

# Why did America Lose the Vietnam War?

## Guerrilla War

The Viet Cong used the following tactics:

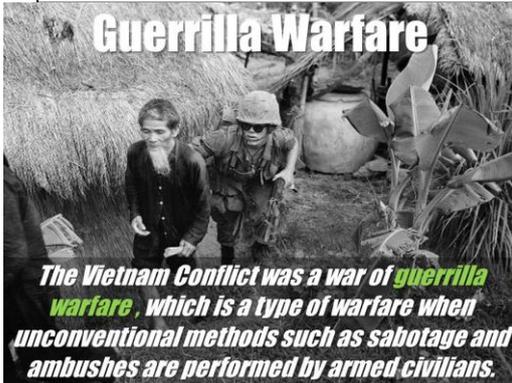
- If the enemy attack – retreat
- Raid all enemy camps
- Attack when the enemy is tired
- If the enemy retreats – follow

The only way to win against guerrilla warfare is to gain the support of the local people. The Vietnamese supported the Viet Cong.

## American Bombing

As casualties among soldiers rose, the Americans launched huge bombing raids that devastated North Vietnam. Chemicals were used to destroy the South Vietnamese jungle where the guerrillas were hiding. Tens of thousands of civilians were also killed. Although the Viet Cong suffered losses in equipment and materials, they were given aid by China and Russia to counter their losses.

The North Vietnamese also hid key industries in remote places and women and children worked to keep supply routes open.



## Loss of American Public Support

The Vietnam War was heavily televised and the images of the death of civilians and destruction of Vietnam did not gain the support of the American public.

Anti-war protests broke out all over the country.

By 1969 the question facing American politicians was how to get out of Vietnam without accepting defeat. The solution was to provide training and equipment for South Vietnamese so that they could replace the American soldiers.

In 1973 a peace treaty was signed which allowed the last American soldiers to leave. However, the Viet Cong did not honour the peace treaty and without American help the South Vietnamese could not stop them. By 1975 South Vietnam had fallen to the Communists.



## Activities

1. Why was guerrilla warfare so successful against the Americans?
2. How did the Viet Cong deal with American bombing raids?
3. Why was public opinion against the Vietnam War?
4. Create a timeline that includes at least 7 events from the Vietnam War.