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# COLD WAR ARMED CONFLICT TIMELINE

Supplementary materials to be used with the Cold War Timeline materials.



## ARMED CONFLICT

PRESIDENT:  
TRUMAN

★  
JUNE 25  
1950

# START OF THE KOREAN WAR

North Korea invaded South Korea. This was the first armed conflict of the Cold War. On July 1, 1950, U.S. forces entered the conflict as part of its containment policy.



*On July 15, 1950, the men of Company D, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 21<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment move away from active fighting. (NARA)*

Domino Theory: The idea that if one nation came under communist control, then nearby nations would also come under communist control, each falling like a row of dominos. The U.S. used this theory to justify its involvement in the Korean War and the Vietnam War, as well as armed interventions in Latin America and Africa.



## ARMED CONFLICT

PRESIDENT:  
EISENHOWER

★  
JULY 27  
1953

# END OF KOREAN WAR

The United States, North Korea, and China signed an armistice, ending the war. However, to date, the Republic of Korea (South) and Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea (North) have not signed a peace treaty. More than 36,000 American service members died in the Korean War.



*On April 18, 1953, American Red Cross workers prepare for a prisoner exchange. They are preparing supplies for liberated prisoners of war. (NARA)*



## ARMED CONFLICT

PRESIDENT: JOHNSON



# OPERATION ROLLING THUNDER

In February 1965, the U.S. Air Force began a bombing campaign of North Vietnam that lasted three years. The operation targeted sites that were strategically valuable to the North Vietnamese. Operation Rolling Thunder

increased opposition to the war in America and most experts agree it did not meaningfully diminish North Vietnam's war capabilities.



*Navy bomber dropping bombs over Vietnam in 1968. (U.S. Navy National Naval Aviation Museum)*



## ARMED CONFLICT

PRESIDENT: JOHNSON

MAR 8  
1965

# AMERICAN TROOPS ARRIVE IN VIETNAM

The first American combat troops landed on the coast of South Vietnam, ten years into the Vietnam War. The arrival of combat troops marked the United States' shift in South Vietnam from a purely economic and advisory role to an active military role.



*Private First Class Fred L. Greenleaf crosses a deep irrigation canal with other members of his company. (NARA, 1967)*



## ARMED CONFLICT

PRESIDENT: JOHNSON

★  
MAR 16  
1968

# MY LAI MASSACRE

U.S. soldiers killed over 300 unarmed South Vietnamese civilians, including women, children, and elderly people.

The soldiers also tortured and mutilated many of the victims. Senior military officials covered up the brutal massacre characterizing the civilian deaths as “small-scale” and accidental. Only in 1969 was the truth of the massacre released to the press, sparking outrage from many Americans. The My Lai Massacre and the cover-up further eroded public trust in the war.



*A burning house in the My Lai village on March 16, 1968.  
(Public domain)*



## ARMED CONFLICT

PRESIDENT: NIXON



# US TROOPS WITHDRAW FROM VIETNAM

The United States formally deactivated the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV). This

marked the full withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam and, for the United States, the end of the Vietnam War. The Vietnam War officially ended in 1975 with the fall of Saigon to North Vietnamese troops. Over 3,000,000 Americans were deployed to Southeast Asia, around 58,000 died, and over 150,000 were wounded.



*On March 31, 1973, a crowd waits to greet repatriated Marine prisoners of war. (NARA)*

# THE COLD WAR: A TIMELINE

