

1967 JCC - South Vietnam

MADMUN XV



Photo by Nick Ut

A letter from the Dias

Dear delegates,

We are thrilled to welcome you to the 1967 JCC South Vietnam committee, where the stakes are high, and the solutions are complex. Our committee will convene on September 1st, 1967, a critical moment in Vietnamese history. This is part of a two-committee Joint Crisis Committee (JCC), meaning your decisions and actions will have a direct impact on the other committee (North Vietnam), and vice versa. The mutually dependent nature of this JCC adds an exciting layer of intricacy and challenge.

Your chairs are Alisa and Varsha, and your crisis staff includes Valery, Maizy, and Isaac. We are incredibly excited to meet you all and hear your innovative ideas and solutions in November! We'll be here to answer questions and guide you through any uncertainties.

This JCC will operate like a regular crisis committee with notes, directives, and crisis updates. The crisis staff will be moving back and forth between the two rooms to communicate crucial information and relay messages from higher-up governmental officials. You will get the opportunity to send notes to the other room, open summits, and elect representatives.

This committee will test your ability to think critically, collaborate effectively, and act decisively. Make sure to respect everyone's ideas and work together to ensure a smooth and productive flow of committee. Remember, the best ideas come from the most enthusiastic collaborations!

To prepare, we require a position paper following standard guidelines to be submitted on each topic before the committee commences. This will help ensure that everyone is well-prepared and ready to dive into the discussions. Remember to write from your character's perspective and to align with their values and viewpoints. If there is not enough information to formulate a comprehensive stance for your character, feel free to interpret your character's background information as you wish to devise their beliefs and ideas. If there is anything that you'd like to add to your character as well, please go ahead. We hope this background guide serves as a valuable resource in your research and preparation.

Since MADMUN is a single-day conference, we hope you will make the most of the time provided to you. We expect you to maintain a high level of decorum and respect for your fellow delegates. Historical context is imperative, so keep the era and global landscape in mind as you prepare your strategies. We eagerly anticipate delegates who bring fresh and inventive ideas to

both the front and back rooms, work harmoniously with their peers, and deliver engaging speeches.

Good luck, and we can't wait to see what you bring to the table!

If you have any questions please reach us at:

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Sincerely,

The South Vietnam Dias

General Introduction

The Vietnam War was one with many intricacies, beginning long before the scope of this committee. There were 6 main factors that laid the groundwork for the Vietnam War, many of which you will read about in this background guide.

1. The Collapse of French Indochina and the subsequent rise of Ho Chi Minh
2. The Battle of Dien Bien Phu
3. The 1954 Geneva Accords
4. The Cold War
5. The Overthrow of Ngo Dinh Diem
6. The Gulf of Tonkin Incident

In this introduction, it is important to specifically recognize the Geneva Accords. **The Geneva Accords** were a collection of documents arising from the Geneva Conference from April to July of 1954. In attendance were representatives from Cambodia, China, France, Laos, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Soviet Union, and North and South Vietnam.

Negotiations began on May 8th, after the French forces fell at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu. Two months later, on July 21st, an agreement was signed by France, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The major point of this agreement was the call for a **ceasefire along the 17th parallel**, essentially splitting Vietnam in two. Each side was given 300 days to retreat to their side of the parallel line. In addition, communist troops were called to evacuate Laos and Cambodia, with free and democratic elections to be held in 1955.

The Geneva Accords were supervised by third-party countries, including representatives from India, Poland, and Canada. The Accords also included **The Final Declaration** which declared that all Vietnamese elections were to be held under the aforementioned committee before July 1956 to reunite the country.

The Accords were set to generally be a success, until the United States made it abundantly clear that they were not bound to it. This led to South Vietnam withholding approval, and essentially axing the Final Declaration from existence. Thus began the lead for the United States government to create their own version of South Vietnam, which had therefore refused to hold nationwide elections with North Vietnam.¹

¹ "The Geneva Accords," *History of Indochina*, Britannica. [Source](#)

The prime minister of South Vietnam at this time was **Ngo Dinh Diem**. He served until 1963 and faced minimal support due to his oppressive policies and corrupt regime. Diem was born into an aristocratic Roman Catholic family which was closely tied to the emperor of Vietnam. He then worked in the emperor's administration under French occupation until 1933. During World War II, he opposed French occupation, but also maintained a stance as very anti-communist, going so far as to refuse Ho Chi Minh's offer to work in his post-war government in 1945.

Following the Geneva Accords, Diem canceled the required election with support from the United States only two years into his reign, as he knew he would lose to Ho Chi Minh in a landslide. A civil disobedience campaign led by Buddhist monks across the country led to Diem brutally persecuting them in an unjust fashion. By this point, his public support was so low, that the United States backed Diem's assassination by Vietnamese generals.²

For the next few years, South Vietnam was without a president. The United States pressured for an election to be held, and finally in 1967 Nguyen Van Thieu was chosen. Previously, he had been a major general who was essentially second in command to the ruling military officer. Before that, he had also participated in the coup that killed Diem. As president he promised democracy, anti-corruption enforcement, and social [reforms](#).

² "Ngo Dinh Diem." Wilson Center Digital Archive. [Source](#)

Topic 1: Soviet Ideology and Influence Domestically

Introduction

By 1967, the Vietnam War was well underway, claiming countless lives and causing substantial turmoil that resonated globally. North Vietnam, or the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), possessed the support and aid of eastern nations, notably the **Soviet Union**. In contrast, South Vietnam received support and aid from Western nations, particularly the **United States**. The DRV embraced Marxist-Leninist principles, and with the support of the Soviet Union, vigorously spread its ideals and sentiments. Conversely, South Vietnam aimed to eradicate communism and promote pro-Western beliefs such as modernization and democratic values. This conflict, sparked by contrasting ideals, was heavily influenced by intervention from the Soviet Union and the United States. Given the aggressive nature of the Vietnam War, what measures can South Vietnam take to counter the accelerating global spread of communism?

Spread of Communist Ideology

The spread of communist ideology laid the groundwork for every event and outcome of the Vietnam War, with its influence breaching not only the government of North Vietnam but South Vietnam as well. In the bigger picture, the Vietnam War was another vessel of the ultimate Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union, and communism fueled it. North Vietnam was deeply injected with communist ideologies, with its government guided by Marxist-Leninist principles under **Ho Chi Minh's** leadership, fueling the territory's desire for independence from French colonial rule and the unification of Vietnam under communist rule. South Vietnam, on the other hand, aimed to eradicate communism and align with Western democratic doctrines.

The Vietnam War was heavily driven by **public opinion** – urging the Northern and Southern Vietnamese governments to vigorously attempt to win the hearts of their populations, using **propaganda** to influence people. Propaganda appeared in many forms, but the most powerful method of swaying the public in Vietnam was through **poster art**. As 80% of the Vietnamese population was determined to be illiterate as of 1945, poster imagery was the most relevant medium for delivering political ideas and inspiring the people. The North used poster art in efforts to build a sense of community and nationalism, spread Ho Chi Minh's teachings in an

idealized manner, and ultimately recruit soldiers to war. The South honed in on promoting anti-communist sensationalism; the US strongly encouraged this, even producing over 23 million propaganda posters and pamphlets for South Vietnam.

Vietnamese education, embodying both the North and South's educational systems, was another object of communist influence. In the North, this involved schools directly teaching about communism, socialism, and the teachings of communist leaders like Ho Chi Minh. Its curriculum was designed to promote communism: It highlighted Vietnam's struggles with imperialism and the history of the Vietnamese revolution, outlining communist virtues that opposed imperialism. In South Vietnamese education, however, the curriculum rather ostracized communism and promoted pro-Western beliefs such as modernization and democratic policies, to align with the policies of the United States and other allies. Essentially, the education systems in North and South Vietnam portrayed communism in contrasting views, displaying how communist influence refracted in different lights and manifested in each region.

Communism also grew roots in Vietnam by latching onto the people's desires for improved economic and agricultural conditions. As a majority of North and South Vietnam's populations were rural and peasant populations, communist policies – particularly **land reforms** and **collectivization policies** – were able to win over them and gain their influence. In North Vietnam, communist-based land reform campaigns redistributed land from large landlords to peasants, encouraging the ideas of social equality and shared ownership, securing loyalty to communism among the rural/peasant population. In addition, the government made collectivization policies; collective farms replaced individual land ownership, further shifting the balance of power from wealthy landowners to the general population. Thus, through the rural community's economic satisfaction, North Vietnam's government injected communism into the majority of its population.

Soviet Support to North Vietnam

Preceding 1967, the Soviets provided military, intelligence, and aid to North Vietnam. The Soviet Union's role in supporting North Vietnam was a crucial one that led to North Vietnam gaining the upper hand. The Soviet Union deployed up to 3,000 troops in Vietnam during this time. They worked to give early warnings to PAVN/VC forces against US B-52 bombers and

were able to alert specific assets to move away from the attack trajectory. These early warnings were able to give assets time to move and minimized both military and civilian casualties.

A large part of the Soviet Union's role was to supply both PAVN and VC forces with medical supplies, artillery, guns, tanks, planes, etc. These supplies were incredibly effective in defeating both American and South Vietnamese forces. Soviet **surface-to-air missiles (SAMs)** were fired at US F-4 Phantoms and were able to shoot them down in 1965. These SAMs were so pivotal that they threatened to halt all air operations over North Vietnam as both South Vietnam and American forces were not prepared to retaliate against them.

The **Vostok Program** was a counter-intelligence and espionage program funded and created by the Soviet Union for North Vietnam. It included three groups of operations: Radio counter-espionage, radio intelligence, and secure communications. Radio counter-espionage pertained to identifying and locating the sources of enemy radio broadcasts in order to neutralize enemy espionage efforts. Additionally, this operation was used to decipher and monitor messages sent to and from enemy spies. Radio intelligence referred to collecting and decoding diplomatic communications in order to utilize information that could be useful in the war effort. The secure communications operation was in order to be able to send secure info between Soviet, PAVN, and VC forces.

Impact on South Vietnam

The Viet Cong used many instances of terror, intimidation, murder, kidnapping, and torture in order to hold power over South Vietnam and erode morale. By October 1961, the VC was killing South Vietnamese civilians at a rate of 1,500 a month. The Soviet Union supported the VC in these terror attacks with weapons and aid. Soviet advisors also helped the VC generate terror tactics and **guerilla warfare** strategies. These tactics and strategies were effective against American and South Vietnamese forces. In official VC documents the use of terror was actually encouraged. The Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) was the North Vietnamese political and military headquarters in South Vietnam. A memo from COSVN in 1965, directed Nguyễn Tài, the chief of security for the Saigon-Gia Định Party Committee, to "exploit every opportunity to kill enemy leaders and vicious thugs, to intensify our political attacks aimed at spreading fear and confusion among the enemy's ranks."

The VC also penetrated South Vietnamese politics, endorsing communism and impairing the SV government. In COSVN Resolution Number 9, produced in July 1969, said: "Integral to the political struggle would be the liberal use of terrorism to weaken and destroy local government, strengthen the party apparatus, proselyte among the populace, erode the control and influence of the Government of Vietnam, and weaken the RVNAF." In South Vietnam, VC controlled areas also put into place **Soviet land reforms**, much like those in North Vietnam. This gained VC support from more rural and poor citizens in South Vietnam. To grow the civilian support of the VC and the disapproval of the SV government, the VC weakened the South Vietnamese economy and disrupted infrastructure. They sabotaged ports where essential goods and materials were being imported and damaged transportation routes to prevent goods from being imported.

The Soviets were responsible for much of the **anti-war propaganda**. This sentiment created a negative view of the US and South Vietnam and heavily influenced efforts for the US to withdraw. The DRV, much like the VC, with Soviet support, propagated communist ideology in the SV government, weakening the government more so.

Questions to Consider

- How did the spread of communism in South Vietnam sway local public opinion and rally support for North Vietnamese forces, and what should SV do to address this?
- What kind of support should South Vietnam seek from the US to strengthen its military capabilities and gain an upper hand against North Vietnamese forces?
- What improvements or reforms could be made to anti-communist propaganda in South Vietnam?
- How can South Vietnam reach out to the rural population and motivate their loyalty to the government?
- What economic policies can South Vietnam implement in order to negate the appeal of communist land reforms?
- How should South Vietnam address and counteract the Soviet-backed terror attacks from the Viet Cong?
- How can South Vietnam use diplomatic strategies to gain international support and increase pressure on the Soviet Union to cease its support to North Vietnam?

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Topic 2: Western Involvement in Vietnamese Conflicts

Introduction

Proxy Wars

A **Proxy War** is defined as “a military conflict in which one or more third parties directly or indirectly support one or more state or nonstate combatants in an effort to influence the conflict’s outcome and thereby to advance their own strategic interests or to undermine those of their opponents.” In simple terms, it is a war in which the main major powers are not directly involved.

³ The United States has had previous experience with Proxy Wars prior to Vietnam, most notably the **Korean War**. The United States and the Soviet Union utilized this war (with the U.S. supporting the South and the USSR supporting the North) to further demonstrate their disapproval of the others’ political and economic ideologies without using any force themselves in the midst of the **Cold War**. It is extremely important to note that this war resulted in virtually *no change* in the original borders between North and South Korea when the war concluded in 1953, and to the present day, no change in ideological alignment. ⁴

With this context in mind, it is important for the representatives in this committee to tread very carefully and consider the past influences of both the U.S. and the USSR. South Korea, which can be compared to South Vietnam in this second Cold War era proxy war, had an astonishing 990,968 civilian casualties, with an additional 621,479 soldiers either killed, injured, missing, or captured.⁵

Gulf of Tonkin

From August 2nd to August 4th of 1964, North Vietnam had two unprovoked attacks on the U.S destroyer ships the *Maddox* and *Turner Joy*. These ships were originally sent into the **Gulf of Tonkin** to intercept North Vietnam communications in support of South Vietnam. At this

³ Proxy Wars are a prominent part of history and oftentimes demonstrate the strength of world powers at the time. [Source](#)

⁴ “U.S. Enters Korean War.” *U.S. Enters Korean War*, National Geographic, 19 Oct. 2023. [Source](#)

⁵ *Host Nation – Republic of Korea*, United Nations Command. [Source](#).

exact same moment, South Vietnam, in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Defense, was on a mission to attack radar stations, bridges, and various targets along the coasts of North Vietnam. They succeeded, and attacked on July 30th and 31st of 1964. The *Maddox* was unrelated to the raids, but observed attack ships and retreated before their prompt return on August 1st.

On August 2nd, the *Maddox* was approached and attacked after sending out warning shots. *Turner Joy* was sent in as reinforcement. By August 4th, the U.S. had intercepted communication which made them believe an attack was coming: in reality, those reports were likely linked to the August 2nd attacks, and that false weather reports and eager reporting led to a miscommunication of danger.

An entire miscommunication regarding two separate western missions led to the Gulf of Tonkin Conflict based on mismatched reports and interceptions. The conclusion of the false August 4th attack proved to be the inciting incident of where this committee is now. The attack led swiftly to the **Gulf of Tonkin Resolution**, allowing the United States President, Lyndon B Johnson, to escalate the U.S. military involvement in Vietnam.⁶

This is another important piece of information to remember when progressing through committee, as the United States tends to have numerous missions occurring at once and, with the size and strength of their military and lack of knowledge of the specific area and customs, can oftentimes make mistakes...

United States Influence

Up until this point, the United States was regarded as both an economic and military powerhouse. Following the disastrous World War I and World War II, the United States came out as one of the only nations unscathed by conflict. France suffered a whopping 567,000 civilian and military casualties. The United Kingdom had 450,700. The Soviet Union? 24,000,000. An absolutely massive amount of lives were lost among these nations, and in particular, the Soviet Union. Around 15,000,000 of these deaths were civilian casualties. The Soviet Union practically lost an entire generation of young men, in addition to millions of civilians. In the meantime, the United States had 418,500 deaths, only 2,000 of them were civilian casualties.

This left the United States on a higher ground than other nations carrying over into the

⁶ "Gulf of Tonkin Incident." [Source](#)

Cold War. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union attempted to regain power and to seize the opportunity of previously Japan-occupied nations. With the economic and military status the United States held, they were seen as an official global powerhouse: an image which only began to wane after the failed Korean War. Leading into the Vietnam War, many Americans still trusted their government and military strength: after all, they were the big winners of the major World Wars. Despite this level of trust, the seeds of doubt began to form.⁷ The French President, Charles de Gaulle, warned JFK prior to the extreme involvement that Vietnam would be a “bottomless military and political swamp.”⁸

As for their impact on war strategy, the United States military and CIA provided training to crack down on around 100,000 communists in Vietnam. Many of them ended up being tortured and killed by the security forces⁹. The South Vietnam army received aid from numerous western countries, while the United States hoped they could guide them through unfamiliar terrain and weather.

Media Influence

The United States also had a large involvement in media influence during the Vietnam war especially as this was the first war to be largely televised. Many Americans saw war in a way they never had before. Because of the advancement of media, we have to address how it affected foreign support and prominently the US.

The more uncensored tone of coverage questions if it caused Americans to feel uneasy about the war, potentially losing the people’s support. “Journalists wrote day-to-day coverage and recorded their stories in the field. This gave Americans a more realistic glimpse into the lives of their soldiers, and they didn’t like what they saw.”¹⁰ In addition, some argue it may have aided the enemy by providing them with information. But, while indeed the media was greatly less censored, there is no proof that it didn’t support America’s involvement in the war¹¹; this being said, it did likely deepen a divide of the population’s support. Some saw the harsh conditions as a reason to remove troops from Vietnam, while others argued that it showed exactly why support was needed.

⁷ “Worldwide Deaths in World War II”. [Source](#)

⁸ “What Went Wrong in Vietnam.” [Source](#)

⁹ “Vietnam War.” [Source](#)

¹⁰ “Vietnam: The First Television War.” [Source](#)

¹¹ “The Vietnam War and the Media.” [Source](#)

Countries Involved in the Vietnam War

There was a wide range of countries who were either directly or indirectly involved in the Vietnam War. The primary country which did *not* want anything to do with the war was France. **France** had previously occupied Vietnam after World War II and was determined to continue their occupation for two reasons: to maintain national pride, and to maintain a hold on its other colonies. This idea was similar to that of Great Britain during the Revolutionary War in the 1700's: to let one colony escape their rule risks a cascading domino effect.

Despite this, rebellion broke out in 1954 by Ho Chi Minh whose military won a decisive victory at Dien Bien Phu (concluding the first Indochina War), fully evicting the French. Henceforth, the French wanted nothing to do with any Vietnam conflicts.

Another western aligned country was **Thailand** which supported United States Combat in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Thailand was the location of multiple major U.S. Air Force Bases that were utilized in bombing, escort, and reconnaissance missions. In addition, over 40,000 Thai troops served on the South Vietnam side of the war, specifically because they wanted economic support from the west, and to prevent communist ideology spreading to their country.¹²

South Korea, previously noted for their own proxy war, also supported South Vietnam in the war by deploying over 320,000 troops throughout the war, in exchange for economic aid from the United States. These soldiers were far from moral, as they killed 9,000 innocent Vietnamese civilians in massacres. These massacres have never since been acknowledged, with specific efforts by their government to prevent civilians from accessing documents related to the incidents.¹³

Australia and New Zealand also supported South Vietnam, with around 60,000 Australian troops present from 1965 to 1971. Both of these nations wanted the United States as a continued ally, and feared communism spreading to other countries. The New Zealand prime minister went as far as to state they provided the "best artillery available in the world," in support of the losing nation.

¹² "How Thailand Played a Key Role in the Vietnam War." [Source](#)

¹³ "It's Time for South Korea to Acknowledge Its Atrocities in Vietnam" [Source](#)

Opinions on the War in South Vietnam

The people of South Vietnam had a variety of views on the war and the involvement of the West. Many of the peasants in South Vietnam despised the war and Western involvement as they saw those countries as violent foreign invaders. This was mainly due to the use of millions of tons of explosives and chemical agents by the Western forces on the South Vietnam countryside in an attempt to eliminate Viet Cong. This decimated villages and farmland in the countryside and caused thousands of peasants to become homeless refugees. Many of these peasants also supported the National Liberation Front (NLF) that sought to overthrow the South Vietnamese government and worked with the Viet Cong.¹⁴

There was also a large group of neutralists who believed that the involvement of other countries in the Vietnam War was negatively impacting South Vietnam. They felt that those countries had no business in Vietnam's internal affairs. However, Neutralists also viewed the anti-war movement in America in a positive light and saw them as potential allies. Monk Titania Khan, a peace activist and neutralist in South Vietnam, even wrote a letter to Martin Luther King Jr., asking him to speak out against the war.

Thirdly, there were Vietnamese Anti-communists who were in support of the war and saw the other countries involved as allies. They approved of the South Vietnamese government and their efforts to fight off the communists. They believed that the spread of communism was dangerous, just like the US did, and saw the war as a step towards stopping it. However, many anti-communists still felt as though other countries weren't respectful of the Vietnamese people, and looked down on them. They thought that the presence of so many Americans was "Americanizing" Vietnamese culture.¹⁵

¹⁴ "The War's Effect on Vietnamese Land and People" [Source](#)

¹⁵ "How Did People in South Vietnam View Americans During the US War in Vietnam?" [Source](#)

Questions to Consider

- What resources should South Vietnam utilize from its foreign allies to best combat North Vietnam?
- What are the potential consequences of getting involved in the second Proxy War involving the United States and the Soviet Union?
- How can the South Vietnam cabinet optimize media usage to garner further support from foreign nations?
- How can the South Vietnam cabinet best use media for domestic support?
- How can the cabinet engage civilians in increasing foreign support?
- What can the cabinet do to ensure maintained allyship with western countries?

Position Descriptions

** Disclaimer: Some positions are chronologically inaccurate. In order to provide interesting and diverse characters we are going to ignore these inaccuracies.*

South Vietnam:

Nguyễn Cao Kỳ - Prime Minister of South Vietnam: South Vietnamese military officer and politician who served as the chief of the Republic of Vietnam Air Force in the 1960s, before leading the nation as the prime minister of South Vietnam in a military junta from 1965 to 1967.

General Duong Van Minh: Otherwise known as “Big Minh,” General Minh was an influential military leader who played a role in the 1963 coup against President Diem and later became President of South Vietnam in 1975

Trương Đình Dzu - Prominent lawyer and presidential candidate for the 1967 election. He advocated for peace negotiations with North Vietnam, which was a controversial stance at the time.

Nguyễn Bá Cẩn - Speaker of the House of Representatives: Involved in legislative processes to support the war effort and government stability

Ngô Đình Nhu - Chief political advisor of South Vietnam's first president: Wielded immense unofficial power, exercising personal command of both the ARVN Special Forces (a paramilitary unit which served as the Ngô family's *de facto* private army)

Phan Huy Quát - Former Prime Minister and senior political figure: He was known for his efforts to reform and stabilize South Vietnam.

Nguyen Xuan Oanh - Economic advisor: Worked on economic policies and reforms to stabilize the South Vietnamese economy during the war.

Trần Lệ Xuân “Madame Nhu” - First Lady: Political Figure known for encouraging women’s rights and her fiery, outspoken personality.

Nguyễn Ngọc Loan: Commander of the Republic of Vietnam National Police from April 1966 to May 1968.

Lê Nguyên Khang - Commander of the Republic of Vietnam Marine Corps.: Important military leader during the Tet Offensive, was well respected and considered to be one of the best commanders.

General Ngô Quang Trưởng - Military General: Most capable/respected South Vietnamese military leader, regarded as the best commander.

Nguyễn Hợp Đoàn - Mayor of Saigon: Was to be the last mayor of Saigon (the capital of South Vietnam) and Governor of Gia Dinh Province, before the fall of Saigon that led to the reunification of Vietnam under the Communist party in 1975.

Nick Ut - Photographer: Was the photographer of the infamous Pulitzer-prize winning image of a 9 year-old girl, Phan Thi Kim Phúc, running down the street after her North Vietnamese occupied village was attacked by Napalm by South Vietnamese forces. He was a reporter for the Associated Press.

United States:

William Westmoreland - US Army General: Commanded American military operations in the Vietnam War from 1964 to 1968.

Arthur J. Goldberg - UN Ambassador: A United States UN ambassador from 1965-1968.

Robert McNamara - United States Secretary of Defense: Was the United States Secretary of Defense until he resigned in 1968, and was extremely influential for the expansion of the Vietnam War.

Neil Sheehan - US reporter for the New York Times: Was a US reporter for the New York Times from 1962 to 1966 and arrived in Vietnam at 25 before becoming disillusioned - he then attempted to convince Americans of the poor nature of the war.