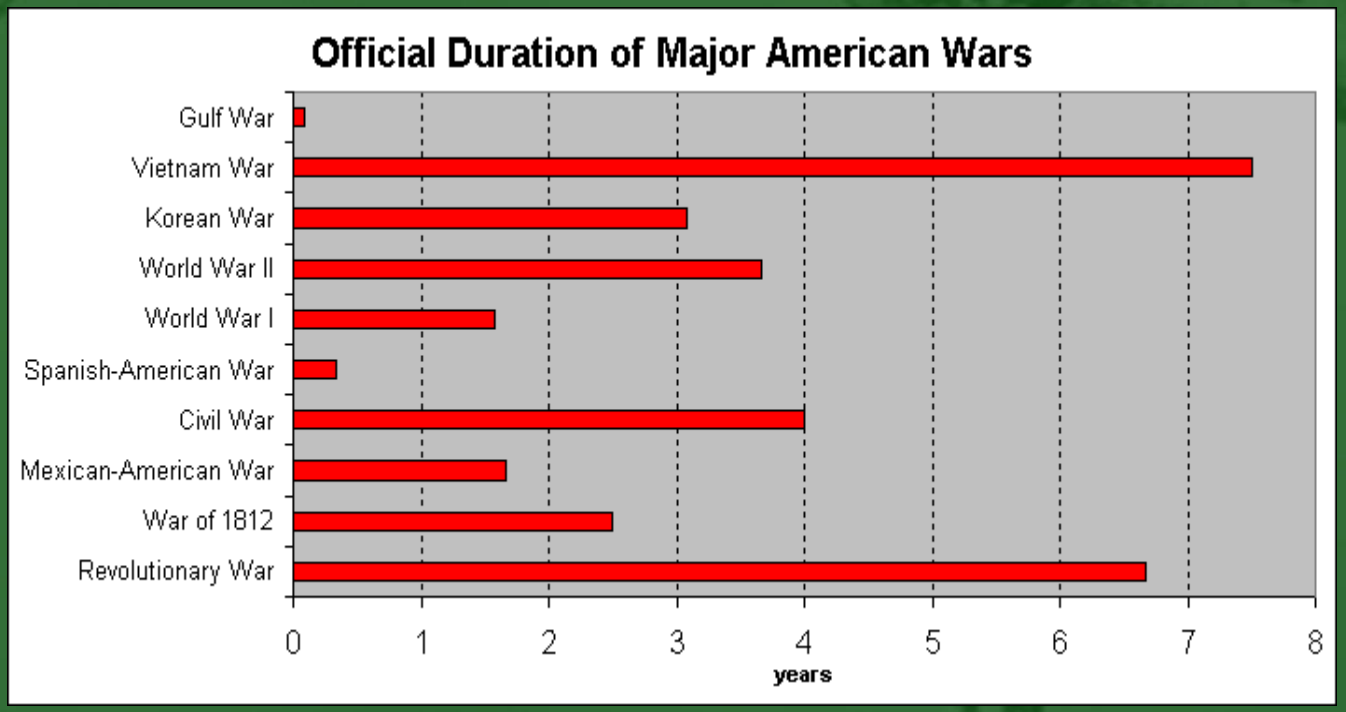
Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

Vietnam War

1960s-1970s

Lasting almost two decades, the Vietnam Conflict was one of the most prominent theaters of the Cold War. Officially the U.S. was only involved for 7 and a half years, still making it the longest war in U.S. history.



Overview

Most historians consider the Vietnam War to have started in the mid-1950s and lasting until 1975. It involved military conflict in Vietnam, as well as neighboring Laos and Cambodia. The war was between the communist North Vietnamese, supported by China and other communist allies, and the anti-communist South Vietnamese, supported by the United States and other anti-communist allies.

Vietnam

1960s-1970s

Eisenhower sends the first military advisors to Vietnam (1956)

Vietcong formed (1960)

Gulf of Tonkin Incident leads to Gulf of Tonkin Resolution (1964)

U.S. begins bombing North Vietnam (1966)

Vietnamization begins (1969)

Last American Troops leave Vietnam (1973)

1955 1956 1957 1958 1959 1960 1961 1962 1963 1964 1965 1966 1967 1968 1969 1970 1971 1972 1973 1974 1975

Eisenhower discusses domino theory regarding Southeast Asia (1954)

U.S. begins using Agent Orange (1962)

Tet Offensive (1968)

My Lai Massacre (1968)

Last Americans leave Vietnam, Saigon falls to the North (1975)

Vietnam

1960s-1970s

Use these guided notes to follow along…

Vietnam War Guided Notes

I background

1) Since the mid-1800s, the _____ had colonized much of Southeast Asia, including Vietnam. They named their colony _____.
2) The Vietnamese defeated them in 1954 in the (battle) _____ of the (war) _____ and left the region the next year
3) South Vietnam, a.k.a. _____ _____
4) North Vietnam, a.k.a. _____ _____
5) The NLF stood for _____, but was called the _____. They were _____
6) The Vietnam *War* was similar to the Korean *War* because:

a. _____ b. _____ c. Both countries were expected to have elections to unify the country

7) Ho Chi Minh was: _____
8) Ngo Dinh Diem was: _____
9) The capital of North Vietnam = _____, and the capital of South Vietnam = _____

II Overview

10) Thailand's role in the Vietnam conflict: _____
11) China's role in the Vietnam conflict: _____
12) Laos' role in the Vietnam conflict: _____
13) Cambodia's role in the Vietnam conflict: _____
14) Hmong role in the Vietnam conflict: _____
15) United States' role in the Vietnam conflict: _____
16) What Eisenhower did to escalate the conflict: _____
17) What Kennedy did to escalate the conflict: _____
18) What Johnson did to escalate the conflict: _____
19) What Nixon did to DE-escalate the conflict: _____

III The Vietnam War (by year)

20) (1954-1959) number of U.S. troops = _____ … other developments: _____
21) (1960) number of U.S. troops = _____ … other developments: _____
22) (1961) number of U.S. troops = _____ … other developments: _____
23) (1962) number of U.S. troops = _____ … other developments: _____
24) What was Agent Orange and why was it so controversial? _____
_____
25) (1963) number of U.S. troops = _____ … other developments: _____
26) What was the nature of the Buddhist monk protest? What was the purpose? _____
_____
27) (1964) number of U.S. troops = _____ … other developments: _____
28) Gulf of Tonkin Incident: _____
29) Gulf of Tonkin Resolution: _____
30) (1965) number of U.S. troops = _____ … other developments: _____
31) What was Operation Rolling Thunder? _____
32) What was Napalm: _____
33) (1966) number of U.S. troops = _____ … other developments: _____
34) (1967) number of U.S. troops = _____ … other developments: _____
35) Describe the Cu Chi Tunnels: _____
36) (1968) number of U.S. troops = _____ … other developments: _____
37) 1968 is often referred to as: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
38) Why was 1968 so pivotal? _____
39) What was the Tet Offensive? _____
40) The Tet offensive was a _____ defeat for the communists, but a _____ and _____ victory.
41) The My Lai Massacre was: _____
42) (1969) number of U.S. troops = _____ … other developments: _____
43) What was Vietnamization? _____
44) (1970) number of U.S. troops = _____ … other developments: _____
45) (1971) number of U.S. troops = _____ … other developments: _____
46) (1972) number of U.S. troops = _____ … other developments: _____
47) (1973) number of U.S. troops = _____ … other developments: _____
48) (1974-1975) number of U.S. troops = _____ … other developments: _____

III Anti-war Protests

49) anti-war protests intensified in _____, coinciding with the emergence of _____ and _____.
50) In 1965 U.S. troop levels topped _____. Seminars, rallies and speeches at college campuses called "_____" gained popularity.
51) In 1966, Veterans of _____, _____ and _____ staged an Anti-War Rally in New York City. Protesters burned their _____.
52) In 1966, _____ complained that the Vietnam *War* placed the "Burden On _____ and the _____".
53) _____ famously refused to go to war, saying he, "not nothing' against no Viet Cong. No Viet Cong ever called me nigger."
54) Other popular anti-war slogans included: "__ __ __ __! We don't want your f-ing war!", "Draft _____, not _____", "Hell no, we won't go", "Make _____, not _____", "_____ today, _____ tomorrow", and "Hey! Hey! LBJ, how many _____ d'you _____ today?"
55) In 1967, _____ spoke out, saying the U.S. was the "greatest purveyor of violence in the world". He encouraged _____ evasion.
56) In 1967, recruiters from Dow Chemical were forced out of a University of Wisconsin job fair. Dow was the company that produced _____
57) In 1969, the _____ was exposed to the public. Nationwide demonstrations occurred, including a large one in _____
58) In 1970, the U.S. invaded part of _____, leading to widespread anti-war demonstrations. A four-day of protest at _____ led to protestors throwing _____ and _____ at national guardsmen. A guardsmen fired on the crowd, killing ____, wounding ____.
59) In the end, at least _____ Vietnamese were killed, and some estimate that number to be more than _____. At least 200,000 _____ were killed, anywhere between 20,000 and 200,000 _____, thousands of _____, and 58,220 _____
60) The legacy left by the Vietnam War is enormous and mixed. The United States never officially declared war, but still lost the conflict nonetheless. The role played by protesters in the U.S. altered government policies and encouraged the North Vietnamese to fight on. Domino Theory proved to be only partially true. The war showed that the military superiority of the United States did not guarantee a victory. And the Cold War fight to contain communism proved to have its limitations. Consider the following questions regarding the legacy of the Vietnam War; choose 1 to answer.
    i. Ultimately, what details help explain how the U.S. lost the Vietnam War?
    ii. What were the disadvantages of the North and why did they continue to fight in the face of these disadvantages?
    iii. What role did American protests play in the outcome of the war?
    iv. In what way were other nations involved (Laos, Cambodia, China, etc.)?
    v. How did this war effect the larger Cold War struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Resistance against the French

Since the mid 1800s, the French had colonized much of Southeast Asia, including Vietnam. The French named their colony French Indochina. Shortly after World War Two, the French attempted to regain control of this Asian colony, leading to conflict with the Vietnamese.

Resistance against the French

Western historians call this conflict the First Indochina war, the Vietnamese called it the Anti-French Resistance War. Toward the end of the First Indochina War, French forces were defeated in the 1954 battle of Dien Bien Phu. The French left Southeast Asia later that year.

Nomenclature

The North Vietnamese fought with their main army, the Vietnam People's Army, as well as guerrilla fighters inside of South Vietnam known as the National Liberation Front (NLF), nicknamed by Americans as the *Viet Cong*. South Vietnamese forces commonly used airstrikes with American technology to attack NLF operations.

South Vietnamese Aliases:

Republic of Vietnam (RVN)

"South Vietnam"

South Vietnamese Army (ARVN)

Nomenclature

The North Vietnamese fought with their main army, the Vietnam People's Army, as well as guerrilla fighters inside of South Vietnam known as the National Liberation Front (NLF), nicknamed by Americans as the *Viet Cong*. South Vietnamese forces commonly used airstrikes with American technology to attack NLF operations.

North Vietnamese Aliases:

Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV)

"North Vietnam"

National Liberation Front (NLF)

National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam

Việt Cộng (VC)

Vietnam People's Army (PAVN)

Vietnam

1960s-1970s

Deja vu

Similarities with Korea

After Vietnamese forces pushed the French out of the country, the U.N. declared the country to be temporarily separated at the 17th parallel (a line of latitude on the globe) in 1954.

Vietnam

1960s-1970s

Deja vu

Similarities with Korea

The Vietnam War drew many parallels to the Korean War, both featuring a struggle between communist North and anti-communist South. Both wars also featured a temporary division of the country at an arbitrary half-way point in hopes of unifying elections that never happened.

Vietnam

Ho Chi Minh

1960s-1970s

Leaders…

Arguably the most famous Vietnamese figure during the Cold War was Ho Chi Minh. He was a North Vietnamese communist revolutionary leader, serving as prime minister (1946-1955) and president (1955-1969) of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam). He worked to establish the Republic in North Vietnam following the French exit.

Vietnam

1960s-1970s

Diem

Leaders…

Another notable leader was the Ngo Dinh Diem. South Vietnam was led by President Diem. Diem was a Catholic, and his regime was closely aligned with U.S. allies with the goal of preventing the spread of communism. Diem was a controversial figure, highly unpopular with portions of the Vietnamese people. Multiple coups were attempted to overthrow him during the Vietnam War.

Vietnam

1960s-1970s

Goals

North and South Vietnamese Goals

The goal for North Vietnam was to reunify the country under a communist government. The Ho Chi Minh saw the struggle with the French, the Americans, and the South Vietnamese 'puppet state' as one continuous conflict to get rid of colonialism and establish communism. The South was closely aligned with the United States and its goal was to prevent the spread of communism.

Ho Chi Minh (North Vietnamese president)

Ngo Dinh Diem (South Vietnamese President)

Vietnam

Capitals

1960s-1970s

Capitals…

Hanoi was the capital of North Vietnam after Japanese occupation in 1945, and then again after French occupation in 1954. Saigon was the capital of South Vietnam prior to, and during the Vietnam War. After the fall of Saigon at the end of the war, the name of the city was officially changed to Ho Chi Minh City in his honor.

Vietnam

1960s-1970s

Other Countries Involved

Thailand was a member of SEATO (Southeast Asian Treaty Organization) and was therefore in a military alliance with the United States and many other Western Nations. During the Vietnam War, the U.S. would use airbases in Thailand, and many of the Hmong people would seek refuge there.

China played a role in the First Indochina War by sending military personnel to help defeat the French. In fact about 2,000 Soviet and Chinese military 'advisors' trained the Vietnamese and provided them with military equipment for this war.

Vietnam

1960s-1970s

Other Countries Involved

Cambodia became a monarchy in 1953, and then a Republic in 1970. North Vietnamese used supply routes in Cambodia during the Vietnam War. Americans invaded Cambodia during the war to disrupt these supply lines.

Both Laos and Cambodia had their own internal struggles regarding communism

During the Vietnam War, Laos simultaneously experienced their own Civil War between royalists and communists. Much of the Vietnam War was fought across the border in Laos. The U.S. invaded parts of Laos and bombed the country consistently.

The War in Vietnam

Vietnam

Laos and Cambodia

1960s-1970s

Laotian & Cambodian Involvement

Bordering Laos and Cambodia also had internal struggles over communism as the established Kingdom of Laos fought domestic communist rebels called the Pathet Lao. The Pathet Lao succeeded in a communist revolution in 1975.

Pathet Lao rebels in Laos

The War in Vietnam

Vietnam

Laos and Cambodia

1960s-1970s

Laotian & Cambodian Involvement

The Kingdom of Cambodia had similar struggles against the communist Khmer Rouge, as well as a military coup. The leaders of the Khmer Rouge eventually fled the country after committing genocide and countless executions of political rivals.

Mass grave of bones as a result of Cambodian genocide at the hands of the Khmer Rouge

Vietnam

Laos and Cambodia

1960s-1970s

Laotian & Cambodian Involvement

North Vietnam used both Laos and Cambodia for supply lines, and sometimes attacked the military forces of these countries when they opposed the North Vietnamese. These supply lines were collectively called Ho Chi Minh Trail, named after the North Vietnamese revolutionary leader. The Trail also allowed the North to attack at strategic locations in South Vietnam.

Vietnam

Laos and Cambodia

1960s-1970s

Laotian & Cambodian Involvement

In 1970, President Nixon ordered the invasion of Cambodia for the purpose of disrupting North Vietnamese supply lines along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. This included 30 separate operations between May and June of 1970.

Vietnam

Laos and Cambodia

1960s-1970s

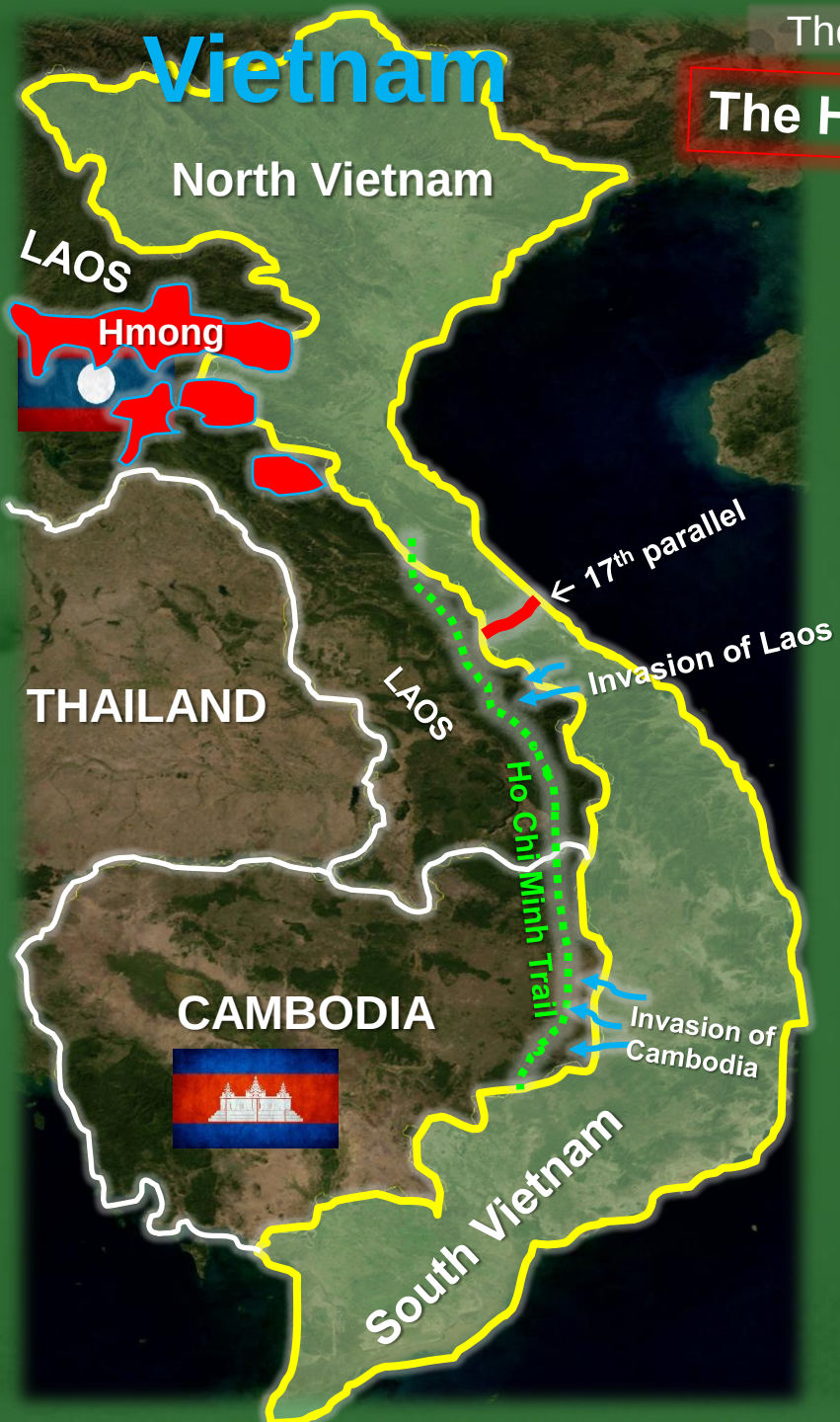
Laotian & Cambodian Involvement

In 1971, The United States staged invasions into Laos from areas just south of the 17th parallel. The purpose was the same as the Cambodian invasions; to disrupt North Vietnamese supply lines on the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Vietnam

The Hmong People

1960s-1970s



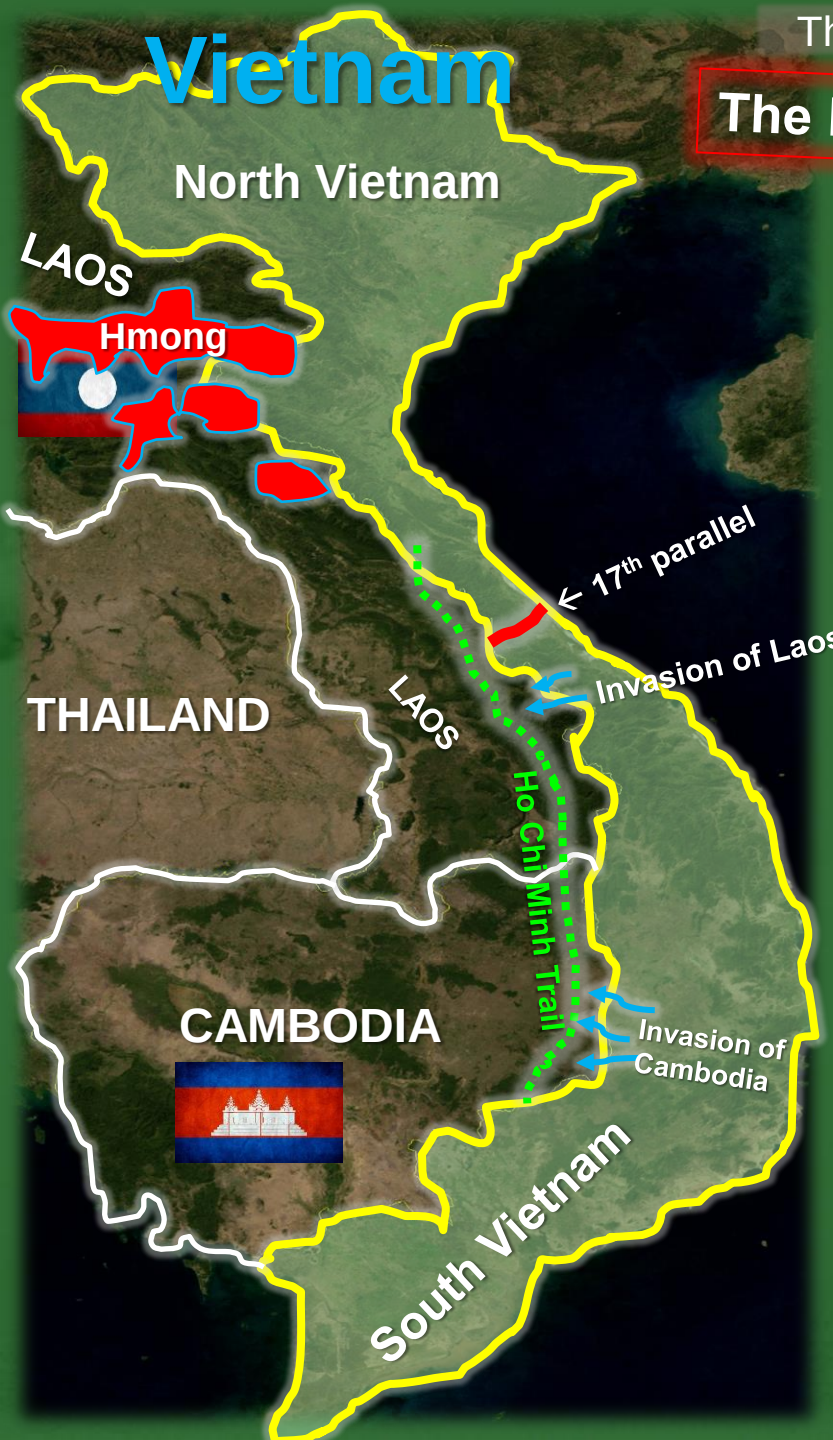
Hmong Involvement

A migrant ethnic group living is Southeast Asia known as Hmong joined the effort on the American side with hopes of gaining territory for a country of their own after they won the war.

The War in Vietnam

The Hmong People

1960s-1970s



Hmong Involvement

They fought guerilla warfare against North Vietnamese forces and Pathet Lao forces in what was called the *secret war*. Hmong were later (and still are) persecuted in the jungles by the governments of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Starting in the 1970s, tens of thousands of ethnic Hmong fled to the United States.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5mi68GYu64k

Vietnam

Other Countries Involved

1960s-1970s

U.S. Involvement

At first, U.S. President John F. Kennedy sent only limited numbers of 'military advisors' to Vietnam in the 1950s. Troop levels tripled in 1961, and tripled again in 1962. President Lyndon Baines Johnson would increase U.S. troop numbers beyond half of a million.

Vietnam

Other Countries Involved

1960s-1970s

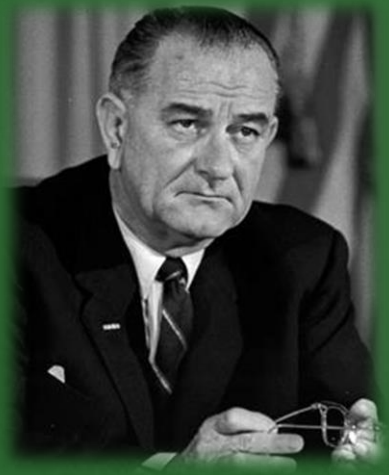
U.S. Involvement

Which presidents escalated the conflict, and which deescalated?

Eisenhower

Kennedy

Johnson



Nixon

Vietnam

1960s-1970s

Other Countries Involved

U.S. Involvement

…Deployed the Military Assistance Advisory Group to train South Vietnam Army (official start of U.S. involvement in the war)

…Sent 400 Green Beret advisors, and 16,000 troops by 1962. Signed the Foreign Assistance Act of 1962 which providing military assistance to nations on the rim of communist world and under attack (Vietnam)

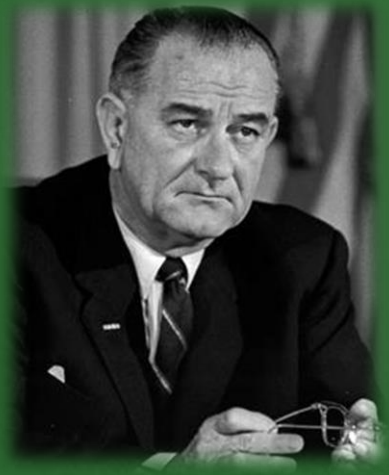
…Initiated Operation Rolling Thunder, sent 185,000 U.S. troops by the end of 1965, sent more than 500,000 by the time he left office

…Decreased the number of troops (1968-1972) going from 543,000 to 39,000. Replaced U.S. troops with trained South Vietnamese troops

Eisenhower

Kennedy

Johnson



Nixon

The War in Vietnam

Vietnam

1960s-1970s

‘54-’59

U.S. troop level:
Less than 1,000

In 1954, the French signed an agreement at a Geneva Convention ending hostilities in Vietnam. A temporary line was drawn at the 17th parallel to divide North and South Vietnam until nationwide elections were to be held in 1956. The United States opposed the nationwide elections, fearing that the communists would gain control of the country. The South Vietnamese president (Bao Dai) also opposed elections to unify the country.

Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

‘54-’59

U.S. troop level:
Less than 1,000

In 1955, Diem defeated Bao Dai in rigged elections to become the South Vietnamese president. The Soviets and Chinese pledge to help supply the North, and the U.S. begins training South Vietnamese with military advisors called the Military Assistance Advisor Group (MAAG).

Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

‘54-’59

U.S. troop level:
Less than 1,000

Also, communist insurgents in South Vietnam become active. Communist guerillas practiced terrorism and assassinated hundreds of South Vietnamese officials by 1960. The North Vietnamese began moving weapons along the Ho Chi Minh Trail through Laos and Cambodia and into South Vietnam. President Diem orders a crackdown on communist activity in the South.

Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

‘54-’59

U.S. troop level:
Less than 1,000

In 1959, communist guerillas kill the first two U.S. servicemen of the Vietnam War.

Major Dale R. Buis

2 AMERICANS KILLED BY SAIGON TERRORIST

PACIFIC STARS & STRIPES

AN AUTHORIZED PUBLICATION OF THE ARMED FORCES FAR EAST

FIVE-STAR FINAL 5¢ DAILY 15¢ SATURDAY

Vol. 15, No. 190 Friday, July 10, 1959

SAIGON, Viet Nam (AP)—A communist terrorist slipped into an American military billet 20 miles north of here Wednesday night during a movie and exploded a bomb, killing two U.S. military advisers, himself and three South Vietnamese.

Another American officer was wounded, and two others escaped injury.

The wounded American was flown to Clark AB at Manila for treatment. A communique from the Republic of Viet Nam government and the U.S. embassy said his condition was not serious.

Following the bomb attack, other members of the terrorist band opened fire from outside the billet with small arms and automatic weapons, the communique said.

Vietnamese Army guards returned the fire, "forcing the terrorists to flee to the nearby river from which direction they had come," the communique reported.

The South Vietnamese killed were two Army guards and an attendant who tried to prevent the terrorist from exploding his bomb. Another terrorist who had slipped into the building with the bomber escaped before the charge went off.

In Washington, the Army identified the American casualties as:

Killed—Maj. Dale R. Buis, whose wife, Virginia Lee, lives in Imperial Beach, Cal., and M/Sgt. Chester M. Ovnand, whose wife, Mildred, lives in Copperas Cove, Tex.

Wounded—Capt. Howard B. Boston, whose wife, Ardyn Allene, lives in Blairsburg, Iowa.

THE ATTACK OCCURRED at the South Viet Nam Army's training center at Bienhoa. The five U.S. officers were members of the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Gp. stationed in South Viet Nam to train President Ngo Dinh Diem's anti-communist forces in the use of American weapons.

President Diem, now touring Central Viet Nam, was informed

(Continued on Back Page, Col. 4)

Herter Says Pact Possible

WASHINGTON (AP)—Secretary of State Christian A. Herter said Thursday there may be some possibility of allied agreement with Russia over the future of Berlin.

At his first news conference since taking office, he stressed, however, he is not optimistic about the outcome of Big Four foreign ministers' talks due to resume in Geneva Monday.

He reiterated that President Ei-

Kozlov Inspects Steel Plant

Master Sargeant
Chester M. Ovnand

Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1960

U.S. troop level:
900

In 1960, the North took major steps to escalate the conflict. First, they began military conscription of every man of fighting age. Secondly, they established the National Liberation Front (NLF) as an insurgent group working in South Vietnam. The South Vietnamese government and the Americans would call the NLF the "Vietcong".

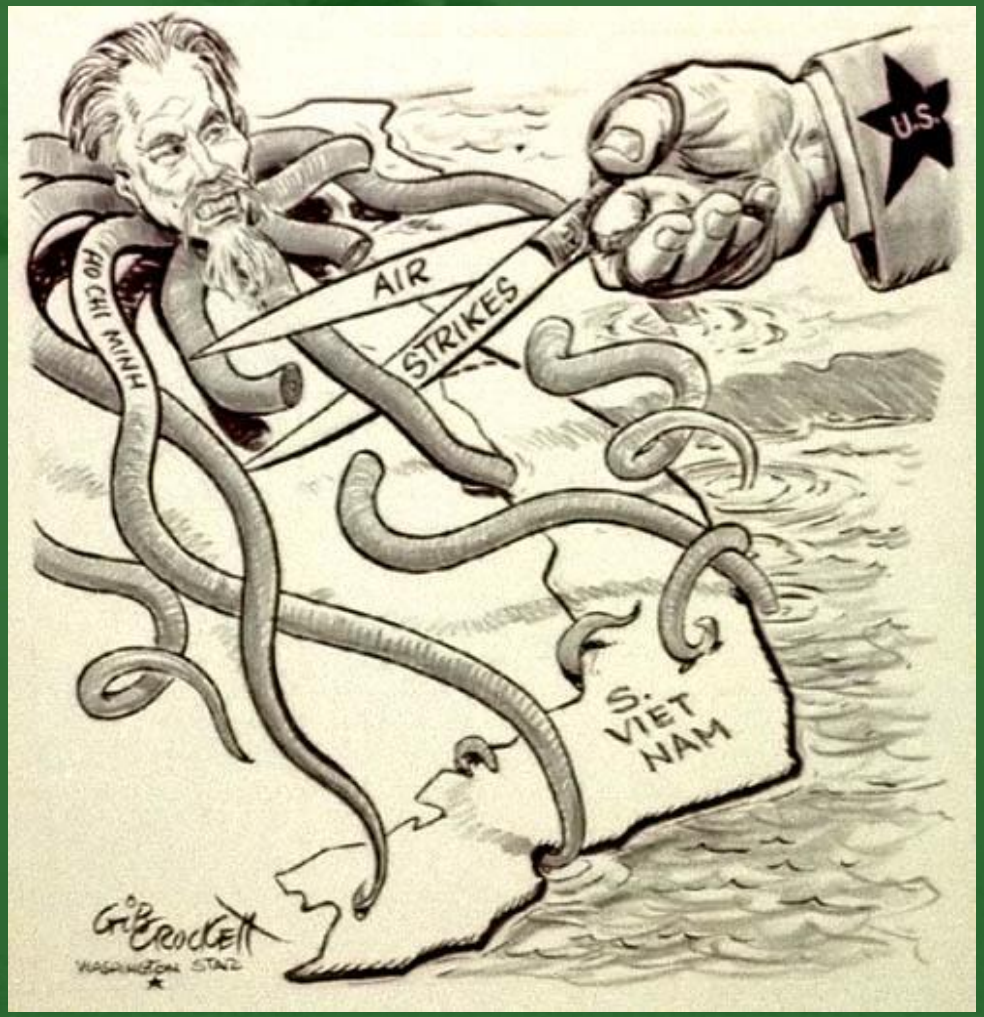
Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1960

Compare and contrast the American political cartoon with the communist propaganda



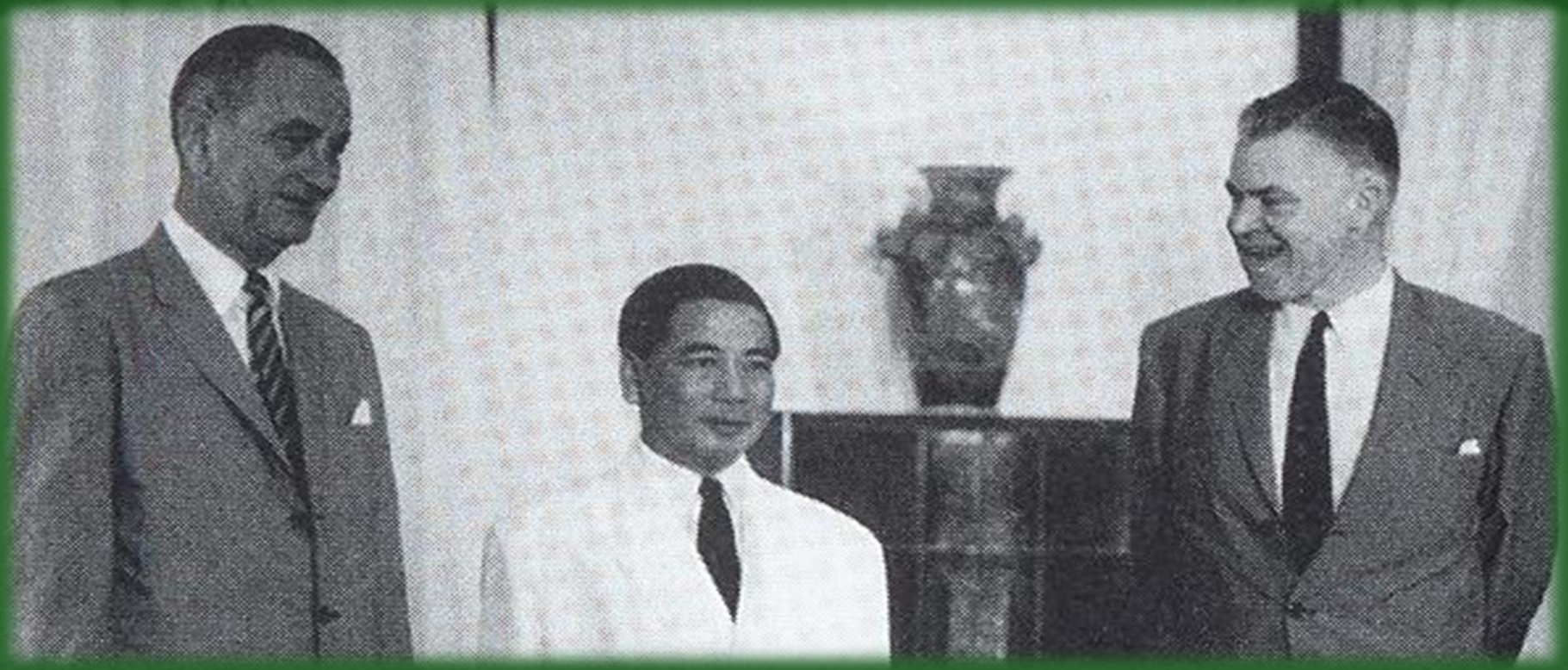
Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1961

U.S. troop level:
3,200

In 1961, South Vietnamese forces defeat an insurgent group of 400 in the Battle of Kienhoa Province. Also, then Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson visited president Diem in Saigon. Johnson told Diem that he was an important ally to the U.S. goals in the region.



Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1962

U.S. troop level:
11,000

In 1962, the United States Air Force began using Agent Orange to kill vegetation and forest to uncover trails used by the Vietcong. The lasting effects include increased cancers, deformities and severe birth defects.

Later that year, a bombing of President Diem's palace occurred with Diem surviving the attack and the attempted military coup.

Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1963

U.S. troop level:
16,000

Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1963

U.S. troop level:
16,000

In 1963, Diem removed many Buddhists from government positions, replacing them with Catholics. Buddhist monks famously protested Catholic President Diem by setting themselves on fire in public.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=btY_Iuh71MA

A Buddhist monk burning himself alive in the middle of the capital of Saigon.

Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1963

U.S. troop level:
16,000

Later that year, president Diem and his brother were successfully overthrown and murdered in a military coup. The U.S. continue their support of South Vietnam, raising troop levels to 16,000.

Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1964

U.S. troop level:
23,000

Gulf of Tonkin Incident

In August of 1964, U.S. ships sitting in the Gulf of Tonkin were attacked by three N. Vietnamese torpedo boats. The attack was unsuccessful with only one U.S. ship damaged and six North Vietnamese sailors killed. Two days later, unconfirmed radar picked up signals of more boats nearby, and a second attack was reported. Most historians agree that a second attack never happened.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dx8-ffiYyzA

Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1964

U.S. troop level:
23,000

This led to congress passing the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which gave president Johnson the power to "take all necessary measures" to protect Southeast Asian countries without congress committing to a formal declaration of war. The House passed the resolution unanimously and the Senate passed the measure 82-0.

Gulf of Tonkin Resolution

Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1965

U.S. troop level:
184,000

In 1965, U.S. forces began bombing raids of insurgent regions of South Vietnam calling it *Operation Rolling Thunder*. This was to boost morale in the Republic of Vietnam (South), to force the North to end their infiltration of the South, to flush enemies out of hiding, and to destroy Northern transports and bases. Bombing occurred for three years.

Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1965

U.S. troop level:
184,000

The use of napalm was increased dramatically during *Operation Rolling Thunder*. The effects of napalm, an explosive gel, were seen as enormous fire-balls in the jungles. Napalm explosions produced measured over 1,000ºF, almost five times hotter than boiling water.

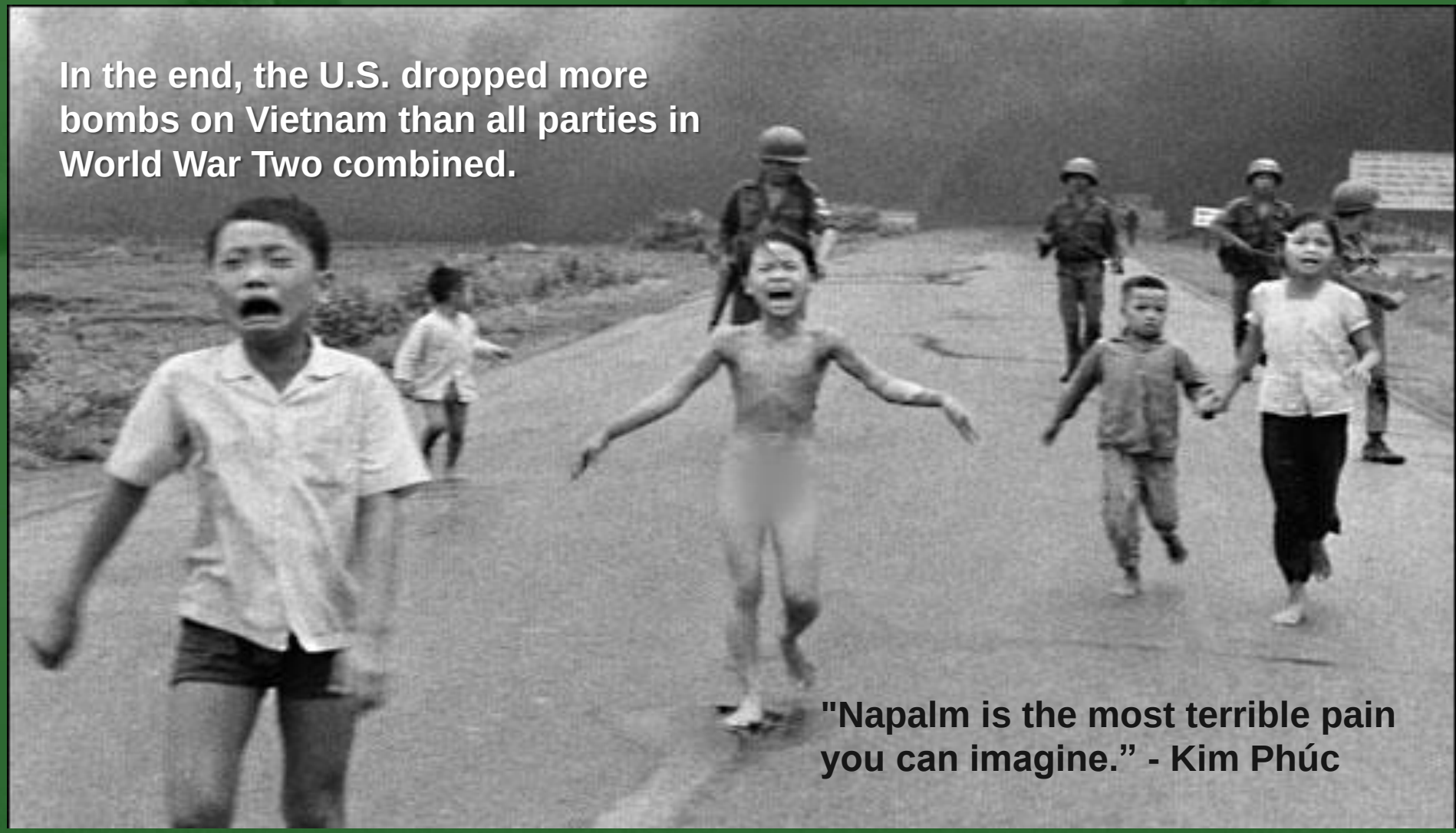
Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1965

U.S. troop level:
184,000



Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1966

U.S. troop level:
385,000

In 1966, the U.S. used B-52 bombers in bombing raids on North Vietnam. The main purpose was to disrupt the flow of supplies through Laos and into South Vietnam.

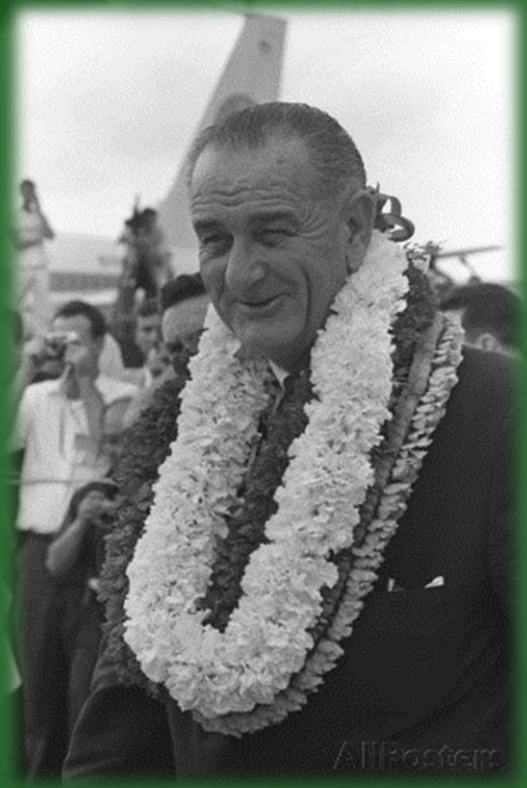
Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1966

U.S. troop level:
385,000

Also in 1966, President Johnson met with South Vietnamese leaders (in Hawaii). Johnson said that the U.S. would continue supporting them as long as the South was expanding democracy and improving economic conditions for its people.



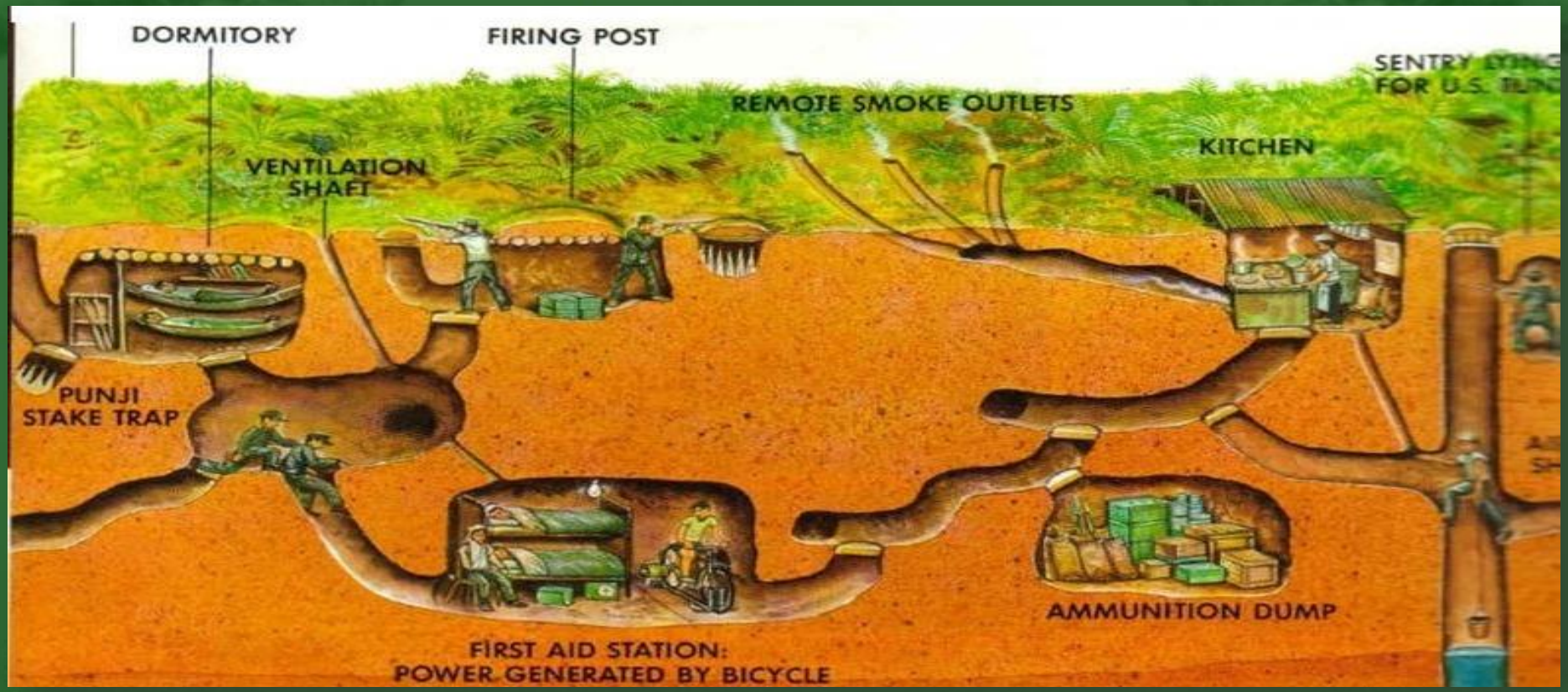
Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1967

U.S. troop level:
486,000

In 1967, a massive underground tunnel system was exposed in Cu Chi, near Saigon. It was used as a headquarters for the Vietcong insurgents. Many American leaders began to question how effective the bombings and other operations had been in demoralizing the North.



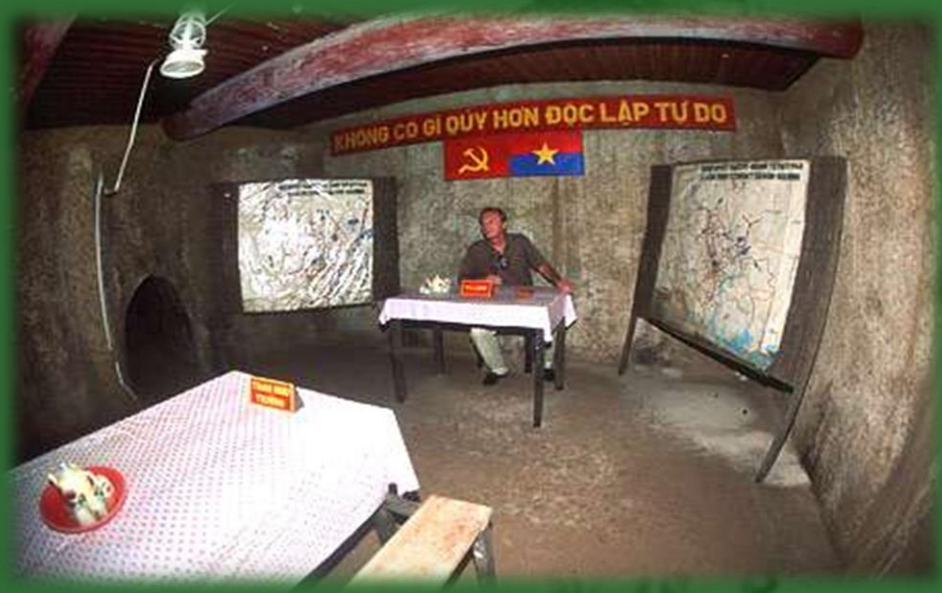
Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1967

U.S. troop level:
486,000



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11ivSD3gI6w

Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1968

U.S. troop level:
586,000

1968 was called a "tumultuous year", a "year of upheaval", a "watershed year", the "year of the gun" and the "year that everything changed". Martin Luther King and would-be president Robert Kennedy was killed. Johnson announced he wouldn't run for reelection, Nixon won the presidency and the Vietnam War escalated to unprecedented levels. U.S. troops increased to well over half a million men.

Execution of Vietcong guerilla (1968)

Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1968

U.S. troop level:
586,000

In terms of the war, several intense battles took place in 1968. But the two biggest developments were the Tet Offensive and the My Lai Massacre.

Tet Offensive

My Lai Massacre

Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1968

U.S. troop level:
586,000

The height of American troop involvement was 1968, when the Tet Offensive took place. It was called such because it began on *Tet Nguyen Dan*, the Vietnamese lunar new year (January 30th, 1968). The Tet Offensive was a series of over 100 coordinated attacks by the North and an attempt to occupy several positions in South Vietnam.

Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1968

U.S. troop level:
586,000

Although it was not successful in terms of gaining land, there were casualties (c. 5,000 S. Vietnamese, c. 5,000 Americans, c. 20,000 N. Vietnamese). It was discouraging to American forces (and citizens back home), who realized that the war was not going to end any time soon. The Tet offensive was a military defeat for the communists, but a psychological and political victory.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q1vJqTN-qVI

Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1968

U.S. troop level:
586,000

My Lai Massacre

Just months after the Tet Offensive, a group of U.S. soldiers slaughtered hundred of unarmed civilians in a Vietnamese village. It was not representative of the work of all U.S. troops, but the My Lai Massacre upset Americans at home as well as the world community.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWchy6ykNnQ

Vietnam

1960s-1970s

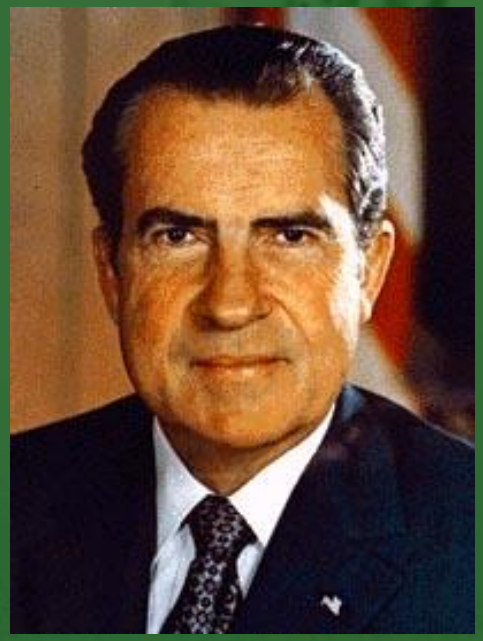
1969

U.S. troop level:
475,000

In 1969, Nixon called for secret bombing of Vietcong positions in Cambodia. This would go on for over a year and would eventually come back to haunt Nixon when it was exposed (this action was not largely supported by the American public). However, Nixon began a process of Vietnamization, a move that was very popular with the American populous.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWPtHN0fMxY

Vietnamization



Vietnam

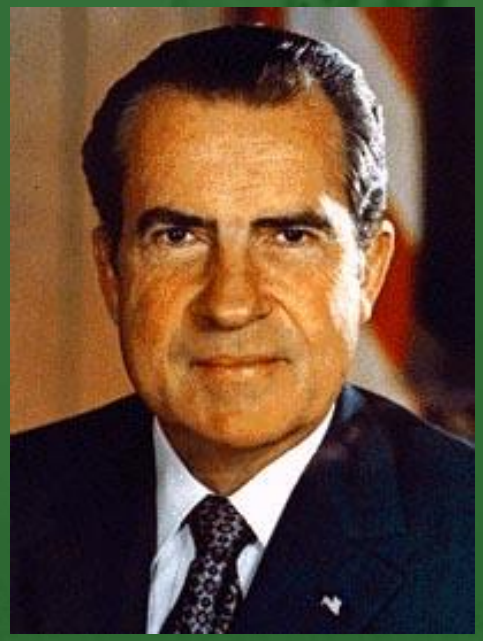
1960s-1970s

1969

U.S. troop level:
475,000

Vietnamization was the replacing of U.S. troops with trained Vietnamese troops. From 1968 to 1972, the number of U.S. troops in Vietnam went from 543,000 to 39,000. A peace treaty was signed in Paris by both sides in January of 1973, though fighting continued over the coming years.

Vietnamization



Vietnam

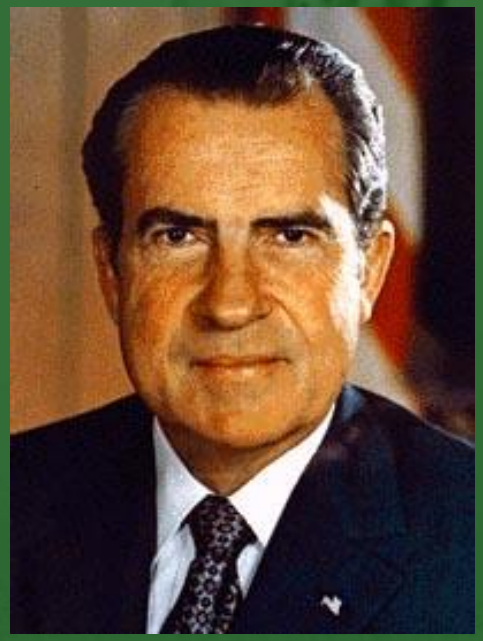
1960s-1970s

1970

U.S. troop level:
335,000

Vietnamization continued into 1970, which witnessed troop numbers average around 335,000. The number fell to below 300,000 by the end of the year. The U.S. also began invasions of Cambodia in an attempt to disrupt the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Vietnamization



Vietnam

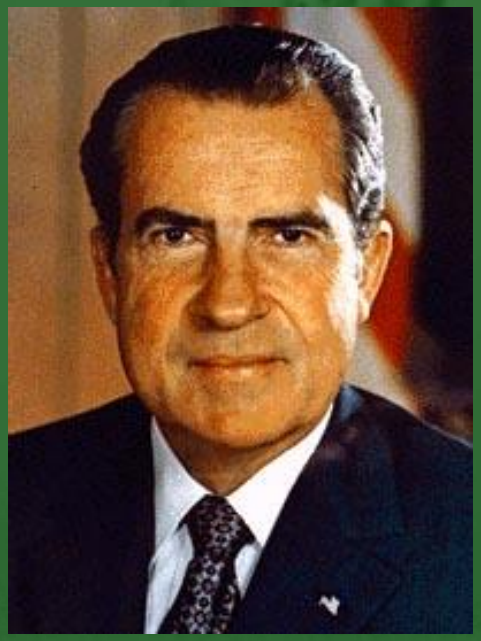
1960s-1970s

1971

U.S. troop level:
157,000

Vietnamization continued into 1971, which saw troop numbers fall to 157,000. The U.S. also began invasions of Laos in an attempt to disrupt other sections of the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Vietnamization



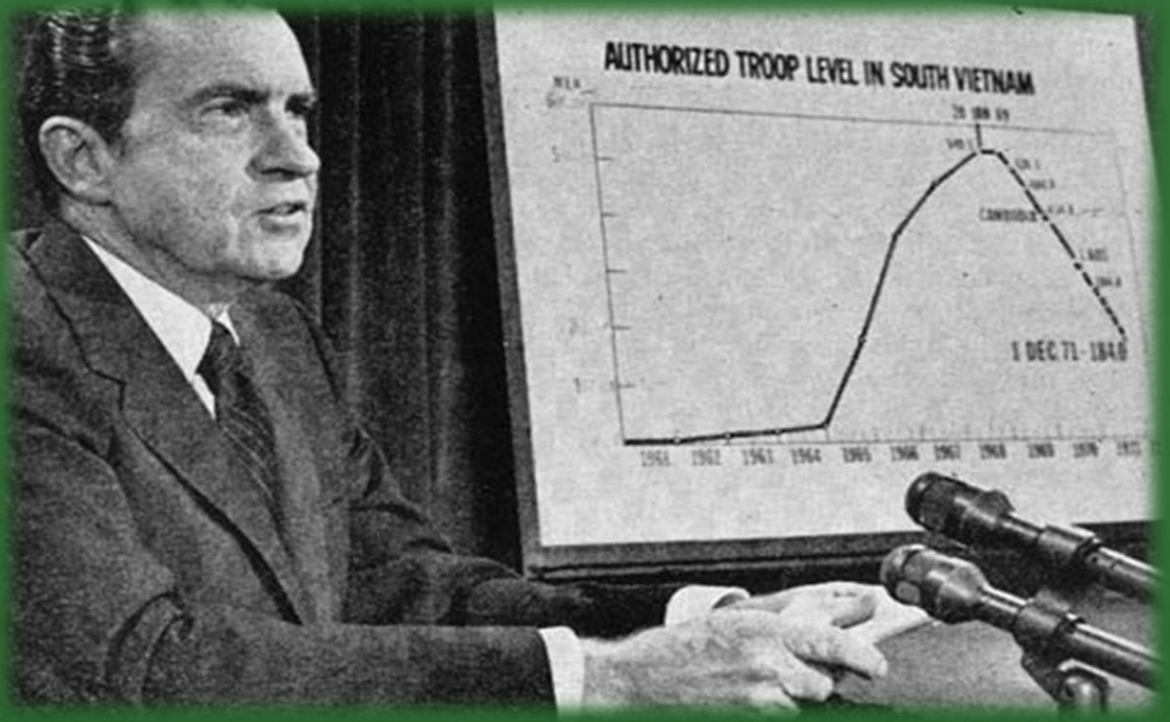
Vietnam

1960s-1970s

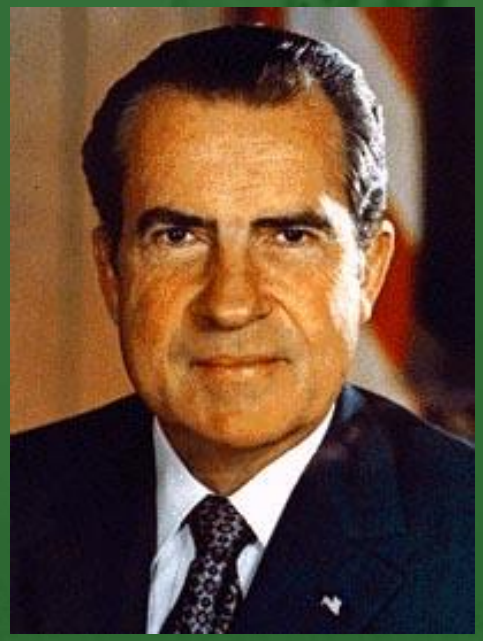
1972

U.S. troop level:
24,000

Vietnamization continued into 1972, which saw troop numbers fall to 24,000. Nixon was pressured to speed up the process of ending U.S. involvement in the war since many democratic candidates for president were making bold promises on the subject.



Vietnamization



Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1972

U.S. troop level:
24,000

Also, Nixon ordered heavy bombing of North Vietnam and the capital of Hanoi. This was an attempt to pressure the North into compromising in the ongoing peace talks. The U.S. air raids on the North Vietnamese capital of Hanoi was called *Operation Linebacker II*, the 'Christmas Bombings' and the 'December Raids'. The North and U.S. agreed to a cease-fire, which was signed the next year.

Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1973

U.S. troop level:

0

In 1973, a cease-fire was signed in Paris and the last U.S. troops left Vietnam. U.S. National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho of North Vietnam (who negotiated the peace) were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Kissinger accepted the award, but Le Duc Tho did not, saying that there was not yet peace in Vietnam.

Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1974-75

U.S. troop level:
0

In 1974, the war picked up again between the North and South. The communists launched a major offensive in South Vietnam, capturing planes, equipment, and important regions near the South Vietnamese capital of Saigon.

Vietnam

1960s-1970s

1974-75

U.S. troop level:
0

Since the U.S. did not respond or intervene, the North carried on even more aggressively. Non-military Americans left Saigon in April of 1975 in the largest helicopter evacuation in history as the communist forces took over the city.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3AiyFF9qOIs

Vietnam

1960s-1970s

Protests in the U.S.

The impact of Television

Prior to Vietnam, most citizens were removed from the realities and horrors of war. Vietnam was different as these realities and horrors were often brought directly into American living rooms. The nightly news in the United States reported on body counts and the total numbers killed each day in the Vietnam conflict.

Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

Protests in the U.S.

Anti-war protests in the United States weren't unusual, and even existed during the Korean War of the 1950s. However, anti-war protests intensified in the late 1960s, coinciding with the emergence of hippies and counterculture.

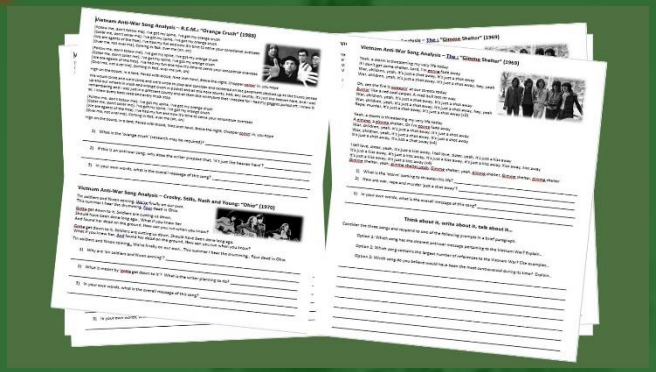
Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

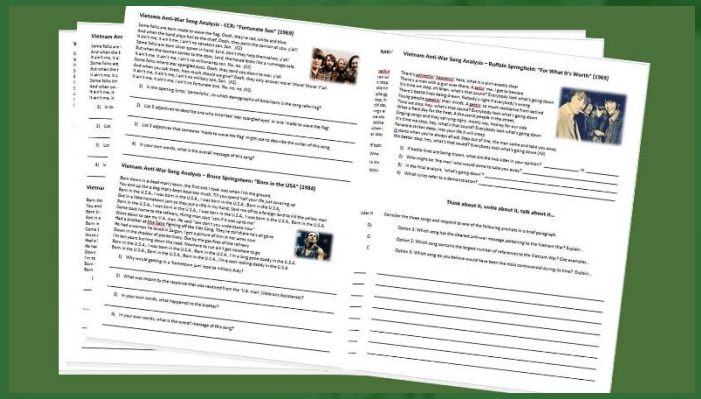
Protests in the U.S.

Rock bands and other musicians were an integral part of the protests. Consider the lyrics and guiding questions for these anti-war songs from the ‘60s, ‘70s and ‘80s.

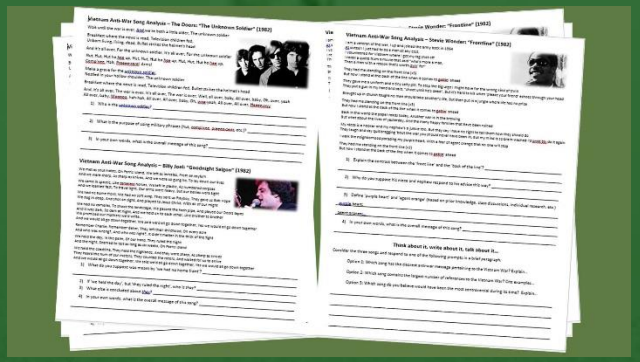


http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Vietnam-Anti-war-Song-Analysis-3-Rolling-Stones-CSNY-REM-guiding-Qs-1107508

Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young



http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Vietnam-Anti-War-Song-Analysis-1-CCR-Springsteen-Buffalo-Springfield-w-Qs-1107509



http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Vietnam-Anti-war-Song-Analysis-2-Doors-Billy-Joel-Stevie-Wonder-guiding-Qs-1107506

http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Vietnam-Anti-war-Song-Analysis-1-2-3-Doors-Stones-CSNY-REM-more-1107505

Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

Protests in the U.S.

1960s-1970s

In 1965 U.S. troop levels topped 200,000. Seminars, rallies and speeches (about U.S. involvement in Vietnam) at college campuses called "Teach-ins" began to gain popularity.

Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

Protests in the U.S.

In 1966, Veterans of WWI, WWII and Korea staged an Anti-War Rally in New York City. Protesters burned their discharge papers.

Vietnam 1960s-1970s

Protests in the U.S.

Also in 1966, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) complained that the Vietnam War placed the "Burden On Minorities and Poor". They pointed to draft practices that discriminated against these groups. CORE also called for the withdrawal of troops from the war.

Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

Protests in the U.S.

Muhammad Ali famously refused to go to war, saying he, "got nothing' against no Viet Cong. No Viet Cong ever called me nigger."

Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

Protests in the U.S.

“Make love, not war”, “18 today, dead tomorrow”, and “Hey! Hey! LBJ, how many kids d’you kill today?”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nl58QbpVLHw

Vietnam

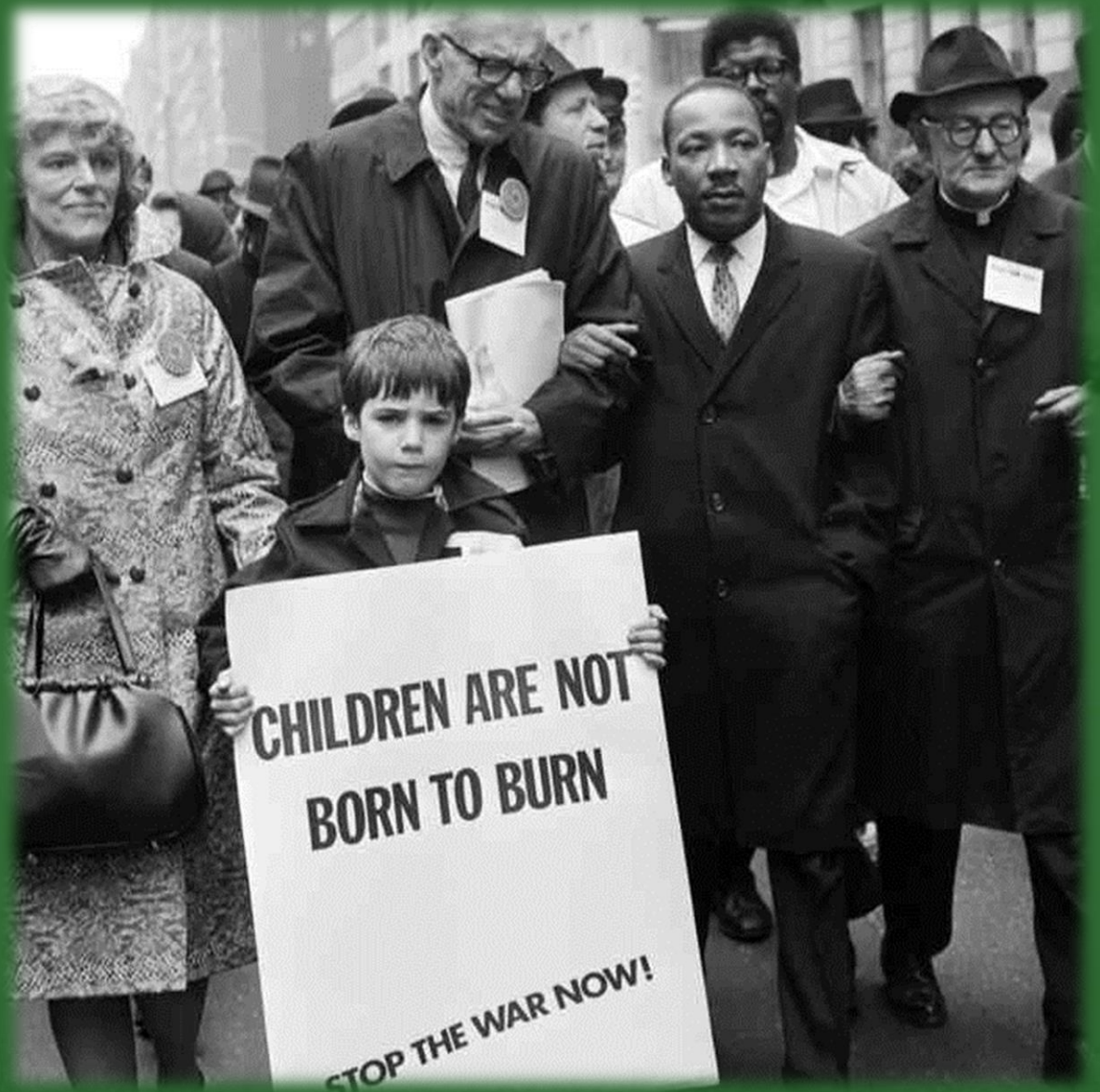
The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

Protests in the U.S.

In 1967, Martin Luther King spoke out against the war. He said the U.S. was the "greatest purveyor of violence in the world". King even encouraged men to evade the draft. King saw the fight against the war and the fight for Civil Rights as part of the same movement.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTgpMVFMOEY



Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

Protests in the U.S.

In 1967, recruiters from Dow Chemical were forced off campus at a University of Wisconsin job fair. Dow was the company that produced the Napalm and agent orange used in Vietnam.

Vietnam

The War in Vietnam

1960s-1970s

Protests in the U.S.

In 1969, the 1968 My Lai Massacre was exposed to the public. Demonstrations occurred across the country, including a huge antiwar Demonstration in Washington D.C.

•

Vietnam

1960s-1970s

Protests in the U.S.

Protests in the U.S.

In 1970, the U.S. invaded part of Cambodia, leading to widespread anti-war demonstrations. A four-day of protest at Kent State University (Ohio) led to protestors throwing rocks and empty tear gas canisters at national guardsmen. One guardsmen fired on the crowd, killing four and wounding nine.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vyzoNCJvy4c

Death Tolls

Death tolls from the Vietnam War are difficult to count with accuracy. Countless deaths were unreported. Others went missing. Some died of snake bites or malaria. Millions fled the country. In fact, 1.2 million Vietnamese entered the United States during, and shortly after the close of the Vietnam War. In the end, at least 800,000 Vietnamese were killed, and some estimate that number to be more than 3,000,000. At least 200,000 Cambodians were killed, anywhere between 20,000 and 200,000 Laotians, thousands of Hmong fighters, and 58,220 U.S. service members.

Legacy

The legacy left by the Vietnam War is enormous and mixed. The United States never officially declared war, but still lost the conflict nonetheless. The role played by protesters in the U.S. altered government policies and encouraged the North Vietnamese to fight on. Domino Theory proved to be only partially true. The war showed that the military superiority of the United States did not guarantee a victory. And the Cold War fight to contain communism proved to have its limitations.

Vietnam

1960s-1970s

Legacy

Legacy

Consider the following questions regarding the legacy of the Vietnam War…

1) **Ultimately, what details help explain how the U.S. lost the Vietnam War?**
2) **What were the disadvantages of the North and why did they continue to fight in the face of these disadvantages?**
3) **What role did American protests play in the outcome of the war?**
4) **In what way were other nations involved (Laos, Cambodia, China, etc.)?**
5) **How did this war effect the larger Cold War struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union?**