

**HOW THE USA GOT INVOLVED IN THE VIETNAM WAR: COUNTDOWN**

1949: Communist China came into being allowing the Vietminh to train in

          China away from French attacks

1950: Truman refused to recognise the Democratic Republic of Vietnam

           Communist China + USSR did recognise Ho’s state

1954: The Battle of [Dien Bien Phu](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/dien_bien_phu.htm%22%20%5Ct%20%22page) – Giap defeated the French force based there; a ceasefire was agreed at Geneva that split Vietnam at the 17th Parallel; France withdrew her military from Vietnam; US promises aid worth $100 million to the anti-communist Diem

1955: The pro-American Ngo Dinh Diem became President of South Vietnam in October. [America](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/america_vietnam0.htm) agreed to train Diem’s army.

1956: Diem started to arrest anyone suspected of being in the Vietminh

1957: the Vietminh started a campaign of guerrilla warfare in South Vietnam

1959: American military advisors were killed in Vietnam – the first US

          casualties; the [Ho Chi Minh Trail](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/ho_chi_minh_trail.htm%22%20%5Ct%20%22page) was first used

1960: the [National Liberation Front](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/national_liberation_front.htm) (NLF) was formed in Hanoi though in the South, they were known as the Vietcong (VC)

1961: US [President Kennedy](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/kennedy_vietnam.htm) pledged extra aid to South Vietnam

1962: The number of US military advisors increased from 700 to 12,000

1963: President Diem was killed in a military coup

          15,000 US military advisors were in South Vietnam

1964: the [Gulf of Tonkin](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/gulf_tonkin_1964.htm) incident; Congress passed the ‘Gulf of Tonkin

          Resolution’; America bombs targets in North Vietnam; NLF   attacked US [air](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/air_warfare_vietnam.htm) bases

1965: ‘Operation Rolling Thunder’ started; first US combat troops were sent to Vietnam in March; by the end of the year there were 200,000 US troops there; first major conventional clash between USA and NVA at Ia Drang