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## The Failure of the United States in Vietnam

Although the failure of the US in Vietnam can be partially due to the clever strategies of the North Vietnamese armies and the guerrilla tactics that they employed to counter those of Technology employed by the far more advanced American Army. The Vietnamese army used the foreign territory of their home country against the US with its inhospitable climate, demanding terrain with thick forestry. These guerrilla tactics Although the Americans had superior technology and weaponry, it was the superiority of the communists' tactics and strategies that won them the war.

The Ho Chi Minh trail, running parallel to South Vietnam through Laos and Cambodia, was the lifeline of the Viet Cong-NVA alliance. It was a complex system of roads, jungle trails, transit shelters and air-raid shelters. The Ho Chi Minh trail was the vital supply line that facilitated the movement of soldiers, weapons, food, aid and many other resources from North Vietnam to the allies in the South. Despite America's constant attempts to cut off this crucial link by means of bomb raids and defoliation, the Ho Chi Minh trail remained strong and effective. The Viet Cong had also constructed a vast and complex network of underground tunnels stretching for hundreds of miles and linking entire districts. The tunnels were used as storehouses for Viet Cong and North Vietnamese supplies including food, weapons, explosives, etc. They also contained workshops, kitchens, sleeping quarters and an array of deadly booby traps for unwelcome intruders.

Booby traps were used extensively by the Viet Cong and were a constant threat the US and southern forces. Hidden land mines, grenades, artillery shells, sharpened bamboo, deadly snakes and trip wire were all effectively utilised to destroy enemy forces. Viet Cong and NVA assaults were conducted predominantly at night time, making it even more difficult for the opposition to capture or even detect them. In response to the nature of the warfare, the US and the ARVN developed certain tactics which they believed would overcome the difficulties of fighting against guerrillas. Due to the difficulty of the warfare the US adopted the combat strategy, 'search and destroy'. The self-explanatory term, essentially involved seeking out enemy bases and annihilating their forces. Large units of US and ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) combat soldiers went into the villages and difficult terrain of the country to find Viet Cong troops and supplies.

This strategy exposed the soldiers to booby traps or ambush. Many villages suspected of being under Viet Cong influence were completely destroyed and its inhabitants killed which in turn created bitter resentment towards the Americans. Helicopters were extensively utilised by the US for various reasons, including the 'search and destroy' missions. Due to the lack of roads

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and the versatility of the choppers, they were used to move infantry units, evacuate and treat casualties, transport artillery and ammunition and to launch missiles and other attacks. The helicopter was played a significant role in the US effort, but although the Viet Cong and NVA were ill equipped in terms of aircraft, they did possess highly effective air defence. Modern and effective anti-aircraft guns and surface to air missiles which were provided by their soviet ally caused considerable damage to US aircraft.

In early 1968, however, the North Vietnamese military commander General Vo Nguyen Giap chose January 31 as the occasion for a coordinated offensive of surprise attacks aimed at breaking the stalemate in Vietnam. Giap believed that the attacks would cause Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) forces to collapse and foment discontent and rebellion among the South Vietnamese population. On the early morning of January 30, 1968, Viet Cong forces attacked 13 cities in central South Vietnam, just as many families began their observances of the lunar new year. Twenty-four hours later, PAVN and Viet Cong forces struck a number of other targets throughout South Vietnam, including cities, towns, government buildings and U.S. or ARVN military bases throughout South Vietnam, in a total of more than 120 attacks. In a particularly bold attack on the U.S.

Embassy in Saigon, a Viet Cong platoon got inside the complex's courtyard before U.S. forces destroyed it. The audacious attack on the U.S. Embassy, and its initial success, stunned American and international observers, who saw images of the carnage broadcast on television as it occurred. Though Giap had succeeded in achieving surprise, his forces were spread too thin in the ambitious offensive, and U.S. and ARVN forces managed to successfully counter most of the attacks and inflict heavy Viet Cong losses. heavy casualties of the PAVN and Viet Cong nor its failure to inspire a general revolt across South Vietnam but the communist bold attack on the U.S. embassy in Saigon, the bloody and lengthy Battle of Hue, the execution of a Viet Cong by the chief of South Vietnamese National Police, Nguyen Ngoc Loan and the carnage of U.S. troops on South Vietnamese streets that were closely reported and described in the U.S. media. Although the Tet Offensive did not spark a general uprising throughout South Vietnam as Hanoi had expected, it did make a major impact in the United States. This impact, albeit not their intention, turned out to be a fortunate result for them as it shifted American public opinion against the war and thus led to American constant de-escalation of the Vietnam war.

In conclusion the media played a large role in the how the politicians back in America viewed the war as the protests by the American public swayed their viewpoints but the tactics and strategies of the opposing armies and how the US couldn't handle the guerrilla tactics used by the Vietcong even with the superior man power, technology and sheer force. The lack of information that the US were able gather as the Vietcong merged with the public and stayed in the jungle with the Americans hardly ever catching sight of this invisible army that they were facing. With this way of facing the enemy.

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