

**THE TRUTH ABOUT VIETNAM**  
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Those who served in the Vietnam War should be very proud of the fact that they won the Tet Offensive in 1968, won the Vietnam War in January, 1973 when the Paris Peace Accords were signed, and prevented all of Southeast Asia from succumbing to Communist domination.

The United States made a solemn commitment by the SEATO Treaty in 1955 (ratified by President Eisenhower with almost unanimous advice and consent of the Senate) to come to the aid of any of the "Protocol States" of that treaty--Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam), Laos, and Cambodia, requesting assistance in defense of their freedom from Communist aggression.

In the post-war era, Hanoi repeatedly admitted that its leaders made a decision on May 19, 1959, to open the Ho Chi Minh Trail and send tens of thousands of soldiers and countless tons of equipment and supplies south to "liberate" South Vietnam by armed force. That was more than 5 years before the U.S. decided to send combat units to Vietnam. The U.S. purpose to send troops to Vietnam was precisely the same purpose we sent troops to South Korea in 1950--to uphold the non-aggression principles of the UN Charter and oppose the expansion of Communism by force.

John F. Kennedy pledged to the world: **"Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty."** In August 1964, Congress enacted the Southeast Asian Resolution by a combined vote of 504-2. That was our mission.

Communist defectors used to laugh and express shock at how successful their campaign had been to portray the "National Liberation Front" to the west as something other than a **classic Leninist "front" organization**. Hanoi actually published an English-language translation of the proceedings of the 1960 Third Party Congress, including the resolution it approved calling for "our people" in South Vietnam to set up a front under Party leadership three months before the NLF was allegedly formed by non-Communist resistance leaders in Ben Tre. Scholars, anti-war protesters, and the media who were duped by this deception should be ashamed of themselves.

America's military actions in Vietnam were portrayed vividly on television, and the public got to see it "up close and personal" and experience vicariously the imperfections, brutality, and fog of war. The American people were horribly misled by the media about what was actually transpiring in Indochina. The 1968 Tet Offensive was a tremendous military defeat for the Communists, and after the May Offensive of that same year the southern "Viet Cong" had ceased to exist as a serious fighting force. Regular North Vietnamese PAVN soldiers took over the fighting, and with only U.S. air support the South Vietnamese successfully blocked their 1972 Spring Offensive. Historians now acknowledge that American counter-insurgency operations in Vietnam were succeeding during the final years of that conflict. Anti-war protesters were wrong.

In December, 1972, President Nixon ordered the bombing of North Vietnam, and this brought the North Vietnamese to the peace table to sign the Paris Peace Accords in January, 1973. The U.S. got our POWs returned. South Vietnam got concessions, the right to free elections, and rights including those embodied in the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment. The U.S. promised to resupply South Vietnam with whatever armaments it needed if North Vietnam renewed its aggression. U.S. troops were pulled out of Vietnam in 1973, as they won the war then.

In August, 1974, Nixon got embroiled in the Watergate scandal. In November, 1974, there was a Democratic landslide in Congress. President Ford implored Congress to keep the U.S. promise to support South Vietnam as the North renewed its aggression. But Congress had its own political agenda and refused. The Congressional action that truly sounded the death knell for South Vietnam and "snatched defeat from the jaws of victory" was not simply cutting aid, but passing a law (the FY 1973 Dept of State Auth. Act, Pub. L. 93-126, 87 Stat. 451) that provided:

**Notwithstanding any other provision of law, on or after August 15, 1973, no funds heretofore or hereafter appropriated may be obligated or expended to finance the involvement of United States military forces in hostilities in or over or from off the shores of North Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia, unless specifically authorized hereafter by Congress.**

This guaranteed Hanoi and its allies that the United States was not going to fulfill its solemn pledge to defend those victims from aggression, and Pham Van Dong (Hanoi's Premier) announced that the Americans would not come back "even if we offered them candy." So Moscow and Beijing greatly increased their aid, Hanoi left only the 325th Division to defend the Hanoi area and sent the rest of its Army behind columns of Soviet-made tanks to conquer South Vietnam (and Laos and Cambodia, the other Protocol States we had repeatedly pledged to protect) in a conventional military invasion. North Vietnamese Army tanks rolled into Saigon on April 30, 1975.

The so-called "liberation" of the Protocol States was catastrophic. An estimated 100,000 South Vietnamese were executed, as many as 250,000 more died in "reeducation camps," and another 45-50,000 died in the "New Economic Zones". The UN High Commissioner for Refugees estimated 420,000 "boat people" died at sea fleeing the Communist tyranny in search of freedom. The Yale University Cambodian Genocide Project estimated 1.7 million Cambodians (more than 20% of the entire population) were killed by Pol Pot and his Khmer Rouge. A January 2004 article on the "killing fields" in NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TODAY noted that "bullets were too precious to use for executions. Axes, knives and bamboo sticks were far more common. As for children, their murderers simply battered them against trees."

Those who helped perpetuate the myths and blatant lies distorting truth about the Vietnam War should be ashamed. Those in Congress who threw away what the Vietnam veterans had won should be ashamed. Vietnam veterans should be very proud of their service to their country.