

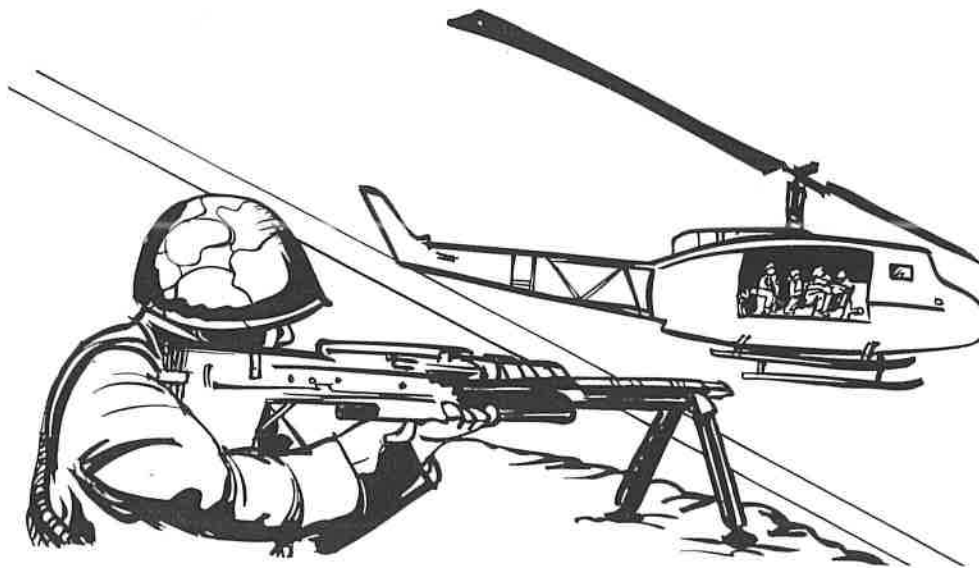
# Outline of the War in Vietnam

Below is an outline of the major events that occurred during the Vietnam War.

America was concerned about Vietnam in the early fifties. In October 1954 President Eisenhower sent word to the South Vietnamese offering economic assistance. He was afraid that if South Vietnam fell to the Communists, so would the rest of the democratic nations in that area.

Due to the success of the Viet Cong forces, America sent a small force of military advisers to South Vietnam in February 1955. This group was only to advise officers and senior enlisted men of the South Vietnamese forces. They were not to go into combat.

1. In 1957 the Viet Cong began fighting against the forces of the South Vietnamese government.
2. In 1961 U.S. Army personnel were sent to Saigon to operate two helicopter units. By 1962 there were more than 10,000 troops in South Vietnam.
3. On November 1, 1963, South Vietnamese generals overthrew the government and President Ngo Dinh Diem was killed.
4. On August 2, 1964, a U.S. destroyer in the Gulf of Tonkin was attacked by North Vietnam. Congress passed a resolution that allowed the President to use U.S. troops at his discretion. President Johnson ordered the bombing of military targets in North Vietnam.
5. President Johnson sent combat Marines to Da Nang, South Vietnam, in 1965. By the end of that year, there were over 200,000 U.S. combat troops in South Vietnam.
6. In January 1968 the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong began the Tet offensive and attacked major South Vietnamese cities.
7. In 1969 President Nixon announced that U.S. forces would begin withdrawing from Vietnam. By September 55,000 U.S. troops had left.
8. In January 1973 the United States, South Vietnam, North Vietnam, and the Viet Cong signed a cease-fire agreement. In March the last U.S. troops left Vietnam.
9. In April 1975 South Vietnam surrendered to North Vietnam and the Viet Cong.



---

# Protest Against the War

---

In 1966 anti-war reaction was spreading across the country with shouts of "Hell no! We won't go!" That year the draft was increased tenfold in order to fill the quotas. Student deferments were stopped, and young college men were reclassified. There were protests on many college campuses.

Resistance to the draft gained momentum. Ballads, buttons, and bumper stickers supported the protesters. Many young American men emigrated to Canada to escape the draft, and many of them stayed a long time. By 1968 over ten thousand draft-eligible Americans were living in Canada.

That same year opposition to the Vietnam War peaked. There were strikes and sit-ins. Over two hundred separate demonstrations took place. Young men burned their draft cards, and induction centers were picketed. Some older people joined the young protesters. Martin Luther King Jr., in April of 1967, was joined by forty-six professors at Harvard to announce an antiwar campaign. In January 1968, a Yale chaplain was arrested for counseling young men on how to avoid the draft.

The battle over the war in Vietnam raged on. At the Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1968, the Democrats attempted to disown a war many of them had supported. During this convention there were bloody street fights between young protesters and the police. Pictures of police beating the antiwar demonstrators were seen on television sets across America. Mayor Daley of Chicago defended his police force saying, "Gentlemen, get the thing straight once and for all. The policeman isn't there to create disorder; the policeman is there to preserve order."

Disorder had already been created. America saw the beatings, and the Democratic candidate Hubert Humphrey lost the race to the Republican Richard Nixon by less than 1 percent of the votes cast. Nixon understood why he had been elected. America wanted out of an unpopular war. On June 8, 1969, he withdrew 25,000 troops. Within a year he stated he would remove 235,000 more soldiers as quickly as possible.

---

## Discussion Questions

---

1. Did you oppose or support American involvement in South Vietnam?
2. Why was the war so unpopular?
3. Who was right—the protesters or those who fought and died for their country?
4. Are you a hawk or a dove?
5. Is war necessary? When is war necessary?

