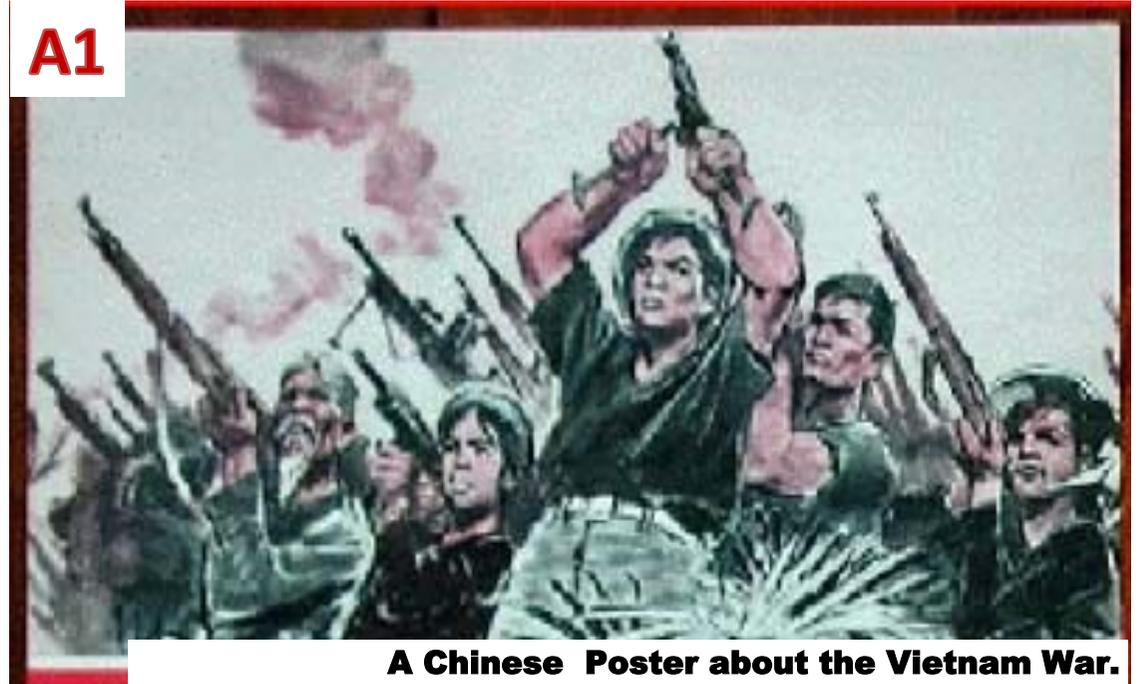
**Y**



**NVA troops enter Saigon in Soviet Tanks, 1975.**

**Z**

**A1**



**A Chinese Poster about the Vietnam War.**

*'There were unexploded shells everywhere and we made workshop chambers in the tunnels. We took them apart and made them into weapons of which the Americans were very afraid. We made booby traps and mines with them that could injure up to seven Americans at one time. Every village had specially trained villagers one trained to remove the explosives, another would prepare a new weapon and another worked on the detonators to set them off.'*

**Captain Linn, Viet Cong.**

**A2**

*'In military terms the Viet Cong's TET operations were a failure, but that was not important. TET was the moment that American casualties overtook those suffered in the Korean War. The TET offensive was the moment of painful truth for America that this was a war they couldn't win. Public and political opinion never recovered from seeing such American losses. Within two months U.S. President Andrew Johnson announced he would not stand in the next election. Ironically, TET was an event from which the Viet Cong would never recover also. Their hardships were so severe that by 1970 and Viet Cong Captain Linh admitted'.. "Our morale had collapsed and there were many deserters from the Viet Cong".*

**Extract : The Tunnels of Cuchi.**

**A3**

# Why Did The USA Lose The Vietnam War?

Source	Who?	Date Pri : Sec : Ter	1 : Vietnamese Military Strengths.	2 : American Military Weaknesses.	3 : The Battle For Hearts and Minds.	3 : Public Opinion In The United States.
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			<input data-bbox="909 1058 987 1114" type="checkbox"/>	<input data-bbox="1312 1058 1391 1114" type="checkbox"/>	<input data-bbox="1715 1058 1794 1114" type="checkbox"/>	<input data-bbox="2119 1058 2197 1114" type="checkbox"/>
			<input data-bbox="909 1273 987 1329" type="checkbox"/>	<input data-bbox="1312 1273 1391 1329" type="checkbox"/>	<input data-bbox="1715 1273 1794 1329" type="checkbox"/>	<input data-bbox="2119 1273 2197 1329" type="checkbox"/>
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# Why Did The USA Lose The Vietnam War?

Source	Who?	Date Pri : Sec : Ter	1 : Vietnamese Military Strengths.	2 : American Military Weaknesses.	3 : The Battle For Hearts and Minds.	3 : Public Opinion In The United States.
			<input data-bbox="909 411 987 467" type="checkbox"/>	<input data-bbox="1312 411 1391 467" type="checkbox"/>	<input data-bbox="1715 411 1794 467" type="checkbox"/>	<input data-bbox="2119 411 2197 467" type="checkbox"/>
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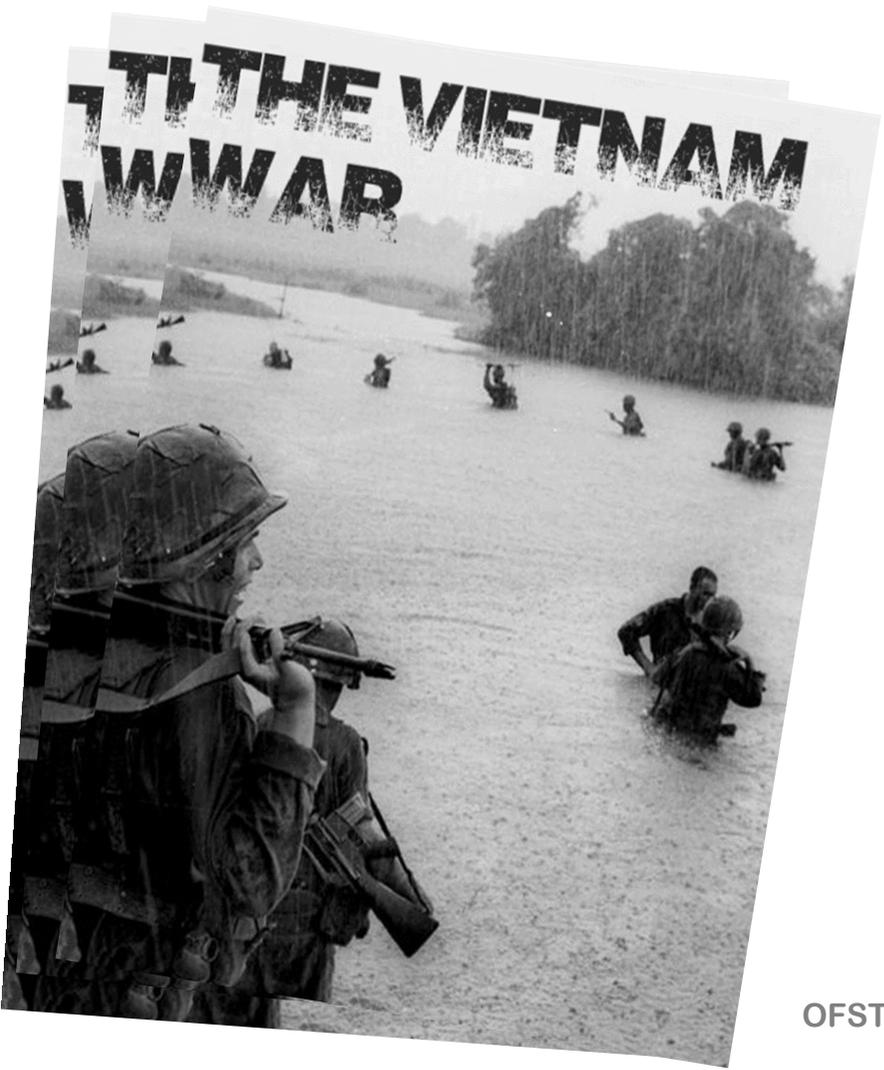
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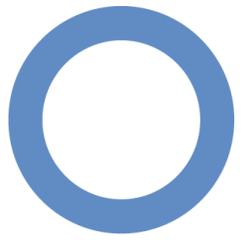
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