

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/the-republic-of-vietnam-1955-1975/>

This video is a transcript of a discussion led by a graduate student focused on the political history and diplomacy of South Vietnam during the Vietnam War, particularly from 1968 to 1975. It emphasizes the student's research, which aims to shed light on the complex and often overlooked political dynamics of the Republic of Vietnam.

Key points include:

1. **Research Motivation**: The student became interested in U.S.-South Vietnamese relations and found a lack of detailed historical research on South Vietnamese politics, despite the prominence of the Vietnam War in academic discussions.
2. **Paper Focus**: The discussed paper, titled "Saigon Goes Global," examines South Vietnam's diplomatic efforts during the war. The student is part of a broader project to explore the "rich and complex" political history of South Vietnam.
3. **Diplomatic Concepts**: The student discusses concepts such as "diplomatic revolution" and "people's diplomacy," drawing parallels with other post-colonial movements while noting the distinct context of an anti-communist state like South Vietnam.
4. **Archival Research**: The student highlights the importance of utilizing both American and Vietnamese archival sources, including diplomatic cables and print media from South Vietnam, to better understand the perspectives of Vietnamese actors.
5. **Historical Events**: Significant historical moments, such as the assassination of South Vietnam's president in 1963, the U.S. military intervention starting in 1965, and the subsequent impact on South Vietnam's political climate, are discussed.
6. **Global Diplomatic Initiative**: South Vietnam's efforts to establish diplomatic ties with countries around the world, including sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, illustrate its desire to assert legitimacy and independence beyond American support.
7. **Challenges of Representation and Legitimacy**: The student argues that South Vietnam's struggle to be seen as a legitimate state was hampered by its dependence on the U.S. and its internal authoritarian tendencies, which conflicted with its international image as a burgeoning democracy.
8. **Future Research Plans**: The student aims to further analyze South Vietnamese political history to understand the internal and external factors contributing to the state's breakdown and the Vietnam War's conclusion, moving beyond traditional military narratives.

Overall, the discussion reflects a commitment to uncovering a nuanced understanding of South Vietnam's history, emphasizing its attempts to navigate a complex international landscape while addressing domestic challenges.