



NORTH VIETNAM

COMMUNIST CHINA

Điện Biên Phu

HANOI

Nam Định

Ninh Bình

Haiphong

LUANG PRABANG

VIENTIANE

*Gulf of Tonkin*

HAINAN

THAILAND

LAOS

Dong Hoi

17th PARALLEL  
*Demarcation Line*

Quang Trí

Huế

Da Nang

BANGKOK

CAMBODIA

PHNOM PENH

Pleiku

Qui Nhon

Nha Trang

Ban Me Thuot

Da Lat

Tay Ninh

Bien Hoa

Phan Rang

SAIGON

Can Tho

Vung Tau (Cap St. Jacques)

Khanh Hung

*Gulf of Siam*

*South China Sea*



# What Is A Soldier



He is an infantryman or MP  
on patrol...

-an engineer constructing an artillery  
firing site..



a helicopter crew member...





# ier In USARV?



or he humps supplies from depot to the field...



asks you, "Are you working?"...



keeps his tank rolling...



or patches you up  
to keep you rolling.



1954-1961

# Years of Trial — Year

The result of the Geneva Accords of 1954 was the creation of a North and South Vietnam. Although the United States was not an active participant in bringing about the end of the Indochina War, our government worked quietly behind the scenes.

At the same time groundwork for the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) was being laid. In September the treaty was signed in Manila. South Vietnam was included in the treaty as a "protocol state" with the signatories accepting the obligation, if asked by the government of South Vietnam, to take action in response to armed attack against South Vietnam and to consult on appropriate measures if South Vietnam were subjected to subversive activities.

President Eisenhower instituted economic aid for the new country in late 1954 and thus began active American interest in South Vietnam.

To understand the events following we must look at the



*Ho Chi Minh*

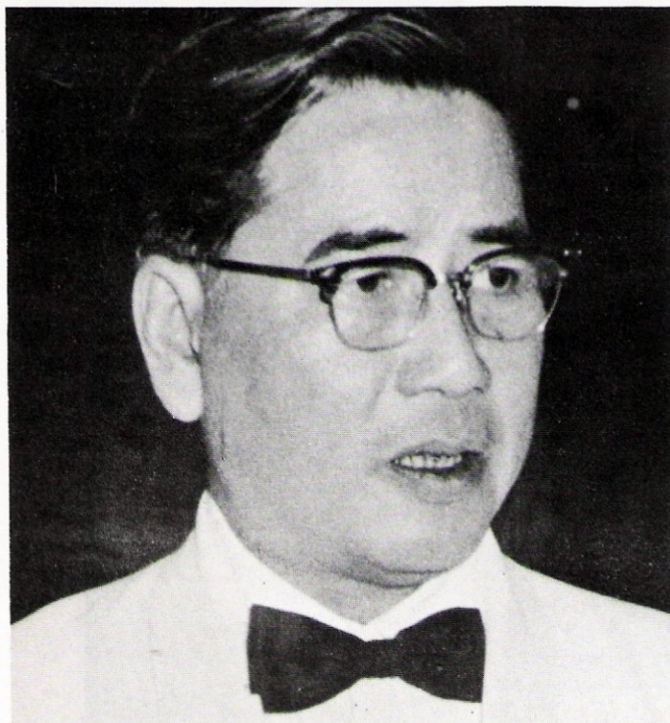
development of North Vietnam; the rise of the Viet Cong and their assistance from the North; and the increased economic and military aid to the South furnished by the United States.

Ho Chi Minh began an immediate consolidation of forces. Many Communists moved north of the 17th parallel—an estimated 90,000—while thousands of selected party members were ordered to remain behind. They were told to hide their weapons and wait for the call.

Hanoi presumed the South would fall by subversion and force would not be necessary. When the South became more and more prosperous, in spite of Communist penetration of South Vietnamese government agencies and attempts at agitation and propaganda, it came as a shock to the Communists.

Agitators and agents were being exposed by the people, causing morale to drop in the Communist ranks and many defections to occur. Compounding the problems of the North, per capita food output dropped by 10 percent, as the South's improved by 20 percent. Authorities in the North openly admitted that food production goals were not being reached.

Despite North Vietnam's vastly larger industrial complex,



*President Ngo Dinh Diem*



# s of Decision



the South's per capita gross national product was more than 50 percent higher—\$110 per person versus \$70 per person (1960 estimate). The North's failures coupled with the South's successes caused a major revision in overall strategy. Military forces would have to be employed to take over the South!

## TERRORISM BEGINS

By 1958 the plan became obvious. Terrorist activity increased appreciably. The wealthy peasant, school teachers and administrative officials were favorite targets of attack. In 1959 the pace of terrorism accelerated, and recruiting for the Viet Cong was stepped up.

Communist propaganda tried to exploit the confusion by stating the South's government was falling apart and was unable to protect its people. The entire campaign was being directed from the North.

The National Liberation Front appeared on December 20, 1960, announcing its foundation and program. It called for the overthrow of the "disguised colonial regime of the United States imperialists and the dictatorial Diem administration?"

Communist propaganda tried to establish that the acts of terror were from popular discontent with Ngo Dinh Diem and his palace regime. It insisted the Viet Cong obtained their weapons by capturing them from American and French sources.

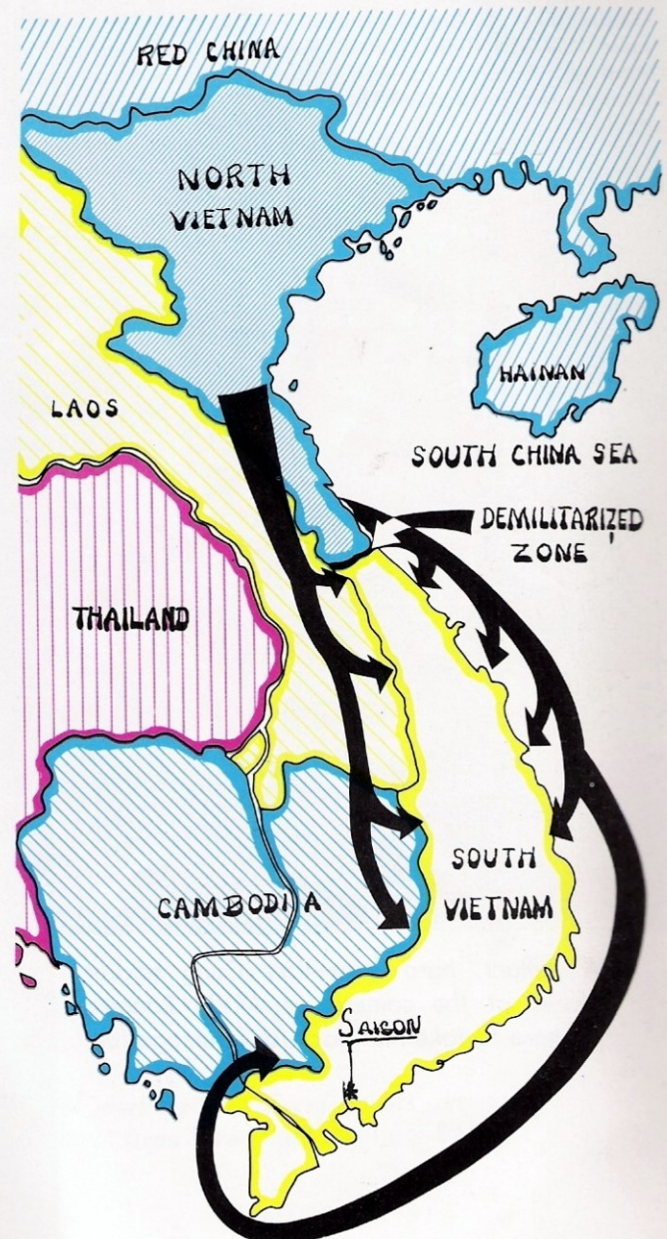
Elaborate precautions were taken to prevent discovery of North Vietnam's support of the southern Communist organization. Reliable sources estimate 40,000 trained military personnel infiltrated from North to South Vietnam through Laos in the five-year period from 1959 through 1964.

## HO CHI MINH TRAIL

When an infiltrator arrives at the Laotian border, his North Vietnamese Army uniform is exchanged for a Lao "neutralist" uniform. He must give up all personal effects of an incriminating nature. A local guide takes him halfway to the first of a series of way stations along the infamous Ho Chi Minh Trail. There he is met by the next guide until the process has led the infiltrator onto South Vietnamese soil.

In South Vietnam he receives a black pajama-like uniform, two unmarked uniforms, rubber sandals, a sweater, a hammock, mosquito netting and waterproof sheeting. After being issued a three-to five-day supply of food and medicines, he is assigned to a unit for operations.

The other infiltration route was by sea. Agents departed from ports just north of the 17th parallel with false identity papers on innocent-looking fishing vessels. However, this route has become virtually closed with improved patrolling





by the South Vietnamese with U.S. Navy assistance.

The Geneva Accords called for a general election in 1955 to unite the two parts of Vietnam. In that year the South Vietnamese Government under Diem rejected the possibility of a free election. The North protested loudly, but without sincerity. After the Geneva Accords, a high North Vietnamese official, Pham Van Dong, was asked who he thought would win such an election. He replied, "You know as well as I do that there won't be any elections."

## CLASSIC STRUGGLE

Hanoi was determined to conquer the South with classic guerrilla tactics. The plan called for the three-phased warfare outlined in Mao Tse-tung's early writings. One, the enemy is harassed and weakened by guerrilla-type attacks. Two, he is engaged in mobile warfare by units up to battalion size. And finally, in all-out warfare by regular forces, the ultimate victory is won.

Phase one of the battle occurred from 1954 to roughly 1960. During this period the United States had first assisted the Vietnamese government with economic aid and then added military advisors to assist the country's military and police forces.

Other countries of Europe and Asia and the Americans had economically helped the fledgling South. U.S. aid totalled about \$1.5 billion between 1954 and 1961.

In 1960 the guerrilla warfare intensified and by 1961 had reached the point of open warfare. By now the Viet Cong was reinforced by practically the entire 325th North Vietnamese Regular Army Division. Communist arms and equipment had standardized the supply system of the Viet Cong.

The American advisory forces had grown to approximately 700 men by 1961. It was apparent more assistance was needed to meet the expanded Communist military threat.

In that year President Kennedy made the decision to increase America's commitment to South Vietnam by increasing the number of advisors and by adding pilots and supporting personnel. The President felt he could not abandon South Vietnam without undesirable consequences throughout Asia and the world.

The decision had been made. South Vietnam would not be abandoned. The United States would assist in stopping the spread of aggression in Southeast Asia. In the next three years more decisions would be made. Decisions that would prove America, indeed, was not allowing a "red wave" to sweep over Asia.

*A defiant, hard core Viet Cong soldier glares at the camera as ARVN Rangers prepare to take him back for interrogation.*

