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During June, of 1965, traumatized South Vietnamese civilians—who survived a mortar attack by government troops as the war between North and South Vietnam raged on—huddle together. The location of this photo is near the post of Dong Xoai. After the government recaptured Dong Xoai, troops found the bodies of 150 civilians and around 300 South Vietnamese soldiers. AP photo by Horst Faas; provided here as fair use for educational purposes.

Did the South Vietnamese people support their government in its war against North Vietnam?

- By October 2, 1963 McNamara and General Maxwell Taylor (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) learned there were "serious political tensions in Saigon (and perhaps elsewhere in South Vietnam) where the Diem-Nhu government is becoming increasingly unpopular."

- Students did not support the government.
- Internal discontent with the South Vietnamese regime had become a "seething problem."
- "The Vietnamese people do not care who wins the war; they simply want peace."

Could South Vietnam win the war without U.S. help?

- The Viet Cong (Communist guerrillas) were "putting up a formidable fight."
- South Vietnam could not win without American assistance.
- "This is a Vietnamese war and the country and the war must, in the end, be run solely by the Vietnamese." (President Kennedy confirmed that sentiment in an interview with Walter Cronkite.)
- The "war cannot be won with the present regime."

If the Diem regime could not win the war, what was the next step?

- Should the U.S. withdraw its advisors?

- Should the U.S. take no further action in Vietnam once America's advisors returned to the States?

The answer seemed to come from an entirely different question. What about the assassination of South Vietnam's President, Ngo Dinh Diem?

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/WHO-SUPPORTED-THE-WAR-Pentagon-Papers>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/WHO-SUPPORTED-THE-WAR-Pentagon-Papers>