



**THE AMERICAN WAR:
THE LAST BATTLE FOR FREEDOM
BACKGROUND GUIDE
SSICsim 2018**



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Glossary

ARVN: Army of The Republic of Vietnam, also known as the South Vietnamese military.

Indochina: Geographical area consisting of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos.

NLF: National Liberation Front of Southern Vietnam. Umbrella organization created by Hanoi to oppose the Republic of Vietnam. Also known as the Viet-Cong.

OSS: Office of Strategic Services (1942-1947), preceded the CIA.

PAVN: People's Army of Vietnam. Armed forces of North Vietnam mostly referred to in this guide as the **NVA** (North Vietnamese Army)

Viet Cong/VC: A term used to describe southern communists and their sympathizers. Commonly used to describe members of the NLF.

Viet Minh: Known better as the Vietnam Independence League. It was a united front created in 1941 to fight the Japanese and French in Indochina, dissolved after the French were defeated. Often used as a



Welcome from the Dais

Dear Delegates,

The world as we know it today is the most peaceful yet the most fragmented we have ever seen it. You and I sit at home reading this with little fear of anything coming to us, but the same cannot be said for others. Globalization has changed warfare so that states can wage war across the world and have little to no fear about being attacked at home. When one looks deeper, they can see that wars waged today all share similarities with one particular war which so happens to be the one war America lost.

The Vietnam War or, as the Vietnamese know it as, “The American War”, is a prime example of a populace getting caught between two forces with little say in the matter. The United States did not come to Vietnam to fight a war against the Vietnamese people, but to fight against the threat of communism. In turn, the National Liberation Front (NLF) took up arms against the Americans fighting for what they believed was their right to independence. The civilians were caught between a rock and a hard place. The Americans would sweep through villages during the day, looking for insurgents. The NLF would come back at night and punish those who they believed sold them out. There was no righteousness for many Vietnamese civilians caught in the conflict, only suffering with no end in sight.

You, the delegates, will assume the roles of National Liberation Front commanders who were tasked with fighting the Americans and managing the well-being of the South Vietnamese citizens. There are a lot of elements to leading an insurgency and carrying out an effective guerilla war, and studying not only the conflicts of Indochina, but all asymmetric conflicts should provide good insight into how to beat the Americans. As the war goes on, things won't get easier, so be prepared to face the hardships that war brings.

Good luck Commanders and remember: Cho Tự Do! To Freedom!

Kyle Monte

The American War: The Last Battle for Freedom

Committee Director, SSICsim 2018



Introduction

The end of the Second World War brought a tide of decolonization. As the years progressed after the war, colony after colony gained independence from their European overlords. India pulled away from the British, Portugal lost Angola, and France lost both Algeria and Indochina. Indochina, which consisted of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, was a rather unique case. As soon as the Vietnamese kicked the French out, shortly after their defeat at Dien Bien Phu, another country came to fill the void.

The day the Second World War ended, the United States went to war with communism. President Harry Truman's doctrine of containment meant that the US was committed to ensuring that communism was suppressed, for if it spread then the whole world would fall to the "Red Tide." This doctrine brought the US on a collision course with Vietnam's efforts for independence. After the French colonial forces fell to the communist Viet Minh, it seemed possible that communism could break its containment and action needed to be taken to prevent it.

For the Vietnamese people, it was not a question of communism or capitalism, it was about independence. When Ho Chi Minh declared independence in September 1945, he opened with the words of Thomas Jefferson "all are endowed with life, liberty, and independence".¹ A communist leader echoed the words proclaimed in the American Declaration of Independence. The Vietnamese never wished to go to war with the US, but unfortunately, not everyone can get what they wish for.

Starting in 1955, the US began pouring more and more resources into South Vietnam for fear of an attack by the communist North. The North was trying to rebuild after the destructive war with the French and did not seek further conflict. Unfortunately, the US-backed South Vietnamese president, Ngo Dinh Diem, began antagonizing the North through a campaign to actively seek out all who were thought to be communists in South Vietnam. This campaign forced the hand of the North who began arming guerillas in South Vietnam, forming the National Liberation Front (NLF) or Viet Cong.

As Diem began escalating his efforts against the communists, the NLF escalated their efforts against the South Vietnamese. The NLF's increasing aggression against the South Vietnamese put it on a collision course with the US, which sent advisors to train the soldiers of the South. As the NLF killed more South Vietnamese military personnel, more and more Americans were caught in the crossfire.

On February 7th, 1965, the NLF launched an attack on the Pleiku airbase. Using mortars and sappers, they destroyed numerous aircraft and bombed the barracks. In the attack, the American advisor's compound was also hit, killing eight Americans and wounding 128 others.² For the first time after an NLF attack, the US responded. The next day, 48 jets bombed North Vietnamese positions across the demilitarized zone.³

The NLF had awakened the US military's might. On March 2nd, 1965, the US began Operation Rolling Thunder, a strategic bombing campaign targeting North Vietnam to force it to stop

¹*The Vietnam War: Episode 1*, directed by Ken Burns (2017; New York; PBS, 2017), Blu-Ray.

² "Viet Cong Attack on U.S. Bases at Pleiku" *Universal Newsreel*, New York, NY: NBC Universal, Feb 08, 1965.

³ "Viet Cong Attack on U.S. Bases at Pleiku."



supporting the NLF. A week after the bombs began falling, on March 8th, the first US combat troops landed at Da Nang to defend airbases in South Vietnam. The US had matched the NLF's aggression, but what would come next?

That's where you come in. The NLF needs leaders more than ever as war looms on the horizon. That's why you have been selected by the North Vietnamese leaders and your own to take charge of your respective provinces, your homes. You all come from different backgrounds, from different situations with different experiences. You are fundamentally different, yet you have been brought together because you are Vietnamese, and you must all work to free Vietnam. You all have different skills that must come together in order to win this war. You will take up this war with the memories of the war with the French still fresh in everyone's minds. Those memories bring questions: how will the NLF fight this war? How will the civilians be safe? Are the communists really the right choice, or does the NLF need to be more independent? There is only one fact: this will be the last war for independence. The Americans are the last obstacle and they must fall, but at what cost?



Background Information

The Beginning

In 1858, at the ancient port of Da Nang, the French colonial forces began their invasion of Indochina. Over the next 50 years, they would completely take over Indochina, ruling from their plantations and cities, like Saigon, which were constructed to look as French as possible. The French did not care for the Vietnamese natives in the slightest and opted to only employ French-speaking Mandarins.⁴ The French boasted about how they brought civilization to Indochina, but the Vietnamese did not want civilization, they wanted independence. As the decades passed, a sense of nationalism grew within Vietnam, the revolution silently brewing as colonialism took its toll on the people.

The Rise of Ho Chi Minh

Born in 1890 to a low-level politician in the French Indochinese government, Ho Chi Minh would dedicate his entire life to freeing Vietnam. In 1908, he protested Vietnam's puppet emperor and was expelled from his school and marked for arrest.⁵ In 1911, Minh left Vietnam and began to work in the kitchen on a French steam liner. He would go on to work in New York, England, and then would finally find himself in Paris where he would discover the anti-colonial writings of Vladimir Lenin.⁶

Minh began getting more and more involved with the French socialist party and in 1919, during the Paris peace talks, attempted to make history. After hearing US President Woodrow Wilson's stance on colonialism and giving everyone the opportunity to control their own destiny, Minh penned him a letter asking him to vouch for Vietnam during the talks and seek their independence. Minh handed the letter to one of Wilson's advisors, but the letter never reached the president.⁷

After the peace talks, Minh moved to the Soviet Union where he began working closely with communist agents to better the situation in Vietnam. Minh would travel across Europe and South-East Asia over the next two decades until he returned to China in 1938 to serve as an advisor to the Chinese Communist Armed Forces.⁸ After all this was said and done, Minh would finally return home.

The Japanese Invasion of Indo China

In September 1940, Imperial Japanese forces invaded Vietnam. Many Vietnamese people saw this invasion as the end of the white colonial rule, but this was not the case. The Japanese allowed Vichy France to remain in control of their colony in exchange for a percentage of Vietnam's food production and whatever else they wanted, seeing as the French were not in a position to say no. For other Vietnamese, like Ho Chi Minh, the Japanese were just as alien as the French and their goal was ultimately the same: to steal their Vietnam's resources for their own gain.

In February 1941, Ho Chi Minh returned to Vietnam and created the Vietnam Independence League or the "Viet Minh." The group was founded on communist ideals, but the people of

⁴ Burns, *The Vietnam War: Episode 1*.

⁵ Pierre Asselin, *Vietnam's American War: A History* (Hanover: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 30-32.

⁶ Asselin, *Vietnam's American War*, 30-32.

⁷ Asselin, 30-32.

⁸ Asselin, 39.



Vietnam never cared about their ideology; to them, the Viet Minh were simply fighting for their independence. Minh recruited a history teacher by the name of Võ Nguyên Giáp to command the military aspect of the Viet Minh. Giáp would create guerilla tactics the Viet Minh would use against the Japanese, for it did not have the numbers or firepower to stand against the Japanese in conventional combat.

In the Spring of 1945, after the fall of Nazi Germany, the United States Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was looking for ways to undermine the Japanese presence across Asia and the Pacific. This brought them into contact with the Viet Minh which, for the last four years, had been fighting a small guerrilla war against the Japanese. The OSS dropped a team into Vietnam to meet with Ho Chi Minh, who had become extremely ill. Upon their arrival, they treated Minh and pledged to provide the Viet Minh with weapons and training. The OSS officers were surprised by the speed at which the Vietnamese learned how to use the weapons and tactics they provided.

With their new tools, the Viet Minh began striking against Japanese storehouses and returning the stored food back to the Vietnamese, who were virtually starving to death at this point in the war. In August 1945, after the first nuke fell upon Hiroshima, Ho Chi Minh ordered every Vietnamese citizen to rise and take back Vietnam before the “Free French” could reclaim their hold over it. The war with Japan had to come to an end, but a new war was on the horizon.

The Indochina War

On September 2nd, 1945, Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnamese independence. Minh knew very well that the French were not going to recognize this and was counting on US support when they returned. Unfortunately, with Roosevelt dead, the US had a very different view of the post-war world. Truman saw communism as the biggest threat to the world and the Viet Minh, being founded on socialist ideals, was dangerous. To add to this, the French threatened to turn to the Soviets if the US intervened with the recovery of their colonies.

Considering these issues, Vietnam was split into two parts at the 17th parallel, with the Nationalist Chinese policing the North and the British policing the South until the French could return. Upon the return of the French, the Viet Minh were openly engaging both them and the British on the streets of Saigon. In early October, the French sent fresh troops to Saigon to relieve the British and defeat the Viet Minh. They quickly dispatched the Viet Minh in Saigon and quickly swept across all of Vietnam.

Ho Chi Minh did not wish to fight the French for he did not want to make an enemy of the Americans and urged Truman through letters to intervene in the conflict, but the CIA confiscated the letters before they got to Truman.⁹ Minh went to Paris to attempt to negotiate a peace and left Giáp in charge in his absence. Giáp took this time to purge those whom he believed to hinder the Viet Minh’s success against the French. The Viet Minh took time to build strength after their defeat at Saigon and began expanding back into the key regions in Vietnam.

In December 1946, after over a year of brewing tensions, fighting once again broke out between the French and the Viet Minh. The Viet Minh were defeated once more and forced to flee into the mountains of Northern Vietnam. The French now controlled the cities and set up hundreds of outposts in the jungles. They began a project they entitled “Pacification” where they would provide infrastructure and medical care to rural Vietnam to win the favor of the populace, but this ended

⁹ Burns, *The Vietnam War: Episode 1*.



up being futile. The French would control a village during the day and at night the Viet Minh would return to gather supplies, often those provided by the French, and learn of French movements. As this went on, the French began getting more and more frustrated; when the Viet Minh attacked, the French would find the nearest village and burn it to the ground.

In 1949, both the Chinese and the Soviets vowed to help the Viet Minh in their fight. In response, the US pledged \$23 million to assist the French effort in Indochina.¹⁰ By the time the Korean War began in June 1950, the Viet Minh had become a modern fighting force. At the same time, the US sent advisors and equipment to aid the French in Vietnam and pledged another \$330 million in aid. By this point, the colonial conflict in Indochina had grown into a proxy war with the involvement of the Soviets and the United States behind closed doors.

The French needed a foothold in Northern Vietnam to finally put down the Viet Minh, and they chose the Valley of Dien Bien Phu. French generals built an airbase in a valley surrounded by jungle-covered hills, believing that this would prevent the Viet Minh from mounting artillery on the hills because they could not get trucks through the jungle. In response, Giáp pulled off one of the greatest logistical feats in military history. He ordered his men to disassemble and carry every piece of artillery through the jungle by hand. It took weeks but by March 13th, 1954, the Viet Minh had surrounded the base with artillery and began bombarding the French airstrip. The airfield was quickly destroyed, meaning the only way the French could be resupplied was through airdrops. The garrison at Dien Bien Phu held out for 55 days, but soon their will to fight dwindled and they surrendered. After almost 100 years, the French were defeated, and Vietnam was finally liberated.

The Geneva Peace Talks

After the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, Ho Chi Minh planned to fully push the French out of Vietnam, but he no longer had the resources to do so. The Chinese lost too much during the Korean War and refused to risk more, and the Soviets under Khrushchev wanted to ease tensions with the west.¹¹ Thus, they were forced to the negotiation table and Vietnam was once again partitioned at the 17th parallel. A demilitarized zone was set up until an election could be held to reunite the two – an election that everyone knew Ho Chi Minh would win.

The Beginning of Active US Involvement

The US fronted 80% of the bill for the Indochina war and were not about to let their investment fall apart. They set up Ngo Dinh Diem to be president in South Vietnam. The French, who were still holding on despite their defeat, hated Diem and actively conspired against him. Diem eventually ousted France's allies and finally forced the French out of Vietnam. In South Vietnam's 1955 election, Diem won with 98.2% of the vote and declared himself the president of the New Vietnamese Republic. This declaration killed the chances for the election that would reunite North and South Vietnam.

After the election, the US increased support for the South in preparation for an invasion from the North, but Ho Chi Minh had no plans for an invasion. Minh's focus was on the complete rebuilding of North Vietnam's infrastructure, which had been decimated during the Indochina war.¹²

¹⁰ Burns, *The Vietnam War: Episode I*.

¹¹ Asselin, *Vietnam's American War*, 84.

¹² Asselin, 84.



The Birth of the National Liberation Front

Diem was still fearful of the communists both to the North and within his own country. In response, he began a campaign entitled “Denounce the Communists”. He locked up thousands and executed hundreds more who were thought to be conspiring with the North or believed to hold communist ideals. The communists, who were previously rather dormant, saw this as an attack and began targeting South Vietnamese officers in attacks.

During this time, Ho Chi Minh began sharing his power with a group of advisors that would be part of what is known as his Politburo, a communist executive group. These advisors were rather fed up with Minh’s caution regarding the South Vietnamese.¹³ Le Duan, Minh’s first lieutenant, pushed his anti-South Vietnamese rhetoric on the Politburo, persuading members that they must do everything in their power to remove Diem by force. He convinced them that if Minh was not going to take a hard stance against the South, he would have to be replaced. By September 1960, the Politburo voted Le Duan in as president of the party, replacing Minh. Though stripped of his title and much of his power, Minh remained the face of the North until his death and many stayed loyal to his ideals.

In January 1961, representatives of Southern revolutionary groups met to form the National Liberation Front (NLF), but US advisors and members of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) would go on to call them the Viet Cong.

Diem’s Fall and the Rise of the NLF

Tensions between the NLF and Ngo Dinh Diem grew stronger with the passing years. With these increased tensions came increased US presence in the region, amounting to 16,000 advisors in Vietnam by 1963.¹⁴ In the same year, Diem showed his true colors to the world. Vietnam has a religious divide between Roman-Catholics and Buddhists which at times throughout history has gotten violent. On May 30th, 1963, a group of Buddhists were peacefully protesting Diem’s persecution of both the communists and their fellow Buddhists. Diem, who was a devout Roman-Catholic, ordered his special forces to fire upon the unarmed protesters. This incident convinced many Vietnamese Buddhists to turn to the NLF and further convinced some members of the US government that Diem needed to be replaced.¹⁵ President John F. Kennedy was skeptical of a plan to overthrow Diem proposed by National Security Advisor Michael Forrestal in October 1963, but he eventually agreed to it with the condition that Diem had to remain alive.¹⁶

On November 2nd, 1963, Diem was overthrown in a US-backed coup by his generals. All was seemingly going well until it was announced that Diem was executed in the back of an armoured car a day after the coup took place.¹⁷ Kennedy and Forrestal quickly realized that the coup had failed, but before anything could be done about it, President Kennedy was assassinated on November 23rd.

¹³ Burns, *The Vietnam War: Episode 1*.

¹⁴ Asselin, *Vietnam’s American War: A History*, 79.

¹⁵ Andrew Preston, “The Soft Hawks’n Dilemma in Vietnam: Michael V. Forrestal at the National Security Council, 1962–1964,” *The International History Review* 25, no. 1 (2003): 23.

¹⁶ Preston, “The Soft Hawks’n Dilemma,” 23.

¹⁷ Preston, “The Soft Hawks’n Dilemma,” 23.



Diem's death created a vacuum in Saigon that many rushed to fill, especially the NLF. With Diem's death, the ARVN high command collapsed as generals fought each other for power. This left American advisors with no power for they were only there to consult the generals, not to give orders. With South Vietnamese troops lying mostly dormant, the NLF had little opposition in South Vietnam. NLF guerillas quickly made their way into villages previously controlled by the ARVN and began setting up tunnel networks and traps in the jungles.

North Vietnam Expands Their Assistance

Under Diem's presidency, the North Vietnamese had been reluctant to fully support the NLF after it was founded, because they feared this would result in greater U.S. involvement. The relative success of the Pathet Lao movement in Laos allowed the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) to seize territory in Laos and Cambodia to facilitate the creation of the Ho Chi Minh Trail in late 1963.¹⁸ The creation of the trail allowed the North Vietnamese to move a large number of troops and equipment into South Vietnam without being detected by the US or South Vietnamese. The NVA started providing weapons and cadres to the NLF, and any people who were willing to fight for the NLF came along the trail. This assistance allowed the NLF to become more emboldened in their tactics.

The Last Straw

The NLF were not the only ones that got bold with their tactics – so did the NVA. On August 2nd, 1964, NVA skiffs attacked the USS Maddox in the Gulf of Tonkin. The skiffs did not damage the ship, but it was nonetheless a significant act of aggression on the part of the North Vietnamese. US President Lyndon B. Johnson used this incident to pass a resolution through congress entitled "The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution." This resolution gave Johnson the power to act without consulting congress on events in Vietnam, so he had the ability to do as he wished.

The Gulf of Tonkin was only one of many incidents that occurred leading up to all out combat between the US and the NLF. Dozens of attacks occurred into late 1964, but the events of February 7th, 1965 would be what pushed America towards war. The attack on the Pleiku airbase was both a critical and unexpected strike on both the South Vietnamese and their American advisors. Early in the morning, NLF Sappers snuck into the base and planted bombs in several aircraft and barracks, including the American advisors' compound. The base awoke to volleys of mortar fire paired with the detonation of the previously planted explosives. By the time the attack was over, eight Americans had died and 128 more were injured, and numerous aircraft were destroyed.¹⁹

President Johnson and his advisors immediately ordered retaliatory airstrikes with 49 aircraft on staging areas in North Vietnam.²⁰ With Johnson having sole control over what happened in Vietnam, things escalated very quickly. On March 2nd, a strategic bombing campaign against North Vietnam entitled "Operation Rolling Thunder" began. On March 8th, the first US combat troops landed at Da Nang to guard South Vietnamese air bases. The Americans had committed themselves to Vietnam in force, which meant they would have to be forced to leave.

¹⁸ Gregory A. Daddis, "American Military Strategy in the Vietnam War, 1965-1973." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History*. London: Oxford, 2015, 3-5.

¹⁹ Harold G. Moore, and Joseph L. Galloway, *We were Soldiers once -and young*, (New York: Random House, 1992) 30-32.

²⁰ Moore, *We were soldiers once*, 30-32.



Outline of Topics

Topic One: How to Fight the American Military

Both the North and South Vietnamese fought against the Imperial Japanese and French armies, but the US military is regarded as the most advanced and well-trained on the planet. The Americans are bringing both technology and tactics to the table that no one has seen before.

The development of Air-Cavalry has made combat a lot more difficult. Helicopters allow for the quick movement of both troops and equipment across the country. Repositioning mid-battle is easy for the Americans. A quick shift or new arrival in US manpower to the battlefield can turn the tide of battle. The helicopter can be countered and nullified but learning how will take a mix of time and combat experience to understand.

The US armoured corps is extremely high-tech. Their older M48 Pattons are still a large threat and the relatively new M60 Pattons carry the same hull as the M48, but with improved armaments. Both vehicles can withstand a frontal assault by any of the NLF's equipment. Their M113 personnel carriers provide mobility to troops on the ground but are not nearly as heavily armoured as the Pattons and are lacking in armaments. The US may have superior armour, but they are not effective in every situation. Tactics must be adapted to account for these deadly machines.

The US air force has already started bombing North Vietnam and their power is well proven. The American Sabres are fully capable of launching attacks anywhere in Vietnam and into some border regions in Laos and Cambodia. The airbases out of which they operate have been heavily guarded after the arrival of the US marines, and the US has stationed aircraft carriers full of attack craft off the coast. The NLF has no aircraft and NVA pilots have nowhere near the experience of their US counterparts. It seems American air superiority is uncontested with the resources currently available, but there are some who can give the US a run for their money.

The NLF needs to find ways to combat superior US technology and tactics. The US is not invincible, but it will take the efforts of all to see them fall.

Guiding Questions:

1. How can each delegate utilize their resources to counter US military superiority?
2. What tactics can be used successfully against the Americans?
3. Is there any way to contest the Americans in the skies?

Topic Two: The True Leader of the Revolution

For years Ho Chi Minh's communist advisors felt he was not doing enough to reunite the two halves of Vietnam. They felt he was too passive in his approach to the revolution and that a new leader needed to take the reins.

When Le Duan took Ho Chi Minh's place as party president, he instilled a doctrine of North Vietnamese aggression. Le Duan's choice to open hostilities against the South Vietnamese and Americans directly resulted in American combat involvement in Vietnam.

Many see Le Duan as a saviour of the people, but others see him as an instigator, a man who brought an unneeded war to Vietnam. Even some of the highest-ranking commanders in the NLF believe Le Duan has brought nothing but war.



Many still follow the ideals of Ho Chi Minh. Many believe Minh should still sit as leader of North Vietnam. Many are willing to support him to their graves.

Guiding Questions:

1. Is war really the best option for reunification?
2. Who's way is the right way: Minh or Duan?

Topic Three: What about the People?

The Vietnamese people, both North and South, have known war for far too long. Many have grown tired of conflict, but their spirits can be enlightened. Many hate the South Vietnamese government for stripping them of their homes and arresting or killing their family members. Showing them the right amount of care can convince them to support your efforts. Beware of civilians who may support your efforts to help them in the face of government tyranny, as this does not mean they will support combat actions against the South and the Americans.

On the other hand, one can also show the populace an iron fist, taking in those eligible to fight for the NLF from villages and killing those who oppose. This will make civilians fear the NLF and be much less likely to go against the movement but beware this may push them closer to the Americans, who may become the lesser of two evils.

Guiding Questions:

1. Which path is the right one to take? Love or Fear?
2. Can we achieve a balance of love and fear that will ensure steady support from the populace?



Characters

Name of character followed by the province(s) they control

Đặng Thanh Minh – Quang Tri: Minh is a prominent member of the communist Pathet Lao movement in Laos. When the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) made gains in Southern Laos to construct the Ho Chi Minh trail, he became an asset due to his connections with the locals in the region. A devoted Marxist-Leninist, Minh is acting as an advisor to the Viet Cong and wishes to see them succeed in their struggle against the capitalists. The section of the Ho Chi Minh trail that Minh overlooks has become home to two NVA armoured divisions, the only two available to reinforce any troops in South Vietnam. Minh is therefore the only delegate in the room with a connection to armoured units, but they still take the orders from the North Vietnamese.

Phạm Hồng Linh – Thua Thien: Linh's husband ran a newspaper in Hue city but after he was killed by Diem for being critical of his government, Linh fled to the hills fearing she would be next. She has many connections within the city, which is a linchpin for American supply lines and South Vietnamese R&R. Her communist ideals and presence on the council is questionable as she has no military background, but her hate for both the South Vietnamese and American governments ensures her allegiance to the NLF... for the most part.

Sái Lâm Viên – Quang Nam and Quang Tin: Viên lived in Da Nang for his entire life up, working in the district court as a judge's assistant. A few days after the Americans arrived, Viên was ousted for being a supposed NLF spy. He was rounded up and taken to a South Vietnamese prison camp where he had his first interaction with the NLF after they successfully assaulted the compound and rescued the prisoners there. Viên has earned his spot on the council through his connections with the region's legal officials who, in these dire times, tend to be rather easy to sway. Although grateful for his rescue, Viên is still skeptical about his communist view.

Ân Lam Tuyên – Kontum: Being a resident of the villages in the highlands of South Vietnam landed Tuyên in a fortified hamlet, products of the stronghold project put forth by the South Vietnamese. Her time in this hamlet let her gather the stories of fellow hamlet dwellers and get a good view of the atrocities that the ARVN has committed against its own people. Seeing some ARVN "discipline" take place during her time in the hamlet, she decided she needed to help her people. She fled into the jungle to seek out the NLF and helped spread Ho Chi Minh's peaceful ideals to the people of South Vietnam in hopes of turning more against the South Vietnamese government.

Võ Minh Triết – Pleiku: Some would argue that Triết is the man responsible for this war. He single handedly orchestrated the attack on Pleiku airbase that would drive the Americans to commit troops to South Vietnam and begin Operation Rolling Thunder. Triết is an experienced guerilla. He was already fighting the French at the age of 12 with the Viet Minh, and he was one of the first to cross the border when Le Duan announced the resurgence of a guerilla war in the. He will do whatever it takes to win this war against the Americans and will stand by Le Duan and his methods at all costs.



Tạ Thanh Uyên – Phu Bon and Phu Yen: Many question Uyên and her methods, but her soldiers would not dare do such a thing. Uyên fought alongside General Giáp at the siege of Dien Bien Phu. As her squad attempted to retreat during an assault on the airfield, she gunned down those who turned their backs to the objective. She was also in the first wave of NLF fighters to enter South Vietnam. Initially only controlling Phu Bon, she took Phu Yen for herself, raiding the compound of Phu Yen’s leader and having him killed after he started giving her trouble over a territorial dispute. She has become so accustomed to war that it seems as if she does not want this one to end.

Lê Bảo Huy – Vinh Bin, Vinh Long, and Sa Dec: Controlling the central island of the Mekong Delta, Huy controls what many American military experts argue is one of the most crucial strategic points in all of South Vietnam. A fisherman by trade, Huy had little interest in this war until an American airstrike destroyed his home, killing his daughter and leaving his wife paralyzed. Huy is well respected by all who live under his area of control due to his humble nature and general concern for the wellbeing of his people. Huy is skeptical of his position in all this, but he does know that this war must end by avoiding as much bloodshed as possible.

Phùng Việt Khải – Darlac: A simple rice farmer appointed by General Nguyễn Hữu An when he passed through the province on his way to Ia Drang valley, Khải has little combat experience but is well versed in the hills and jungles of Darlac. The only member to be handpicked by an NVA General, the NLF troops in the area have a large amount of respect and confidence for Khải. Khải has little knowledge about the dealings in Hanoi or even the capitalist and communist divide, but he does care dearly for his family and his people.

Đỗ Tú Quỳnh – Khanh Hoa and Ninh Thuan: Daughter of a fisherman, Quỳnh’s father saved up his entire life to ensure she could attend university. She attended a foreign trade university in Hanoi where she quickly became fascinated with Ho Chi Minh. After meeting Minh at the university one day, Quỳnh became dedicated to his vision of a united, peaceful Vietnam. She cares much for the people of her districts and little for Le Duan’s warmongering.

Lạc Anh Vũ – Go Cong, Kien Hoa, and Dinh Tuong: Once an officer in the ARVN, Vũ’s allegiance to the South changed with the crimes of Diem. Vũ’s brother was one of the protesters killed during the Buddhist Riots in Saigon. After his death, Vũ deserted the South Vietnamese and joined the NLF in hopes of dismantling the corrupt government in Saigon. His military experience has to lead him to side with Le Duan’s view of the war. Only aggression can defeat tyranny.

Phạm Hữu Cường – Quang Duc and Tuyen Duc: Cường is the oldest member on the council. He fought against both the Japanese and the French, earning quite the reputation for himself along the way. Cường is known and respected by all who sit on the Politburo in Hanoi and was offered a position but turned it down. Cường is not much of a communist: he believes in freedom and sees the strife of those in the USSR and China as a reason democracy should prevail above all else. Cường has been forced into a hard place. The South Vietnamese government has become tyrannical and freedom no longer exists, so he has been forced to join with the communists once again in order to bring peace and unity to Vietnam.



Hòang Thúy Mai – Saigon: Mai has run a brothel in Saigon for over a decade. She was a pivotal informant during the war with the French and now the NLF hope she can be just as useful as before. She has a lot of connections within the city and can pull a lot of strings to get things done. She sits on the council for personal gain. Information costs a lot of money in this climate, especially if it means winning or losing the war.

Kiều Tuyết Oanh – Lam Dong and Binh Thuan: Born to a prominent judge in Phan Thiet, Oanh's entire family have been big supporters of Ho Chi Minh and his ideals. From a young age Oanh's father taught her the teachings of Karl Marx and stories of Vietnamese triumphs over the Japanese. Her father was assassinated by the NLF for fear since he was one of Diem's most trusted judges. She holds Le Duan's warmongering responsible for her father's death but not the NLF themselves.

Ân Minh Giang – An Giang, Chau Doc, and Kien Phong: Overseeing the Mekong river's transition into Cambodia is the task that has fallen onto Giang. He and his brothers have ridden the Mekong their entire lives, catching fish and simply enjoying themselves. When the NLF came looking for the district head, Giang and his brothers were the first they approached. His two brothers passed the task onto him believing he was best suited for the job. The Mekong is crucial to NLF supply and Giang's knowledge should allow him to keep the Americans out if he plays his cards right.

Đoàn Đình Sang – Tay Ninh, Binh long, and Phuoc Long: Sang was a political officer during the Indochina war. He was tasked to ensure that everyone remained loyal to their communist ideals. His position gave him a hardline approach to those who disobeyed his orders: death. This serious approach is what led to him controlling the region that marks the end of the Ho Chi Minh trail and, thus, the biggest resource flow from the North to the South. A strong supporter of Le Duan, he will do whatever it takes to defend the trail and win this war.

Vĩnh Thái Sơn – Mondolkiri and Raytanikiri: Sơn is a member of the Khmer Rouge, a large communist movement in Cambodia. He was recruited by the North Vietnamese to oversee the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Growing up just across the border in Pleiku, he moved to Cambodia to join the Khmer Rouge. A devout Marxist, but a believer first in peaceful resolution, Sơn will go to great lengths to ensure that the least amount of blood is shed.



Mechanics

Provincial Compounds

During the war against the French, the Viet Minh constructed massive tunnel complexes to keep their operations secret from the French. These complexes still exist, and some are large enough to hold up to 4000 troops. They will serve an integral role in fighting the Americans and the ARVN and as such should be treated as an important asset.

Each delegate has a tunnel complex in their territory. Since many of these complexes constructed by the Viet Minh in South Vietnam have fallen into disrepair, you will have to construct these complexes from the ground up. The complexes start off with just a single barracks to hold your troops (troop numbers and special resources will be distributed during the first committee session). It is your responsibility to maintain and upgrade your complex. Implementing upgrades requires đồng (Vietnamese currency, represented by đ) and tunnel slots. Each complex starts off with 20 slots, but this can be expanded with enough personnel and resources.

Expansions are left to your imagination, but the crisis team will notify you of feasibility and costs; upgrade construction begins after you approve these costs. Upgrades carry benefits but may come with unforeseen consequences, depending on the current situation in South Vietnam.

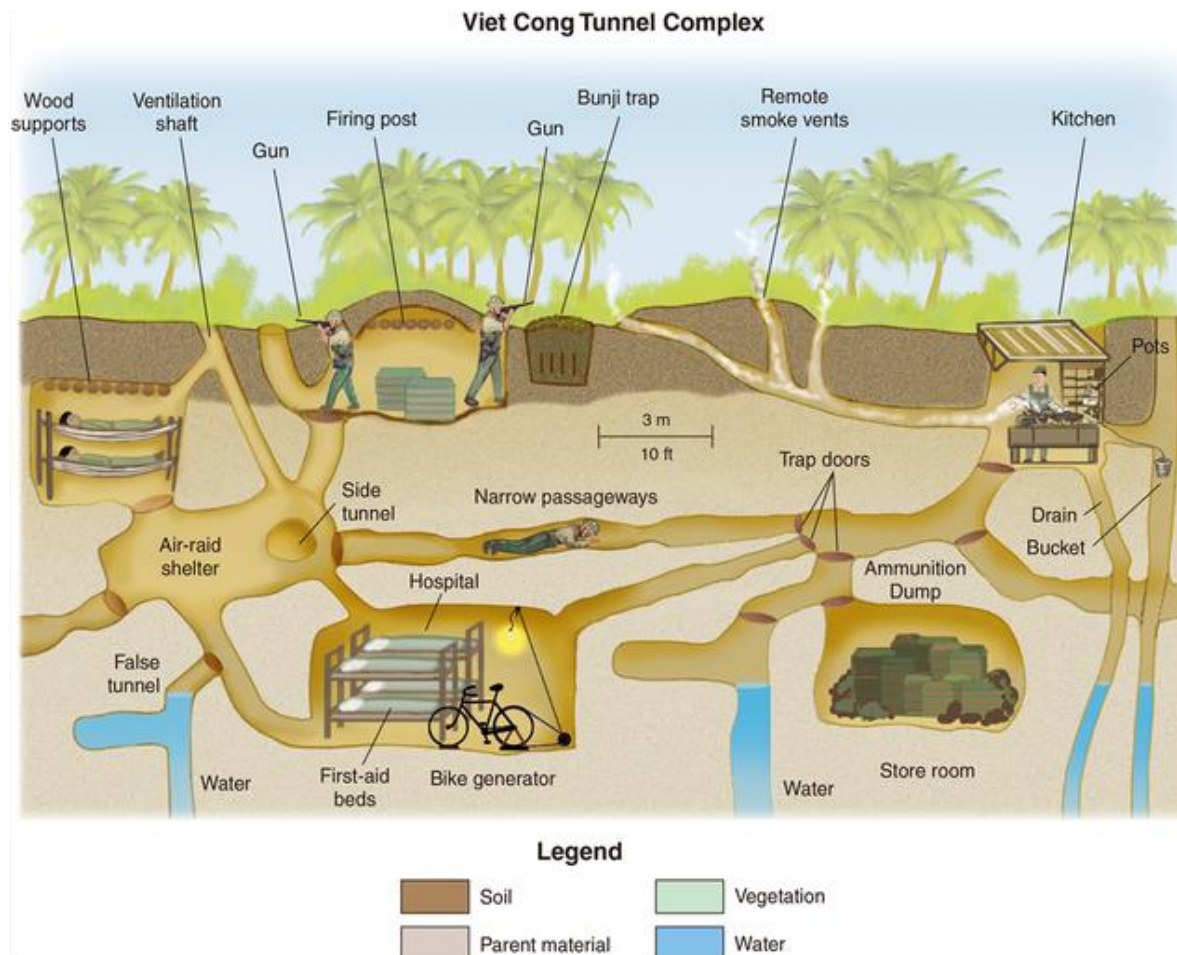
The following chart includes examples of possible upgrades for complexes and their respective costs and material benefits:

| <i>Upgrade</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Cost</i> | <i>Upkeep</i> |
|-----------------------------|---|----------------------------|---|
| Medical Wing | This upgrade can be used to either cut down on troop losses or gain populace support through public medical care. | 50,000đ 2 tunnel slots | 25,000đ every 3 months |
| Anti-Aircraft Bunker | Constructed above the tunnel system, this upgrade will keep the skies relatively clear of aircraft depending on the experience level of the crew manning it. It is not as effective against faster attack craft like Sabres but can deal with large planes like AC-47s fairly well. | 500,000đ 4 tunnel slots | 50,000đ every 3 months |
| Explosives Factory | A factory that can either focus on constructing anti-personnel or demolition grade explosives that can either be used to fight against the capitalists or sold to other groups for a profit. | 250,000đ 3 tunnel slots | Either 50,000đ upkeep or 75,000đ profit |
| Barracks Expansion | This expansion will allow more troops to be stationed in a given region. (More troops are required to operate certain expansions and thus facilitate further upgrades.) Allows for the recruitment of two more divisions. | 50,000đ 1 tunnel slot | 10,000đ every 3 months |



| | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| Consumer Goods Factory (clothing, farm tools, etc.) | This expansion allows you to produce goods to rival the capitalists and win over the hearts and the minds of your people, as well as provides your people with the consumer goods they desperately crave. | 75,000 ^d 1 tunnel slot | 10,000 ^d every 3 months (dependent on number of workers) |
| Radio Station | Broadcast your own anti-government messages – win the hearts and minds of your people. | 50,000 ^d 1 tunnel slot | 1,000 ^d monthly |
| Your Own Improvement | Not satisfied with any of the recommended improvements? Think you can do better? Propose your own compound improvements, and the crisis team will get back to you with a lump sum and monthly cost. | N/A | N/A |





Example of a tunnel complex.²¹

The Phone Line

The committee will have access to a private phone line which it can use to call the North Vietnamese Politburo. The phone line can be used to ask the North Vietnamese what their stance is on certain committee requests like public directives. Due to the widespread US monitoring of public phone lines and radio waves, contact with the North Vietnamese will be impossible for delegates to do privately, unless otherwise stated in character profiles. The phone line can also be used to contact other important players on the international stage – who these players are will be left up to the imagination of delegates.

Use of the phone line requires a simple majority to pass.

²¹ “Cù Chi Tunnels,” *1960s: Days of Rage*, <https://1960sdaysofrage.wordpress.com/2017/05/02/cu-chi-tunnels/>.



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Appendix



22 “South Vietnam Administrative Districts,” Vietnam War Stories, <http://vnwarstories.com/Maps/map.SouthVietnamAdministrativeDistricts.png> (accessed September 23, 2018).

