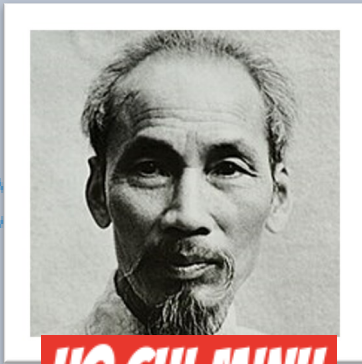


THE VIETNAM

WAR





HO CHI MINH



CHINA

HANOI

NORTH VIETNAM

Gulf of Tonkin

LAOS

NVA

17th Parallel

THAILAND

SOUTH VIETNAM

CAMBODIA

VIETCONG

ARVN

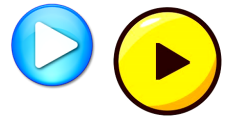
US ARMY

Gulf of Thailand

SAIGON

South China Sea

THE VIETNAM WAR 1954



Wider Origins of War - Cold War Context + Containment + Domino Theory

1975

Regional Origins

Vietnam had been part of French Indochina – until invasion by Japan at the start of World War 2. Historic occupation + Japanese savagery led to a resistance movement (Viet Minh) inspired by Ho Chi Minh. When WW2 ended in 1945, the Viet Minh marched into Hanoi (capital of North Vietnam) and declared independence. However, France again laid claim - leading to nine years of war. In 1954, Vietnam was divided North and South and was divided along the 17th parallel. China lent its support to the North and the USA financed the South. In 1954, a peace agreement (The Geneva Accords) stated that there would be a national election to unify the country within two years.



The US Response and the Domino Theory

Rightly concerned that a fair election would result in victory for Ho Chi Minh - the USA worked to stop the elections agreed in the Geneva Accords. President Eisenhower and Secretary of State, John F. Dulles believed in the Domino Theory. Essentially, if Vietnam fell to communism, it would be followed by Lao, Cambodia then Thailand. Therefore, the US backed anti-communist, Ngo Dinh Diem who set up the Republic of South Vietnam. Diem was very unpopular due to his wealthy status and being a Christian who showed little tolerance for the Buddhist religion most popular in rural areas. After his assassination in 1963, subsequent leaders proved equally unpopular.



DOMINO THEORY



DIEM

The National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam - Vietcong (VC)

The Vietcong were South Vietnamese supported by the Viet Minh. The Vietcong used the 'Ho Chi Minh Trail' - jungle paths to hide, hit and run. Many parts of the trail crossed into neighbouring Laos and Cambodia. The South Vietnamese government tried moving peasant villages to areas that were easier to control by the government - the 'Strategic Hamlet Programme', but this only angered peasants further and led to local corruption.



VIETCONG

Increased US involvement by 1962 - Army of Republic of Vietnam (ARVN)

President JFK sent 'advisors' to help the South Vietnamese army (ARVN) fight the Vietcong. Having studied the Korean War, Kennedy was cautious of committing combat troops. In 1963, Kennedy was assassinated and replaced by Lyndon B. Johnson who was more hawkish in his approach. In 1964, a small North Vietnamese gunboat fired on a US warship in the Gulf of Tonkin. This gave Johnson an excuse for war with North Vietnam.



JOHNSON

US Approach + Military Tactics

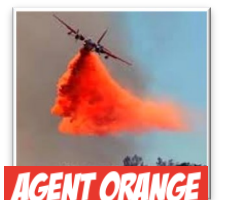
The USA consistently misunderstood and underestimated strength + morale of the Vietnamese people. Military tactics included **bombing** of military, industrial + civilian targets. From 1965 to 1968 Johnson's bombing campaign was labelled Operation Rolling Thunder. Although hampering NVA + VC war effort and disrupting supply routes on the Ho Chi Minh trail, air power wasn't enough. **Search and destroy** missions were carried out from heavily defended U.S. bases in South Vietnam - these involved helicopters loaded with troops landing in villages to find + eradicate Viet Cong forces. However, U.S. troops were often ambushed, caught in traps, and found it hard to know who was a civilian and who was a Viet Cong fighter. The death and destruction to civilians only helped the lose the 'hearts and minds' of the Southern Vietnamese. **Chemical weapons** were another horrific tactic and included the use of Agent Orange - a chemical that was sprayed onto fields to destroy crops. Napalm = firebombs that would destroy crops, villages and the jungle. Civilians and soldiers alike were devastated by these weapons.



ROLLING THUNDER



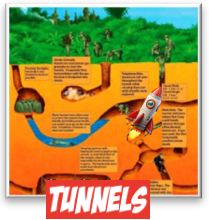
SEARCH + DESTROY



AGENT ORANGE

Vietnamese Tactics - NVA supports VC

The North Vietnamese army (NVA) were the official army of the North Vietnam. The Viet Cong were the Southern Vietnamese who operated in the jungles + **tunnels** and blended in with the local population as needed. They worked in smaller squads and mainly used weapons of stealth, knowledge of the local area and **guerrilla warfare**. Ho Chi Minh taught them to be courteous and generous with the local population, even helping them look after their fields during harvests. The Vietcong received support from the North Vietnamese army along the Ho Chi Minh trail.



Morale - US + ARVN v Vietminh + Vietcong

Most U.S. soldiers were inexperienced, unsuited to hot jungle warfare + often had little understanding why they were fighting in Vietnam. The average age of the US soldiers was 19. A rotation system also meant that as troops were gaining valuable combat experience they went home and replaced by inexperienced men. Drug use was also a problem and there were also many recorded incidents of soldiers 'fragging' their superiors. On the other hand, Vietnamese were fighting for independence on their land against a brutal invading force. Many ARVN (South Vietnam) soldiers deserted or worked as spies passing on information to their fellow Vietnamese in the Vietcong or NVA.



Turning point - The Tet Offensive and the My Lai Massacre in 1968

In January 1968, the Viet Cong launched a wave of attacks against 100 cities and other US targets. Bitter fighting took place in the city of Saigon in South Vietnam. Despite huge losses for the Viet Cong and being repelled, the Tet Offensive was a shock. A CBS journalist named Walter Cronkite asked during live television reporting ... "What the hell is going on, I thought we were winning this war?" Victory in Vietnam looked further away than ever – and there was increasing anti war sentiment given the financial and human cost.



In 16th March 1968, American Charlie Company set off on a search and destroy mission. They arrived in My Lai in the early morning. The mission turned into a massacre as hundreds of women, children and elderly murdered by the American soldiers. No Vietcong were found and only three weapons discovered. A year later Ronald Ridenhour, an American soldier who knew some of the soldiers who had taken part in the massacre, sent a letter to officials in Washington in which he said something 'rather dark and bloody as occurred in My Lai.' Life Magazine published photographs of the massacre - shocking many in the US and worldwide.



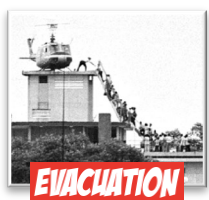
Ending the war - Peace with Honour

After the Tet Offensive, President Johnson said the war could not be won. Bombing was reduced and peace negotiations started. A defeated Johnson also announced he would not run for re-election and was replaced by Richard Nixon in 1968. Nixon tasked National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger with ending the war. This was done by improving relations with the USSR and China + Vietnamisation (handing fighting over to the ARVN) + peace negotiations + increasing bombing to put pressure on the North. In January 1973, a peace agreement was signed. This 'peace with honour' allowed Nixon to pull U.S. troops out of Vietnam after 8 years of active combat.



Impact and Outcome of the War by 1975

Without the support of the USA, South Vietnam was overrun by the North Vietnamese in 1975. Iconic images of Vietnamese desperately trying to climb aboard the last American helicopters evacuating the US embassy in Saigon. The failure demonstrated that a superior military alone could not prevent communism spreading in far out places all over the world. Bombing not only in Vietnam but also in Lao and Cambodia pushed these countries towards communism governments by 1975. The defeat was a humiliation and propaganda disaster for the America - who had previously presented the war against the communists as a moral crusade. It had created divisions within US society shown by the anti-war protests. Many American troops faced hostility, and some were spat at when they returned home by anti-war demonstrators. America was forced to adopt a friendlier approach toward China.



Topic Review - The Vietnam War (c1954 - 75)

- 1 - The Cold War was a struggle between 2 main countries - The **Soviet Union** and the **USA**
- 2 - The US policy to stop the spread of communism was called **Containment**
- 3 - The **Domino Theory** = the idea that if Vietnam fell to communism so would Laos, Cambodia + Thailand
- 4 - Vietnam had been ruled by **France** before it was invaded by **Japan** during World War 2
- 5 - **Ho Chi Minh** led the Vietminh and fought for Vietnamese independence
- 6 - Vietnam was divided along the **17th** parallel in 1954 - with a plan for a national election within **2** years
- 7 - The USA ignored the **Geneva Accords** and supported Ngo Ding **Diem** in South Vietnam
- 8 - Diem was very unpopular in the South because he did not tolerate **Buddhism** or agree to the **election**
- 9 - A North Vietnamese attack in the Gulf of **Tonkin** gave President Johnson the excuse to start the war
- 10 - The NVA = army of the **North Vietnam** + the **Vietcong** in the South fought against the USA + ARVN
- 11 - The ARVN = Army of Republic of Vietnam were Southern Vietnamese who fought with the **USA**
- 12 - Johnson's bombing campaign from 1965 to 1968 was called **Operation Rolling Thunder**
- 13 - US soldiers flew out from US bases in the South to look for Vietcong in **search + destroy** missions
- 14 - The US used horrific weapons such as **napalm** and **Agent Orange**
- 15 - The average age of an American soldier was **19** - most soldiers were **drafted** and lacked experience
- 16 - The Vietcong used **guerilla** warfare + received support from the NVA
- 17 - The Vietcong often hid in **tunnels** and moved along the **Ho Chi Minh trail**
- 18 - Ho Chi Minh taught the Vietcong to help locals with field work = True : False
- 19 - The killing (in the US army) of their superiors was called **fragging**
- 20 - Many of those drafted to fight in the war were often poorer, **black** Americans
- 21 - Mohammed Ali - world boxing champion - was put in prison for refusing to fight = True : False
- 22 - The **Tet** Offensive in 1968 was a turning point - it showed that the USA was not winning the war
- 23 - CBS reporter said live on air - "*What the **hell** is going on, I though we were **winning** this war?*"
- 24 - Another turning point in 1968 was the **My Lai Massacre** carried out by Charlie Company
- 25 - Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) did not run for re-election and was replaced by Richard **Nixon** in 1969
- 26 - Nixon pushed for peace at the same time he increased the **bombing** to pressure the North
- 27 - Vietnamisation was Nixon's policy of handing over fighting to the Southern Vietnamese Army (**ARVN**)
- 28 - Nixon and the USA tried to save face by describing their withdrawal as 'Peace with **Honour**'
- 29 - The last American troops left Vietnam in 1973 - the NVA marched into **Saigon** in 1975
- 30 - Why USA lost? = failed to win the **hearts** and **minds** of the Vietnamese people
- 31 - Why USA lost? = despite having a superior **military** the USA did not adapt to the conditions
- 32 - Why USA lost? = low **morale** in army and increasing **anti** - war protests as home
Anti war protest chant = "**Hey, hey LBJ - how many kids have you killed today?**"
- 33 - Why USA lost? = the **Vietcong** were an elusive + determined enemy who used guerilla warfare
- 34 - Impact = **Cambodia** + **Laos** became communist by 1975
- 35 - Impact = USA humiliated + Vietnam fell to communism - forced to take a softer approach with **China**

Topic Review - The Vietnam War (c1954 - 75)

- 1 - The Cold War was a struggle between 2 main countries - The **S** _____ Union and the **U** _____
- 2 - The US policy to stop the spread of communism was called **C** _____
- 3 - The **D** _____ **T** _____ = the fear that if Vietnam fell to communism so would Laos, Cambodia + Thailand
- 4 - Vietnam had been ruled by **F** _____ before it was invaded by **J** _____ during World War 2
- 5 - **H** _____ **C** _____ **M** _____ led the Vietminh + fought for Vietnamese independence
- 6 - Vietnam was divided along the _____ th parallel in 1954 - with a plan for a national election within _____ years
- 7 - The USA ignored the **G** _____ **Accords** and supported Ngo Ding **D** _____ in South Vietnam
- 8 - Diem was very unpopular in the South because he did not tolerate **Buddh** _____ or agree to the **e** _____
- 9 - A North Vietnamese attack in the Gulf of **T** _____ gave President Johnson the excuse to start the war
- 10 - The NVA = army of the **N** _____ Vietnam the **Viet** _____ in the South fought against the **USA + ARVN**
- 11 - The ARVN = Army of Republic of Vietnam were Southern Vietnamese who fought with the **U** _____
- 12 - Johnson's bombing campaign from _____ **O** _____ **R** _____ **T** _____
- 13 - US soldiers flew out from US bases _____ Vietcong in **s** _____ + **destroy** missions
- 14 - The US used horrific weapons such _____ **O** _____
- 15 - The average age of an American soldier was _____ - most soldiers were **d** _____ and lacked experience
- 16 - The Vietcong used **g** _____ warfare + received support from the NVA
- 17 - The Vietcong often hid in **t** _____ and moved along the **H** _____ **C** _____ **M** _____ trail
- 18 - Ho Chi Minh taught the Vietcong to help locals with field work = True : False
- 19 - The killing (in the US army) of their superiors was called **f** _____
- 20 - Many of those drafted to fight in the war were often poorer, **b** _____ Americans
- 21 - Mohammed Ali - world boxing champion - was put in prison for refusing to fight = True : False
- 22 - The **T** _____ Offensive in 1968 was a turning point - it showed that the USA was not winning the war
- 23 - CBS reporter said live on air - "What the **h** _____ is going on, I though we were **w** _____ this war?"
- 24 - Another turning point in 1968 was the **M** _____ **L** _____ **Massacre** carried out by Charlie Company
- 25 - Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) did not run for re-election and was replaced by Richard **N** _____ in 1969
- 26 - Nixon pushed for peace at the same time he increased the **b** _____ to pressure the North
- 27 - Vietnamisation was Nixon's policy of handing over fighting to the Southern Vietnamese Army (**A** _____)
- 28 - Nixon and the USA tried to save face by describing their withdrawal as 'Peace with **H** _____'
- 29 - The last American troops left Vietnam in 1973 - the NVA marched into **S** _____ in 1975
- 30 - Why USA lost? = failed to win the **h** _____ and **m** _____ of the Vietnamese people
- 31 - Why USA lost? = despite having a superior **m** _____ the USA did not adapt to the conditions
- 32 - Why USA lost? = low **m** _____ in army and increasing **a** _____ - war protests as home
- Anti war protest chant = "Hey, hey LBJ - how many kids have you killed **t** _____ ?"
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- 34 - Impact = **C** _____ and **L** _____ became communist by 1975
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