



**Discussion point from
previous weeks:
“To what extent was the
USA paranoid about the
threat posed by
communism after WW2?”**



Review Activity: General Causes



- * Produce a one-sided table in Word with 4 rows dealing with the following topics.
- * Use your notes, textbook and the Internet if necessary!

| | Causes | Course | Consequence / Assessment |
|----------------------|--------|--------|--------------------------|
| McCarthyism | | | |
| Korean War | | | |
| Hungary | | | |
| Cuban Missile Crisis | | | |
| Berlin Wall | | | |



Background



- * Vietnam is in South-East Asia.
- * It was part of an old French Colony called Indo-China
- * During WW2 the Japanese captured it from the French
- * The Vietnamese resistance was led by the communist **Ho Chi Minh (left)**
- * **1945:** They resisted the French when they tried to re-establish control
- * **1946:** War broke out between the two groups
- * Vietnam was 9000 miles from the USA, yet they decided to get involved by pouring \$500 million a year into the French war effort.
- * **Why???**

Background continued...



Background to the War



- Differences between North Viet Nam & South Viet Nam
 - **Ho Chi Minh's** nationalist forces controlled the North
 - **Ngo Dinh Diem**, a French-educated, Roman Catholic claimed control of the South





Background to the War



- A date was set for democratic elections to reunify Vietnam
- Diem backed out of the elections, leading to military conflict between North and South



Discussion Point:
“Do you think that the USA was justified in interfering in the affairs of Vietnam? Explain your answer”.

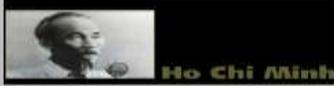
WHY DID THE USA GET INVOLVED IN VIETNAM?

THINGS YOU NEED TO INCLUDE IN YOUR ANSWER!!!

By Mr Yeland
www.SchoolHistory.co.uk

Your introduction -

VIETNAM, in South-East Asia, was part of the old French colony called Indo-China



When the JAPANESE captured it from the French in the Second World War, a Vietnamese resistance organisation, THE VIETMINH was formed. Its leader was HO CHI MINH, a Communist.

THE VIETMINH BEGAN A GUERRILLA WAR AGAINST THE FRENCH AFTER 1945

HOW DID THE US FIRST GET INVOLVED?

▶ Vietnam was a country 9000 miles away from the United States. Yet America felt that its national interest was threatened strongly enough to fight a war there. The explanation lies in the fear caused by the spread of communism at that time. The communist take-over of China, the Korean War and the communist victory over the French in Vietnam - all led many Americans to fear that the communists were taking over the world and must be stopped.

The US government believed that by helping the South Vietnamese government resist the attacks of the communist North they were helping to prevent the spread of communism throughout the world.



THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE AND 'CONTAINMENT'



'Truman Doctrine' and the policy of 'containment.'

- The USA was not going to allow any more countries to turn communist.
- The USA was going to 'contain' the expansion of Communism.

1949 was a bad year for the USA in the Cold War:

- The USSR exploded its own atom bomb. The USA was no longer the only nuclear power
- China became Communist. The USA had spent \$2 billion supporting anti-communists.



The USA at first disapproved of the French, but from 1949 Communist China began to support the Vietminh, the USA:

- Spent \$600 million a year into the French war effort
- The USA helped the French set up a non-Communist government in the south of the country.

1954 French defeated at Dien Bien Phu.

Geneva Agreement 1954: Vietnam divided into North Vietnam and South Vietnam.

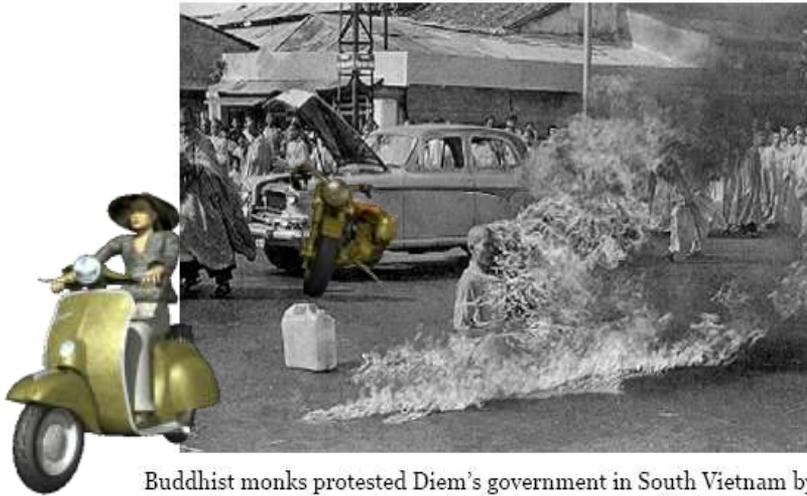
- Vietnam was supposed to have elections in 1956
- Indo-China was divided into four countries: Laos, Cambodia, North Vietnam and South Vietnam



NORTH VIETNAM
Leader: Ho Chi Minh

SOUTH VIETNAM
Leader: Ngo Dinh Diem





Buddhist monks protested Diem's government in South Vietnam by burning themselves to death on the streets of Saigon.

Task: What does this demonstrate about Diem's ability to lead his country?



Early Protests of Diem's Government



Self-Emolation by a Buddhist Monk



The American Reaction



- * **SEATO:**
- * Fearing that the communists would win a massive amount of votes with the Buddhist peasant population who were disgusted by the materialism of the Dinh Diem government, the US
- * - refuses to allow these elections to take place
- * - forms the **Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)** to protect the independence of Vietnam.

The American Reaction



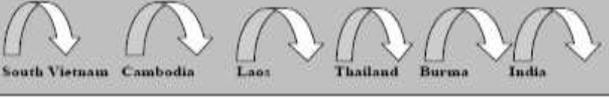
- * **Containment / Domino Theory**
- * **Truman** (President 1945-53) = "Containment" = Europe
- * **Eisenhower** (President 1953-61) = "Domino Theory" = Asia
- * "You knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly"
- * (South Vietnam > Cambodia > Laos > Thailand > Burma > India > ???)
- * Ho Chi Minh responds with a guerrilla campaign against the south.

THE DOMINO THEORY



1954 Eisenhower Cites "Domino Theory" Regarding Southeast Asia

Responding to the defeat of the French by the Vietnam at Dien Bien Phu, President Eisenhower outlines the Domino Theory: "You have a row of dominoes set up. You knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly."



South Vietnam Cambodia Laos Thailand Burma India

President Eisenhower's foreign policy followed the 'domino theory'.

- The idea was that the countries of South East Asia (and elsewhere) were closely linked together.
- If one country fell to communism, then others would also fall, like a row of dominos.

The USA supported the leader of South Vietnam.

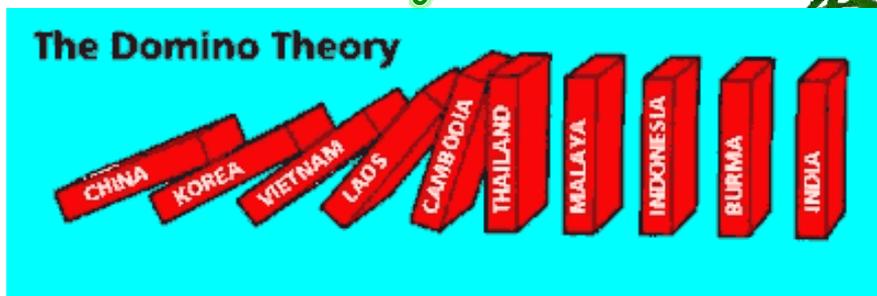
- America supported Diem by sending money
- Supplies and military equipment
- 1959 Communist government in N Vietnam ordered the Vietminh to begin a terror campaign against Diem's government.



Ngo Dinh Diem who was a fanatical catholic. As communism hated religion, Diem hated all that communism stood for. This is why he got America's support - he had a poor record on human rights but his rule was in the era of the "Domino Theory" and anybody who was anti-communist in the Far East was likely to receive American backing - regardless of their less than savoury background. Ngo ruled as a dictator along with his brother - Nhu. Their government was corrupt and brutal but it was also backed by America.



Short Activity: The Theory Illustrated!



Activity: Produce your own political cartoon on how the domino theory Works! Include labels and at least a one-sentence caption.





Warm Up:



Questions:

- * 1) What two different strategies could the U.S. have taken towards Viet Nam during the 1960's?
- * 2) Why are the two men pictured in this way?
- * 3) Are these positive or negative criticisms of the strategies? Explain your answer.



Bill Mauldin: The Star-Timer (Chicago), 1966.
Copyright 1966—Chicago Sun Times. Reproduced by courtesy of
Wil-Jo Associates, Inc., and Bill Mauldin.



U.S. Military Involvement Begins



- Repressive dictatorial rule by Diem
 - ⌞ Diem's family holds all power
 - ⌞ Wealth is hoarded by the elite
 - ⌞ Buddhist majority persecuted
 - ⌞ Torture, lack of political freedom prevail

- The U.S. aided Diem's government
 - ⌞ Ike sent financial and military aid
 - ⌞ 675 U.S. Army advisors sent by 1960.



U.S. Military Involvement Begins



- Kennedy elected 1960
- Increases military "advisors" to 16,000
- 1963: JFK supports a Vietnamese military *coup d'etat* (overthrow)- Diem and his brother are murdered (Nov. 2)
- Kennedy was assassinated just weeks later (Nov. 22)



WHY DID AMERICA BECOME MORE AND MORE INVOLVED?

NLF 1960 The National Liberation Front was set up in South Vietnam. It aimed to:

- Overthrow Diem
- Get rid of the Americans
- Reunite North and South Vietnam



1960 John F. Kennedy became President

- Kennedy increased the number of military advisors from 100 to 1600 by 1963. He also helped to equip the South Vietnamese Army.
- 1961 The US spent nearly \$270 million in military support for Diem.



1961 The 'strategic hamlet' programme. To "save" the peasants from the Viet Cong, Diem organised a system whereby whole villages were moved into defended camps - known as fortified villages.

- This policy did not work because the peasants did not want to be removed from their land
- The policy played into the hands of the Viet Cong who were promising the peasants more land once communism have taken root in the south.



November 1963 Kennedy assassinated



President Johnson became President



- Diem's unpopularity was so great that in November 1963, the South Vietnamese Army overthrew and killed him. The confusion at a political level in South Vietnam and the abuse of peasant's rights within the agricultural community were two reasons for the spread of communism within the south.
- Such a development alarmed the American president, Lyndon Johnson, who had asked his military chiefs to formulate plans should a full-scale war break out. The one proviso the chiefs-of-staff had was that America had to be seen as the victim rather than the aggressor.

Johnson's version of the 'Domino Theory'

- 'If you let a bully come into your front garden one day, the next day he'll be up on your porch, and the day after that he'll rape your wife in your own bed.'
- Johnson wanted a more aggressive war against the communists.
- Johnson didn't think the South Vietnamese government was able to keep the North Vietnamese out of the South.



1964 The US military prepared plans for the bombing of North Vietnam.



The Gulf of Tonkin Incident – July 1964

- The **Tonkin Incident** occurred when two American ships were attacked by North Vietnamese gunboats, while they were in international waters.
- In response to this, the American Senate gave Johnson the power to give armed support to assist any country requesting help in defence of its freedom.
- In March 1965, the first American ground troops landed in South Vietnam and by December 1965, there were 150,000 stationed in the country.
- The bombing of North Vietnam had already started in February 1965. This bombing was given the name 'Operation Rolling Thunder'.



Why did America get involved in Vietnam?

Background to the War in Vietnam

Vietnam, a French colony, had been invaded and occupied by the Japanese during the **second World War**. Ho Chi Minh was the leader of a group of Vietnamese, called the Vietminh, who opposed the Japanese. Ho Chi Minh supported **Communism** and by the end of the war the Vietminh had gained control of North Vietnam.

After the defeat of the Japanese in 1945, the French returned to re-take control of Vietnam. Communist China sent aid to the Vietnamese. The US, fearing that the Communists could take control of south-east Asia, sent aid to the French.

In 1954, the French were defeated. Elections were held in the North and it became Communist led by Ho Chi Minh. The US stopped elections being held in the South because they were afraid that the Communists would win.



Ho Chi Minh



John F. Kennedy



Ho Chi Minh was upset that elections had not been held in the South and launched a **guerrilla war** against the government in the South. The Americans sent money, arms and advisors to help the south but the Viet Cong (Vietnamese Communists) could not be defeated.

In 1963, President Kennedy was assassinated and Vice President Johnson became President of the USA. Johnson believed that if the Communists took South Vietnam they would then go on to take control of South-East Asia. This would mean the loss of important military, political and commercial interests.

By 1965 the government in the South was on the verge of collapse and Johnson made the decision to send American troops into Vietnam.

Activities

1. Copy the words in the glossary to the back of your exercise books.
2. Which two countries controlled Vietnam?
3. In which year were the French defeated?
4. Why did the Americans stop elections in South Vietnam?
5. What did the North Vietnamese call themselves?
6. Why was South-East Asia important to the Americans?
7. In which year did President Johnson make the decision to send troops to Vietnam.

Glossary

Communism – A classless society where everything is equally owned and controlled.

Guerrilla War – Small bands of soldiers harass and make sudden strikes on an army.



Vietnam

- President Kennedy is assassinated shortly after Diem.
- Lyndon Johnson assumes to presidency.

"You see, the Communists want to rule to world, and if we don't stand up to them, they will do it. And we'll be slaves. Now I'm not one of those folks seeing Communists under every bed. But I do know about the principles of power, and when one side is weak, the other steps in."

- Lyndon Johnson

Task: Do you think President Johnson wanted to involve the United States in the conflict in Vietnam? How can you tell?



- Communist guerillas, called Viet Cong or VC, began attacking South Vietnam.
- They began winning support from some South Vietnamese people.



November 1963 Kennedy assassinated

→ **President Johnson became President**



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Johnson Sends Ground Forces



- Remembers Truman's "loss" of China → **Domino Theory** revived



I'm not going to be the president who saw Southeast Asia go the way China went.



Johnson Sends Ground Forces



- Advised to rout the communists by Secretary of State, **Robert S. McNamara**
- **Tonkin Gulf Incident** → 1964 (acc. to Johnson, the attacks were unprovoked)
- **Tonkin Gulf Resolution**
 - ↳ "The Blank Check" *

More details follow...



Gulf of Tonkin Incident & Resolution



- * The **Gulf of Tonkin Incident** is the name given to two separate incidents involving naval forces of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) and the United States in the waters of the Gulf of Tonkin.

- 1) On **2 August 1964**, the destroyer USS *Maddox* (DD-731) engaged three North Vietnamese P-4 torpedo boats, resulting in damage to the three boats.
- 2) Two days later the *Maddox* (having been joined by the destroyer *C. Turner Joy* (DD-951) reported a second engagement with North Vietnamese vessels. This second report was later concluded to be incorrect.

- * Together, these two incidents prompted the first large-scale involvement of U.S. armed forces in Southeast Asia.



USS Maddox fires upon
three P-4 torpedo boats



Who lied? And Why?



- * In 2005, an official NSA declassified report revealed that the *Maddox* had engaged the North Vietnamese, but that there may not have been any North Vietnamese vessels present during the engagement of 4 August. The report stated

- [I]t is not simply that there is a different story as to what happened; it is that *no attack* happened that night. [...] In truth, Hanoi's navy was engaged in nothing that night but the salvage of two of the boats damaged on 2 August.

Gulf of Tonkin Resolution

- * **Gulf of Tonkin Resolution**—granted U.S. President **Lyndon B. Johnson** the authority to assist any Southeast Asian country whose government was considered to be jeopardized by "communist aggression," including the commitment of U.S. forces without a declaration of war.
- * The resolution served as Johnson's legal justification for escalating American involvement in the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam).

Escalation

- Johnson began sending more troops to Vietnam to fight a difficult enemy

1966 – 385,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam

1967 – 485,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam

1968 – 536,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam

The Enemy – The Viet Cong (Vietnamese Communists)

- The Viet Cong had no sophisticated technology or weapons.

•

Task: What is guerilla warfare?

Launching surprise raids and hit-and-run style fighting. They would launch a brief fight and run.

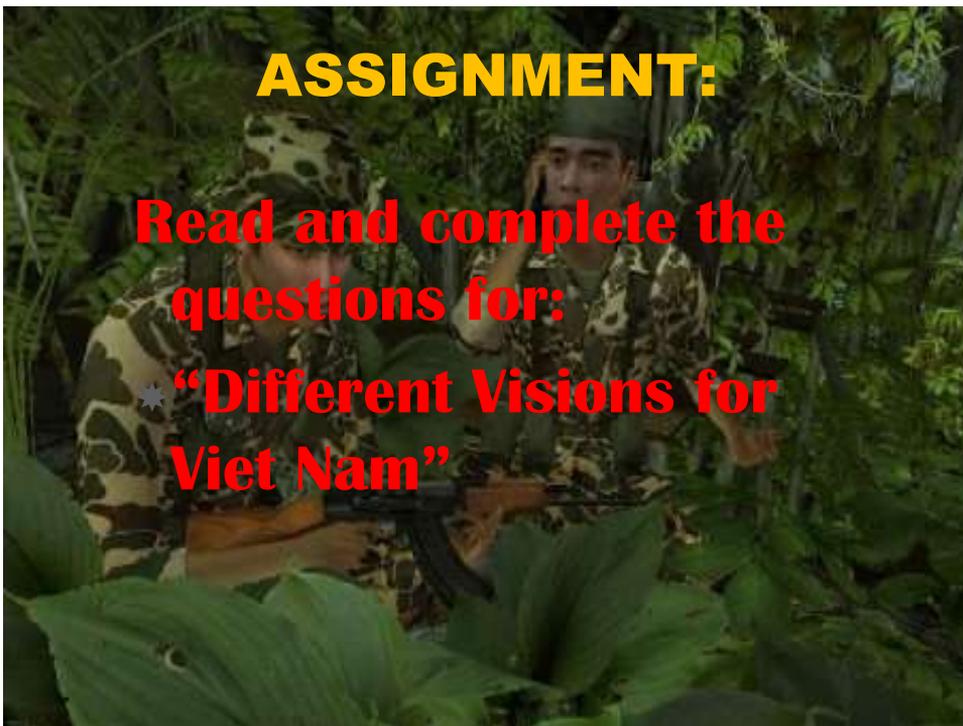
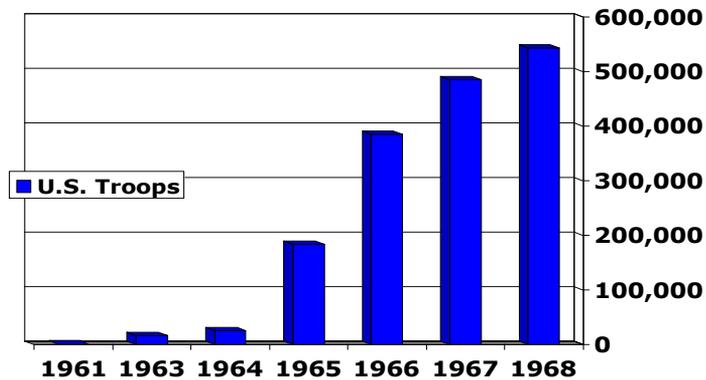
- They hid in an elaborate tunnel system built underground.
- They planted land mines.
- They set trip wires and punji traps.
- Viet Cong used local South Vietnamese people to spy or kill.

Task: Why would it be difficult to recognize VC from the local South Vietnamese population?





U.S. Troop Deployments in Vietnam



Seminar Notes

All answers should be as specific as possible, and unless otherwise stated, given from the point of view from the author. Full credit will be awarded for direct use of the primary source.

USE DIRECT QUOTES FROM THE PRIMARY MATERIAL.

9.2 Vietnam

Lyndon B. Johnson, William Fullbright

- A. Select 2 quotes from the reading and in a paragraph for each, explain why these quotes capture the essence of this document.
- B. Select 4 of the below questions and answer them in paragraph form.
1. What are Johnson's four main arguments for American participation in Vietnam?
 2. What were America's objectives?
 3. What was the "dream of his generation" and how was it new?
 4. What is the link that Fullbright sees between Detroit and Vietnam?
 5. How is Vietnam "incompatible" with American values? How has it created a moral "wasteland?" What values does Fullbright offer?



The Ground War 1965-1968

- No territorial goals
- Body counts on TV every night (first "living room" war)



- Viet Cong supplies over the **Ho Chi Minh Trail**

Ho Chi Minh Trail

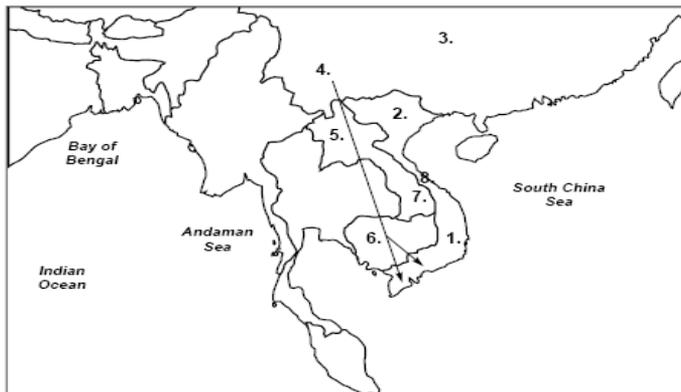
- * The **Ho Chi Minh trail** was a system of roads that ran from the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) to the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) through the neighboring kingdoms of Laos and Cambodia. The system provided support, in the form of manpower and material, to the [National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam](#) (or [Viet Cong](#)) and the [People's Army of Vietnam](#) (PAVN) during the Vietnam War.
- * The trail was not a single route, but rather a complex maze of truck routes, paths for foot and bicycle traffic, and river transportation systems.
- * The road is named after North Vietnamese president [Ho Chi Minh](#).

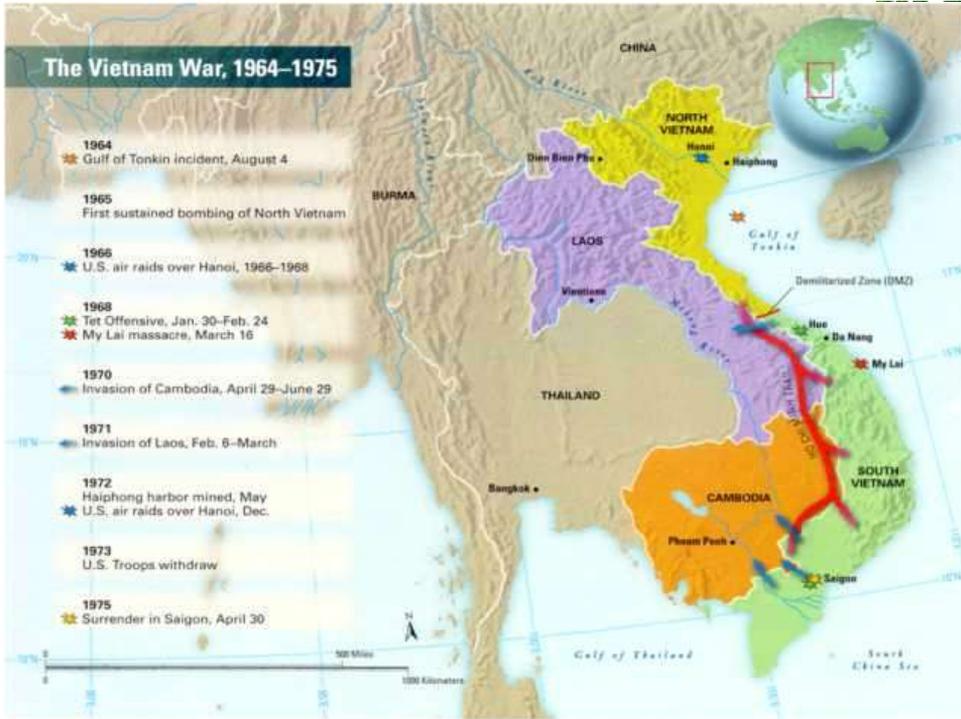


Mapping the Terrain

The terrain and climate of Vietnam was unfamiliar territory to most American soldiers. After all, Vietnam was mostly jungle with thick growths of shrubs and trees. Conditions there were unlike any other ever encountered by the military. Learn more about Vietnam with this mapping activity. Read the story and write the names of the locations on the lines provided.

After the Vietcong defeated combat regiments in May and June of 1965, the government of 1. _____ collapsed. The United States began pouring in more troops and continued bombing 2. _____. Supported by the Soviet Union and 3. _____ guerrilla forces multiplied. Reinforcements and munitions were smuggled along the 4. _____ through 5. _____ and 6. _____ into South Vietnam. By mid-1967, there were no signs of the war ending. All U.S. strategy had failed and American combat casualties rose dramatically. On January 31, 1968, the communists launched surprise attacks on every major South Vietnamese village and city. At 7. _____, American soldiers found mass graves of people killed by the Vietcong. The Vietcong eventually withdrew from Hue, but fighting for 8. _____ raged on for 75 days. By the time the offensive had been defeated in March, the U.S. counted 2,000 soldiers dead, the South Vietnamese 4,000, and the North Vietnamese 40,000. Still, the fighting continued.





The Air War 1965-1968




- 1965: Sustained bombing of North Vietnam
- **Operation Rolling Thunder** (1965-68): Ongoing bombing of Hanoi nonstop for 3 years! Esp. targets the **Ho Chi Minh Trail**.
- **Downed Pilots: P.O.W.s.**
Example: Republican Presidential candidate John McCain!

Operation Rolling Thunder

- * **Operation Rolling Thunder** was a sustained U.S. 2nd Air Division (later Seventh Air Force), U.S. Navy, and Republic of Vietnam Air Force (VNAF) aerial bombardment campaign against the **Democratic Republic of Vietnam** (North Vietnam) from March 1965 until November 1968, during the Vietnam War.
- * The **four objectives** of the operation were:
 - 1) To bolster the sagging morale of the **Saigon** regime in the Republic of Vietnam;
 - 2) To convince North Vietnam to cease its support for the communist insurgency in South Vietnam;
 - 3) To destroy North Vietnam's transportation system, industrial base, and air defenses;
 - 4) To interdict the flow of men and material into South Vietnam.
- ❖ Rolling Thunder failed due to the military aid and assistance received by North Vietnam from its communist allies, the **Soviet Union** and the **People's Republic of China** (PRC). Operation Rolling Thunder was terminated in 1968.



F-105 Thunderchiefs radar-bombing in direction of B-66 leader.



Chemical Warfare from the Air!

- * **Carpet Bombing - napalm** --Napalm is the name given to any of a number of flammable liquids used in warfare, often jellied gasoline.



U.S. napalm bomb strike in South Vietnam, 1966. U.S. dropped more than 338,000 tons of napalm (jellied gasoline) on Vietnam and killed more than 2 million Vietnamese during

eight years of war (AP).



The Air War: A Napalm Attack



Who Is the Enemy?

Vietcong

- ↳ Farmers by day: guerillas at night.
- ↳ Very patient people willing to accept many casualties.
- ↳ The US grossly underestimated their resolve and their resourcefulness.

*The guerilla wins if he does not lose,
the conventional army loses if it does
not win.*

Mao Zedong



American Strategy

- U.S. walked through the countryside in search of VC, an unfamiliar country.
- Thousands of tons of bombs were dropped on North Vietnam.
- Agent Orange was a herbicide used to kill foliage to reveal enemy positions.
-
- They ransacked villages looking for hidden weapons in food containers.



Task: Did the U.S. Army have an easy fight in Vietnam? Explain.

AGENT ORANGE



NAPALM



Who Is the Enemy?



★ Interpreting Statistics

| U.S. Troop Levels in Vietnam | |
|------------------------------|---------|
| 1960 | 900 |
| 1961 | 3,200 |
| 1962 | 11,300 |
| 1963 | 16,300 |
| 1964 | 23,300 |
| 1965 | 184,300 |
| 1966 | 385,300 |
| 1967 | 485,600 |
| 1968 | 536,100 |
| 1969 | 475,200 |
| 1970 | 334,600 |
| 1971 | 156,800 |
| 1972 | 24,200 |



* 3. What's this cartoon about? What does this reveal about the struggles of President Johnson?

★ Questions To Think About

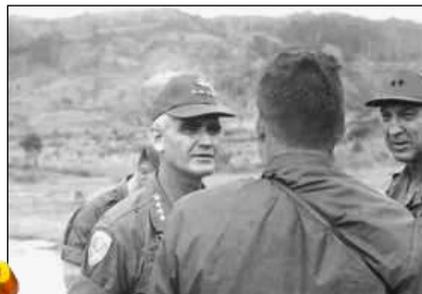
1. When did the American troop commitment increase most rapidly? Why? Explain your opinion, backed by facts.
2. When did the American troop commitment begin to decline? Why? Explain you opinion, backed by facts.



The Ground War 1965-1968



z **General Westmoreland** -- was an American General who commanded American military operations in the Vietnam War at its peak from 1964 to 1968



Was this true?

We can see the "light at the end of the tunnel" (1967)."





The Tet Offensive, January 1968



- N. Vietnamese Army + Viet Cong attack South simultaneously (67,000 attack 100 cities, bases, and the US embassy in Saigon)
- Take every major southern city
- U.S. + ARVN beat back the offensive
- Viet Cong destroyed
- N. Vietnamese army debilitated
- BUT...it's seen as an American defeat by the media



The Tet Offensive, January 1968



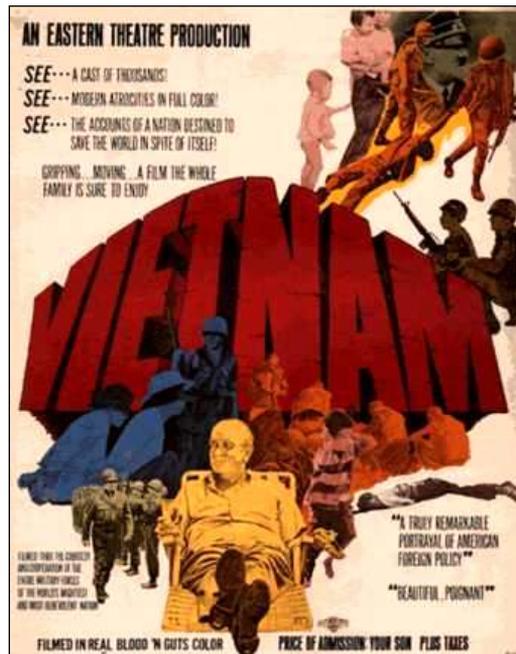


Impact of the Tet Offensive



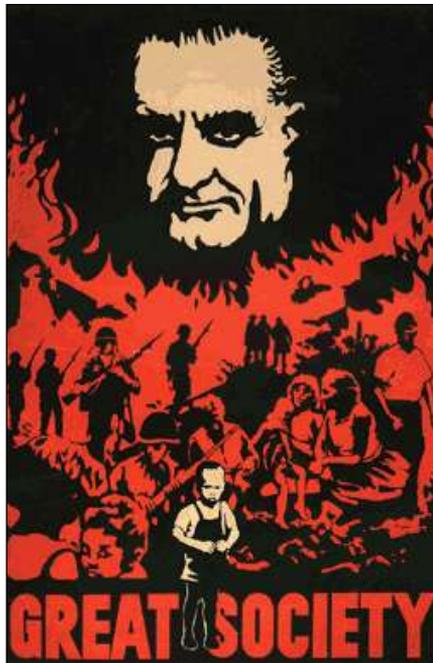
- Domestic U.S. Reaction: Disbelief, Anger, Distrust of Johnson Administration

- *Hey, Hey LBJ! How many kids did you kill today?*





Johnson's popularity dropped in 1968 from 48% to 36%.



Impact of the Vietnam War



Johnson announces (March, 1968):



...I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your President.





American Morale Begins to Dip

- ❑ Disproportionate representation of poor people and minorities.
- ❑ Severe racial problems.
- ❑ Major drug problems.
- ❑ Officers in combat 6 mo.; in rear 6 mo. Enlisted men in combat for 12 mo.



Are We Becoming the Enemy?



Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry



❑ Lt. William Calley,
Platoon Leader

- ❑ Mylai Massacre, March 1968
- ❑ 300-500 unarmed villagers





Impact of My Lai Massacre



- * The **My Lai Massacre** was the mass murder of up to 500 unarmed citizens of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam), almost entirely civilians and some of them, women and children, conducted by U.S. Army forces on March 16, 1968. The massacre took place in the hamlets of Mỹ Lai and Mỹ Khê of Sơn Mỹ village.
- * Some of the victims were sexually abused, beaten, tortured, or maimed, and some of the dead bodies were mutilated!
- * The incident prompted widespread outrage around the world. The massacre also reduced U.S. support at home for the Vietnam War. Three U.S. servicemen who made an effort to halt the massacre and protect the wounded were sharply criticized by US Congressmen, received hate mail, death threats and mutilated animals on their doorsteps.
- * Only 30 years after the event were their efforts honored.



SP5 Capezza burning a dwelling.