

Abstract:

After the year of 1968, which was crucial in the history of the war in Indochina , a new phase of a conflict started to evolve. The United States, under President Lyndon B. Johnson, after the Tet offensive and massive domestic protests, finally retreated from the goal of military victory and changed its strategy to get out of the conflict as quickly as possible. Johnson had established negotiations with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in Paris, which the South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu systematically negated. As it was later revealed, this was done in cooperation with the Republican candidate for President Richard M. Nixon, who wanted to do this in order to compromise policy of a Democratic president and take his place himself.

Nixon, after his appointment to the presidency, assumed that renewed negotiations in Paris would be simple and would lead to the rapid end of the war. Soon it became clear that it was a mistake. North Vietnamese and communist insurgents in South Vietnam managed, due to conflicts caused by Thieu and by the delay between flares, to restore their strength and they were no longer willing to retreat. Negotiations bogged down in fruitless debates and disputes.

Nixon and his closest collaborator Henry Kissinger were forced to seek other solutions. On the international diplomatic scene The United States tried to negotiate with the Allies of Hanoi - the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China about the restrictions of their support of VDR and about putting pressure on the North Vietnamese, which should force them to sign peace agreements. Détente with the Soviet Union and especially the establishment of diplomatic relations with the PRC, of which the largest amount was contributed by Kissinger, were a great success of American diplomacy. However, this clever foreign policy did not lead to a shift in the Indochinese conflict.

Military Policy in Vietnam during the Nixon era was driven by doctrine of so called Vietnamization, i.e. replacing the U.S. armed forces for ARVN. Even though Nixon promised that he would try to calm the conflict it turned out to be the opposite as the conflict came to its escalation. This was caused by the incursion of Cambodia in 1970, the invasion of American South Vietnamese fellows in Southern Laos in 1971 and intensive bombing. Especially in Cambodia hard fights were led with the communists Khmer Rouge after the Americans had initiated the fall of King Sihanuk. In 1972 VDR tried to refute The Republic of Vietnam using military power. Only thanks to the U.S. rapid response and launch of their air attacks against the attacking North Vietnamese Army and also against VDR as such, the Americans were able to thwart the plans of Hanoi. North Vietnamese leadership then came to the conclusion that the only chance to achieve victory is an agreement with the Americans. The signing of the agreements, however, was obstructed by Saigon, which was feared of the departure of U.S. forces and called for changes in the agreement. Hanoi did not agree with the changes until another massive bombing. In 1973 the peace agreement was signed in Paris. Consequently, the USA withdrew from Indochina and remained minimally engaged in the conflict. After the fall of Nixon in 1974 and Gerald Ford's onset, there were no major changes in American foreign policy and in 1975 the pro-US regimes in the region dropped as well.

Key words: Nixon, Ford, war in Indochina, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos