



Future Generations
CalsMUN 2022

Research Report

Forum: Historical Security Council

Issue: The Vietnam War
(1st November 1955 - 30th April 1975)

Chairs: Sal van der Schaar & Kevin van Bergen



Personal Introduction

Chair

Sal van der Schaar

Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is Sal van der Schaar and, together with Kevin, I'll be your chair for the HSC at the upcoming CALSMUN conference. About me, I am an 18 year old and a first-year university student at Leiden University, studying Political Science and International Relations & Organisations specifically. My experience has consisted of me participating in over a dozen MUNs over the past years, among which I have chaired quite a few as well.



In my personal time, I like to watch movies and series (basically the entire Netflix catalogue) and I also play hockey and tennis. I hope we will have a good time at the conference together!



Co-Chair

Kevin van Bergen

Hello delegates, my name is Kevin van Bergen, I'll be the co-chair for this year's Historical Security Committee. I am, just like Sal, a university student, but I attend Tilburg University where I study International Business Administration. I am 19 and a second year student, but I am here since I still love helping out my old friends and local MUN, because of my history as a Cals College graduate. My MUN experience has been attending 5 MUN's as a delegate and having helped out as a chair in last year's MUNDAY at Cals.

What can you expect of me during the conference? I am personally not the type to be all that strict on the formal procedures. My goal will be to help as many of you formulate additions to our resolutions, and to help with a vast knowledge of our two incredibly interesting committee issues. Let's create a committee where everybody feels free to speak and where everybody can add their ideas.

Then some fun information about me, because I think that MUN's are an incredible place to get to meet new people and talk about so much more than just the issues. I am a giant movie and TV enjoyer, with a huge heart for Avatar(Atla), Marvel and Anime. My hobbies can be seen by me joining the Tilburg volleyball and internationals student association. Fully adjusting to university life with almost daily workouts and evenings of going out. For uni life, I still chose to immediately move to Tilburg, despite the chance of nothing physical happening for the whole year, but I haven't regretted it for a moment since. It led to such an incredible growth that I am now already the chairman of the volleyball association Gepidae in my second year. All in all, I would say that me and Sal are a great opportunity to all of you for any questions about university and we're open to any.



Introduction

For the purposes of this conference, which is to resolve this conflict, the date at which we find ourselves is March 8th, 1968, at the peak of the Second Indochina War, also known as the Vietnam War in the West and the American War in Vietnam. We will try to prevent any at all possible anachronisms, staying true to the information available at the agreed upon date and attempting to resolve the issue from that point onwards.

The Second Indochina War, as it will be called from now on to maintain neutrality considering the different colloquial names for it in different parts of the world, is a war that needs to be put into multiple contexts. Firstly, it arose out of the First Indochina War, between the French Empire and the nationalist independence movement, the Viet Minh. The Geneva Conference, which followed at the conclusion of the war, which led to Vietnam being separated into two zones, in which the Viet Minh would govern the north, and the State of Vietnam, led by the former emperor, would lead the south. Although these zones were meant to be provisional, they became separate countries when the emperor failed to declare elections to unify Vietnam. These countries would be known as North Vietnam and South Vietnam, the main actors in the Second Indochina War.

Secondly, the war ought to also be viewed in the broader context of the Cold War. When France left former Indochina, the United States took over the supportive role to the government of South Vietnam. After the US became involved in the conflict and stationed troops in Vietnam, cold war adversaries, the Soviet Union and China, began supporting the government in the north. The reason the US got involved is an alleged attack on an American destroyer by Northern Vietnamese boats. As of today, the US has approximately 500,000 troops stationed in Vietnam.



Definition of Key Terms

Guerilla warfare

Type of military strategy fought by the Viet Cong, characterized by “fast-moving, small-scale actions against orthodox military and police forces”.

Ho Chi Minh trail

A military supply route used by Communists in the north to materially support the Communist insurgents in the south, through Laos and later Cambodia.

Proxy war

A war where there is long-term interaction between external actors and the actors directly involved in the war. The Second Indochina War is often named as a leading example of a proxy war.



General Overview

The first era of the war, which lasted from 1955 to 1959, was marked by the support of the US to South Vietnam, and country-building according to Communist ideals in North Vietnam. Furthermore, Communist rebels, which would later become the Viet Cong, commenced resistance to the government in the south, primarily through guerilla warfare and construction began on the Ho Chi Minh trail, which would become a key route for supply and communications for Communists between the north and south.

In the early '60s, the Viet Cong, officially the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, was formed. This rebel group acted with the material support of the Northern Vietnamese government. The US continued delivering military advice to the government of Ngô Đình Diệm. After Diệm remained consistently on the losing end on the battlefield, he was overthrown and assassinated in a military coup supported by the United States. After the assassination of American president John F. Kennedy and the assumption of Lyndon B. Johnson to the office of the president and the alleged Gulf of Tonkin incident, the US started deploying their first combat troops to Vietnam, whose presence would gradually increase throughout the rest of the sixties to approximately 500,000 now. The presence of the Americans in Vietnam triggered the start of the most confrontational part of the war, in which it would cement itself as a Cold War proxy-war, with the main Cold War adversaries facing off through their support for the two sides in the Vietnamese conflict. With casualties mounting up to over 150,000, this conflict is starting to be one of the deadliest in the series of Cold War conflicts.

The beginning of this year, 1968, saw Northern Vietnam break a truce with an attack on an American base. This attack reignited the war, as it was believed to have calmed down following the end of 1967. Consequently, the launch of the Tet offensive by North Vietnam, targeting places of great importance, such as provincial capitals, military bases, district towns and Saigon, the national capital in South Vietnam, further escalated the war once more. This offensive has just concluded with the defeat of the Communists in Saigon. It was launched as a surprise attack during the Vietnamese festival Tet. Many large cities, such as Saigon and Huế, alongside the American military base in Khe Sanh, were targeted by Communist forces from the north and south. This offensive could become a turning point in the war, considering



the deteriorating public opinion on the war in the United States, as American casualties have sharply risen during this offensive and the belief that the Communists were not able to launch an attack this large quickly waned.



Major Parties Involved

National Parties

People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN)

The PAVN is the official military force of North Vietnam. Being born out of the Viet Minh from the First Indochina War, the PAVN was the main belligerent against the South Vietnamese army, alongside the Viet Cong. The strength of the PAVN alongside the Viet Cong is estimated at 67,000.

Viet Cong

The Viet Cong is the main resistance against South Vietnam in the south and the main source of insurgency against the government. They employ guerilla warfare as their main battle strategy.

Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN, south Vietnam)

The ARVN comprises the main forces of the Republic of Vietnam, or South Vietnam. With the help of mainly the US, alongside other SEATO and anti-communist allies, they fight against the insurgency of the Communist rebels and forces. Their strength is estimated at around 600,000.

Supporting forces

China

China began supporting the Communists in North Vietnam already during the First Indochina War. Currently, China supports North Vietnam with military assistance and the supply of goods. After the American escalation, China also began sending forces from their People's Liberation Army to Vietnam. Their strength is estimated at around 320,000.

Soviet Union

The Soviet Union supplies North Vietnam with multiple goods, such as medical supplies, arms and various forms of military equipment. It is unknown whether Soviet troops are stationed in Vietnam.



Other Communist forces

Other Communist forces, such as Czechoslovakia, North Korea, Cuba, the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), Romania and Bulgaria supported the northern Vietnamese government with military and diplomatic aid.

Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO)

South Vietnam made use of this organisation, composed of the US, Australia, New Zealand, France, the UK, Pakistan, Thailand and the Philippines, during the war. All countries, except France, the UK and Pakistan, accepted to help South Vietnam during the war. Their collective strength is estimated around 510,000, although the vast majority of this comes out of the US. This organisation also provided for advisors and other medical and military supplies.

South Korea and Taiwan

These countries were non-SEATO supporters of South Vietnam. Taiwan's contribution consisted of training military personnel. South Korea's effort was more thorough, as they sent the largest foreign contingent of troops, outside the United States. Their strength is estimated at around 50,000.



Timeline of Key Events

Date	Description of Event
<i>02-09-1945</i>	Viet Minh declaration of independence (Led to revolutionary war)
<i>September 1950</i>	Start of MAAG program
<i>07-05-1954</i>	End of Battle of Dien Bien Phu
<i>1959</i>	Start construction and use of Ho Chi Minh trail
<i>20-12-1960</i>	Foundation Viet Cong
<i>02-08-1964</i>	Gulf of Tonkin incident
<i>30-01-1968 – Ongoing</i>	Tet Offensive



Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Firstly, the 1954 Geneva Conference occurred at the conclusion of the First Indochina War in an attempt to reunite Vietnam through elections that would be held after the conference. However, Diệm did not agree or signed the accords of the conference and did not hold elections. This is one of the main precursors to the Second Indochina War.

The United Nations Security Council has, thus far, not passed any meaningful resolutions on this issue.

Possible Solutions

The Security Council could work to appoint mediators, either independent or affiliated with a particular state or independent organisation, to help resolve the conflict.

It could further take a formal position on the war, making it a matter of international affairs and putting it on the international agenda.

Lastly, steps could be taken to eventually reach an agreement among the great powers in the SC to stop international meddling in the conflict.

More direct steps could be taken, but with the veto powers that exist in the SC with a direct stake in this war, it is unlikely to pass.



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