

Why did australia become involved in the vietnam war

[War](#), [Vietnam War](#)



The Vietnam War which went from 1965 to 1975 involved America and its allies, including Australia, aiming to prevent South Vietnam from an invasion by the communist North Vietnamese. There were many key reasons for Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. The Americans provided valuable support when they arrived at our aid during the WWII so Australia felt a responsibility to return a favour to the US to maintain healthy foreign relations. Australia also became implicated in the war due to the threat posed by the expansion of communism, known as the "Domino Effect".

On the political front Australia was also very anticommunist and believed to stop the war arriving at our front step we should use the forward defence approach. For these reasons Australia found itself entrenched in an exhausting war. Australia was in a position where it needed to think about its countries welfare, and its responsibility to America. After World War I Australia knew it could not defend itself against any enemy on its home ground, so Menzies sought to strengthen Australia's relationships with United States and Britain relying on "great and powerful friends".

The ANZUS treaty (1951) and the SEATO treaty (1954) were a way to create a closer link to America, although it does not say that US must help Australia's it gives them a closer relationship. The SEATO treaty linked the United states, Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Pakistan and the Philippines this gave Australia strong alliances with nations equally apposed to the communist 'disease' in South East Asia. Australia as a nation was fearful of the 'reds under the beds' and it had a strong belief in the merits of Eisenhower's Domino Theory.

The Domino effect meant that after Vietnam had fallen, the surrounding countries would follow, just like a row of Dominoes eventually leading to Australia. The expansion of communism was a great threat to Australia as its proximity to South East Asia intensified Australia's position on anti-communism. The isolation Australia faced meant the government had to halt the "Domino effect", Menzies supported this belief in 1964, when he stated "If these countries collapsed [Laos and South Vietnam], there would be grave threat to Thailand and the whole of South-East Asia would be put at risk. The domino theory influenced Australia's actions and decisions mainly in the troops Australia sent to Vietnam in 1960's. The fear of communism eventually overtaking Australia was initially the main reason for Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. Sir Robert Menzies was elected Prime Minister of Australia in 1949 and maintained leadership for sixteen years. Menzies wanted to achieve a better lifestyle for all Australians and was bitterly opposed to communism. In comments mr Leechman asked for examples and to work on the paragraph) Australia wanted to stop communism and stop the communism ripple effect occurring, with the forward defence policy Australia could ensure its safety. Forward defence is meeting any threats to Australia as far away from the mainland as possible. Menzies was having troubles getting the public to agree on his anti communism views so he created the fear of 'reds under the bed' which got him enough support from the public to support his campaign.

Australia first started its campaign in 1962 when it sent 30 advisers called 'the team' into Vietnam, Australia later sent land and air fighters. Australian

troops in Vietnam reached the largest in 1964 with 8, 000 troops Australia's military status was growing and seeing the small country of Vietnam Australia wanted to ' flex its military muscle'. Australia's government was uneducated of Vietnam's history of defeating the French and killing 50, 000 of Americas men.

It only saw Vietnam as a small threat that could be easily eliminated with the help of ' great and powerful friends'. Australia learnt its lesson and was beaten in Vietnam. Australia went into Vietnam for many reason, the main reason was the stop the ' domino effect' of communism spreading down though South East Asia eventually ending up at Australia. Australia's military was relatively small in size and knew it could not defend itself on it's homeland, so it needed to strengthen its allies relying on its ' great and powerful friends' for future support.

The government of Australia advertised the problems of communism to tell the public that we need to eliminate communism and use a forward defence approach as a measure to ensure Australians safety.