

Vietnam war: lessons learned

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



A very little known fact has been that it was the United States itself that initially gave military training to the small communist group in Vietnam, named Vietminh led by Vo Nguyen Giap and Ho Chi Minh, for fighting against the Japanese invaders (Westheider, 2007, p. 1). For imparting this training, a small group of American military men were smuggled inside Vietnam via air under the aegis of Office of Strategic Services which later became CIA (Westheider, 2007, p. 1). This has been indicative of the greatest anomaly in American history- America had supported rebellious groups all over the world against invasive or even national governments but later on these very groups turned into threats against the US. This could be seen when looked at America's role in promoting Islamic militants in Afghanistan against the Najibullah government and also in Iraq where Saddam Hussein was given clandestine support by CIA in his formation period as a leader. Later on, the militant groups in Afghanistan evolved into Taliban and became the number one enemy of America. So was the case of Saddam Hussein. The strategy of training the communists in Vietnam can be seen as a predecessor to these incidents. Another aspect of double-faced policy of the US is that the US though supported many rebel groups in many countries, to get rid of the colonial rule, it never supported a nation's real independence. Instead the US always had tried to form a puppet government in such countries, once the existing colonizers were thrown out. In Vietnam also, " President Franklin Roosevelt had opposed returning Vietnam to French colonial rule, but he did not necessarily support independence for Vietnam" (Westheider, 2007, p. 2). It is this dishonesty and dual personality exhibited by America in its wars, whether it be Vietnam, Afghanistan or Iraq, that alienated its citizens from its

rulers. It has also been criticized that American Presidents who were involved in Vietnam war were politically motivated (Summers, 2007, p. 12). For example, it was observed that “ President Lyndon Baines Johnson made a conscious decision not to mobilize the American people ...for the Vietnam war” (Summers, 2007, p. 12). This was because he feared that if the public were mobilized into a war frenzy, that would affect his “ Great Society” programs (Summers, 2007, p. 12). Other Presidents also had their own similar selfish reasons. References Summers, Harry G., Jr; On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War. Novato, CA: Presidio Press, c. 1982. Westheider, James. E., The Vietnam War, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007.