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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCHResearch Memorandum
RFE-14, January 10, 1962SUMMARY OF PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF VIETNAM¹

This Research Memorandum is designed to present in brief narrative form the principal events in the history of Vietnam, particularly since 1945. It lists events decisive in themselves or in Vietnam's evolution to the status of an independent state and indicative of the serious problems the country has faced since independence. While not purporting to be complete or exhaustive, it up-dates and expands considerably an earlier report, IR-6048, Summary of Significant Events in the Histories of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, October 24, 1952. The classification of this report, as in the case of the earlier one, is intended to facilitate wide distribution.

Year (A.D.)

939	Vietnamese achieve independence after one thousand years of Chinese domination.
1284-87	Vietnamese under Tran Hung Dao defeat invasion by Kublai Khan's Mongol forces.
1428	Successful revolt by Le Loi ends second Chinese occupation imposed in 1406.
1470	Vietnamese military defeat of Chams brings about decline of the Champa Empire.
1615	Roman Catholic Jesuit missionary priests establish Christian mission at Faifo.
1649	Alexander of Rhodes, Roman Catholic Jesuit missionary priest in Vietnam, completes catechism in Vietnamese and in 1651 a Latin-Portuguese-Vietnamese dictionary, thus systemizing Romanized transcription of the Vietnamese language from the Chinese.

1. Final analysis of the material contained in this report was concluded on January 6, 1962.

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- 1802 French install Gia Long as emperor of Annam (central Vietnam), Tonkin (northern Vietnam), and Cochinchina (southern Vietnam).
- 1812 Emperor Gia Long formulates Vietnamese legal code.
- 1858 French-Spanish expedition at Tourane.
- 1859 French expedition at Saigon.
- 1862 Northern half of Cochinchina annexed as French colony by Treaty of Saigon (June 5). Annexation of rest of Cochinchina completed by 1867.
- 1883 French protectorates established over Tonkin and Annam.
- 1899 French colonies and protectorates in Indochina merged into an Indochinese Union under French Governor General.
- 1910-11 Modified French penal code and code of criminal procedure introduced in Vietnam.
- 1930 Formation of the Indochinese Communist Party.
- 1931 Arrest of Ho Chi Minh in Hong Kong by the British. Suppression of the Indochinese Communist Party by the French police.
- 1936 French permit the Indochinese Communist Party to operate; suppress it again in 1939.
- 1940 Japanese enter Tonkin (September) and reach agreement with French colonial regime; attempted revolts in Cochinchina suppressed.
- 1941 Vietnamese Communists form the Vietnam Independence League, popularly known as the Viet Minh.
- 1945
- March 9 Japanese take over direct administration from the French.
- March 10 Annam is proclaimed independent under Emperor Bao Dai. Tonkin and Cochinchina subsequently join the new state.
- March 25 French Provisional Government issues statement promising new status for Vietnam.

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1945 (continued)

- August Vietnamese Communists establish "Provisional Democratic Republic of Vietnam" in Tonkin.
- August 13 Japanese surrender to allied forces.
- August 25 Emperor Bao Dai abdicates in favor of the "Democratic Republic of Vietnam."
- September Chinese Nationalist armed forces enter Tonkin.
- September 2 Independence of "Democratic Republic of Vietnam" under Ho Chi Minh's leadership proclaimed at Hanoi; Bao Dai accepts position as its "supreme counsellor."
- September 12 French, British, and Indian military forces arrive in Saigon.
- September 23 French take control of Saigon.
- October 9 French-British pact giving full recognition to French rights in Indochina is signed in London.
- October 25 French begin military and civil operations to reestablish French control over Vietnam.

1946

- January British forces begin departure from Vietnam.
- February 14 French High Commissioner establishes Provisional Consultative Council for Cochinchina.
- February 28 French-Chinese agreement provides for the withdrawal of Chinese forces from Tonkin.
- March 6 French-Vietnamese Communist agreement recognizes Vietnamese Communist regime "as part of the Indochinese Federation and the French Union."
- March 14 Marius Moutet, French Minister of Overseas France, announces "free constitution to be granted to Cochinchina."
- April Bao Dai goes into voluntary exile.

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1946 (continued)

April 19-May 11 Dalat Conference between France and Vietnamese Communist regime to implement agreement of March 6, 1946.

June 1 Provisional Government of Cochinchina is established.

July 6 Fontainebleau Conference held to continue negotiations with Vietnamese Communist regime; suspended without results.

August 1 Second Dalat Conference convoked by French colonial authorities.

September 14 ~~Modus vivendi~~ between France and Vietnamese Communist regime signed at Paris.

November Fighting between French and Vietnamese Communist forces at Haiphong and Langson.

December 19 Fighting breaks out in Hanoi, followed by general warfare and complete breakdown of relations between France and Vietnamese Communist regime.

1947

May French establish administrative committees in Tonkin and Annam to rule areas under control of French troops.

October Name of Provisional Cochinchina Government changed to Provisional Government of South Vietnam; General Nguyen Van Xuan elected president.

1948

June 5 Bao Dai, French High Commissioner Emile Bollaert, and General Nguyen Van Xuan sign Baie d'Along (Ha Long Bay) Agreement to establish State of Vietnam with Bao Dai as Chief of State within the French Union.

June 6 Provisional central government of Vietnam formed by General Nguyen Van Xuan and installed at Hanoi.

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1949

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1950 (continued)

April	Nguyen Phan Long cabinet falls.
May	Tran Van Huu is appointed Prime Minister.
September-October	French forces are defeated at Cao Bang and lose northern border posts except Moncay.
November 3	Bao Dai announces decision to form National Army of Vietnam.
December 19	General de Lattre, newly appointed French High Commissioner in Indochina and Commander-in-Chief of the French Expeditionary Forces in the Far East, arrives in Vietnam; declares a halt to the evacuation of civilians from Hanoi.
December 23	US signs Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement with France, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos for indirect US military aid to Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.
December 26	France, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia sign ten conventions at Pau, France, determining the powers of joint organizations.

1951

January	French-Vietnamese forces defeat Vietnamese Communist forces at the battle of Vinh Yen and consolidate their defenses in the Tonkin delta area.
April 19	At ceremony at Vinh Yen commemorating January victory, General de Lattre pledges to "fulfill independence of Vietnam," and Prime Minister Tran Van Huu pledges "sincere cooperation" with France to defeat the Communist forces.
May 12	Dalat massacres: reprisal assassination of 20 Vietnamese "suspects" by a French Surete officer at Dalat.
July 15	Bao Dai decrees general mobilization of manpower and resources for the war effort.
September 7	US signs agreement with Vietnam for direct economic aid.

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1951 (continued)

- September 8 Delegates from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos participate in the signing of the Japanese Peace Treaty at San Francisco.
- October 15 First call in Vietnam for 15,000 men under mobilization decree.

1952

- April Jean Letourneau, French Minister of State in charge of relations with the Associated States, becomes Minister-resident in Indochina to perform the duties usually assigned to the High Commissioner
- May 1 The strength of the Vietnamese Army, including auxiliaries, is reported to be 125,000 men.
- June Tran Van Huu cabinet is dismissed and Nguyen Van Tam is appointed Prime Minister of Vietnam.
- July US Legation in Saigon is raised to Embassy status. US Ambassador presents credentials to Bao Dai. Vietnamese Embassy established in Washington, D.C.
- September 1 Installation and first meeting of the Provisional National Council of Vietnam.
- September 18 Hung Yen military sector in northern Vietnam transferred from French to full Vietnamese military control.
- October 12 The 200th US ship carrying military aid arrives in Saigon.

1953

- January 9 Prime Minister Nguyen Van Tam reshuffles his cabinet.
- January 25 First local elections held although incomplete and conducted only in pacified areas.
- May 11 Vietnamese piaster is devalued.
- June 6 Prime Minister Nguyen Van Tam announces strength of Vietnam's armed forces to be over 160,000.

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1953 (continued)

July 3 French Government announces it prepared to transfer its remaining powers to Vietnam.

August 28 Bao Dai and President Auriol of France issue communique affirming French intention to complete Vietnam's independence and restating Vietnam's free adherence to the French Union.

October 16 Vietnamese "National Congress" proclaims opposition to Vietnam's adherence to the French Union.

October 30-31 Vice President Nixon visits Vietnam.

1954

January 12 Buu Loc is appointed Prime Minister, succeeding Nguyen Van Tam.

March French-Vietnamese negotiations begin in France for transfer of remaining French powers to Vietnam.

April 10 Bao Dai departs for France from where he governs Vietnam until his deposition by referendum in 1955.

April 26 International conference opens at Geneva to discuss Indochina and Korean situations. Indochina discussions attended by representatives of France, United States, United Kingdom, U.S.S.R., Communist China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and the Vietnamese Communist regime.

April 28 French-Vietnamese declaration that mutual relations will be conducted "on the basis of two fundamental treaties."

May 7 French fortress at Dien Bien Phu surrenders to Vietnamese Communist armed forces.

June 4 Two French-Vietnamese treaties initialed.

June 16 Prime Minister Buu Loc and his cabinet resign.

July 7 Ngo Dinh Diem appointed Prime Minister by Bao Dai.

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1954 (continued)

July 21 Geneva Agreements signed, ending hostilities in Indochina, partitioning Vietnam at 17th Parallel pending countrywide "free general elections by secret ballot" in 1956, pledging France to accord complete independence to Vietnam, and creating International Control Commission (ICC) to supervise implementation of the Agreements. Vietnam and US not signatories. Most Vietnamese Communist military forces subsequently withdraw from south of the parallel.

US unilateral declaration made by Under Secretary of State Walter B. Smith during the concluding plenary session of the Geneva Conference states US 1) "will refrain from the threat or the use of force to disturb" the Geneva Agreements, 2) "would view any renewal of the aggression in violation of the aforesaid agreements with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security," and 3) "shall continue to seek to achieve unity through free elections, supervised by the UN to insure that they are conducted fairly."

August Flow of almost 1,000,000 refugees from North to South Vietnam begins.

August 31 General Paul Ely, French High Commissioner for Indochina, states France is unequivocally committed to support the South Vietnamese government as the legal government in Vietnam and to grant it total independence.

October National Revolutionary Movement, mass political party, is founded.

October 10-11 North Vietnamese Communist regime formally takes control of Hanoi.

November 19 Departure of General Nguyen Van Hinh to France stabilizes the internal political situation.

December 29 France, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos sign agreement in Paris abrogating the 1950 Pau Conventions and dissolving quadripartite bodies established by the Conventions.

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1955

- January 1 US begins to render direct assistance to Vietnam, on the basis of the existing pentagonalateral agreement of December 1950, for support of the Vietnamese armed forces.
- January 24 In an interview with a New York Post correspondent, Prime Minister Diem states that Vietnam would do everything possible to help the ICC and would wait to see whether conditions of freedom existed in Communist North Vietnam at the time stipulated in the Geneva Agreements for holding Vietnam-wide elections.
- February French relinquish command authority over the Vietnamese Army.
- February Prime Minister Diem announces that US MAAG will assist in training the Vietnamese Army.
- February 5 Prime Minister Diem decrees the first of a series of laws initiating important and extensive land reform program.
- February 19 Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty -- with its protocol covering Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos -- comes into force.
- March 7 US-Vietnamese agreement supplements existing economic cooperation agreement of September 1951.
- March 29 Armed non-Communist revolt precipitated in Saigon by the Binh Xuyen political-bandit group, spreading ultimately into large-scale dissidence in the southern provinces with the participation of elements of the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao religious sects.
- March 31 French-North Vietnamese agreement provides for a North Vietnamese Liaison Mission to the ICC to operate in South Vietnam.
- May 10 Prime Minister Diem forms new cabinet composed largely of his own followers.
- May 11 University of Saigon comes under complete Vietnamese control.

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1955 (continued)

- July Communists initiate first overt propaganda moves in South Vietnam by distributing literature signed by North Vietnam's "National United Front."
- July 1 French formally relinquish command authority over the Vietnamese Navy.
- July 7 French formally transfer Nha Trang air base to Vietnamese control.
- July 16 Prime Minister Diem, in referring to Geneva Agreements provision for Vietnam-wide elections, states that the Vietnam Government is "not against the principle of the ballot," that such elections "are effective only with freedom," and that the North Vietnamese Communist regime must prove that it "discontinues totalitarian methods of terror."
- August After a year of refugee migration, almost 600,000 refugees from North Vietnam have been placed in resettlement sites.
- August 9 Prime Minister Diem reiterates Vietnam's support for the "principle of essentially free elections" called for in the Geneva Agreements but states that "nothing constructive will be realized" so long as the North Vietnamese Communist regime does not permit the people "to enjoy democratic freedom and fundamental human rights."
- August 16 Last French High Commissioner in Vietnam departs.
- October Binh Xuyen is defeated as an organized armed insurgent force.
- October 23 National referendum deposes Bao Dai as Chief of State in favor of Prime Minister Diem.
- October 26 Chief of State Diem proclaims Vietnam to be a Republic under his Presidency.
- October 31 President Diem issues his first order to the Vietnamese armed forces as their Supreme Commander.
- December 5 President Diem decrees new Vietnamese nationality law.
- December 12 US Consulate in Hanoi is closed.

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1956

January Army units occupy Tay Ninh, principal Cao Dai political center, leading to break-up of organized Cao Dai armed insurgency. Agreement with Cao Dai leaders on February 28 legalizes Cao Dai religious practices and forbids its political activities as a religious sect.

February 12 Tran Van Soai, leader of an important Hoa Hao faction, surrenders. Ba Cut, another principal Hoa Hao leader, is captured on April 13, leading to break-up of organized Hoa Hao armed insurgency.

March 4 First national elections give the National Revolutionary Movement and other pro-government political parties overwhelming majority in Vietnam's first national legislature, the National Constituent Assembly.

March 15 Inaugural session of the National Constituent Assembly.

April 6 Vietnam Government announces it will continue to cooperate with the ICC and reiterates its position of supporting Vietnam-wide elections at such time as conditions in Communist North Vietnam permit genuinely free voting.

April 28 French Military High Command in Vietnam is dissolved.

June 5-10 French Parliamentary delegation visits Vietnam.

July 6-7 Vice President Nixon visits Vietnam.

July 30 Vietnamese Liaison Mission to ICC is established preparatory to the transfer of functions from the French Liaison Mission.

September 14 President Diem reshuffles his cabinet.

September 19 French Air Force officially transfers the Tourane air base to Vietnamese control.

October 26 Vietnam's first constitution promulgated and National Constituent Assembly officially transferred into a National Assembly.

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1956 (continued)

- November 11-12 Typhoon disaster in Mekong River delta provinces.
- November 16, 20 Radio Hanoi broadcasts admit peasant resistance and armed clashes in North Vietnam's Nghe An province. On November 29, President Diem denounces the North Vietnamese Communist regime's military actions in Nghe An province as a violation of human rights and a forceful suppression of persons wishing to move to the southern zone and urged the UN to take the matter under consideration; Vietnam also protests to the ICC, charging the North Vietnamese Communist regime with violation of Article 14c of the Geneva Agreements.
- December 28 Nguyen Ngoc Tho confirmed by National Assembly as Vietnam's first Vice President, following his appointment by President Diem.

1957

- February 22 Attempted assassination of President Diem at rural fair in Ban Me Thuot by a Cao Dai adherent.
- March 5 President Diem enunciates new national investment policy.
- March 27-April 4 Asian People's Anti-Communist League holds its third conference in Saigon. Vietnam established as site of permanent secretariat.
- April 11 Lucien Cannon, Chief of the Canadian Delegation to the ICC, is murdered.
- May 2 National military conscription program decreed.
- May 5-19 President Diem visits the United States.
- June French naval and air force training mission withdrawn.
- July 29 US establishes consulate at Hue.
- August 15-19 President Diem visits Thailand.
- September 2-9 President Diem visits Australia.

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1957 (continued)

September 18-22 President Diem visits the Republic of Korea.

October 22 Bombing of US MAAG and USIS installations in Saigon; US personnel injured.

November 4-8 President Diem visits India.

November 12 Formal opening of the University of Hue.

1958

January 4 Large Communist guerrilla band attacks rubber plantation north of Saigon, reflecting steady increase in Communist armed activities since mid-1957.

February 20 Fire sweeps Gia Kiem refugee resettlement center leaving 20,000 persons homeless.

February 26 President Diem announces cabinet changes.

March 19-23 President Diem visits the Philippines.

April 26 Vietnam Government declaration on concrete measures to be taken by North Vietnam in order to create conditions for the holding of free elections as stipulated in the Geneva Agreements.

May 17 North Vietnamese Liaison Mission to the ICC withdrawn from Saigon.

August 10 Large Communist guerrilla force attacks in Tay Ninh.

September 10 Vietnamese-French agreement signed providing French aid for the Vietnam Government's agrarian reform program.

November 6-7 President Rhee of the Republic of Korea visits Vietnam.

1959

February 15-18 Roman Catholic Church in Vietnam holds Marian Congress. Presided over by Papal Legate Cardinal Agagianian.

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1959

- March 19-22 President Prasad of India visits Vietnam.
- April 22-26 President Garcia of the Philippines visits Vietnam. Vietnam-Philippines treaty of friendship signed on April 26.
- May 13 Japan and Vietnam sign World War II reparations agreement.
- June 11 Vietnam-Laos agreements (six) on minorities, border control, commerce and finance, and suppression of smuggling signed in Vientiane.
- July Vietnam Government publishes official publication, Violations of the Geneva Agreements by the Viet Minh Communists. Annual installments published in July 1960 and May 1961.
- July 8 Communist guerrillas attack Vietnamese military base at Bien Hoa, killing and wounding several US MAAG personnel.
- July 10 In Belgian Communist publication Red Flag, Ho Chi Minh, head of the North Vietnamese Communist regime, states "we are building socialism in Vietnam, but we are building it in only one part of the country, while in the other part we still have to direct and bring to a close the middle-class democratic and anti-imperialist revolution."
- August 3-5 Crown Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia visits Vietnam.
- August 7 Trans-Vietnam railroad inaugurated.
- August 14 Thai-North Vietnamese Red Cross organizations sign agreement to repatriate Thailand's Vietnamese refugee minority to North Vietnam.
- August 30 Second national elections give the National Revolutionary Movement and other pro-government political parties overwhelming majority in the National Assembly.
- December 18-21 King and Queen of Thailand visit Vietnam.

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1960

January Large Communist guerrilla band attacks Vietnamese army installation in Tay Ninh, indicating growing size and aggressiveness of Communist guerrilla-subversive apparatus and initiating the present security crisis.

In an article in Hoc Tap, journal of the Communist Party (Lao Dong) in North Vietnam, General Vo Nguyen Giap, head of the North Vietnamese armed forces, states "the North has become a large rear echelon of our army" and "the North is the revolutionary base for the whole country."

January 15-19 President Diem visits the Republic of China.

February 15-19 President Diem visits Malaya.

March Communist guerrilla force attacks leprosarium in Bien Hoa province.

President Diem inaugurates first agrovillage in Phong Dinh province.

March 24 Vietnamese-French agreement on outstanding financial and properties issues and on trade relations.

June 9 Burmese parliamentary delegation arrives in Saigon.

June 10 Chinese and other foreign Asian congregations in Vietnam are dissolved.

July 20 Vietnam National Assembly delegation leaves Saigon for six-week visit to the United States.

September 5-10 3rd National Congress of the Lao Dong Party is held in Hanoi, with considerable attention devoted to South Vietnam.

On September 5, in addressing the opening of the Congress, Ho Chi Minh states "the North is becoming more and more consolidated and transformed into a firm base for the struggle for national reunification."

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1960 (continued)

September 5-10 (continued)

On the same day, Le Duan, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party, in delivering the Committee's political report, states 1) one of the "momentous tasks" of the Party is "to liberate the South from the atrocious rule of the US imperialists and their henchmen;" 2) "we must constantly intensify our solidarity and the organization and education of the people of the South;" and 3) "the southern people's revolutionary struggle" combines varied forms ranging "from elementary to advanced, legal, and illegal" and aims at drawing "the masses of the people into the common struggle against the US-Diem clique."

On September 10, the resolution adopted by the Congress declares clearly that an "immediate task" of the "revolutionary struggle of our compatriots in the South" is to overthrow President Diem's government.

October Series of attacks by large Communist guerrilla force in the Kontum-Pleiku area.

October 18 President Diem announces cabinet changes.

November 8 Secretary of State for the Presidency, Nguyen Dinh Thuan, declares in a press conference that Communist guerrilla attacks in the Kontum-Pleiku area in late October were staged from bases in the "North" through Laos in preparation for further actions in Vietnam and that events in Laos had facilitated communist movements in Vietnam.

November 10 Vietnam Government sends letter to the ICC charging that communist attacks in Kontum-Pleiku area in late October 1) involved regular army forces from Communist North Vietnam through Laos, 2) constitute open aggression which was well prepared, commanded by high-ranking officers, and conducted by regular forces trained in North Vietnam, and 3) employed weapons made in North Vietnam or other Communist countries.

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1960 (continued)

November 11-12 Abortive coup attempt by small group of junior and middle grade military officers and certain political opposition elements.

November 25-28 Vice President Macapagal of the Philippines visits Vietnam.

1961

January 18-19 Vietnam participates with the Philippines and the Republics of Korea and China in foreign ministers conference in Manila.

January 29 Radio Hanoi praises establishment of the "National Front for Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSV)," allegedly founded in December 1960. On January 30, Radio Hanoi, quoting the press organ of the Communist Party (Lao Dong) in North Vietnam, states the "sacred historical task" of the NFLSV is "to overthrow the US-Diem clique" and "to liberate the south."

February 6 President Diem announces intention to reorganize the government.

April In an article in the Lao Dong Party's journal Hoc Tap, Truong Chinh, member of the Politburo of the Lao Dong Party, states 1) the "two strategic responsibilities of the Vietnamese revolution" are "to carry out the socialist revolution in North Vietnam" and "to liberate South Vietnam from the ruling yoke of the US imperialists and their henchmen" and 2) "southern compatriots have to rise and group themselves under the fighting banner of the Liberation Front to destroy the US-Diemist regime."

April 3 US-Vietnam Treaty of Amity and Economic Relations signed in Saigon. National Assembly ratifies treaty on June 14.

April 9 President Diem and Vice President Tho elected by outstanding majority in Vietnam's first presidential elections.

April 29 President Diem sworn in for second term.

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1961 (continued)

May 11-13 Vice President Johnson visits Vietnam.

Vietnam-US communique on May 13 states 1) both governments will extend and build upon existing programs of military and economic aid, 2) Vietnam's regular armed forces will be increased with US assistance, 3) US will provide assistance for the entire Civil Guard, 4) US military experts will be used to assist Vietnam's armed forces in health, welfare, and public works activities at the village level, and 5) special group of US economic and fiscal experts will be sent to Vietnam to work out financial plan as basis for joint efforts.

May 17 Vietnamese delegation, led by Foreign Minister Mau, arrives in Geneva to participate in 14-nation conference on Laos.

May 29 President Diem announces cabinet reorganization.

June 19 US Special Financial Group headed by Dr. Eugene Staley arrives in Saigon.

June 24 ICC decides it has competence to investigate complaints of actions contrary to Articles 10, 19, 24, and 27 of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Vietnam of the Geneva Agreements.

July 8 Attempted assassination of US Ambassador Frederick E. Nolting.

July 14-16 Large Communist guerrilla force defeated in Kien Phong province.

July 24 Two National Assembly deputies assassinated by Communist guerrillas.

August 14-16 Large Communist guerrilla force defeated in Kien Tuong province.

September 1-4 Series of attacks by 1,000 Communist guerrillas in Kontum province.

September 18 Large Communist guerrilla force attacks capital of Phuoc Thanh province.

October Mekong River floods large sectors of delta area.

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1961 (continued)

October 1 Col. Hoang Thuy Nam, head of the Vietnam Liaison Mission to the ICC, kidnapped by Communist guerrillas; dead body recovered on October 17.

October 18 President Diem decrees state of national emergency.

October 18-25 General Maxwell D. Taylor mission to Vietnam.

October 24 Vietnam Government letter to the ICC charges the North Vietnamese Communist regime with organizing and carrying out "elaborate and intensive" program of subversion, terror, and direct aggression against Vietnam.

October 26 In his National Day message to the Vietnamese people, President Diem stresses theme of national emergency and need for greater effort and dynamic solidarity against "Communist imperialism."

President Kennedy sends letter to President Diem citing the historic courage of the Vietnamese people and outstanding achievements of the Republic of Vietnam. In noting the "suffering, destruction, and death which Communism has brought to Vietnam," President Kennedy again reaffirms US determination "to help Vietnam preserve its independence, protect its people against Communist assassins, and build a better life through economic growth."

November 17 Secretary of State Dean Rusk states in a press conference "the determined and ruthless campaign of propaganda, infiltration, and subversion by the Communist regime in North Vietnam to destroy the Republic of Vietnam and subjugate its peoples is a threat to the peace. The independence and territorial integrity of that free country is of major and serious concern not only to the people of Vietnam and their immediate neighbors but also to all other free nations." He again reaffirms US determination "to help Vietnam preserve its independence" and notes there has been "an acceleration of deliveries" of US defense assistance to Vietnam.

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1961 (continued)

December 8

US Department of State issues official publication, A Threat to the Peace: North Vietnam's Efforts to Conquer South Vietnam, documenting North Vietnam's direction and support of the Communist guerrilla-subversive war against the Republic of Vietnam through the infiltration of espionage agents, military personnel, weapons, and supplies.

Secretary of State Dean Rusk states in a press conference 1) the publication "shows clearly that the North Vietnamese Communists have repeatedly violated the Geneva Accords" and "makes it clear that South Vietnam needs additional help in defending itself," 2) the US "is now taking steps to help South Vietnam develop the military, economic, and social strength needed to preserve its national integrity," and 3) calls upon other nations to "join us in providing assistance to South Vietnam until such time as the Communists have halted their acts of violence and terror."

President Diem signs decrees establishing provincial advisory councils and raising allowances for armed forces and Civil Guard personnel.

December 11

USNS CORE arrives in Saigon.

December 15

President Diem-Kennedy correspondence released simultaneously in Saigon and Washington. President Diem states Communist authorities in North Vietnam "have never ceased to violate the Geneva Agreements" and "have resorted to terror in their efforts to subvert our people, destroy our government, and impose a Communist regime upon us." His country, therefore, "now faces what is perhaps the gravest crisis in its long history" and appeals for "further assistance from the US if we are to win the war now being waged against us." President Kennedy responds the US "shall promptly increase" its assistance to Vietnam's "defense effort as well as relieve the destruction of floods" and "if Communist authorities in North Vietnam will stop their campaign to destroy the Republic of Vietnam, the measures we are taking to assist your defense efforts will no longer be necessary."

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1961 (continued)

December 15 (continued)

Chinese Communist military mission, headed by Marshall Yeh Chien-ying, arrives in Hanoi. Departed December 31.

December 22

Communist guerrillas kill a member of US MAAG during ambush of a Vietnamese Army vehicle.

December 29

President Diem signs 10 decrees on fiscal reforms.

1962

January 4

US-Vietnam communique released simultaneously in Washington and Saigon announces "a broad economic and social program aimed at providing every Vietnamese with the means for improving his standard of living." Communique also states "increased US assistance for both immediate economic and social measures and longer-range development reflects the confidence of the US Government in the future of free Vietnam" and welcomes assistance from "other governments in carrying forward these programs."

January 6

American civilian employee of an American corporation under contract to USOM fatally wounded in a Communist guerrilla ambush.

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Selected List of Special Celebrations and National Holidays

Tet or Lunar New Year	Celebrated on the last day of the twelfth month and the first 3 days of the first month of the lunar calendar.
Trung Sisters Anniversary	Celebrated on the sixth day of the second month of the lunar calendar.
Anniversary of Buddha	Celebrated on the full moon of the fifth month of the lunar calendar.
January 3	President Ngo Dinh Diem's birthday.
May 1	Labor Day.
July 7	"Double Seven" Day or anniversary of Ngo Dinh Diem's appointment as Prime Minister in 1954.
September 28	Anniversary of Confucius.
October 26	National Day or anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Vietnam in 1955.
November 2	Memorial Day for the War Dead.

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