

The peace process and end of war

The process of reaching an end to the war involved an extended period of talks between the USA, North Vietnam and South Vietnam. Talks began in Paris in 1968.

Reasons for the peace negotiations up to 1972

USA's reasons	Shared reasons	North Vietnam's reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victory in Vietnam no longer seemed possible, especially after the problems with the Tet Offensive • Growing opposition to the war • Congress was reluctant to finance the continuation of the war • Nixon was keen to appear the peacemaker in Vietnam for political gain at home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High numbers of dead and wounded • Costs of the war • The war could drag on for years to come 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China and the USSR wanted North Vietnam to make peace and might withdraw help • North Vietnam was being bombed heavily

Turn to page 19 to find out more about the Tet Offensive of 1968.

Features of the negotiations, 1973

- After negotiations had broken down in 1972, further talks began in Paris on 8 January 1973.
- All parts of the peace agreement were to be supervised by an international body.
- The USA would pay for reconstruction across Vietnam.

The North Vietnamese and South Vietnamese thought the war had not actually ended, seeing 'the peace' as temporary while the Americans withdrew.

Key agreements

- All countries would accept Vietnam as a single reunified country through independent negotiation (with no outside interference).
- There would be an immediate ceasefire.
- US troops, equipment and advisers would be withdrawn and military bases removed.
- There would be no US government intervention in Vietnamese politics or military.
- The government of a new unified Vietnam would be chosen in fair and independent elections.

The Paris Peace Agreement, 1973

The Paris Peace Agreement, signed by the USA, North Vietnam, South Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of Vietnam on 27 January 1973, brought an end to the war and peace to Vietnam.

How was it significant?

The Paris Peace Agreement gave the USA an opportunity to withdraw from Vietnam. Yet in the long run it failed to secure the future of an independent non-communist South Vietnam. South Vietnam's economy crashed due to bad harvests, and a large reduction in US aid and investment. This contributed to the unpopularity of the new South Vietnamese government, and the Vietcong were soon popular in the village communities once more.

North Vietnam continued to seek a united, communist Vietnam and became impatient with the refusal of the President of South Vietnam, President Thieu, to talk. They resumed combat with South Vietnam in late 1974. The ARVN could not fend off the attack but Congress would not approve funds for the USA to intervene. The South Vietnamese capital, Saigon, fell in April 1975.

The economic and human costs of the Vietnam War for the USA

- The war cost the US economy \$167 billion. The expense led to cutbacks in federal spending on domestic issues and caused economic problems.
- Over 58 000 US soldiers died; 75 000 were left with a serious permanent disability; 850 000 suffered severe mental health problems, including post-traumatic stress. There was a high rate of suicide among veterans of the war.

After the fall of Saigon in 1975, North and South Vietnam merged on 2 July 1976 to form the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Now try this

List **three** consequences of the Paris Peace Agreement, 1973.

Tasks:

1. Make a table with these three themes, political, social, and economic. Then add reasons that fit under each of these columns for why the Vietnam war ended in 1973.
2. Explain what the Paris Peace Conference agreed.
3. In your opinion what do you think is the most important reason the Vietnam war ended in 1973?