

The American Superpower Criticized: The Vietnam War (1)

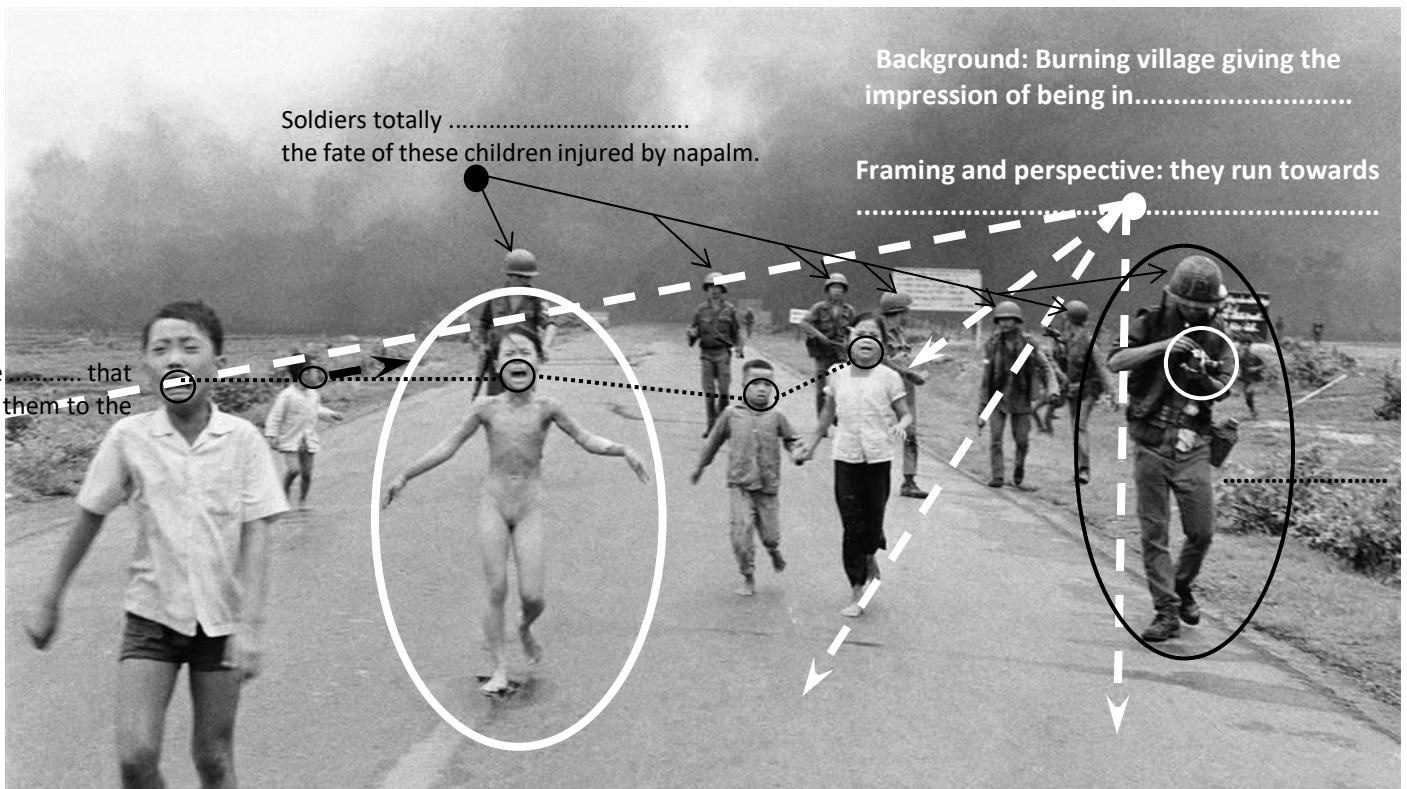


Kim Phuc was born in 1963 in the village of **Tran Bang** in the south of the country, which is **being attacked with napalm by the South Vietnamese army** (on the orders of the Americans who believed it was a Viet Cong hideout) on **June 8, 1972**. Severely burned, Kim Phuc (9 years old) is photographed by Nick Ut and the shot makes the buzz around the world. Rescued after **14 months in hospital and 17 operations**, she emigrated to Canada and devoted her life to fighting violence against civilians in wartime. She says her injuries still hurt her.



Nick Ut (born **Huynh Cong Ut** in 1951) is a photojournalist Vietnamese-American made famous by his photo of the little girl Kim Phuc in 1972. At the age of 21, he received the **World Press Photo of the Year Prize** in 1972 and the **Pulitzer Prize** for Photography in 1973. He is the one who takes the little girl to the hospital for treatment. The rest of his career was devoted to war photojournalism, and he continued to work for the Associated Press until his retirement in 2017.

Background: The Vietnam War is typical of the Cold War because it is an indirect conflict: officially, the conflict concerns the South Vietnamese fighting against the Viet Cong (communist guerrillas). In reality, this is a **strategic issue for the United States** because, according to the *"domino theory"* in Washington, Vietnam's shift to the communist camp could drag neighboring countries along. The **conflict smoldered** for ten years (1954-1964) after the war for independence against France and abruptly escalated into an open war between the **communist opposition in the interior of the South**, supported by the North, and the **Government of Vietnam** settled in Saigon in the South. **The U.S. supports the dictatorship in the south** that asks for help. In May 1964, the **United States began bombing neighboring Laos** to cut off communist supplies, then **attacks on American soldiers in South Vietnam**. **It caused** a further escalation: in February 1965, the **American army went on the ground in the north, dropping half a million tons of bombs in 38 months**.



Background: Burning village giving the impression of being in.....

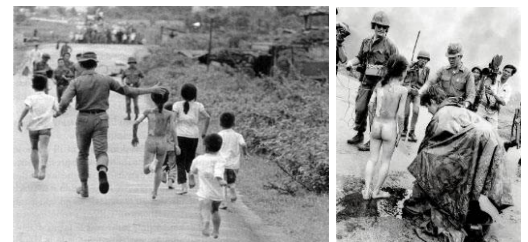
Framing and perspective: they run towards

Soldiers totally the fate of these children injured by napalm.

It's the that unites them to the

"Vietnam Napalm," renamed "**The Napalm Girl**," photograph by **Nick Ut** for the Associated Press, June 8, 1972, published on the **front page of the New York Times** on June 12, 1972. Original negative in the archives of the Associated Press, New York.

1. Where is Kim Phuc located? Why does she attract attention?
2. Complete the dotted lines. Trace the shape of the girl's body. How can we describe it?.....
3. How does framing influence the viewer's feelings?.....
4. How does the soldiers' attitude influence the viewer?.....



Reverse shot and treatment of Kim Phuc on the spot by US military doctors (Nick Ut – 8 juin 1972 – Associated Press)

To sum up

In 1972, President Nixon decided to disengage the United States from Vietnam. Why can it be said that the media coverage of the conflict influenced the American superpower?