

The Vietnam War 1946-1975

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French phase 1946-1954

- Ho Chi Minh, leader of the communistic Vietminh declared Vietnam a „Democratic Republic“ and fought for the independence against France
- Haiphong-incident: Vietminh troops ignored the postulation of the french government to retreat from Haiphong => France attacks the city
- The USA supported France with money to stop communism in the Vietnam
- 1953: battle at the fortress of Dien Bien Phu => Peace of Geneva (Vietnam was divided into two parts: communistic north and dictatorial south)

American phase 1955-1973

- Tonkin-incident 1964: The USA said that the destroyer „Maddox“ had been attacked by North-Vietnam ships in the gulf of Tonkin
- 1965: President Johnson gave the order to bombard the North-Vietnam (reason: Tonkin-incident) and first US troops landed in the Vietnam
- 1968: The USA increased its troops to 543 000 and first peace negotiations failed
- Ted-Offensive 1968: The Vietcong and North-Vietnamese troops failed attacking many South-Vietnamese cities but proved their strength
- The USA were criticized for killing many civilians, using napalm and other cruel weapons (Agent Orange) and methods (massacre of My Lai)
- 1969: Richard Nixon was elected and developed a plan to „vietnamise“ the war
- 1973: Both factions agreed about a peace treaty => american troops retreated and North-Vietnamese were allowed to stay in the South

Vietnamese phase 1974-1976

- After the US troops had retreated, the South was inferior and could not stop the northern troops even with US money
- 1975: Saigon was conquered by the North and the South capitulated => 1976: Vietnam was reunited

Why did the USA lose the war?

- There was no backup from the citizens (USA and South Vietnam)
- The Vietnam knew the landscape and had built a huge tunnelsystem where they were safe and were able to start ambushes
- The North was supported by China and the UdSSR (Ho-Chi-Minh-Path)
- Lots of deadly traps
- Wrong tactics and equip and war was too expensive

Aftereffects

- More than 2 million dead and 3 million injured Vietnamese => more than 100 000 orphans
- 57685 dead and 153 303 injured US-soldiers
- The war brought a severe economic crisis to the USA => it cost 798,4 billion US-Dollar
- Even today parts of the Vietnam are contaminated and there are lots of miss births
- Some areas are mined and still lots of people die of old bombs
- Many regions are not habitable and nothing grows there

Sources

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