**Vietnam War Tactics and Strategies**

Student’s Name

University

Course

Professor

Date

**Vietnam War Tactics and Strategies**

The Vietcong and the United States employed different war tactics and strategies during the Vietnam war. The war was caused by a conflict between South and North Vietnam. The United States became involved due to its close relationship with South Vietnam. The Vietnam war was lengthy and costly since it was influenced by other factors, such as the Cold War. Most of the casualties from the event were Vietnamese civilians (Summers, 1983). The United States troops relied on technology while devising their war strategies, while the Vietcong depended on the understanding of their land and solid relationships with the peasants.

**U.S. Tactics and Strategies**

The U.S. troops had an advantage over the Vietcong during the Vietnam war due to advanced technology. Most of the war tactics relied on advanced military weapons, such as jets and bombing planes. In addition, troops could be transported easily from the United States to North Vietnam due to the advancement of U.S. infrastructure.

The first tactic employed by the United States during the Vietnam war involved using advanced technological weapons. For instance, high-altitude bombers were used to destroy the suspected Vietcong strongholds. Media channels such as Television were applied to report a false number of Vietnamese casualties. This strategy was aimed at discouraging the Vietcong. Dumping napalm on Vietcong strongholds using jets forced the Vietcong to retreat during the war (Burns et al., 2017). In addition, helicopters were used to target the Vietcong hideouts. The application of advanced military weapons made it difficult for the Vietcong to compete with the United States during the war.

President Johnson ordered the strategy of taking the war to the enemy since the Vietcong strongholds were difficult to locate. The Vietcong retreated when the U.S. attacked and launched guerilla attacks when the U.S. troops were tired. President Johnson became frustrated with the Vietcong’s war strategies and decided to take the fight to the enemy. However, this tactic was not effective due to two reasons. Firstly, the U.S. soldiers became easy targets for the Vietcong guerilla attacks. Secondly, the tactic influenced the U.S. troops to apply force during the “search and destroy” mission. This factor resulted in the My Lai massacre, where unarmed South Vietnamese civilians were killed. The massacre harmed the U.S. reputation (Herring, 1982).

Adding the number of U.S. troops in different military bases in North Vietnam was viewed as an effective strategy by the United States government during the Vietnam war. The troops were added between 1965 and 1966 (Burns et al., 2017). During this period, President Johnson ordered two battalions of U.S. marines to be deployed in Da Nang. By applying the tactic, the U.S. hoped to outnumber the Vietcong. The strategy resulted in the addition of more than 200,000 soldiers in different North Vietnam military bases (Herring, 1982).

During the Vietnam war, the United States relied on bombing since the defense mechanism of the Vietcong was weak. Bombings targeted strategic military bases in North Vietnam. Likewise, destroying the militants’ supply routes was considered an effective strategy that could weaken the Vietcong. Even though the United States prioritized this strategy, most bombings were ineffective since Vietcong strongholds were located in the jungle. Likewise, North Vietnam was not developed (Summers, 2007). Hence the United States could not target specific industrial sectors to weaken the militants. Overall, these were the key strategies and tactics applied by the United States of America during the Vietnam war.

**Vietcong Tactics and Strategies**

Unlike the United States troops, the Vietcong lacked advanced military weapons during the Vietnam war. Thus, their war tactics and strategies relied on factors such as their understanding of the jungle and their relationships with peasants (Tovy, 2010). Likewise, the Vietcong used weapons stolen from the American troops during guerilla attacks.

Vietcong relied heavily on guerilla attacks since this strategy weakened the United States troops. While devising the war strategy, the Vietcong had to be careful due to the military strength of the United States. Some of the weapons used by the militants involved daggers and swords. Likewise, explosives captured by Americans were used in the battle against the U.S. troops. The Vietcong had a better understanding of the jungle, unlike the Americans. The former took advantage of this factor by setting traps using pointed bamboo sticks and mines (Tovy, 2010). This strategy played a vital role in weakening the Americans.

The Vietcong applied simple tactics that frustrated the enemy. The strategy involved retreating when the U.S. troops attacked. Likewise, the militants attacked when the Americans were tired. In addition, the Vietcong ambushed the U.S. troops and stole mines and grenades that were used to set up traps (Wilkins, 2011). This simple tactic was effective since it made it difficult for the U.S. to target the Vietcong strongholds.

The Vietcong also relied on assistance from peasants. Developing close relationships with the latter ensured that the militants had access to food and hiding places during the war. The Vietcong assisted the peasants by helping them with their workloads (Wilkins, 2011). Overall, these were the key war strategies and tactics applied by the Vietcong during the Vietnam war.

**Conclusion**

In summation, the war tactics and strategies applied by the United States of America during the Vietnam war were based on advanced technology. Examples included bombings, taking the war to the enemy, using advanced military weapons, and escalating troops in various military bases. On the other hand, the Vietcong relied on their understanding of the jungle while developing war tactics. For instance, the militants planned guerilla attacks and surprised their enemy using simple tactics such as attacking when the U.S. troops were tired. Likewise, the Vietcong relied on assistance from peasants since the latter provided food and hiding places during the war.

**References**

Burns, K., Corrigan, B., Sanders, F., & Burns, K. (2017). *The Vietnam War*. Penguin Random House Audio Publishing Group.

Herring, G. C. (1982). American strategy in Vietnam: the postwar debate. *The Journal of Military History*, *46*(2), 57.

Summers, H. G. (1983). *On strategy: The Vietnam war in context*. Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College.

Summers, H. G. (2007). *American strategy in Vietnam: A critical analysis*. Courier Corporation.

Tovy, T. (2010). Peasants and revolutionary movements: The Viet Cong as a case study. *War in History*, *17*(2), 217-230.

Wilkins, W. (2011). *Grab Their Belts to Fight Them: The Viet Cong’s Big-unit War Against the U*.S. Naval Institute Press.