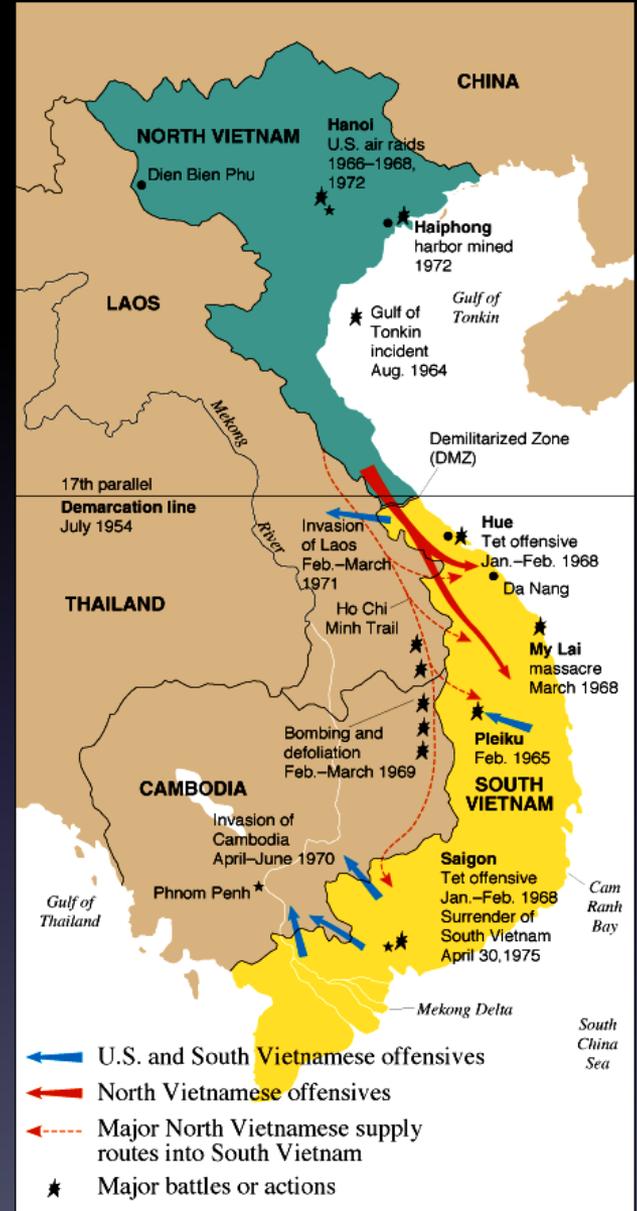


The Vietnam War

INTRODUCTION TO THE VIETNAM WAR

Where is Vietnam?



- ← U.S. and South Vietnamese offensives
- ← North Vietnamese offensives
- ← Major North Vietnamese supply routes into South Vietnam
- ★ Major battles or actions

Why Did the United States Fight a War in Vietnam?

- Basically to hold the line against the spread of world Communism
- America paid for the war the French fought against Communist Vietnam as a part of the Truman Doctrine
- In the 1950's, America became involved again.



Longest and Most Unpopular War



- The Vietnam War was the longest and most unpopular war in American history. During the war:
 - 58,000 Americans lost their lives.
 - The oldest man killed was 62 years old; the youngest, 16.
 - 61% of the men killed were 21 or younger.
 - 304,000 were wounded.
 - 75,000 were severely disabled.
 - The United States spent over \$200 billion dollars on the war.

CAUSES OF THE VIETNAM WAR

Conflict Between France & Vietnam

- The Vietnam War grew out of the long conflict between France and Vietnam.
 - In July 1954, after one hundred years of colonial rule, a defeated France was forced to leave Vietnam.
 - Nationalist forces under the direction of General Vo Nguyen Giap defeated the allied French troops at the remote mountain outpost of Dien Bien Phu in the northwest corner of Vietnam.

The Geneva Peace Accords

- The Geneva Peace Accords, signed by France and Vietnam in the summer of 1954, provided for the temporary partition of Vietnam at the 17th parallel, with national elections in 1956 to reunify the country.
- In the North, a communist regime, supported by the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, set up its headquarters in Hanoi under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh.



Ho Chi Minh Trail

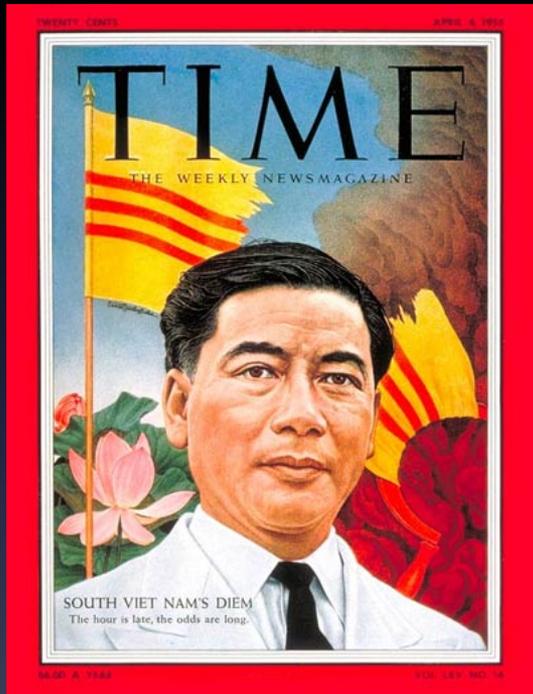


Opposition to Geneva Accords

- The United States prevented the elections that were promised under the Geneva conference because it knew that the Communists would win.
- He and President Dwight D. Eisenhower supported the creation of a counter-revolutionary alternative south of the 17th parallel.



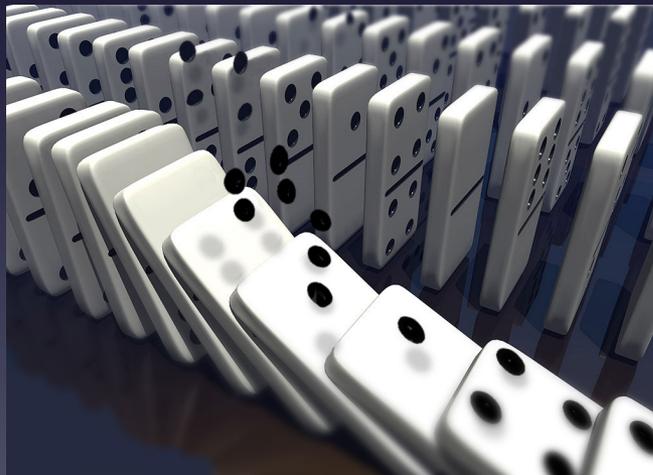
A New Nation in the South



- The Eisenhower administration helped create a new nation in southern Vietnam.
- In 1955, with the help of massive amounts of American military, political, and economic aid, the government of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) was born.

The Domino Theory

- American policymakers developed the “Domino Theory” as a justification for the involvement. This theory stated, “If South Vietnam falls to the Communist, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Burma, India and Pakistan would also fall like dominos. The Pacific Islands and even Australia could be at risk”.



South Vietnam Under Diem

- Diem claimed that his newly created government was under attack from Communists in the north.
- In late 1957, with American military aid, Diem began to counterattack.

December 1961 White Paper

- In 1961, President Kennedy sent a team to Vietnam to report on conditions in the South and to assess future American aid requirements.
- The report, known as the "December 1961 White Paper," argued for:
 - An increase in military, technical, and economic aid
 - The introduction of large-scale American "advisers" to help stabilize the Diem regime



The Kennedy Response

- As Kennedy weighed the merits of these recommendations, some of his other advisers urged the president to withdraw from Vietnam altogether.
- In typical Kennedy fashion, the president chose a middle route.
 - Instead of a large-scale military buildup or a negotiated settlement, the United States would increase the level of its military involvement in South Vietnam through more machinery and advisers, but no military troops.

Buddhist Self-Immolations

- Diem's brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, had raided the Buddhist pagodas of South Vietnam, claiming that they had harbored the Communists that were creating the political instability.
- The result was massive protests on the streets of Saigon that led Buddhist monks to self-immolation.
- The pictures of the monks engulfed in flames made world headlines and caused considerable consternation in Washington.



MAP ACTIVITY

Instructions

Label the following on the map:

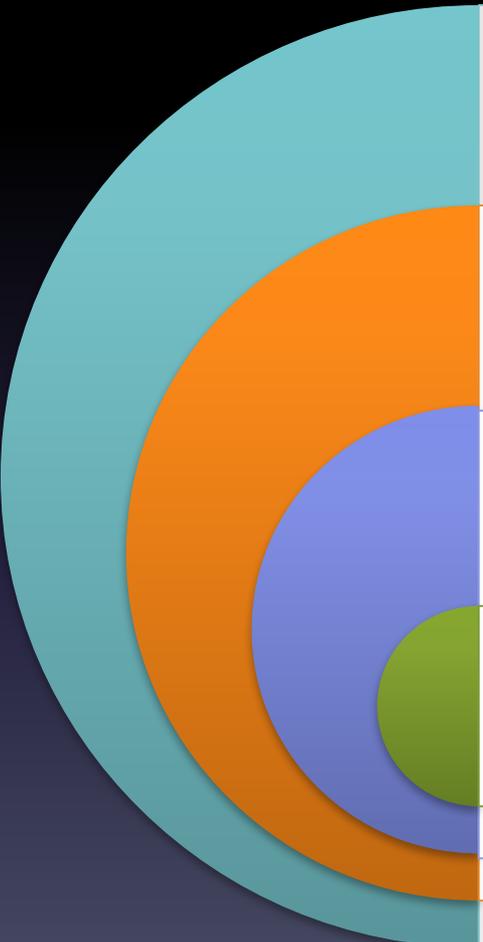
China	North Vietnam	South Vietnam	Laos
Cambodia	Thailand	Burma	Demilitarized Zone
Gulf of Tonkin	Gulf of Thailand	Mekong River	South China Sea
Mekong Delta	Hanoi	Saigon	Phnom Penh

Color the following on the map:

- The Communist countries on the map in **RED**, the Mekong River **BLUE** and the Demilitarized Zone **ORANGE**

MAJOR EVENTS OF THE VIETNAM WAR

Escalation of the Conflict



At the time of the Kennedy and Diem assassinations, there were 16,000 military advisers in Vietnam.

The Kennedy administration had managed to run the war from Washington without the large-scale introduction of American combat troops.

The continuing political problems in Saigon, however, convinced the new president, Lyndon Baines Johnson, that more aggressive action was needed.

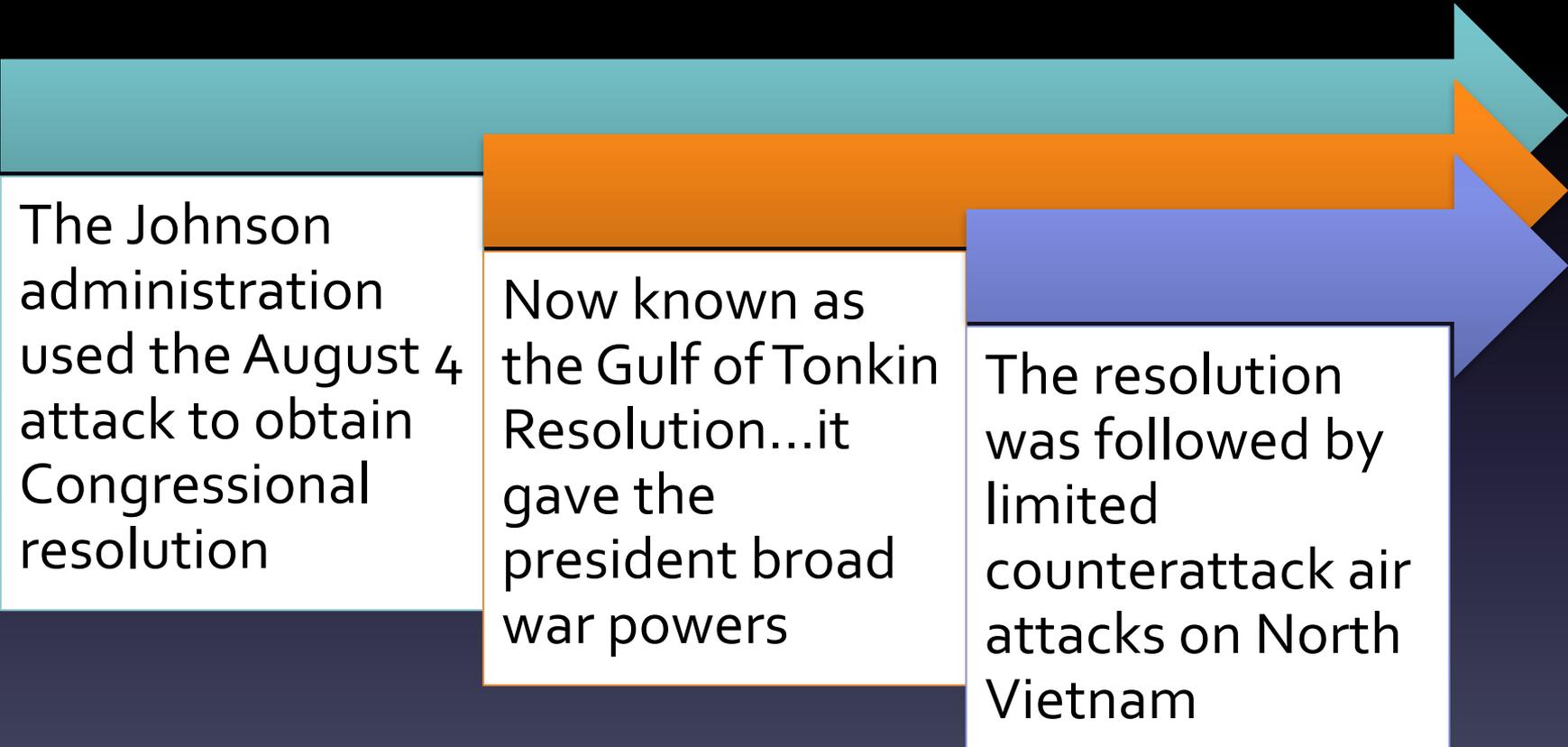
After a dubious North Vietnamese raid on two U.S. ships in the Gulf of Tonkin, the Johnson administration argued for expansive war powers for the president.

Attack on American Ships

In August 1964, in response to American & South Vietnamese espionage along its coast, North Vietnam launched an attack against two US ships

The first attack was supposed to have taken place on August 4, but authorities had recently concluded that no second attack ever took place.

The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution



The Johnson administration used the August 4 attack to obtain Congressional resolution

Now known as the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution...it gave the president broad war powers

The resolution was followed by limited counterattack air attacks on North Vietnam

Operation Rolling Thunder

In early 1965, North Vietnam attacked two US army installations in South Vietnam and as a result Johnson ordered sustained bombing missions over North Vietnam

The bombing mission, known as Operation Rolling Thunder, caused the Communist Party to reassess its own war strategy



The Tet Offensive



• By 1968, things had gone from bad to worse for the Johnson administration

• In late January, North Vietnam had launched coordinated attacks against major southern cities

• These attacks, known as the Tet Offensive, were designed to force the Johnson administration to the bargaining table



Agent Orange

Was a dangerous chemical used in the Vietnam War to defoliate the dense jungle

20 million gallons of Agent Orange were sprayed

Was used in Operation Ranch Hand



Agent Orange



Up to 4 million people in Vietnam were exposed to the chemical

Now up to 1 million suffer from serious health issues

It can cause: deformities among offspring, leukemia, and other cancers

As well it also caused enormous environmental damage by: eroded tree cover, difficulty in reforestation and reduction in many animal species

A Secret Plan to End the War

In late March 1968, a disgraced LBJ announced he would not seek Democratic Party re-nomination for the presidential election and hinted towards bargaining with the Communists to end the war



Negotiations began in the spring of 1968, but the Democratic Party could not rescue the presidency from Republican challenger Richard Nixon...who claimed to have a secret plan to end the war.

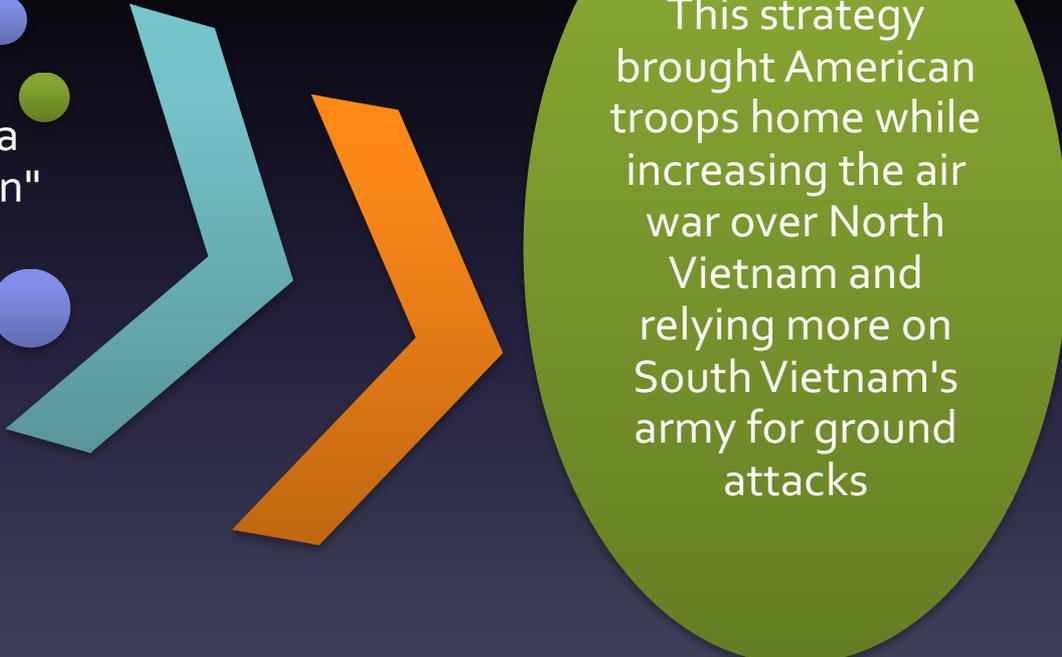


Vietnamization

Vietnamization



Nixon's secret plan involved a process called "Vietnamization"



This strategy brought American troops home while increasing the air war over North Vietnam and relying more on South Vietnam's army for ground attacks

The Paris Peace Agreement

In early January 1973, the Nixon White House convinced Saigon that they would not abandon the South Vietnamese army if they signed the peace accord

On January 23, therefore, the final draft was initialed, ending open hostilities between the US and North Vietnam

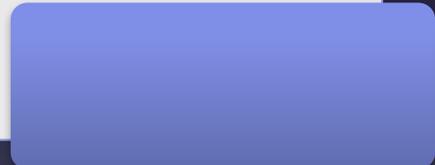
The Paris Peace Agreement, did not end the conflict in Vietnam, however, Saigon continued to battle Communist forces

The US is now no longer fighting the Vietnam War

The Fall to Communism

- From March 1973 to the fall of Saigon in April 1975, the South Vietnamese army tried desperately to save the South from political and military collapse
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- 
- The end finally came when North Vietnamese tanks rolled south along National Highway One

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- On the morning of April 30, Communist forces captured the presidential palace in Saigon...thus ending the Vietnam War