Timeline

1930
Indochinese Communist Party, opposed to French rule, organized by Ho Chi Minh and his followers.

1932
Bao Dai returns from France to reign as emperor of Vietnam under the French.

September, 1940
Japanese troops occupy Indochina, but allow the French to continue their colonial administration of the area. Japan’s move into southern part of Vietnam in July 1941 sparks an oil boycott by the U.S. and Great Britain. The resulting oil shortage strengthens Japan’s desire to risk war against the U.S. and Britain.

1945
An OSS (Office of Strategic Services, forerunner of the CIA) team parachutes into Ho Chi Minh's jungle camp in northern Vietnam and saves Ho Chi Minh who is ill with malaria and other tropical diseases.

August, 1945
Japan surrenders. Ho Chi Minh establishes the Viet Minh, a guerilla army. Bao Dai abdicates after a general uprising led by the Viet Minh.

September, 1945
Seven OSS officers, led by Lieutenant Colonel A. Peter Dewey, land in Saigon to liberate Allied war prisoners, search for missing Americans, and gather intelligence.

September 2, 1945
Ho Chi Minh reads Vietnam’s Declaration of Independence to end 80 years of colonialism under French rule and establish the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in Hanoi. Vietnam is divided north and south.

September 26, 1945
OSS Lieutenant Dewey killed in Saigon, the first American to be killed in Vietnam. French and Vietminh spokesmen blame each other for his death.

November, 1946
Ho Chi Minh attempts to negotiate the end of colonial rule with the French without success. The French army shells Haiphong harbor in November, killing over 6,000 Vietnamese civilians, and, by December, open war between France and the Viet Minh begins.

1950
The U.S., recognizing Boa Dai’s regime as legitimate, begins to subsidize the French in Vietnam; the Chinese Communists, having won their civil war in 1949, begin to supply weapons to the Viet Minh.

August 3, 1950
A U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) of 35 men arrives in Saigon. By the end of the year, the U.S. is bearing half of the cost of France’s war effort in Vietnam.

May 7, 1954
The French are defeated at Dien Bien Phu, General Vo Nguyen Giap commands the Viet Minh forces. France is forced to withdraw. The French-indochina War ends. See also:

Dien Bien Phu: A Vietnamese Perspective
Dien Bien Phu: A Website of the Battle

June, 1954

July 20, 1954
The Geneva Conference on Indochina declares a demilitarized zone at the 17th parallel with the North under Communist rule and the South under the leadership of Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem.

October 24, 1954
President Dwight D. Eisenhower pledges support to Diem's government and military forces.
1955
The U.S.-backed Ngo Dinh Diem organizes the Republic of Vietnam as an independent himself president.

1956
Fighting begins between the North and the South.

July 8, 1959
The first American combat deaths in Vietnam occur when Viet Cong attack Bien Hc servicemen are killed.

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1960
The National Liberation Front (NLF)--called the Viet Cong--is founded in South Viet

February, 1961
The U.S. military buildup in Vietnam begins with combat advisors. President John declares that they will respond if fired upon.

June 16, 1963
A Buddhist monk immolates himself in Saigon. Buddhist demonstrations occur through August.

June 20, 1964

November 1, 1963
South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem is assassinated.

May 4, 1964
Trade embargo imposed on North Vietnam in response to attacks from the North or

August 2 and 4, 1964
The Gulf of Tonkin Incident. North Vietnamese torpedo boats attacked the U.S Maddox in the Gulf of Tonkin. A second attack allegedly occurs on August 4.

In November, 2005, the National Security Agency (NSA) released “previously class regarding the Vietnam era, specifically the Gulf of Tonkin incident. This release incl articles, chronologies of events, oral history interviews, signals intelligence (SIGINT) translations, and other related memoranda.”
URL: http://www.nsa.gov/vietnam/
LII Item: http://lii.org/cs/lii/view/item/19925

August 5, 1964
President Lyndon Johnson asks Congress for a resolution against North Vietnam of Tonkin incident. Congress debates.

August 7, 1964
Congress approves the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution which allows the president to 1 necessary measures to repel further attacks and to provide military assistance to Treaty Organization (SEATO) member. Senators Wayne L. Morse of Oregon and Alaska cast the only dissenting votes. President Johnson orders the bombing of Noi additional information, see New Light on Gulf of Tonkin, McNamara Asks Gia Happened at Tonkin Gulf?”, and 30-Year Anniversary: Tonkin Gulf Lie La Vietnam War.

March 8-9, 1965
The first American combat troops arrive in Vietnam.

April 6-8, 1965
President Johnson authorizes the use of U.S. ground combat troops for offensive op day he offers North Vietnam aid in exchange for peace. North Vietnam rejects the o

April 17, 1965
Students for a Democratic Society sponsor the first major anti-war rally in Wa

June, 1965
Generals Nguyen Cao Ky and Nguyen Van Thieu seize the South Vietnamese c

October 15-16, 1965
Anti-war protests are held in about 40 American cities.

November 14-16, 1965
The first major military engagement occurs between U.S. and North Vietnamese fr

September, 1967
Thieu is elected president of South Vietnam.

Oct. 21-23, 1967
50,000 people demonstrate against the war in Washington, D.C.
January 21, 1968
The battle of Khe Sanh begins, ending six months later.

January 31, 1968
The Tet Offensive. Communist forces launch attacks on Hue and 31 other South Vietnamese provincial capitals and military bases. One assault team gets inside the walls of the U.S. embassy in Saigon but is driven back.

American Perspective
Vietnamese Perspective

March 16, 1968
Unarmed Vietnamese civilians are killed by members of U.S. Army Lt. William L. Calley Jr.'s platoon at My Lai.

March 22, 1968
President Lyndon Johnson names General William Westmoreland as Army Chief of Staff. He was replaced in Vietnam by General Creighton W. Abrams.

May 10, 1968
The Paris peace talks begin between U.S. and Vietnamese officials.

May 10-20, 1969
The battle for Hamburger Hill

June 8, 1969
President Richard Nixon announces the first troop withdrawals from South Vietnam.

September 3, 1969
Ho Chi Minh dies.

November 15, 1969
250,000 people demonstrate against the war in Washington, D.C.

December 1, 1969
The first draft lottery since 1942 begins.

March 10, 1970
Captain Ernest Medina charged with murder for the murders at My Lai. Events leading to the Lai Courts-Martial begin, ending with the conviction of Lieutenant William Calley on March 29, 1970.

April 30, 1970
The armies of the U.S. and South Vietnam invade Cambodia to roust North Vietnamese troops. The invasion sparks campus protests.

May 4, 1970
Four students are killed by National Guardsmen at Kent State University in Ohio. This sparked hundreds of protest activities across college campuses in the United States. See: States Anti-War Movement and the Vietnam War and New Mexico State Police Association

May 6, 1970
More than 100 colleges are closed due to student riots over the invasion of Cambodia.

February, 1971
South Vietnam and the U.S. invade Laos in an attempt to sever the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

December 18, 1972
Christmas bombing of Hanoi and North Vietnam begins.

December 24, 1972
1972 Bob Hope gives his last show to U.S. servicemen in Saigon. It was his 9th Christmas show in Vietnam. President Nixon suspends Operation Linebacker II for the Christmas holiday.

December 28, 1972
The North Vietnamese announced that they will return to Paris if Nixon ends the bombing campaign was halted and the negotiators met during the first week of January.

January 23, 1973
United States, South Vietnam, and North Vietnam sign Paris Peace Accords, ending combat role in war. U.S. military draft ends. A cease-fire goes into effect 5 days later.

March 29, 1973
Last U.S. combat troops leave Vietnam.

February 12-27, 1973
POWs begin to come home as part of Operation Homecoming.
April 1, 1973  
Hanoi releases last 591 acknowledged American POWs.

September 16, 1974  
President Gerald Ford offers clemency to draft evaders and military deserters.

April 21, 1975  
South Vietnamese President Thieu resigns.

April 29-30, 1975  

American Perspective  
Vietnamese Perspective

April 30, 1975
North Vietnamese forces take over Saigon; South Vietnam surrenders to North Vietnam and reunifying the country under communist control, forming the Independent Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Washington extends embargo to all of Vietnam.

May 12, 1975
The U.S. merchant ship Mayaguez is seized by the Khmer Rouge in international waters in the Gulf of Siam. The ship, owned by Sea-Land Corporation, was en route to Sattahip, Hong-Kong, carrying a non-arms cargo for military bases in Thailand.

December, 1978
Vietnam invades Cambodia and topples Pol Pot’s Khmer Rouge government, ending terror.

1979
Western European countries and non-communist Asian nations support U.S.-led en Vietnam, in protest against invasion of Cambodia.

February, 1982
Vietnam agrees to talks on American MIAs.

November 11, 1982
The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, "The Wall," is dedicated in Washington, D.C.

1988
Vietnam begins cooperation with United States to resolve fate of American service action (MIA).

September/October, 1988
United States and Vietnam conduct first joint field investigations on MIAs.

September 1989
Vietnam completes Cambodia withdrawal.

April 21, 1991
United States and Vietnam agree to establish U.S. office in Hanoi to help determine Washington presents Hanoi with a roadmap for phased normalization of relations and the lifting of embargo.

October, 1991
Vietnam supports U.N. peace plan for Cambodia. Secretary of State James Baker is ready to take steps towards normalizing relations with Hanoi. Washington presents "roadmap" for phased normalization of relations and lifting of U.S. embargo.

December, 1991
Washington lifts ban on organized U.S. travel to Vietnam.

1992
Vietnam’s Constitution adopted.

April 29, 1992
Washington eases trade embargo by allowing commercial sales to Vietnam that meet basic human needs, lifts restrictions on projects by American non-governmental and non-profit entities, and establishes of telecommunications links with Vietnam.

October, 1992
Retired General John Vessey, U.S. presidential envoy on MIA issue, makes sixth visit to Hanoi, obtains Vietnamese agreement on wider MIA cooperation, which Washington describes as a breakthrough.

December 14, 1992
President George Bush grants permission for U.S. companies open offices, sign feasibility studies in Vietnam.

July 2, 1993 President Bill Clinton ends U.S. opposition to settlement of Vietnam’s $140 million International Monetary Fund, clearing the way for the resumption of internatio Vietnam.

September 13, 1993 President Clinton eases economic sanctions against Vietnam to allow American firr development projects financed by international banks, another step toward normal January 16, 1994 Admiral Charles Larson, head of U.S. Pacific Command visits Vietnam, the high active-duty U.S. military officer to do so since the war’s end. He concludes that lift embargo would help efforts to account for Americans missing from the war.

January 27, 1994 Backed by broad bipartisan support, the Senate approves non-binding resolution un Clinton to lift embargo, a move they felt would help get a full account of Americans missing in the Vietnam War.

February 3, 1994 President Clinton announces the lifting of the trade embargo.


April 30, 1995 Vietnam celebrates the 20th anniversary of the end of the war.

May 15, 1995 Vietnam gives U.S. presidential delegation batch of documents on missing Americi Pentagon as most detailed and informative of their kind.

May 23, 1995 Senators John Kerry (D, Mass) and John McCain (R,-Ariz.), both Vietnam veter to normalize relations.

May 31, 1995 Vietnam turns over 100 pages of maps and reports about U.S. servicemen killed or the war. An American veteran’s map helps locate a mass grave of communist soldi the war.

June 1995 Senators Kerry and McCain say they plan to offer a Senate resolution approving noi with Vietnam.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher recommends to President Clinton that th establish formal diplomatic relations with Vietnam.

State Department praises Hanoi authorities for increasing counter-narcotics coope United States.

Vietnamese President Le Duc Anh announces he will visit the United States in Octo celebration marking the 50th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

July 11, 1995 President Clinton announces normalization of relations with Vietnam, saying the tir move forward and bind up the wounds from the war.

July 28, 1995 Vietnam becomes a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (À

August 5, 1995 Secretary of State Warren Christopher opens U.S. embassy in Hanoi.


July 12, 1996 U.S. National Security Adviser Anthony Lake visits Hanoi to mark the first anniv normalization of relations.
April 10, 1997
Former POW Douglas "Pete" Peterson is confirmed by the Senate as the first a
Vietnam since the end of the war and the first ever to be posted to Hanoi. Vietnam
confirmed as Vietnam's ambassador to the United States.

April 16, 1997
U.S. and Vietnam reach copyright protection agreement, a step toward Most Fav
status.

May 9, 1997
Ambassador Peterson arrives in Hanoi to take up his new post. Ambassador Le Van
Washington on May 7.

June 24, 1997
Secretary of State Madeline Albright arrives in Vietnam on an official visit.

March 10, 1998
President Clinton waives the The Jackson-Vanik Amendment for Vietnam, allo
investors in Vietnam to compete more effectively in Vietnam and to receive financi
government agencies such as the Export-Import Bank.

April 15, 1998
Pol Pot dies

July 13, 2000
The United States Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky and Vietnam's Trade
sign a major trade agreement intended to provide Vietnam with access to the U.
same terms granted to most other nations. Vietnam agrees to lower tariffs and oth
on American products and services. The trade agreement is the last step in normal
between the U.S. and Vietnam.

November 16-19, 2000
President Bill Clinton and his family, Hillary Clinton and their daughter Chelsea, arrin
historic visit. Clinton was the first President to visit Vietnam since President Nixo
The purpose of Clinton's trip was to discuss relations between the two countries. C
think it is time to write a new chapter here. See President Clinton's Visit to Vi

July 24-26, 2001
Secretary of State Colin Powell pays a three-day visit to Vietnam where he attend
Regional Forum in Hanoi. It was Powell's first visit to Vietnam since he served in th

October 3, 2001
The United States Senate approves an agreement normalizing trade between the U
Vietnam.

November 28, 2001
Vietnam's National Assembly ratifies the trade agreement with the United States b
any U.S. interference in Vietnam's internal affairs could jeopardize implementatio
The Vietnamese government voiced strong concerns over the U.S. House of Repre
passage of a Vietnam Human Rights Act which ties future U.S. non-humanitarian
improvements in Vietnam's human rights record.

November 10, 2003
U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld met with Vietnam's Defense Minister f
was the first time a senior Vietnamese military official has visited Washington.

November 19, 2003
Navy missile frigate USS Vandegrift docked in the port of Ho Chi Minh City, a symb
boosting relations between Vietnam and the United States. Many of the crew were
Daughters of Vietnam War veterans. It was the first U.S. ship to dock in Vietnam si
war.

January 14, 2004
Nguyen Cao Ky, who served as premier of South Vietnam until 1967 and then as from 1967 to 1971, paid a visit to relatives in Vietnam for the Tet holiday. Permission given by the Vietnamese government. The visit caused controversy among overseas; felt it would legitimize the current government in Vietnam. Ky fled to the United St fall of Saigon in 1975.

March 25 , 2005
Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai welcomed Vietnamese monk, Thich Nh
banned from returning to Vietnam in 1966. the Zen Master was invited by the Vie
Sangha's International Religious Board and will stay in Vietnam for 3 months.

March 29, 2005
The USS Gary arrived in the port of Saigon, marking the celebration of the 10th ann
normalization of diplomatic relations between the United States and Vietnam. The
become annual.

April 30, 2005
The 30th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War.

Vietnam Remembers Fall of Saigon
Open Letter to the People of Viet Nam
Vietnam: A Lingering Conflict
Vietnam Experts Comment on 30th Anniversary of War's End
Vietnam’s Long Journey from War

June 19, 2005

Prime Minister Phan Van Khai and a delegation of the Vietnamese government arrived first destination on his official four-city, week-long visit to the United States at the President George Bush. “The purpose of my visit to the United States is to elevate a higher plane,” Khai said.

The Prime Minister Phan Van Khai met privately with Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates company’s Redmond headquarters. Gates also gave him a tour of Microsoft’s “home display of consumer technology and a company research center. The Prime Minister press and representatives of major U.S. businesses at his first stop. Contracts were signed.

The Prime Minister met with President Bush on Tuesday, June 21 in the White House talked about Vietnam’s desire to join the World Trade Organization, business issue and signed an agreement that Bush said would make it easier for people to worship

The Prime Minister is highest-ranking leader to visit the United States since the Vietnam War ended 30 years ago. The last time a Vietnamese leader visited the United States, he was country that no longer exists.

Vietnamese Prime Minister to Visit United States
Vietnam on the Path of Reform
PM Phan Van Khai: “My Visit to the United States is Important”
Protests Staged For Vietnam Prime Minister’s Visit
Vietnam’s Prime Minister Meets with Bill Gates
President Welcomes Vietnamese Prime Minister to the White House

July 26, 2006

Former POW and U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam, Pete Peterson, writes an opinion Congress to grant permanent normal relations status to Vietnam.

November 7, 2006

The World Trade Organization formally invited Vietnam to become it’s 150th mem

November 17, 2006

U.S. President George H.W. Bush began a four-day visit to Vietnam in Hanoi where the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders’ meeting. He also met with Prime Minister Dung. Bush’s trip included a stop in Ho Chi Minh City with a visit to and a tour of the Joint POW-MIA Accounting Command responsible for locating American soldiers missing in Vietnam.

January 22, 2007

Adm. Gary Roughead, commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, paid a two-day visit to with Vice Adm. Nguyen Van Hien, commander of the Vietnamese Navy. Under disc to cooperate in typhoon prediction, search and rescue, and disaster relief.

January 25, 2007

Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung and Vietnam’s official in charge of reli Yen Thi, met with Pope Benedict XVI in Rome an effort to normalize relations after tension.

May 21, 2007

Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer witnessed the signing of an agreement requiring all government offices to use licensed computer software in a step to curb rampant piracy. The Ministry of Finance was the first government agency to sign the Microsoft Office license during a visit by company Chairman Bill Gates last year.

November 11, 2007

25th anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C.

--Sandra M. Wittman

For additional information on U.S. Vietnam Relations, see:

Joint Task Force Full- Accounting
U.S. Embassy (Hano)
U.S.-Vietnam Relations (U.S. State Department)
Vietnamese Embassy (Washington, D.C.)