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Vietnamization of the War

by Joe Escobar - Sunday, May 26, 2013, 3:34 PM

This forum thread is for Vietnamization of the War posts and replies.

After studying the required materials, address the individual questions in SEPARATE posts.

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BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post.

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Nixon and Vietnamization

by Nathaniel Hahn - Wednesday, May 29, 2013, 2:23 PM

There were many problems it seems that hampered the efforts to conclude the war in Vietnam; lies, deception, false promises, but the I think the one major problem, to put it maybe a little too simply, stubbornness. All sides seemed so steadfast in their stance and no one was willing to give an inch. America was not willing to make any concessions of its anti-communist South Vietnam, North Vietnam was not willing to budge from its unified Vietnam stance, and South Vietnam was not too eager to be without American aide, which it had been so dependent on for years. I also think the problems came from what Mcnamara hinted at in the Fog of War, that a there was a lack of understanding. We were fighting as war against Communism and they were fighting a civil war. One of the biggest delays towards the end, and ultimately frustrating Nixon and more so Kissinger, was South Vietnam's refusal of the peace treaty that had been agreed upon by the other parties in Paris. It seems that idea of Vietnamization was not necessarily the preference of Thieu, realizing that meant more South Vietnamese casualties, a cut in the aide being provided from the United States, and with fewer American soldiers in the cities spending money, economic collapse with increasing inflation. Some might say he was not really trying to end the war, but appease to both South Vietnam as well as pressure from home. He was

withdrawing American troops, but was secretly bombing Cambodia and Laos. That by withdrawing troops and minimizing the amount of American casualties, he could extend the war but also placate to the anti-war movement and the building pressure from congress. But once people found out about the secret bombings, it sparked once again the anti-war movement and prompted congress to put more pressure on the White House. I think that Nixon had to withdraw troops, the domestic and even foreign pressures were starting to boil over, and by putting more responsibilities on the South Vietnam seemed like the only way that we could de-escalate without just leaving them with nothing, and Nixon could achieve his “peace with honor.” But what is good in theory isn’t always good in execution.



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Re: Nixon and Vietnamization

by Hao Qiu - Thursday, May 30, 2013, 10:37 PM

I do believe that one major problem was the government of United States did not want to lose their power on Southeast Asia, and if they won the war, they could use Vietnam to help them against China and Soviet Union. As you said, America was not willing to make any concessions of its anti-communist South Vietnam, they would like to contain communist force during that Cuba nuclear crisis. That was why the American troops would not be immediately withdrawn from Vietnam. The government could not let the Vietnam be a communist country.

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Re: Nixon and Vietnamization

by Athena Miller - Saturday, June 1, 2013, 2:08 PM

I agree that stubbornness was a problem on both sides, but partially for the United States I believe it was pride. They did not want to believe a little country such as Vietnam could defeat the "all powerful" United States. I'm sure it was very aggravating for all the different presidents that were in office during the war. They did not want to be the president that admitted defeat.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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Re: Nixon and Vietnamization

by Georgia Haskell - Saturday, June 1, 2013, 11:57 PM

I think you nailed it with "Pride" being a huge problem. As we learned throughout the course also the fear of not being re-elected stood in the way of decision making during the war.

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Re: Nixon and Vietnamization

by Elizabeth Gambee - Sunday, June 2, 2013, 5:12 PM

Well said. All sides participating the Vietnam War were definitely set in their ways and so steadfast in their goals and views that compromise and solutions almost seemed impossible.

Furthermore, as you mentioned, everyone seemed to be on different pages and there was a huge lack of understanding amongst the Vietnam War participants. As you discussed, while the Vietnamese viewed the war as more of a civil war, the United States and other countries typically viewed it as a battle against communism.

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Re: Vietnamization of the War

by David Hartness - Wednesday, May 29, 2013, 5:31 PM

It's hard to say whether or not Nixon was right at ending American's participation in the Vietnam war with Vietnamization. He was right partially in in Nixon Doctrine for certain, as it did prevent another Korean or Vietnam war in the fight on communism that involved United States deployment. The withdrawals of American troops was certainly right for what the American people wanted, but was it right for it to leave the South Vietnam government without more American troops?

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Re: Vietnamization of the War

by Hao Qiu - Saturday, June 1, 2013, 9:08 PM

I agree with you, Nixon had a choice. He could withdraw American troops to satisfy what the American people want, on the other hand, he could also help the South Vietnam government to fight against the North Vietnam government. Everything has both sides, none of them is absolute wrong.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Vietnamization of the War

by John Howland - Wednesday, May 29, 2013, 6:04 PM

One must first point out that, on the eve of his election in 1968, Richard Nixon secretly conspired with the South Vietnamese government to wreck all-party Vietnam peace talks as part of a deliberate effort to prolong a conflict in which more than 20,000 Americans were still to die, along with tens of thousands of Vietnamese and Cambodians. (Martin Kettle – Manchester Guardian) Nixon feared that Vietnam peace efforts by President Johnson in the run-up to the November 1968 US presidential election could wreck Nixon's bid to oust Hubert Humphrey. With that said we can get a better glimpse into Nixon's agenda for the Vietnam Conflict.

The problems Nixon faced were that while the US government had to court public approval, the North Vietnamese did not. They were in a stronger moral position than the US, as by this time world opinion was largely sympathetic as a result of American interference and atrocities such as the My Lai massacre that had been reported by the world's media. Furthermore the North Vietnamese were wary of negotiating with the US, since they had been left with an unfavorable settlement in the Geneva accords of 1954. They also had a tremendous psychological advantage of continuing what was already a 25 year old struggle, on their own territory, with their own people, and with the practical advantage of a greater capacity for reinforcement despite US air operations. With these factors in their favor, the North Vietnamese were unyielding in their calls for the US to withdraw unconditionally, and to abandon their commitment to Thieu and establish a coalition government without him.

Now as to the "de-coupling Vietnamization and American troop withdrawals", I feel they had to be complimentary of each other. In order for the South Vietnamese to take control of their country the US had to pull the troops out. As long as we had troops there the South Vietnamese would have no reason to do what was necessary to protect their interests. Nixon decided that South Vietnam would be given financial and technical assistance to build up its armed forces to such a level that they would be capable of countering the North Vietnamese threat without US military help. Nixon's reasoning was that the threat of a fortified South Vietnam would be enough to force the North Vietnamese into making concessions. As America withdrew troops the gap was filled by ARVN troops. On paper this may, as

with any strategy, have worked but Nixon was overconfident in his abilities to negotiate. Add to that the disillusionment amongst the American public was at its highest level and the reasons for involvement seemed increasingly irrelevant.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Vietnamization of the War

by Hao Qiu - Sunday, June 2, 2013, 7:12 PM

Good catch, the withdrawals and Vietnamization are complimentary of each other. The US government should pull the troops out and let the South Vietnam government do whatever they want to do. The US government does not have any rights that allowed to interfere other government's agenda.

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Vietnamization of the War Question 1

by Athena Miller - Wednesday, May 29, 2013, 6:17 PM

I believe that there were multiple problems that hampered the efforts to conclude the war. The Vietnamization program was difficult to implement. The South Vietnamese government did not agree with the program and did not back it. South Vietnam was very dependent on the United States and it was hard for both parties to withdrawal because of the dependency. The North also did not feel any threat from this program since the United States was unable to “win” the war, than how was the AVRN going to succeed. (Herring 287)

The unwillingness of either the United States or North Vietnam to give any concession in the peace talks hampered the conclusion of the war. Additionally, the domestic unrest at home was causing major pressure on Nixon to get America out of the war. His speech pacified some of the protestors for a while, but it started again with a vengeance after the Easter Invasion.

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Vietnamization of the War Question 2

by Athena Miller - Wednesday, May 29, 2013, 7:12 PM

I wouldn't necessarily say he was “right” in de-coupling Vietnamization and American troop withdrawals, but it was understandable. I believe Nixon felt that American troop withdrawals in excess would allow the North Vietnamese to believe that they had the upper hand in negotiations. Also, since Vietnamization was a slow process and had been showing some improvement, but still had many faults within its process and implication it was not a strong position for the United States. I do believe that the two

strategies do essentially complement each other though. The dependency of the South Vietnam on the United States for its support would have made it necessary for the slow withdrawal of American troops. This would have given the AVRN more confidence that the withdrawals of U.S. troops actually coincided with the AVRN troops being able to accomplish the task at hand themselves instead of a sign of abandonment.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Vietnamization of the War Question 2

by Elizabeth Gambee - Sunday, June 2, 2013, 5:31 PM

I too believe that the two strategies essentially complemented each other. However, as you mentioned, I guess it was understandable that Nixon felt it necessary to de-couple the two strategies due to the fact that American troop withdrawals in excess could potentially lead the North Vietnamese to believe that they held the upper hand in negotiations.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Vietnamization of the War

by Hao Qiu - Wednesday, May 29, 2013, 10:37 PM

1. There are some problems that surfaced to hamper efforts to conclude the war. For the future of peace, precipitate withdrawal would thus be a disaster of immense magnitude, so this is one of the problems. Also, the defeat and humiliation in South Vietnam without question would promote recklessness in the councils of those great powers who have not yet abandoned their goals of world conquest. And, this first defeat in our Nation's history would result in a collapse of confidence in American leadership, not only in Asia but throughout the world.
2. The two strategies essential complements to each other.

The president did not end the war by immediately withdrawing all troops for some reasons. A nation cannot remain great if it betrays its allies and lets down its friends. Our defeat and humiliation in South Vietnam without question would promote recklessness in the councils of those great powers who have not yet abandoned their goals of world conquest. This would spark violence wherever our commitments help maintain the peace—in the Middle East, in Berlin, eventually even in the Western Hemisphere. Ultimately, this would cost more lives. It would not bring peace; it would bring more war. He chose instead to change American policy on both the negotiating front and battlefield. In order to end a war fought on many fronts, he initiated a pursuit for peace on many fronts. In a television speech he set forth the peace proposals in great detail. The military force will complete withdrawal of all outside forces within 1 year, and also have proposed a cease-fire under international

supervision. President Nixon chose his plan B, "We can persist in our search for a just peace through a negotiated settlement if possible, or through continued implementation of our plan for Vietnamization if necessary—a plan in which we will withdraw all of our forces from Vietnam on a schedule in accordance with our program, as the South Vietnamese become strong enough to defend their own freedom."

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Vietnamization of the War

by Cameron Cole - Wednesday, May 29, 2013, 11:12 PM

The reason why American lagged in getting out of Vietnam was because communist aggression was spreading like a wildfire, along with South Vietnamese failure to uphold their country. President Richard Nixon's strategy he introduced called Vietnamization was in my opinion a good idea at the time. It was the best alternative that he could propose for Vietnam. Nixon was aiming to end American involvement in the Vietnam by transferring all military accountabilities to South Vietnam. This was a great theory because it built up South Vietnam's military strength in order to facilitate a gradual withdrawal of all American troops. This idea would also prepare the South Vietnamese to take full responsibility of their country and to defend against the communist growth in that region. Even though in 1975, when South Vietnam fell to the North, I still feel as though Nixon's decision was the correct one. In regards to troop withdrawals from Vietnam, I believe that both of the withdrawal processes and Vietnamization were definitely complements of each other because Vietnamization was a process created to make the absence of the American troops. Without some sort of idea, the withdrawal of American troops would have been very difficult. Both ideas were essential to each other because they both were premises for each other.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Vietnamization of the War

by John Howland - Friday, May 31, 2013, 6:17 PM

You know those words, "communist aggression was spreading like a wildfire", make me laugh until I remember how innocent people were hunted down in this country by a madman named Joseph McCarthy. I would guess the North Vietnamese would have said "capitalistic aggression was spreading like wildfire". Are we saying that people can only believe in one form of government? I guess today we've changed communist into Muslim, even though Catholics have killed as many if not more innocents throughout history. We must stop using general terms to describe those we disagree with and we have to stop making the opposition out to be the Devil incarnate.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Vietnamization of the War

by Jon-wesley McLeod - Sunday, June 2, 2013, 8:32 PM

"If you're not with us then you're against us" right? People definitely like to separate and classify things into groups including cultures, ideologies, nations, etc. Humans have a tendency to see differences rather than similarities and exclude instead of include. I don't think American politicians really broke down why communism was so appealing to people in other countries. If I was a poor peasant, working the land that many generations before I did for simple earnings, and was taxed heavily by an unforgiving greedy landlord I might be inclined to hear what the communist revolutionary might say. "Hey we are gonna come by and give you a bigger plot for your family, take out that landlord, redistribute things taken" I would probably support them. The PBS documentary showed East Germany using North Vietnamese footage for anti-capitalist propaganda films for resisting the colonialist empires expansion against people's sovereignty. Pretty much the same thing we've heard against communists since the end of WWII. Unfortunately, we know what can/will happen with communist take over with horrible examples from the Khmer Rouge, China, and Russia's revolutions. They usually end up a society with a great distance between the have and have-nots with a military form of authoritarian government and a secret police. I think Americans are very proud of our system and push other forms of government aside as second rate even though there have been remarkable societies with alternative forms of governing throughout history.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Vietnamization of the War

by John Howland - Sunday, June 2, 2013, 9:40 PM

As with any form of government looks great on paper and then once you add greedy humans into the mix that's when it goes south. You could say the same about this country, we have a society with a great distance between the have and have-nots with an almost military form of authoritarian government and a secret police. Don't be deluded in thinking that they are not hiding a lot from us. Look at what happened when GWB decided to go to war with Iraq, if you think about it you can directly correlate what he did to what Nixon did. He twisted the authority Congress gave him just like what Nixon did. The truth is that no society can use one form of government, only with a mixture can we have a truly fair society.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Vietnamization of the War

by Jon-wesley McLeod - Sunday, June 2, 2013, 11:39 PM

Yeah, I always thought that w.m.d.s in Iraq and the Tonkin incident are eerily similar in the "justifications" used to go to war. Bush also pretty much ignored the U.N. and waged war without proof and based mainly on speculation. I absolutely agree that societies need a mixture of ideologies to perform at its best, but at least we have some individual rights in America that other countries don't grant their citizens like freedom to debate. One of the last stories in the Appy book was from Thai Dao and he was talking about a Westminster, California (Little Saigon) video store owner who put up a picture of Ho Chi Minh and the North Vietnamese flag in his shop in 1999. I grew up down there and was a senior in high school when it was all over the news and people were pissed off. Blocking his store for weeks and generally protesting his actions but all I could think was *this is America*, he is allowed to put it up even if it is offensive, but people also have the right to protest and boycott as well. Eventually the police got him for pirating tapes, something that probably wouldn't have happened if there wasn't an uproar but did to appease the locals.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Vietnamization of the War

by Hao Qiu - Sunday, June 2, 2013, 2:21 PM

"Communist aggression was spreading like a wildfire," nice point. It was true that the North Vietnam was becoming strong and more aggressive. So Nixon was trying to, and he had to, withdraw the American troops out of the Vietnam to make sure soldiers get back home. And he really did a right choice.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Vietnamization of the War

by Cameron Cole - Sunday, June 2, 2013, 7:55 PM

When Nixon saw that North Vietnam was becoming more powerful he needed to rebuttal that with some aggressive action. He did what was

necessary at the time, even though it was not successful as he wanted he did what he thought was right at the time

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Vietnamization of the War

by John Howland - Sunday, June 2, 2013, 9:45 PM

Do you think they were becoming more aggressive due to what the US was doing? What would you do if a country invaded America? Would you fight with the last ounce of your strength? Would you kill any invader you came upon?

Sum of ratings: (1)

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What problems surfaced to hamper efforts to conclude the war?

by Georgia Haskell - Thursday, May 30, 2013, 3:51 AM

The problems that surfaced when trying to end the war started with both sides not willing to negotiate a peace treaty. The north wanted all American troops to pull out and Theiu removed from power. The South wanted North Vietnamese troops out of the south and continued American support. The next problem was the invasion and bombing of Cambodia and the turmoil and division it caused in America. Along with the release of secret documents proving unknown war activities by the American Government gave the North Vietnamese the idea that if they just held out a little longer the Americans would leave because of the anti-war movement.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Was president Nixon right...?

by Georgia Haskell - Thursday, May 30, 2013, 4:02 AM

Was President Nixon right in de-coupling Vietnamization and American Troop withdrawals from negotiations or were the two strategies essential complements to each other?

I think that they go hand in hand. Remove American troops and clearly Vietnamization will happen no matter what. They will be left to fend for themselves and it will be up to them. I think it didn't matter. He just had to word things in whatever way would make both side's compromise and sign the peace agreement. I think he was wrong in secretly committing to continue aiding them when he had no way of following through with that.

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Sum of ratings:1 (1)



Re: Was president Nixon right...?

by Elizabeth Gambia - Sunday, June 2, 2013, 5:14 PM

I agree. Vietnamization and American troop withdrawals truly do go hand in hand. As you stated, without American troops, the Vietnamese would have been forced to fend for themselves, thus catalyzing Vietnamization.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Was president Nixon right...?

by Cameron Cole - Sunday, June 2, 2013, 8:33 PM

I also agree these two plans definitely go hand in hand with each other. One can not function without the other

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Was president Nixon right...?

by David Hartness - Sunday, June 2, 2013, 10:02 PM

There was really nothing else Nixon could do if he decided to withdraw the USA from the war. Vietnamization would have to take place when we pulled out of Vietnam, what else could the South Vietnamese do without US?

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Vietnamization of the War

by Jon-wesley McLeod - Friday, May 31, 2013, 3:11 PM

I like how Nixon broke down and addressed individual issues or questions regarding American involvement the Vietnam War and explained his support of former presidents' policies, especially since he ran on an anti-communist platform. The way he explained his inheritance of an ongoing conflict didn't sound like he was blaming former decisions but coping with a complex problem. I think Nixon lost credibility when he summarized the history of North Vietnam beginning fifteen years prior to the speech. Basically stating that they were propped up by Russia and China to overtake free South Vietnam and start an authoritarian communist state ultimately controlled by Moscow. Although there are some truths to his speech, we know there are much more interweaving complexities in the relationships between all parties involved. Vietnam was split in '54 without their sovereignty, only ten years before Nixon's

history starts.

Two main problems that hampered the efforts of peace in my view were the disagreement in varying Americans' ideas about how to honorably end the war. How will America save face with the amount of investments it had in Vietnam? The amount of soldiers killed, the money spent, and the years of hardline ideology didn't equal what was gained from the war. America looked fallible in the eyes of the world and most embarrassing to some, the Eastern Bloc and China. The other problem with Nixon ending the war was North Vietnam's understanding of American politics. By waiting it out and essentially driving Nixon crazy with his own personality, North Vietnam played the power struggle between Kissinger and Nixon while deepening the schism between Thieu's independent position in the talks, resistant to concession, but ultimately required support of America to hold out. With the deadline of re-elections coming and the Senate finally taking more of a stand against executive orders, Nixon was starting to feel the pressure to concede more demands to North Vietnam in the efforts of ending the war even if it meant breaking promises to our allies in South Vietnam.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Vietnamization of the War

by Jon-wesley McLeod - Friday, May 31, 2013, 3:35 PM

To say if Nixon was correct in separating Vietnamization and American troop withdrawal from negotiations is tough. Could we have kept the same amount of U.S. forces in country and have ARVN take the brunt of the load? I don't know. I think American troop withdrawal was necessary on the NLF and North Vietnam's platform for peace and vital to their eventual plans of reunification as their original goal. I think even if they weren't in the original talks, the pressing issues of both influenced ideas in the politicians shaping the peace treaty.

A description of Nixon's Vietnamization after the signing of the Paris agreements says "Although he had succeeded in buying some time for Vietnamization, he had never built a base of public support to uphold the standards he had set for peace with honor. In the end, his standards had to give way to public unwillingness to invest more resources in a losing cause." (Herring. 319)

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Re: Vietnamization of the War

by Cameron Cole - Sunday, June 2, 2013, 8:07 PM

I disagree with the opinion about Nixon's idea being tough; about the spreading Vietnamization and American troop withdrawal. Getting the troops out of that country and beginning to strengthen the south to maintain their own country was definitely the most appropriate action that needed to be made. The United

States needed to withdrawal at some point, and regardless our departure would have been looked down on. At-least Nixon attempted to restructure and build up the South to try to help a country who has done nothing good for America. I do agree somewhat with your idea about leaving "some" U.S troops in the country to help the ARVN, but not for long term. It should have been done at a slow/progressive rate, it would have made the transition alot easier for the south to handle.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

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Re: Vietnamization of the War



by Jon-wesley McLeod - Sunday, June 2, 2013, 9:19 PM

Nixon was not the only president that wanted to strengthen ARVN and put the emphasis on the South Vietnamese. Johnson said "We are not about to send American boys 9 or 10 thousands miles away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves" and we know that's not what happened. The U.S. have been trying unsuccessfully for years to help as you put it "a country that has done no good for America" with training expertise, billions of squandered dollars, thousands of troops killed, and national turmoil so they can have their own autonomy. It may have been misguided and a disaster but the intentions were to help a fellow free-democratic nation from aggression, something that nations have been doing for their allies for centuries. But I believe the original question was about separating those ideas from negotiations with the North Vietnamese in peace talks. It also wasn't my idea to leave "some" troops, it was the U.S. governments. I was just restating the facts and explaining how I wasn't sure if slow withdrawal would do anything different in the end other than cause more eventual American deaths and a temporary setback for the inevitable fall of Saigon. We needed to withdrawal, absolutely, but Nixon was concerned with the best way to save face and to do both while thinking about re-election and his legacy was tough. Presidents are elected to those positions to make decisions that have far reaching effect; power that not a lot of people can handle and they can be completely wrong sometimes. Like the North Vietnamese said "if you couldn't win with an extra half a million Americans, what are the ARVN gonna do?"

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

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current article about UO grad elected to Vietnam politburo



by Jon-wesley McLeod - Friday, May 31, 2013, 4:16 PM

HANOI (Reuters) - Vietnam's ruling Communist Party has appointed for the first time a U.S.-educated official to its powerful politburo, a landmark decision as pressure mounts to reform an economy stagnating after years of boom growth.

The top decision-making body of the party that has ruled Vietnam since 1975 voted to increase its membership and bring in Nguyen Thien Nhan, a deputy prime minister overseeing education, health and technology, it said on its website (dangcongsan.vn).

Nhan, 59, a former vice mayor of Ho Chi Minh City, received a master's degree in public policy at the University of Oregon in 1993 and joins an elite group long dominated by politicians educated locally or in the former Soviet Union.

Vietnam's ruling party is facing its toughest economic challenges in years and has vowed reforms to tackle crippling debt in its banking system, and mismanagement at scores of cash-sapping state-owned firms.

Economists say policymakers have acted effectively to rein in inflation but have been too slow, or reluctant, to implement the sweeping structural changes needed to revive what was a promising "tiger" economy now growing at its slowest pace in 13 years, and put Vietnam back on foreign investors' radar.

Vietnam's economy is hamstrung by weak credit growth and consumer demand that has forced 113,000 businesses to close since 2011, when inflation soared to over 20 percent and foreign investors delivered only a sixth of the \$64 billion pledged.

The politburo also elected its second female member, Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, deputy chairwoman of parliament. Ngan, also 59, is a former deputy minister of trade and finance. The two appointments will increase the politburo's size to 16 members.

Carlyle Thayer, an emeritus professor at the Australian Defense Force Academy in Canberra said Nhan's selection was likely aimed at boosting Vietnam's image among investors in Europe and the United States.

"Nhan's elevation is a reflection of the risk-adverse leadership in Vietnam," he said. "Despite his promotion and assumption of greater responsibility he is still responsible to the politburo and its consensus decision-making." (Reporting by Martin Petty; Editing by Daniel Magnowski)

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Re: current article about UO grad elected to Vietnam politburo



by John Howland - Friday, May 31, 2013, 5:58 PM

Excellent catch, good job!!

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: current article about UO grad elected to Vietnam politburo



by Georgia Haskell - Sunday, June 2, 2013, 12:15 AM

Ya, I agree with John, excellent catch!! And way to go Oregon Alumni.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Vietnamization of the War

by Elizabeth Gambee - Friday, May 31, 2013, 8:19 PM

A problem that surfaced to hamper efforts to conclude the war was the fundamental fear that precipitate withdrawal would inevitably enable communist take over and massacres in the South. With such rapid removal of American support, atrocities towards civilians by communists would likely prevail.

From an American perspective, sudden removal of support would catalyze our Nation's first defeat in its short history and would result in a severe blow to the world's confidence in American leadership.

Personally, I thought that Nixon was not wise to de-couple Vietnamization and American troop withdrawals from negotiations because, in my opinion, the two strategies definitely complemented one another and were very relevant to each other. Vietnamization required lessening Vietnam's reliance on the United States through transferring the tasks of fighting and directing the war from the U.S. government back over to the Vietnamese government. Clearly, through lessening the presence of the United States military in South Vietnam (withdrawing American troops), Vietnamization would be taking place, hence their relevance to one another. Vietnamization encompassed American troop withdrawal, and American troop withdrawal encompassed Vietnamization as well.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Vietnamization of the War

by Nathaniel Hahn - Sunday, June 2, 2013, 7:18 PM

First I would like to thank you for the feedback on my post in this forum. I also would like to say that I agree with your first paragraph that a problem was fear of a communist takeover if American troops left Vietnam. That does not necessarily mean that it would, but fear of that possibility was a driving force. You are also correct when you state that by withdrawing the American perception would be that of defeat, and would be a blow to the world's confidence in American leadership, and that may very well have been the case if we admitted "defeat and withdrew, but by prolonging the war the way we did, and the turmoil within our government as well, actually had that very effect, the world's confidence in us had taken a blow.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Vietnamization of the War

by Cameron Cole - Sunday, June 2, 2013, 8:23 PM

There were multiple complications that troubled the efforts to conclude the war in Vietnam; one of the main issues was the deception towards the public through the technique of lies and false fabrications between the U.S government and the American military. Dishonesty and false promises is what prompted such a complicated departure, as it would any situation. All parties concerned appeared to be very unwavering in their personal positions on what they thought was the appropriate course of action on how to leave Vietnam. North Vietnam was not even close to complying to Americas idea to unify Vietnam, so they increased their military support against the south which made the South more reliant on the United States staying. Another issue that arose was the misunderstanding of the Fog of War. America was fighting the impossible war to defeat the idea of Communism that could not possibly be broken at that time and by doing so we walked right into the middle of a civil war.

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Re: Vietnamization of the War

by Cameron Cole - Sunday, June 2, 2013, 8:30 PM

I completely overlooked the fact of how America would be looked upon to the world as being weak. That was probably a huge reason why America took so long to get out of Vietnam. America has seen nothing but victory in past wars, and we did not know how to deal with losing one. These were definitely uncharted places where the American has never been before, which is why it took so long (not experienced) but Nixon did what he thought was right because of all the pressure he was under with the American PUBLIC and the world.

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Re: Vietnamization of the War

by David Hartness - Sunday, June 2, 2013, 9:49 PM

America during the Vietnam conflict was considered to be the most powerful nation on the planet. It's hard to face the loss of perceived strength when the world is so divided into factions during the cold war conflict. I can somewhat agree with Nixon's decision to end the war to end the cost of American's burdern of life and treasure.

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Problems Concluding the War

by Jacob Hutchins - Sunday, June 2, 2013, 10:16 PM

When all was said and done I feel the same push and pull within our own political process made withdrawl from Vietnam exceedingly difficult. The need to wothdraw coupled with the pain of losing really dragged everything out. I think Nixon's de-coupling of Vietnamization with troop withdrawl was a mistake; I think negotiating would have been smooter without having the deal with these things as separarte issues. The North clearly had no real interest in settling for much less than what they wanted. When someone has the upper hand I think you need to take the best you can get.

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