

Republic of Vietnam

Rice

The Republic of Vietnam was created after Geneva agreement divided Vietnam into a northern (communist) zone and a southern (noncommunist) zone in 1954. The original intention was for both halves to be reunited in 1956 with elections, but the South Vietnamese government stated that the conditions for free elections were not uniformly present in Vietnam (United States Department of State 2010). At that point, the Prime Minister was the nonpartisan Pham Buu Loc. In June, he stepped down, and the Prime Minister became Phan Huy Quat, who is considered an acting prime minister, as he was only in power for 10 days, until 26 June 1954. He was replaced by Ngo Dinh Diem (CL+NRM). This is a SOLS change.

The southern zone declared itself the Republic of Vietnam on October 26, 1955, and Ngo Dinh Diem established himself as an increasingly personalist leader (with the support of the United States). Diem assumed the position of President, and from that point forward, the President is considered to be the leader of Vietnam, not the Prime Minister. Diem's administration was made up of mainly his family members, and gradually grew more unpopular. In November 1963, military generals staged a coup against Diem, ousting him from office and later assassinating him (along with his brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, who had been his chief advisor). General Duong Van Minh assumed the title of "Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Committee" (later "President"), and became the titular head of state (Corfield, 73). This is a SOLS change.

The military would remain in control of the Republic of Vietnam until the end of the Vietnam War. Minh in turn suffered a counter coup on January 30 1964 by Khanh, but as this represents a continuation of military government according to Geddes, we do not code a SOLS change. Following the January coup, a short power struggle ensued among a few of the generals that seemed resolved with the hesitant installment of the civilian Van Huong government on November 4 (Fishel 1965). However, increasing political disagreement and instability led to another military coup of Khanh on 26 January 1965 (Fishel 1966). On February 20 the military receded from government and installed a civilian leadership under Quat. Following a failed coup attempt, Khanh was forced resign and left Vietnam for the US. Forces in the military had installed and supported the civilian leadership (Fishel 1966). By June, however, the military re-took control in the form of a "war cabinet"; the Republic of Vietnam would thereafter effectively be controlled by Van Thieu until the Americans left Vietnam (Fishel 1966). The short reentry of general Minh in order to appease North Vietnam did not save the Republic of Vietnam from the forced unification in 1975 (Library of Congress 2011). As all governments from the coup against Diem until the dissolution of the Republic of Vietnam originated from the military no SOLS changes were coded during this period.

References

Corfield, Justin. *The History of Vietnam*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2008.

Fishel, Wesley R. 1965. "The Eleventh Hour in Vietnam" *Asian Survey*. 5(2) 98-107.

Fishel, Wesley R. 1966. "Vietnam: The Broadening War" *Asian Survey*. 6(1): 49-58.

United States Department of State. "Country Background Note: Vietnam". Last edited May 27, 2010.
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/4130.htm>

US Library of Congress. A Country Study: Vietnam. Last edited March 22, 2011.
<<http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/vntoc.html>>. Accessed on March 18, 2011.

Coded by Meera Krishnan June 22, 2010
Revised by Ashley Leeds February 27, 2012
Revised by Matt DiLorenzo 07/31/2012
Revised by Bryan Rooney 10/16/2012
Edited by Andrew Wood (Rice) on 5/24/2014