

# THE VIETNAM WAR



# The USA In Vietnam : Key Words.

 **Discover** : key unit vocabulary. **Explore** : key word meanings. **Skill** : vocabulary development.

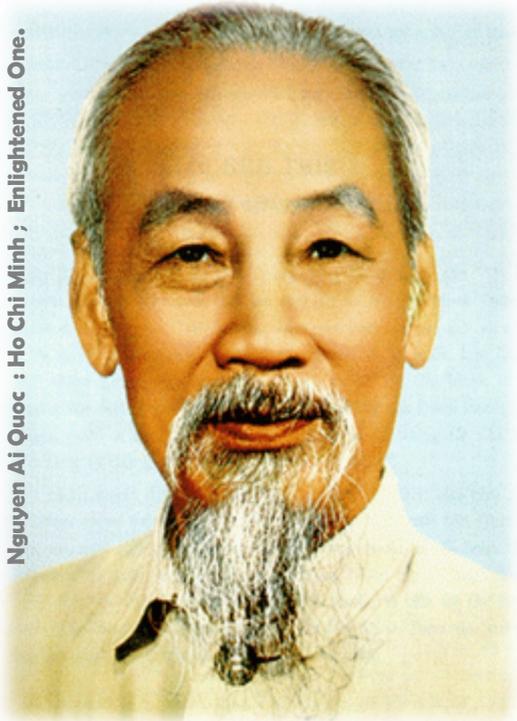


Word	Definition	Similar Word	?
	To be free from control of another country.		A
	To argue against something.		B
	A way of fighting using surprise, hit and run tactics.		C
	A person not involved in the army or fighting.		D
	Feelings, emotions state of well being of an individual or group .		E
	The 'communist' North Vietnamese Army, made up of the Viet Minh.		F
	Working together.		G
	An American policy to stop the spread of communism.		H
	US President Nixon's policy to leave fighting to the ARVN forces.		I
	A trap.		J
	To ask for something.		K
	Communist soldiers loyal to Ho Chi Minh..		L
	A powerful, poisonous chemical used to destroy crops + jungle.		M
	The South Vietnamese army allied with the USA.		N
	The feelings / views of the civilian population.		O
	Killing or violence that is unjustified even in times of war.		P
	The US fear that communism would spread between countries.		Q
	To go on the attack.		R
	Southern Vietnamese who fought against the USA.		S
	A US weapon - fire bombs.		T
	National Liberation Front : Another (earlier) name for the Viet Cong.		U
	A leader who is put in place because they can be easily controlled.		V
	The murdering of their own officers by US soldiers.		W
	Someone who is new and lacks experience.		X

# Ho Chi Minh : communist, patriot or nationalist?

**Discover:** who Ho Chi Minh was. **Explore:** his struggle for Vietnamese independence. **Skill:** judgments.

Nguyen Ai Quoc : Ho Chi Minh ; Enlightened One.



Nguyen Ai Quoc (Ho Chi Minh) was born in 1890, in a small village in Central Vietnam. At this time Vietnam was part of French controlled Indo-China . Ho Chi Minh would dedicate his life trying to gain Vietnamese independence from France. In 1917, he travelled to Europe looking for help. He studied in Paris, and tried to get a job in the French government in the hope he could persuade important people to support Vietnam’s cause. In 1918, at the time of the Paris Peace Conferences (Versailles), he begged Woodrow Wilson to support Vietnam’s claim for independence. Woodrow Wilson refused to meet him.

**1: Why do you think Woodrow Wilson was reluctant to support Vietnamese independence at this time in history?** \_\_\_\_\_

Whilst in France, Ho Chi Minh read the teaching of Karl Marx and became increasingly attracted to Left Wing ideology. He was also inspired by the success of the Russian Revolution in 1917.

**2: Given the refusal of France and the USA to support independence, what new approach do you think Ho Chi Minh would adopt?**

In 1921, Nguyen Ai Quoc, took the name Ho Chi Minh, which means ‘Enlightened Spirit’. Disillusioned / u \_\_\_\_\_ with the prospects / c \_\_\_\_\_ that independence could be achieved via negotiation / t \_\_\_\_\_, he moved to China in 1924. Here he would learn about guerrilla tactics from the Chinese communist army. Ho Chi Minh embraced the concept / i \_\_\_\_\_ that poor, peasant classes could be used to launch / s \_\_\_\_\_ a violent revolution as a way to achieve / g \_\_\_\_\_ independence. Ironically, in 1928, he visited North East Thailand where he practised as a Buddhist Monk. In 1941, shortly after the outbreak of WW2, Japan occupied / i \_\_\_\_\_ Vietnam, taking control away from the French. Ho Chi Minh rushed back to help defend his homeland and established / s \_\_\_\_\_ u \_\_\_\_\_ his Viet Minh army of communist fighters. Using the tactics he had learnt in China, Ho Chi Minh and his Viet Minh drove out the Japanese in 1945. Ho Chi Minh was declared the new leader of Democratic Republic of Vietnam, however, France quickly tried to reclaim / t \_\_\_\_\_ b \_\_\_\_\_ control. Once again, Ho Chi Minh appealed / a \_\_\_\_\_ f \_\_\_\_\_ h \_\_\_\_\_ to the USA to grant / g \_\_\_\_\_ full independence. Ho Chi Minh’s letter is below. It was decided that Vietnam would be partitioned / d \_\_\_\_\_ north and south. Ho Chi Minh would control the north and France, (which had a stronger influence in the south) installed puppet leader Bao Dai, the former Vietnamese Emperor, as the Chief of State in the south .

Complete the timeline using the clues provided.

	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	

Dear Mr Truman,

*We ask what has been graciously granted to the Philippines. Like the Philippines our goal is full independence and full cooperation with the UNITED STATES. We will do our best to make this independence and cooperation profitable to the whole world.*

I am dear Mr. PRESIDENT,

Respectfully Yours,

Ho Chi Minh.

In 1945, Ho Chi Minh wrote a letter to former US President, Truman. His letters were never answered.

# Vietnam In The Cold War Context .

**Discover :** how the situation in Vietnam related to the wider Cold War conflict.



**A**

## Why did the USA fear Ho Chi Minh?

Vietnam and America are thousands of miles apart, so why did the USA fear what was happening there? The Domino Theory was a fear held by the USA. Essentially that Communism would spread throughout the world if it was not stopped. Once communism took hold in North Vietnam, under the rule of Ho Chi Minh, it would spread to South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia Thailand and the whole of Asia would follow. The USA decided to follow a policy of containment and believed southern Vietnam was the place to stop the fall of the communist dominos.

## The Domino Theory explained by US President Dwight Eisenhower in 1954.

*'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. So you could have a beginning of a disintegration that would have the most profound influences.'*

**B**



## Review Questions.

Which 2 superpowers 'fought' the Cold War?

v

Which 2 ideologies 'fought' the Cold War?

v

When did the Cold War begin?

Year the Democratic Republic Vietnam created?

Who was the leader of the DRV?

## Define:

The Domino Theory :

Containment :

## How similar are the messages in A + B ?

Points of similarity / corroboration

P1:

P2:

Points not similar / corroborated

P1:

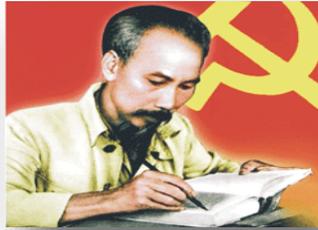
P2:

Mostly similar  Not similar

# Why Did The USA Get Involved In Vietnam?

**Discover:** 4 reasons why the USA got involved in Vietnam. **Explore :** the problems caused by Ngo Diem. **Skills:** knowledge + constructing text.

**START:** At the end of WW2, Ho Chi Minh (right) appealed to the USA. He wanted Vietnam to be granted independence from France. Afraid of the domino theory the USA planned to...



.. try and contain Communism by supporting South Vietnam against Ho Chi Minh. Intent on unifying north and south the **Viet Minh** defeated the French at the Battle of **Dien Bien Phu**. France and...

... the Viet Minh agreed to the **Geneva Peace Accord** in 1954. Vietnam would temporarily be divided north and south with free, national elections scheduled for 1956. Former....

.. Emperor Bao Dai (right) controlled the South. Bao Dai was essentially a French puppet. The USA supported Bao Dai, but the Vietnamese people did not. In 1954 President Eisenhower wrote....



*"Possibly 80 percent of the population would have voted for Communist Ho Chi Minh as their leader rather than Chief of State Bao Dai."*

In the south of ...

...Vietnam groups known as the **Viet Cong** fought against Bao Dai. Fearing the loss of the south, the US backed the Catholic, anti-communist, Ngo Dinh Diem, (right). In 1961, US Vice...



...President Lyndon Johnson wrote:

*'President Diem is the Churchill of the decade.. He will fight Communism in the streets and alleys, and when his hands are torn he will fight it with....*

*his feet. President Ngo Dinh Diem is in the vanguard of those leaders who stand for freedom.'*

Ngo Dinh Diem was the first 'democratically' elected president of South Vietnam but....

.... the election was fixed. The only choices were Bao Dai and Ngo Diem. Voters complained that they were forced to vote for Diem and some of those that did not were ...

...beaten by American backed Southern Vietnamese soldiers. The result of the election was 98.2% for Diem. In 1956, Diem broke the promise made at the Geneva Peace Accords by ...

cancelling the national elections.

**Why do you think Diem cancelled the national elections as agreed?**

---



---



---

After cancelling the national elections, Diem became increasingly unpopular. He imprisoned anyone who opposed him including communists, journalists and intellectuals, and even ...

.. children. Another reason for Diem's unpopularity was that approximately 70% of Vietnam was Buddhist. Diem, a Catholic ignored the rights of Buddhists. In 1963, in protest to this...

..... Quang Due, a sixty-six year old Buddhist monk, committed suicide by setting himself on fire. ( see following 3 images )



In response to Quang Due's and five other similar suicides a member of Diem's government response was: *"Let them burn, and ....*

*we shall clap our hands."*

The USA feared that Diem was becoming too dangerous, arrogant and increasingly ....

... unpopular. In 1963, Diem was overthrown by a US backed army coup. After his arrest, despite promises to allow Diem to leave Vietnam he was...

...killed (see image) in November, 1963.

Even though the USA had been sending aid and military advisors to Vietnam, the real start of the war began with the **Gulf Of Tonkin Incident** when...



..... a US warship was allegedly attacked by a North Vietnamese torpedo boat. This attack gave the US Congress and President Lyndon Johnson the excuse to attack ...

.....North Vietnam without a declaration of war. On March 2, 1965, US aircraft began bombing targets in North Vietnam and soon after the first troops arrived. They were ....

..Commanded by General William Westmoreland, US troops won early victories over Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces. The numbers of US soldiers increased and the unpopular draft introduced. The draft was ....

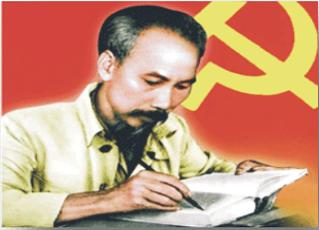
..a kind of lottery in which US men of fighting age were randomly selected to join the army. In reality it was often the poorer (many black) men who were sent fight against 'communism' on the other side of the world.

Give four factors that led to US got involvement in Vietnam.

- 1: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4: \_\_\_\_\_ **END.**

# Why Did The USA Get Involved In Vietnam?

**Discover:** 4 reasons why the USA got involved in Vietnam. **Explore :** the problems caused by Ngo Diem. **Skills:** knowledge + constructing text.



...President Lyndon Johnson wrote:

*'President Diem is the Churchill of the decade.. He will fight Communism in the streets and alleys, and when his hands are torn he will fight it with....*

...killed (see image) in November, 1963.

Even though the USA had been sending aid and military advisors to Vietnam, the real start of the war began with the **Gulf Of Tonkin Incident** when...

.....North Vietnam without a declaration of war. On March 2, 1965, US aircraft began bombing targets in North Vietnam and soon after the first troops arrived. They were ....

.. Emperor Bao Dai (right) controlled the South. Bao Dai was essentially a French puppet. The USA supported Bao Dai, but the Vietnamese people did not. In 1954 President Eisenhower wrote....



*"Possibly 80 percent of the population would have voted for Communist Ho Chi Minh as their leader rather than Chief of State Bao Dai."*

In the south of ...

...Vietnam groups known as the **Viet Cong** fought against Bao Dai. Fearing the loss of the south, the US backed the Catholic, anti-communist, Ngo Dinh Diem, (right). In 1961, US Vice...

In response to Quang Due's and five other similar suicides a member of Diem's government response was: *"Let them burn, and ....*



*his feet. President Ngo Dinh Diem is in the vanguard of those leaders who stand for freedom.'*

Ngo Dinh Diem was the first 'democratically' elected president of South Vietnam but....

.... the election was fixed. The only choices were Bao Dai and Ngo Diem. Voters complained that they were forced to vote for Diem and some of those that did not were ...

...beaten by American backed Southern Vietnamese soldiers. The result of the election was 98.2% for Diem. In 1956, Diem broke the promise made at the Geneva Peace Accords by ...

Give four factors that led to US got involvement in Vietnam.

- 1: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4: \_\_\_\_\_ **END.**

After cancelling the national elections, Diem became increasingly unpopular. He imprisoned anyone who opposed him including communists, journalists and intellectuals, and even ...

... the Viet Minh agreed to the **Geneva Peace Accord** in 1954. Vietnam would temporarily be divided north and south with free, national elections scheduled for 1956. Former....

..... Quang Due, a sixty-six year old Buddhist monk, committed suicide by setting himself on fire. ( see following 3 images )



.. children. Another reason for Diem's unpopularity was that approximately 70% of Vietnam was Buddhist. Diem, a Catholic ignored the rights of Buddhists. In 1963, in protest to this...

... unpopular. In 1963, Diem was overthrown by a US backed army coup. After his arrest, despite promises to allow Diem to leave Vietnam he was...



*we shall clap our hands."*

The USA feared that Diem was becoming too dangerous, arrogant and increasingly ...

**START:** At the end of WW2, Ho Chi Minh (right) appealed to the USA. He wanted Vietnam to be granted independence from France. Afraid of the domino theory the USA planned to...

.. try and contain Communism by supporting South Vietnam against Ho Chi Minh. Intent on unifying north and south the **Viet Minh** defeated the French at the Battle of **Dien Bien Phu**. France and...



..... a US warship was allegedly attacked by a North Vietnamese torpedo boat. This attack gave the US Congress and President Lyndon Johnson the excuse to attack ...



..Commanded by General William Westmoreland, US troops won early victories over Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces. The numbers of US soldiers increased and the unpopular draft introduced. The draft was ....

..a kind of lottery in which US men of fighting age were randomly selected to join the army. In reality it was often the poorer (many black) men who were sent fight against 'communism' on the other side of the world.

cancelling the national elections.

**Why do you think Diem cancelled the national elections as agreed?**

---

---

---

---

# Summary: Why Did The USA Get Involved In Vietnam?

 : to create an effective revision method that explains why the USA got involved in Vietnam.

Point :
Example 1 :
Explain :
Example 2:
Explain :

Point : Vietnamese Pressure
Example 1 :
Explain :
Example 2:
Explain :



Point :
Example 1 : Cancelled elections.
Explain :
Example 2:
Explain :

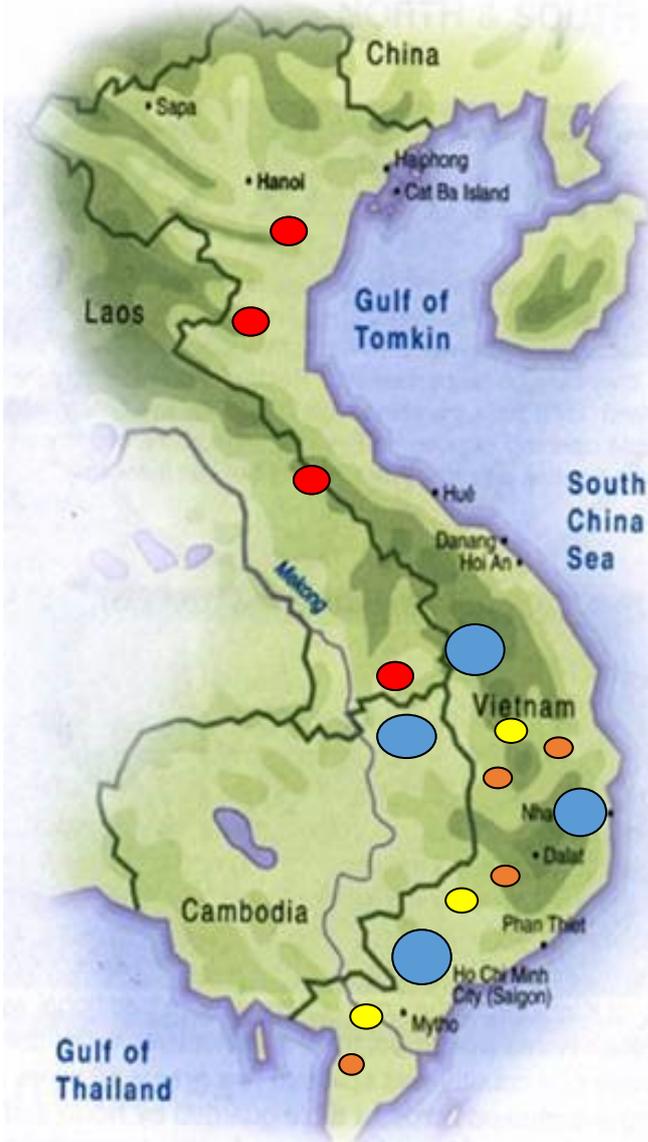
Point :
Example :
Explain :
Explain :



# Taking Sides : who is who, what is what?

**Mission :** to understand the geography, places, groups and people in the Vietnam war.

There was a number of groups involved in the Vietnam conflict. The map and activities below should help you understand the differences between them. The **Ho Chi Minh Trail** was a complex web of jungle paths that allowed the North Vietnamese to move soldiers and supplies into the south. In 1965, it took six months to travel from North Vietnam to Saigon, by 1970, the journey was cut to six weeks. From the air, the Ho Chi Minh Trail was hard to see. The Americans tried to destroy the trail with bombs, napalm and Agent Orange, a powerful chemical. This had little effect and the trail stayed operational.



Taking Sides.			
	USA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	North Vietnamese Army : NVA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Viet Cong VC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	National Liberation Front : NLF	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Army Republic of Vietnam : ARVN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	People's Army of Vietnam : PAVN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	USSR, China, North Korea Support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	South Korea, Thailand, Australia Support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

True or False?		T	F
	The NVA and PAVN are essentially the same thing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Ho Chi Minh learned about guerrilla tactics from China.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Most Americans supported their involvement in Vietnam.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	The cost of killing one VC soldier was calculated at 400,000 dollars.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Bombs killed more people than disease on the HCM trail.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	The NLF and VC are essentially the same thing,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	The VC and the NVA are essentially the same thing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	More bombs were dropped in Vietnam than all the bombs in WW2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Research where needed and complete tasks / questions below.**

- 1: Mark the Ho Chi Minh Trail on the map above.?
- 2: Which bordering country / countries did the Ho Chi Minh Trail cut through?
- 3: Why did the USA spray Agent Orange onto the jungles of Vietnam?
- 4: What effect do you think Agent Orange had on the local Vietnamese population?
- 5: What other American military tactics would have lost the 'hearts and minds' of Vietnamese civilians?
- 6: How did the Viet Cong try to gain the support of the southern Vietnamese people?
- 7: Devise a question of your own based on the information provided.

# Picking sides : who is who ?

USA

Viet Cong

NVA

Bao Dai

South Korean Support

Chinese Support

Thailand Support

ARVN

General Westmorland

Viet Minh.

Diem

General Giap

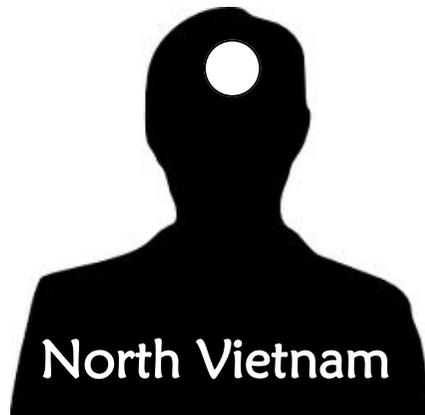
Indochine Communist Party

Soviet Support

National Liberation Front.

People's Army Of Vietnam.

Canada



# Nineteen, by Paul Hardcastle.

 Musical Interlude : Listen to the song 'Nineteen' and complete the lyrics.



[www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRJFvtvTGEk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRJFvtvTGEk)

In 1965, Vietnam seemed like just another \_\_\_\_\_ war.  
But it wasn't, it was different in many ways.

As so were those who did the fighting.

In World War II the average age of the combat soldier was \_\_\_\_\_ .

In Vietnam, he was \_\_\_\_\_ .

The heaviest fighting of the past two weeks continued today  
twenty-five miles northwest of \_\_\_\_\_ .

"I really wasn't sure what was \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ ".

In Vietnam, the combat soldier typically served a \_\_\_\_\_ month  
tour of duty. But was exposed to hostile \_\_\_\_\_ almost everyday.

In Saigon, a US military spokesman said today, more than \_\_\_\_\_  
(US) troops were killed last week in that sensitive border area in all  
of South Vietnam. The enemy lost a total of \_\_\_\_\_ soldiers.

All those who remember the war.

They won't \_\_\_\_\_ what they've seen.

Destruction of men in their \_\_\_\_\_ .

Whose average was nineteen.

D-d-d-d-d-destruction

According to a Veteran's Administration study half of the Vietnam  
combat \_\_\_\_\_ suffered from what psychiatrists call post  
traumatic stress disorder. Many vets complain of alienation, rage, or  
\_\_\_\_\_. Some succumb to suicidal thoughts. Eight to ten years after  
coming home almost eight-hundred-thousand men are still fighting the  
Vietnam War.

\_\_\_\_\_ of them received a \_\_\_\_\_ welcome.

S-s-s-s-Saigon Nineteen.

# North Vietnam V American Army Comparison.

Discover: how the Vietnamese and US combat forces compared. Explore: the strengths and weaknesses of both Skill: categorisation and evaluation.

V  
I  
E  
T  
N  
A  
M



U  
S  
A  
R  
M  
Y



Score each piece of information out of 10.

Rounds Won

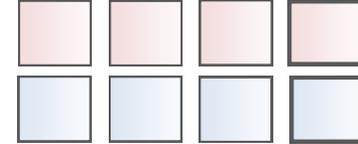


Total Score.

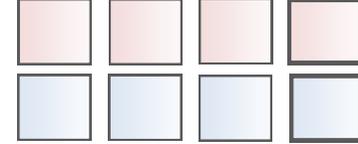


Category	North Vietnam	US Army
<b>Personnel</b>	<p><b>Ho Chi Minh :</b> 'Uncle Ho' was a smart, passionate leader. He had already led the Viet Minh to victory over the Japanese and French.</p> 	<p><b>General Westmorland</b> An aggressive experienced general. He aimed to bring the NVA into the open and destroy them in large scale battles.</p> 
<b>Firepower</b>	<p>It had very few <b>Soviet MIG-21</b> jet fighters. Pilots were trained by the Chinese had some early success against USA. Used mainly used for defence</p> 	<p>The M16 assault rifle was a common weapon used by the US soldiers. It was more accurate and had a greater range than the AK-47.</p> 
<b>Tactics</b>	<p><b>Guerrilla Warfare:</b> NVA + VC in particular used their jungle skills and knowledge. After an attack they could mix in with the local people or hide in tunnels.</p> <p>The Vietnamese understood it was sometimes better to injure than kill the enemy. <b>Why do you think they would do this?</b></p>	<p><b>Search + Destroy</b> Soldiers were taken in 'Huey' helicopters to attack suspected enemy locations. This could be in villages or jungle.</p> 
<b>Morale</b>	<p>Ho Chi Minh was committed to achieving independence at any human cost or sacrifice.</p> <p>Ho Chi Minh used effective propaganda to promote a strong sense of national pride and sacrifice within the NVA + VC.</p>	<p>Presidents <b>Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon</b> all felt a sense of commitment to fighting the war. All were uneasy at the human and financial cost needed to win.</p> 
<b>Support</b>	<p>North Vietnam drew support from the USSR, China and North Korea.</p> <p>Ho Chi Minh and the North Vietnamese used effective propaganda to win over local Vietnamese. They could be ruthless with anyone who did not support.</p> <p><b>NVA</b> c 900,000</p> <p><b>Viet Cong</b> ?</p> 	<p>Americans were supported by some southern Vietnamese, Canada, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Philippines and Thailand.</p> <p>Despite attempts to win over hearts and minds of local Vietnamese this is largely failed. The US public opinion in favour of the war began to drop.</p> <p><b>USA</b> c 530,000</p> <p><b>ARVN</b> c 600,000</p> 

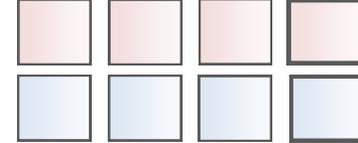
Round 1 Total



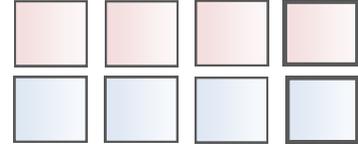
Round 2 Total



Round 3 Total



Round 4 Total



Round 5 Total



# The USA and Vietnam : Review 1.



**Review** : create and complete review questions. Focus on the causes and military comparisons.

1	Name two countries that occupied Vietnam before the arrival of the USA.
2	Give two agreements made at the Geneva Peace accords in 1954 ?
3	Give three examples how Diem angered the people of South Vietnam. / /
4	
5	
6	
7	



## Describe the military strengths of the North Vietnamese.

- Keep answers short
- Intro : Give a broad , main answer as to Vietnamese military strengths.
- Give four military strengths of the NVA.
- Think about a sensible order for these points.

Introduction:

Firstly :



Moreover :



In addition :



Finally :



	My mark	4	Peer mark	4	Teacher mark	4
--	---------	---	-----------	---	--------------	---

# Tunnel Defence : being the Viet Cong.

 **Mission :** to design, build and defend a tunnel system.

You are going to take on the role of a Viet Cong ( NLF ) soldier/s. Your tunnels have been a very good weapon against the superior firepower of the Americans. However, as the war has progressed the Americans have become more skilled at finding and destroying your tunnel systems. They have new specialised soldiers who they call **Tunnel Rats** who they send down into your tunnels to kill you and destroy your tunnels. Your mission is to design, build and then defend a tunnel entrance / system and protect the injured soldier in the infirmary.

- Create your trench system : show this by cutting up white paper and sticking onto the A3 diagram.
- Choose 15 items only from the list of 20 below.
- Think of ways to combine / craft items that will help you live, hide, survive and fight in the tunnels.
- Draw out traps / relevant items onto small pieces of paper and place onto your tunnel system.
- Place yourself and other any other soldiers onto the diagram.

	<b>Viet Cong Squad Leader</b> Place in tunnel 		<b>Viet Cong Soldier x 1</b> National Liberation Front member. 
	<b>Viet Cong Soldier x 1</b> National Liberation Front member. 		<b>Russian Tokarev 7.62 x 2</b> Pistol.
	<b>Thin Metal Wire</b> 10 metres.		<b>Bamboo Sticks x 8</b> Each is 50 cm in length.
	<b>Knife x 1</b> Handmade.		<b>Cobra Snake x 1</b> An aggressive, poisonous snake..
	<b>Shovels x 3</b>		<b>Empty Coke Cans x 4</b>
	<b>Square Pieces of wood x 4</b> Flat : 60 cm x 60 cm		<b>Small Wooden Box x 1</b> 30 cm x 30 cm.
	<b>Metal Bucket x 1</b>		<b>Rope</b> 3 metres in length.
	<b>Unexploded American Bomb x 1</b> Very large and very heavy.		<b>Long Metal Pipe x 1</b> 4 metres long.
	<b>Metal Spikes x 5</b> 20 cm in length.		<b>AK 47 x 1</b> Machine Gun.
	<b>Grenade x 1</b>		<b>A large coconut x 1</b>



**Private Vasquez**  
 20  
 Hispanic  
 Height : 160 cm  
 Weight : 140 Lbs  
 Single  
 Poor service record.



**Private Johnson**  
 23  
 African American  
 Height : 180 cm  
 Weight : 200 Lbs  
 Married  
 Good service record.

# Choose Your Tunnel Rat.



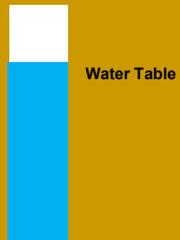
Johnson



Vasquez

**Kitchen.**

**Infirmary.**

# The Tunnels of Cuchi.

**Discover :** how the tunnel systems helped the NVA + VC. **Explore:** how the US army tried to destroy them . **Skill:** source analysis, Q and A.

'It was nine thirty in the morning, suddenly a sniper opened up and shot our sergeant in the chest from a tunnel spider hole , a small one man trench with connecting escape tunnel. As the dying officer was being stretchered into the helicopter he turned his head to a journalist who was there and said. "Before I go (die) I'd like to talk to the man who controls those incredible people in those tunnels".

**Extract : 'The Tunnels of Cuchi' .**



Who were those 'incredible people'?

"We were just sitting there when Charlie pops up right between us and throws two grenades, reaches down grabs his gun and sprays us all. Before we can pick up our weapons he's back in the ground and that goddam trapdoor shuts over him" **GI Stewart Green.**

'We should fight them (US soldiers) we should annihilate them. You will have no way out. It is always darkest before the d\*\*\* . After cold days w\*\*\* days will come. We will disregard hardships and death, determined to defeat the American aggressors.'

**Tran Bang : Viet Cong Guerrilla, Diary Entry.**



Guess words.  
D \_\_\_\_  
W \_\_\_\_



Who was Charlie?



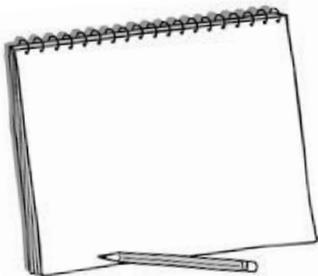
Key Point of Extract?

'It soon became clear that the US were not facing a communist enemy who had come from the north and held the local peasants at knife point. The Americans had discovered a new enemy who was better armed, more elusive and knowledgeable than they could have imagined. They were the people who lived in the villages of Cuchi. They had discovered the real Viet Cong.'

**Extract : The Tunnels of Cuchi.**

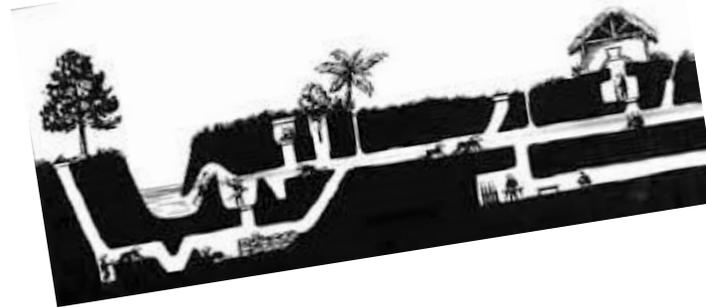
'I made a drawing of what I found including the tunnel water traps. They were rather like U bends in the tunnel system and stopped US gas from spreading through the entire tunnel system. The first US tunnel explorers just took a deep breath and waded in then swam up the other side. You never knew how long the tunnel was or what was waiting for you on the other side. When you did come out you were wet, stinking and rotten.'

**Bernard Justen : US ' Tunnel Rat'.**



'Everything was done to make sure every one of our soldiers did not have a single doubt as to why and for whom they were fighting. The training was based on the principles taught by Mao Zedong. Without correct propaganda a guerrilla would soon give up under the extreme hardship. In fact later in the war thousands of guerrillas did defect (change sides) and go over to the southern government. This was one of our worst headaches.'

**Le Minh, a Viet Cong political commissar.**



What kept VC guerrillas in the fight despite such hardships?



Define : defect.

What was burn, bash bury?  
Was it successful?



'We found a small tunnel workshop where hand grenades were made. Almost everything they used was from things scavenged, left behind or stolen from US infantry. This included empty coke, tomato and beer cans. Because of what we found in the tunnels we tried to encourage a policy of burn, bash, bury but most other squadrons did not follow this. As the war became harder on the Viet Cong they used more and more waste so generously left around by the Americans'.  
**Captain Macgregor, US ARMY.**

'The NLF (Viet Cong) campaigned hard amongst the local population. They made special effort to weaken the morale of the southern ARVN soldiers, often using their families to persuade them. On average 21 percent of ARVN defected back to their families and joined the Viet Cong , or, worked secretly for them. This meant that usually the Viet Cong had at least 8 hours' warning of any US mission against them.' **Extract : The Tunnels of Cuchi.**



Key point from the extract?

'To the Vietnamese, the land itself is sacred. The traditional villager was bound in one place by the tradition of r\*\*\* farming on the land of his ancestors. Without l\*\*\* the villager has no identity. They believed if a man moved of his land his soul would remain.' **Extract : The Tunnels of Cuchi.**



Guess words.  
R \_ \_ \_  
L \_ \_ \_

There were unexploded \*\*\*\*\* everywhere and we made workshop chambers in the tunnels. We took them apart that could \*\*\*\*\* up to seven Americans at one time. Every village had specially trained villagers one trained to remove the explosives, another would prepare a new weapon and another worked on the detonators to set them off.' **Captain Linn, Viet Cong.**

'The enemy may be greater in strength and number but he will not be able to drive us from the battle field. We will launch surprise attacks from within the underground tunnels..... which are favourable for small forces such as ours that are limited in weaponry.'



Guess words.  
S \_ \_ \_ \_  
B \_ \_ \_ \_  
I \_ \_ \_ \_



Find an object that the length of how far tis VC guerrilla dug.

'We had to dig daily. We dug in teams of three. If I managed to dig down thirty centimetres in a day it was an achievement.' **Viet Phoung, Viet Cong.**

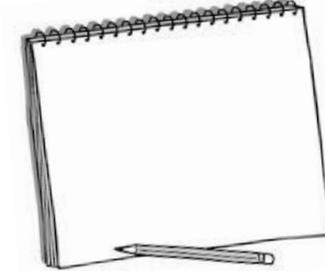
What was found in the tunnel?



In 1966, the Viet Cong managed to steal an M-48 tank from the ARVN forces. This caused considerable anger on the side of the southern Vietnamese. Three years later the Americans found it....in a tunnel. It had been stripped of its part but the battery, lights and radio were still working.' **Extract : The Tunnels of Cuchi.**

'The tunnels were homes for the living AND the dead. As it became increasingly hard for the Viet Cong to go above ground they began to bury their dead inside the walls of the tunnels. It was offensive to leave a dead comrade above the ground and it also frustrated the Americans who were obsessed with the body counts of the enemy. The VC also hid the bodies of dead American l the tunnels.' **Extract : The Tunnels of Cuchi.**

Why did they hide dead US soldiers in the tunnels?



A communist pamphlet.



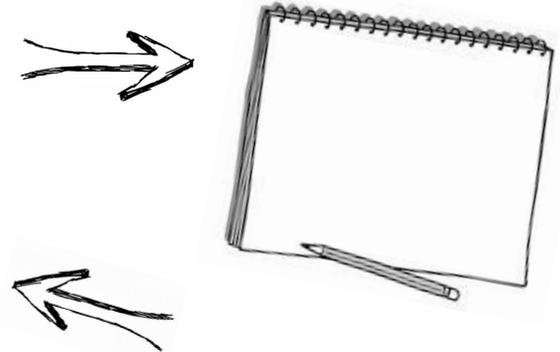
What type of warfare does this pamphlet explain?

'We must plan for the eventual possibility of retreating from the tunnels so a secret passage must be built from a tunnel system from which our troops can escape. The passages are not to be straight but zigzagged because if the Americans find an entrance he will set of mines and bangalors. Zigzagging reduces the destruction from explosions and prevents a direct line of fire'. **An extract from a manual on tunnel construction.**



'The ARVN never entered the tunnels and even occasional shouted greeting to the Viet Cong hidden below... "Sleep well you guys so you can go about your work tonight". The ARVN would even help hide tunnel entrances or fail to report them once discovered.' **Viet Cong Captain, Vieng Than Linh.**

'One Viet Cong technique was to cut a man's throat as he came up through a trapdoor. Even more efficient was to thrust a bamboo spear straight through the neck as he came up. In this way the dead soldier could not be pulled back down by his comrades and formed an effective but grisly blockage in the tunnels.' **Extract : The Tunnels of Cuchi.**

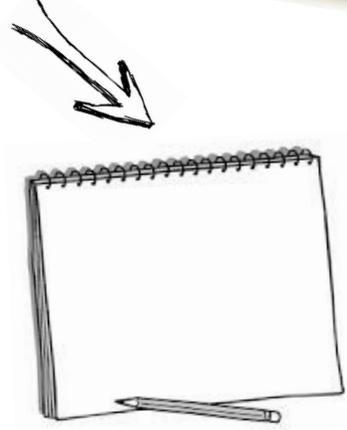


Guess words.  
C \_ \_ \_  
S \_ \_ \_  
C \_ \_ \_

'There were times when you could hear the breathing on the Viet Cong down there and I'd know he was right there. Real quiet but you could hear the person breathe. I said to myself "I'm becoming like a rodent and this is where animals belong". In this dark corner of the tunnel is where Charlie is and I would go no further. He knew I was there too. We became so a tuned in the dark we could hear the flick of an eyelid as he sat there waiting for us in the dark, there, in the corner.' **US Tunnel Rat, Arnold Gutierrez.**

Key Point?

What would frighten you ore than this?



'We had three Viet \*\*\*\* trapped inside the tunnels with no way out. We had given them two warnings to come out but to no avail. After the third had been given we heard a single \*\*\*\*. We threw grenades into the hole. After it was all over and we took the bodies out we discovered that two women had shot their \*\*\*\*\* in the back and tried to use his body in an attempt to protect themselves from the grenade.' **Sergeant Robert Baer.**

"I crawled to an opening and let the flashlight roll ahead in front of me. So the flashlight is lying in front of me shining into the room at the opposite corner. I peeked round the corner and saw a rat standing on its back legs, showing its teeth. It was the biggest rat I ever seen. Well I just flipped out, I was firing and yelling and screaming. I grabbed a 'frag' and threw it in and rolled out of there. I can't remember ever being so afraid. That's when I gave it up. It was the last hole I ever went into." **Sargeant Robert Baer.**

"...one day an American 'tunnel rat' entered a tunnel with a mine detector although he was well trained in trap detection he slowly moved forward when something warm touched his forehead. He reached out to push it away but the thing coiled around his neck. He had no time to scream or take out his knife. Outside his comrades waited for him. When he didn't return to the surface another tunnel rat was sent in to investigate. He soon came back pulling the purple, coloured corpse of the tunnel rat."

'\*\*\*\* proved to be of little use inside the tunnels. They couldn't detect the booby traps and many were \*\*\*\*\* or maimed inside by wired triggered grenades. This was too distressing for their handlers who \*\*\*\*\* to send any more dogs down into the tunnels.' **Colonel James Bushong.**

'In 1967, during Operation Cedar Falls, tunnel rats found a VC document that named dozens of southern Vietnamese who were actually VC sympathisers. This included all 14 of the barbers working within the American base.' **Extract : The Tunnels of Cuchi.**

Guess Words  
D \_ \_ \_  
K \_ \_ \_ \_  
R \_ \_ \_ \_



What does this Latin motto mean?

What do you think killed this Tunnel Rat?

Who said this?

Key Point?

**Nguyen Khac Vien, VC.**

"You can kill ten men for every one I kill of yours. But even at these odds I will still win and you will lose."



'The most common form of booby trap was a wired grenade, used in tunnel entrances or inside the tunnels themselves. They were made by putting a homemade grenade inside a discarded coke can with the pin already pulled out. A pull on the grenade extracted the grenade from the can and it automatically detonated itself then exploded.' **Extract : The Tunnels of Cuchi.**

'In 1967, a foot patrol encountered a tunnel complex. Once they entered the tunnels they found 3 dead \* \* \* \* tethered (tied) around the neck. A syringe containing a yellow fluid was also found. Testing of the one of the rats found it was carrying the bubonic \* \* \* \*.' **Extract : The Tunnels of Cuchi.**

'We were defending the underground hospital against advancing American armour. I was hit in the right hand by a sniper's bullet. My little finger was hanging from my hand by just a little strip of skin. I was bleeding a lot so I just ripped it off. I bandaged it up and was operated on by a comrade then carried on with my duties and soon returned to perform surgery myself using my other hand.' **Dr Vo Huang Le.**



Shared message?

Why was doing business with the Americans allowed?

'The Viet Cong cracked down heavily on those who were friends with the Americans, except for commercial reasons (business). A Vietnamese girl was seeking permission to marry an American GI . One morning her head was found stuck on a post outside the main gate to a local village. A note was attached..... ' this is what happens to people who go around with the enemy'. **Extract : The Tunnels of Cuchi.**

'You just work and work and work, and \* \* \* \* up and blast but the tunnels are still there. They are so vast and deep and there are so many of them, destroying them was like trying to fertilise a forty acre field with a \* \* \* \*'.  
**Brigadier General, Ellis Williamson.**

Guess words.  
R \_ \_ \_  
P \_ \_ \_ \_

Guess words.  
B \_ \_ \_  
F \_ \_ \_

Reliable source?  
Yes / No  
because.....

What created Vu Thi Mo's hatred?

Do you think this killing was justified?

'Women who had their periods when down in the tunnels had considerable difficulty keeping themselves clean. If there were water shortages they sacrificed their personal hygiene for what little water was needed for cooking or for washing clothes. ' **Vo Ti Mo. (Female VC)**

'There was the infamous Punji stick traps. They could be easily camouflaged by twigs and foliage. They were of a reasonable size and dug a sufficient depth to ensure that the spike would penetrate the boot of an American GI's boot. A more complicated version had the spikes pointing downward from the sides of the trap making taking out the foot unharmed impossible. Sometimes the spikes were poisoned with human waste (poo) or venom from animals.' **Extract : The Tunnels of Cuchi.**



Punji Trap

"Once after a battle we withdrew into the tunnel, went down to the lower level, moved along a bit then back up to the upper level. An American tunnel rat was not far behind us. American people were big and could not get through all the trapdoors. This one got through to the lower level, but when he came up again he could not pass through the trapdoor to the upper level. I was with Uta, an old guerrilla. He was guarding the second trapdoor. When the American tried to pull himself through, he became stuck. The old man stabbed him and he died. We left him there." **Vo Ti Mo. (Female VC).**

# The End ( of the tunnel ) Game.

'The TET offensive in January 1968 marked the end of the tunnels. The coordinated attacks on Saigon and other major cities in the south were planned and prepared in the tunnels of Cuchi and the 'Iron Triangle'. The TET offensive was the turning point of the war, the beginning of the end. Without the tunnels you would not have had the TET offensive but after this the decimated (weakened) guerrillas were increasingly replaced in the fighting by the regular army of North Vietnam'. **General Robert Knowles.** **A**

"Their economy is simple and agrarian and their population is unfamiliar with the modern western comforts and conveniences.... But our sustained bombing has not broken their morale. They are no strangers to discipline, hardships and death." **Robert McNamara, US Secretary of Defence, 1968.** **B**

'The Viet Cong guerrillas were decimated in the unequal battle, but the huge regular army of North Vietnam was ready to carry on the war forward. In 1970, the order from Hanoi was to abandon (end) the guerrilla (tunnel) war and begin with large formation warfare.' **Extract : The Tunnels of Cuchi.** **C**

'In military terms the Viet Cong's TET operations were a failure, but that was not important. TET was the moment that American casualties over took those suffered in the Korean War. The TET offensive was the moment of painful truth for America that this was a war they couldn't win. Public and political opinion never recovered from seeing such American losses. Within two months US President Andrew Johnson announced he would not stand in the next election. Ironically, TET was an event from which the Viet Cong would never recover also. Their hardships were so severe that by 1970 and Viet Cong Captain Linh admitted'.. "Our morale had collapsed and there were many deserters from the Viet Cong". **Extract : The Tunnels of Cuchi.** **D**

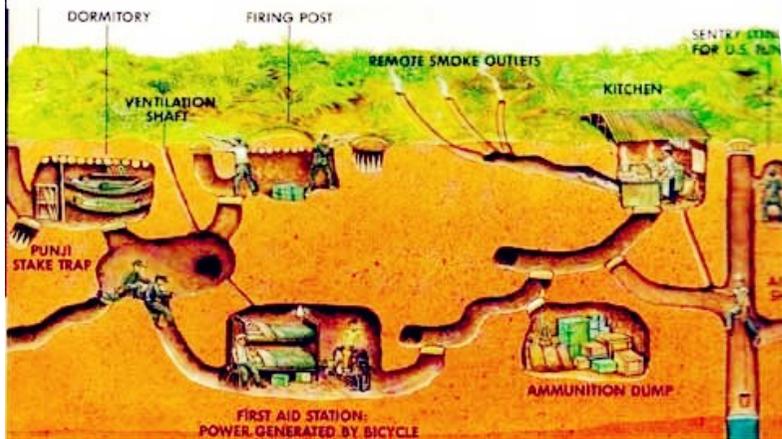
Which source is the odd one out?  
**A B C D**  
because.....

How did the tunnels help TET offensive?

Was TET a MILITARY success?

How far do B + C agree?  
Limited extent  
Some extent  
Large Extent

Why was the order given to end tunnel warfare?



How did Vietnamese tactics change after this?

How important were the tunnels in 'winning' the war?  
Limited  
Somewhat  
Vital

# The TET Offensive, Jan, 1968.

'65 -'68



After 3 years of fighting US / ARVN forces were locked in a 'cat and mouse' stalemate with NVA / VC guerrillas.



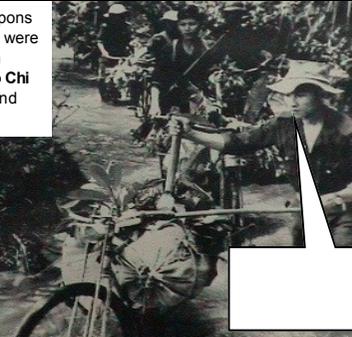
He hoped to create an uprising from the southern Vietnamese masses.

1967

NVA General Giap believed it was time to launch a surprise, large attack on the south.

Troops, weapons and supplies were moved south along the Ho Chi Minh Trail and tunnels.

1967



Jan 1968

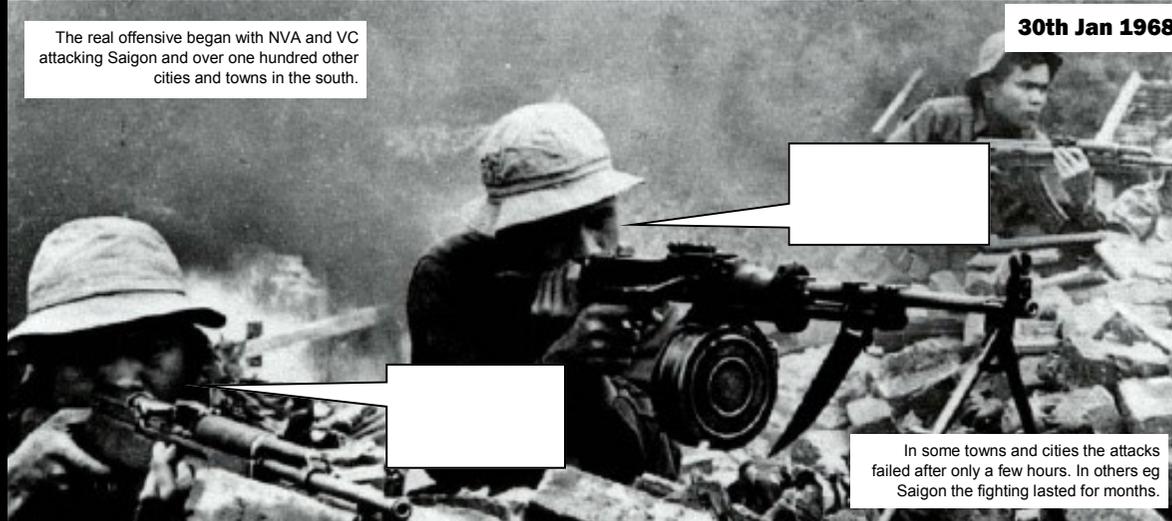
The attack was planned during the TET lunar New Year holiday. A ceasefire had been agreed and Giap knew the Americans would not expect an attack at this time.

21st, Jan 1968



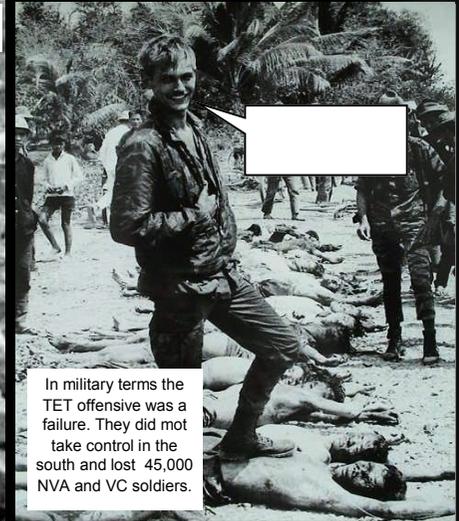
The North Vietnamese launched a diversionary attack on the American air base at Khe Sanh. This drew some American soldiers out of major cities and towns.

The real offensive began with NVA and VC attacking Saigon and over one hundred other cities and towns in the south.

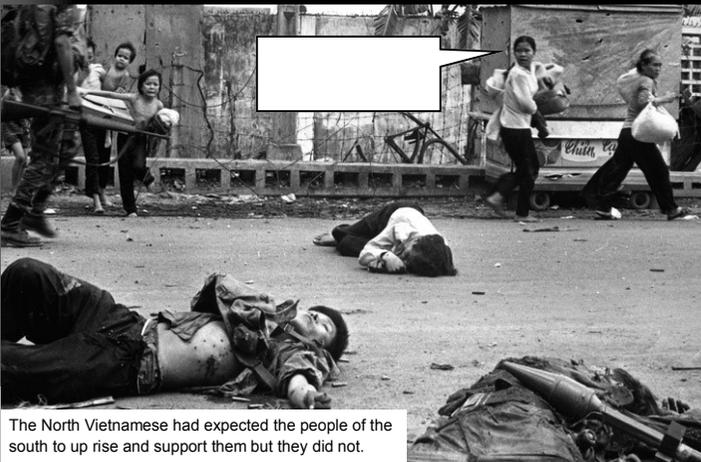


30th Jan 1968

In some towns and cities the attacks failed after only a few hours. In others eg Saigon the fighting lasted for months.

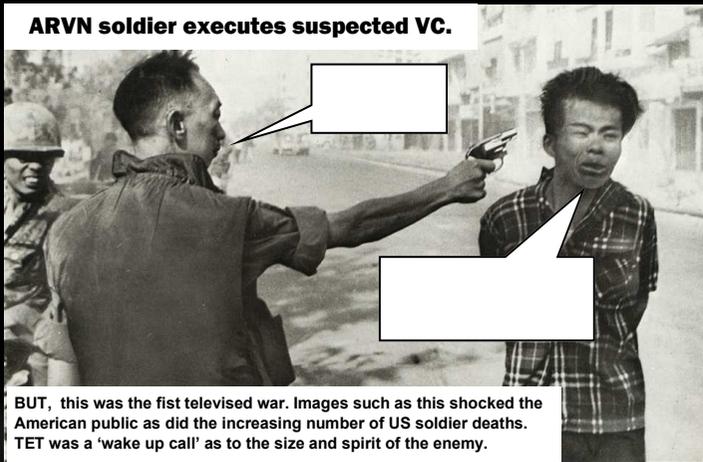


In military terms the TET offensive was a failure. They did not take control in the south and lost 45,000 NVA and VC soldiers.



The North Vietnamese had expected the people of the south to up rise and support them but they did not.

ARVN soldier executes suspected VC.



BUT, this was the first televised war. Images such as this shocked the American public as did the increasing number of US soldier deaths. TET was a 'wake up call' as to the size and spirit of the enemy.



The TET attack shocked the US public, military and politicians. President Lyndon B Johnson announced that he would scale down involvement and he would not stand again for election.

# VIETNAM PART 1 of 3

The resource is free to share.

Part 2 - My Lai + Why did the USA withdraw?

Part 3 - Skills, sources, revision, games and quizzes.

( Available with site pass offer )

Please contact me [phil@ichistory.com](mailto:phil@ichistory.com) if you have any questions.

Please print resources responsibly - display, reuse + recycle when possible.

[www.icHistory.com](http://www.icHistory.com)