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Troops

by [Joe Escobar](#) - Thursday, 15 October 2009, 03:13 PM

Discuss the situation which led the United States to send ground troops to South Vietnam. What did American leaders hope to accomplish? In particular, what impact did these actions have on the conflict?

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Re: Troops

by [Scott Burgess](#) - Tuesday, 20 October 2009, 09:40 PM

The decision to send troops into ultimately goes back to the Gulf of Tonken incident. That led the US to bomb North Vietnam in retaliation for those attacks. That intern led to the VC attacks on the US air base (Bien Hoa) near Siagon; the Brinks Hotel and South Vietnamese bases near Siagon. The North Vietnamese army started attacking in battalion sized units. That presented the US with a larger sized war. Then the US base was attacked with 8 soldiers killed and 126 wounded was the 3rd attack in 3 months. It led to the start of Operation Rolling Thunder and more US aircraft on the ground in Vietnam. To protect the aircraft 3500 marines were sent in to Da Nang. That led to 72 thousands troops on the ground that spring. In early April the mission of the troops went from defense to offensive search and destroy. Which led to 200,000 troops by the end of the year. I think that the government was hoping to intimidate the communist north into leaving South Vietnam alone. Unfortunately for every action we took, the north had a reaction and so forth. That is how conflicts get escalated a little at a time.

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Re: Troops

by [Amy Wells](#) - Wednesday, 21 October 2009, 04:17 PM

The reason that we sent in ground troops to begin with was to protect the air bases that we had over there. Americans believed that we needed to protect ourselves more because of reports that there had been attacks on two of our ships, the Maddox and the Turner Joy, in the Gulf of Tonkin off the coast of North Vietnam. The leaders were hoping that we would send in a few ground troops to protect our air bases, and show that we are strong. What it really did was making the war bigger for Americans, and made it so we had to stay and be a part of the war. What started out as a few ground troops soon turned to 200,000 troops by the end of the year. Over the next three years Johnson raised the U.S. troop's commitment in South Vietnam to more than 500,000 troops, Johnson also intensified the air war over North and South Vietnam. The sad thing is that most of the decision to make Americans more an active role in this war was based off of false information. This makes us wonder how involved the U.S would have been the true information would have been reported.

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Re: Troops

by [Scott Burgess](#) - Wednesday, 21 October 2009, 08:38 PM

It makes you wonder what Bush was thinking. The ability to determine if a story is true or not is a lot easier with modern tech. Yet here we are in a sink hole of a war based on a lie once again. How can we, the greatest nation on earth not learn from our past.

Yes, I think that the American public would not have approved the war in Vietnam based on the truth. Think of the response if the public knew that the Sec of State did not believe that we were going to win the war as early as 1965.

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Re: Troops

by [Jennifer Mosier](#) - Wednesday, 21 October 2009, 09:01 PM

The lack of information does make you wonder whether or not we would have gone into the war or not, but I don't believe we can point our fingers at one individual. I also believe that sometimes the general public doesn't need to know everything about all the operations, etc. because if the public did, then the operation may not be as successful as it could have been. Word of mouth travels very quickly and what people don't know they can't talk about.

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Re: Troops

by [Amy Wells](#) - Thursday, 22 October 2009, 05:50 PM

I am not a very political person and not a history person either, but I find that in history there is always someone who takes the blame, usually the president. How can we just blame one person? As I was reading I read that Johnson battled with himself on the decisions he was making. The decision he was making was based off of information he received from someone else, which that person got from someone else, and so on. Remember when you were a kid and you would sit in a circle and start at one end and whisper in someone's ear and they whispered it to the next, and by the time you got to the last person what they said was nothing near what you said. Just a thought for you to think about, how stories can change.

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Re: Troops

by [Michael Bellamy](#) - Saturday, 24 October 2009, 02:28 PM

I like the topic you bring up in your last sentence. For me, I think that even if the true information had been reported right away, it still would have not had any impact on the final outcome. The U.S. may not have been as involved at that particular moment, but it would have only been a matter of time before something else was used as an excuse to fully enter the war. This has been the case with many occasions involving war throughout history, and in this instance, the U.S. was so determined to fight communism that if too much time had passed, they would have been looking for something as little as a land mine detonation to send in the heavy artillery.

Scott – I also like how you questioned why we cannot learn from our past. You always hear people talking about how history repeats itself, which I believe is true to a good extent. War is always going to be war, and it might not be the fact that we aren't learning from our past, but more so the fact that the same elements of war can be common, from initiating motive to declare war, to the combat itself, to the end result.

In my journal entry I also wrote about how McNamara was very well aware of the truth behind our progress. This gave the American people false hope, resulting in more public support than there should

have been.

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Re: Troops

by [Kim Tran](#) - Saturday, 24 October 2009, 07:19 PM

The Gulf of Tonkin incident was maybe a big mistake that change the whole situation between both countries. However, there was also, in my opinion, an attempt of starting the war. Remember, before the 2 incidents, there were other attacks on two islands in the same general area by several Oplan 34A raids. The American government was and always wanted to destroy the Communism Party as soon as possible before it spread out to the South of Vietnam and other countries around. Therefore, the false information perhap was created to bring them the oppotunity to start the war faster.

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Re: Troops

by [Michael Bellamy](#) - Wednesday, 21 October 2009, 08:36 PM

The prominent turning point for the United States in the Vietnam War was the questionable Gulf of Tonkin Incident. In August of 1964, The Maddox, a U.S. destroyer, was reported to have been attacked by three North Vietnamese torpedo boats. Two days after, there was a second alleged attack on the Maddox once more, along with the C. Turner Joy. Northern Vietnamese General Phung The Tai completely denied the event saying that the Gulf of Tonkin Incident "was a fabrication created by the U.S. security national council." However, the situation turned out not to be a fabrication, but a miscommunication when President Lyndon B. Johnson was not informed soon enough that there had in fact been no attack. In the heat of the incident Johnson retaliated by ordering an air invasion to bomb North Vietnam. Soon to follow were multiple retaliations back and forth on both sides with one of them being a Vietnamese attack on the Brinks Hotel on Christmas Eve.

In 1965 Operation Rolling Thunder was launched and with this came the need for ground troop support. The U.S. sent in ground troops to aide the Air Force bases by giving them the added protection that they needed. Troops were not initially sent over in mass numbers, rather in small groups at a time. Because of this, the large amount of troops that were in Vietnam went unnoticed by the American public, and caused them to be extremely supportive of this decision, especially due to their impression that Vietnam was struggling to fight against communism.

By sending in ground troops, American leaders hoped to further intimidate the Northern Vietnamese and eventually become successful in stopping the spread of communism which was the main objective of the war in the first place. The United States was determined to avoid the "domino theory," which was the idea that if Vietnam was to fall to communism, so would every county around it and so on. As the war progressed, more and more soldiers were dying in battle yet the constant flow of incoming troops did not stop, and what started as simple ground support turned into a way of delaying a communist victory. The bottom line is, with sending more troops over time, the final outcome of the Vietnam War was not changed, just prolonged.

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Re: Troops

by [Kim Tran](#) - Wednesday, 21 October 2009, 08:50 PM

The Gulf of Tonkin incident led to the attack of the Brinks Hotel. Soon after that, the VC attacked the American air base in Pleiku, central Vietnam. This led President Johnson to authorize the bombing of North Vietnam. At the same time, President Johnson was displeased with the instability of the South Vietnamese government. To protect the aircraft stationed in South Vietnam, President Johnson decided to send 3,500 troops to DaNang in

order to protect the aircrafts. By the end of the year, the number of troops increased to 200,000. Later on, it was decided that the passive defense wasn't helping much, and that's when the United States decided to engage in seek and destroy missions. This marked the start of the war in Vietnam as Americans became more aggressive.

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**Re: Troops**

by [Chad Schultz](#) - Thursday, 22 October 2009, 11:00 PM

The USS Maddox was on a mission and fired several times upon a torpedo that had been stalking along side the Gulf of Tonkin. Within the same area there was a increase in attacks, and this is when President Lyndon Johnson decided to approve the Gulf of Tonkin resolution. There is a lot of conspiracy between if there was attacks or not after August 2, 1964. America was stating that President Johnson was misleading America and the troops to supports his opinion and to gain power. The ranks grew from around 5,000 to nearly a million men before the end of the war.

Sending in the troops was a bold move to scare away communism from South Vietnam. President Johnsons plans, Blatantly misfired and became and what equated into a full blown war. I partially agree, that maybe President Johnson was to quick on the trigger and maybe was misinformed about the attacks.

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**Re: Troops**

by [Jennifer Mosier](#) - Saturday, 24 October 2009, 08:37 PM

The United States sent ground troops in late 1964, early 1965. This was the first change in the commitment for the US. Johnson sent troops after the "attack" on the Maddox and Turner Joy about 60 miles off of the North Vietnam coast. Whether or not these attacks were planned is a gray area like much of the war. The Marines that were sent in after these attacks were to protect the air bases. The American leaders were hoping that if the air bases were protected within a 50 mile radius then the plan for the air strikes in the North would slowly work. This included a slow continuation of bombing and then constant bombing in the North. Our air attacks did nothing to the North, much like bringing troops in and just about anything else the United States tried to do. Bringing more troops in only made the commitment for the United States deeper and full of anger, frustration and mistrust.

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