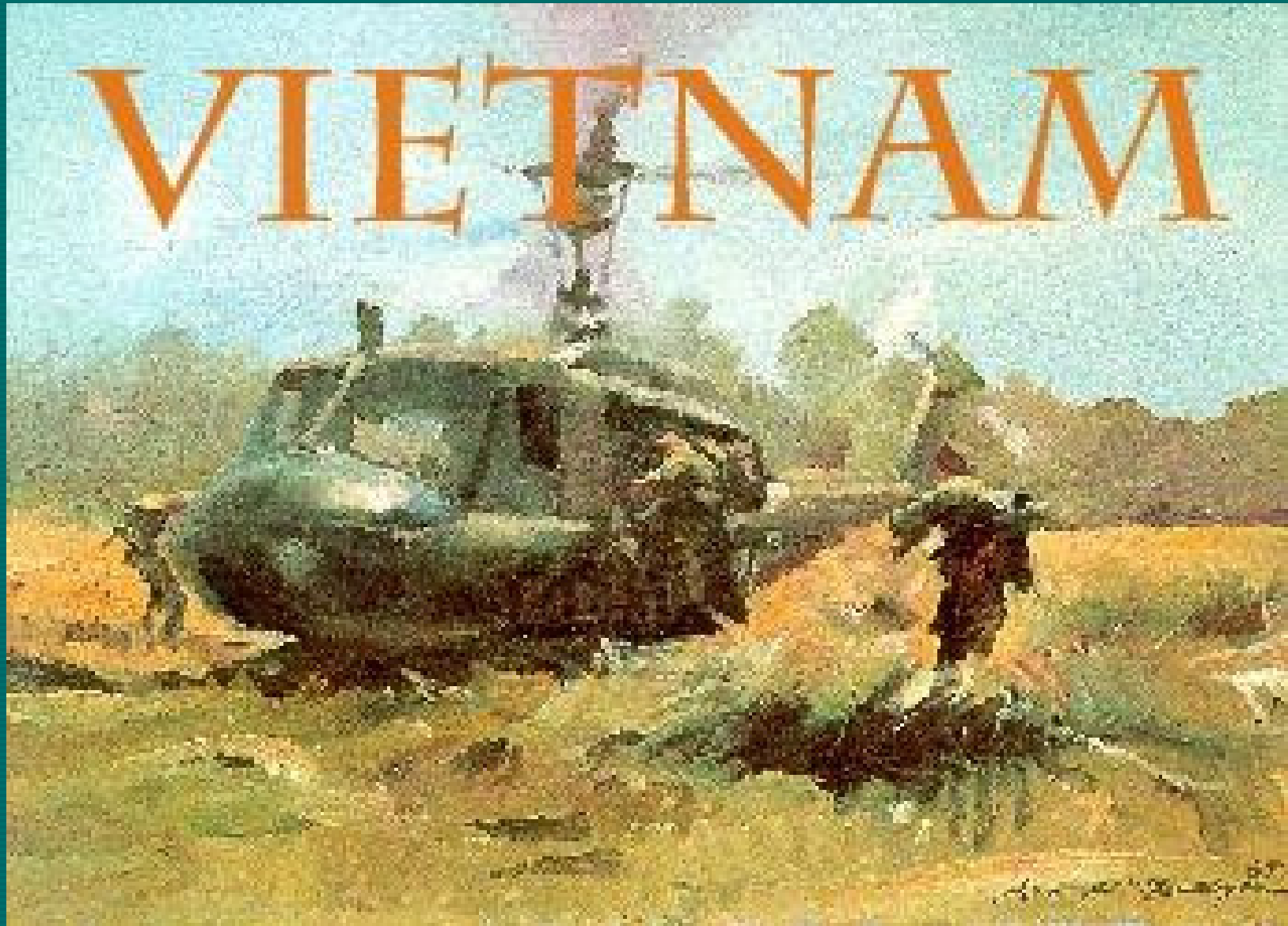
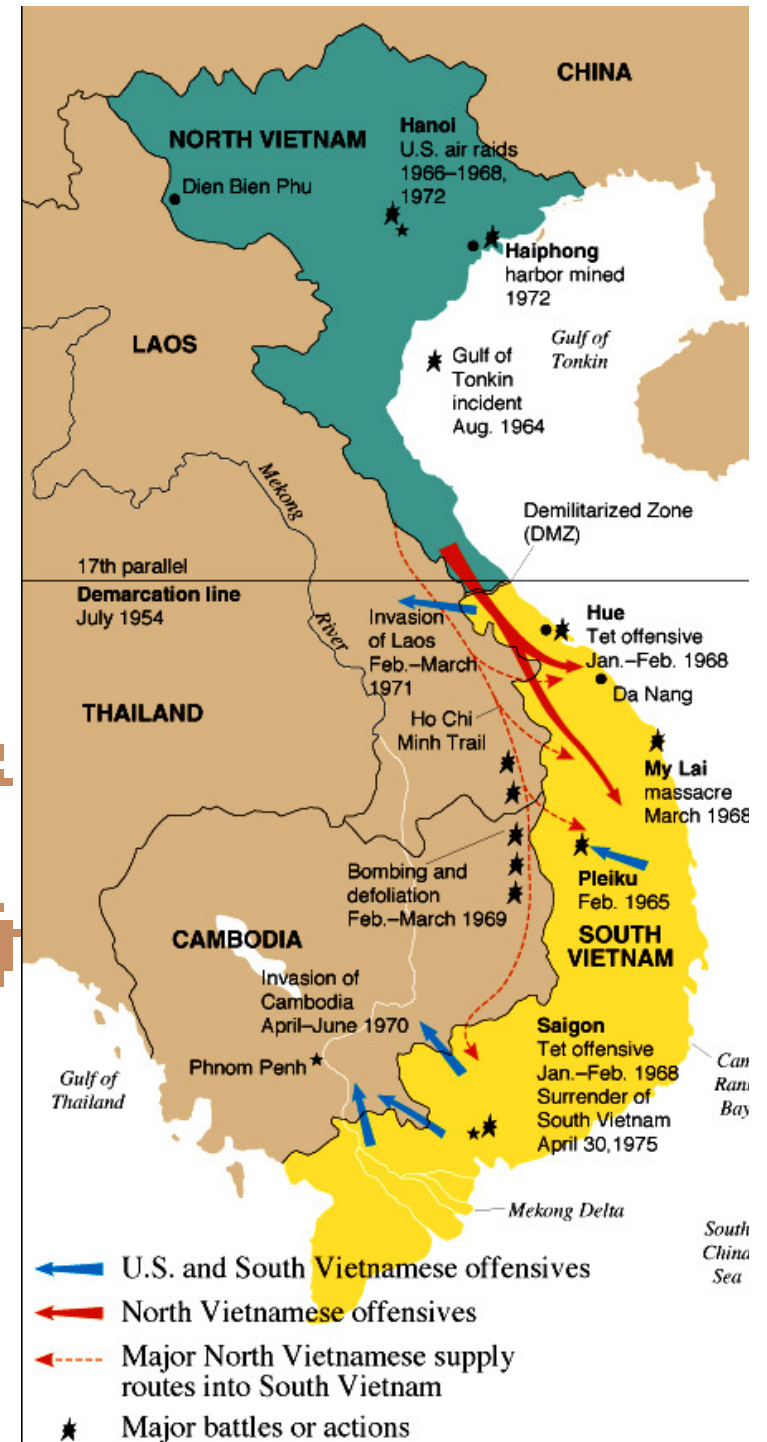
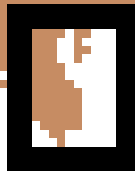


The Vietnam War

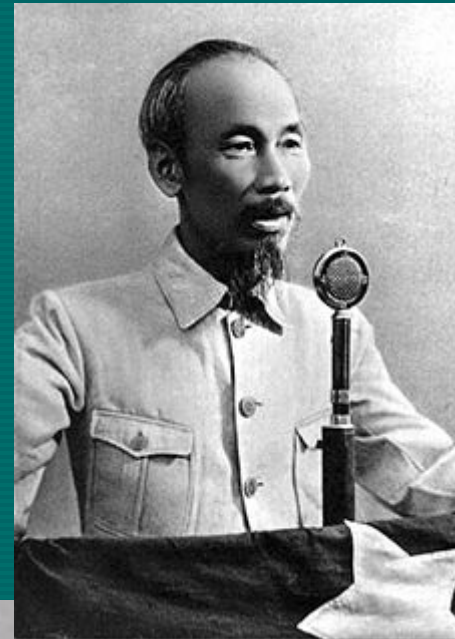


Where is Vietnam?



Vietnamese Independence

- On Sept 2, 1945, hours after Japan's surrender in World War II, Vietnamese communist Ho Chi Minh declares the independence of Vietnam from France.
- He proclaimed "All men are born equal: the Creator has given us inviolable rights, life, liberty, and happiness!"
- Members of this movement became known as the Viet Minh



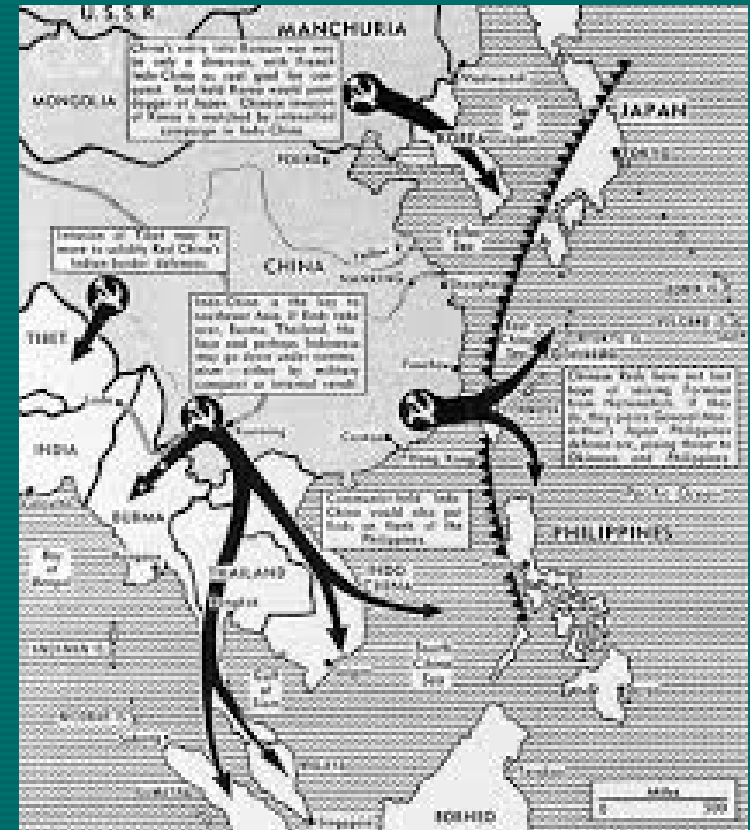
First Indochina War, 1945-1954

- French forces seized southern Vietnam and opened talks with the Vietnamese communists. These talks collapsed in 1946, when French warships bombarded the northern Vietnamese city of Haiphong, killing thousands.
- In response, the Viet Minh launched an attack against the French in Hanoi on December 19, 1945— marking the beginning of the First Indochina War.



Truman Doctrine

- To prevent communism from spreading. America paid for the war the French fought against Communist Vietnam as a part of the Truman Doctrine (1947) “to help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against ... totalitarian regimes.”
- Aid increases from \$10 million in 1950 to more than \$100 million in 1951



French Defeat

- Viet Minh forces, under the direction of General Vo Nguyen Giap launched a surprise attack against a large French military base at **Dien Bien Phu** and surrounded more than 12,000 French troops
- The Viet Minh overran the base and the French began pulling out 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.



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.
 - Secretary of State John Foster Dulles thought the Geneva Accords granted too much power to the Communist Party of Vietnam.
 - 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 following year, Ngo Dinh Diem, a staunchly anti-Communist figure from the South, won a election that made him president of South Vietnam



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.
 - He used the help of the CIA (through Operation Phoenix) to identify those who sought to bring his government down and arrested thousands.
 - He passed a repressive series of acts known as Law 10/59 that made it legal to hold suspected Communists in jail without bringing formal charges.



Opposition to Diem

- The outcry against Diem's harsh and oppressive actions was immediate.
 - Buddhist monks and nuns were joined by students, business people, intellectuals, and peasants in opposition to Diem's corrupt rule.
 - The more these forces attacked Diem's troops and secret police, the more Diem complained that the Communists were trying to take South Vietnam by force. This was "a hostile act of aggression by North Vietnam against peace-loving and democratic South Vietnam."



The National Liberation Front

- The Communists supported the creation of a broad-based united front to help mobilize southerners in opposition to the government in South Vietnam.
- On December 20, 1960, the National Liberation Front (NLF) was born.
 - It brought together Communists and non-Communists in an umbrella organization
 - Anyone could join as long as they opposed Ngo Dinh Diem and wanted to unify Vietnam.



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.



Military Coup

- By late September, the Buddhist protest had created such disorder in the south that the Kennedy administration supported a coup.
- In 1963, some of Diem's own generals approached the American Embassy in Saigon with plans to overthrow Diem.
- With Washington's tacit approval, Diem and his brother were captured and later killed.
- Three weeks later, President Kennedy was assassinated on the streets of Dallas.



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.

Attack on American Ships

- In August 1964, in response to American and South Vietnamese espionage along its coast, North Vietnam launched an attack against the C. Turner Joy and the U.S.S. Maddox, two American ships on call in the Gulf of Tonkin.
 - The first attack occurred on August 2, 1964.
 - A second attack was supposed to have taken place on August 4, but authorities have recently concluded that no second attack ever took place.



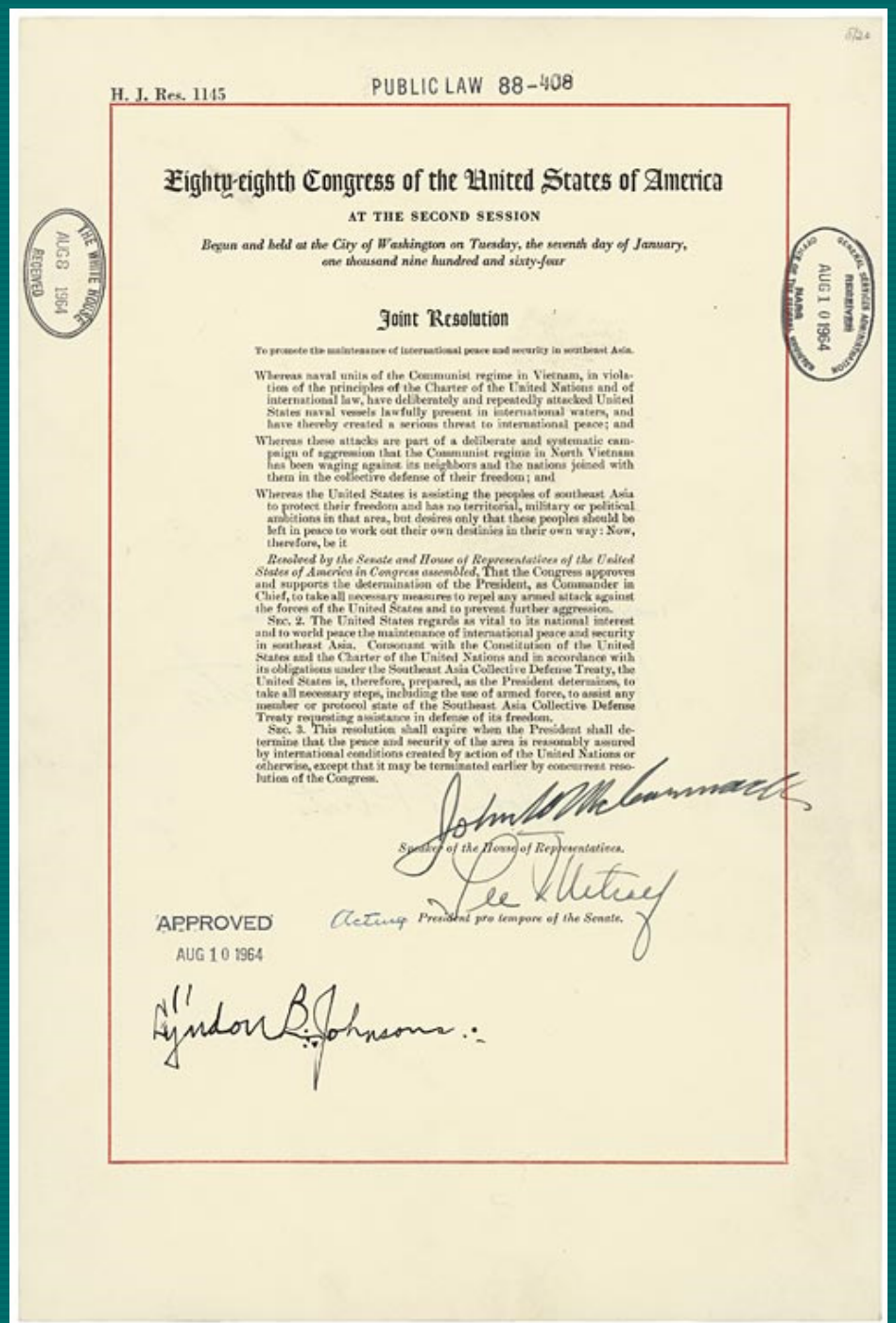
Gulf of Tonkin Case Study

- Why did the Tonkin Gulf incident represent a turning point for U.S. policy in Vietnam?
- How did the U.S. position in Vietnam in the summer of 1964 fit into the overall strategy of U.S. foreign policy?
- Why did the Tonkin Gulf Resolution encounter virtually no opposition in Congress?



President Johnson signs the resolution on Aug 10, 1964.

The resolution authorized the president to take “all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the force of the United States.” President Johnson used this authorization to expand U.S. involvement in Vietnam



Primary Sources on Vietnam Involvement T-Chart

Support Involvement	Against Involvement

FOG OF WAR VIDEO

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1A_X_6_9m2s

Fog Of War Vietnam.wmv



0:53 / 6:52



Operation Rolling Thunder

- In early 1965, the NLF attacked two U.S. army installations in South Vietnam, and as a result, Johnson ordered sustained bombing missions over North Vietnam.
- The bombing missions, known as “Operation Rolling Thunder,” caused the Communist Party to reassess its own war strategy



Napalm Bombs

- “Operation Rolling Thunder” was backed up by napalm bombs – the latter causing dreadful burns to thousand of innocent civilians.



Operation Ranch Hand

- When this failed to break down the jungle cover the USAF started “Operation Ranch Hand” – the defoliation program, using Agent Orange.
 - This deadly chemical cocktail, containing dioxin, killed off millions of acres of jungle to try to weaken the Vietcong – but left a horrendous legacy in Vietnam.
 - The dioxin got into the food chain causing chromosome damage to humans. There were hundreds of cases of children born with deformities.



How did the North Vietnamese Fight Back Against the U.S. Invaders?

- The North Vietnamese used classic Maoist guerrilla tactics. “Guerrillas must move through the peasants like fish through sea,” i.e., the peasants will support them as much as they can with shelter, food, weapons, storage, intelligence, recruits.



North Vietnamese Tactics

- In areas held by the NLF, the Communists distributed the land to the peasants. (By 1973, the NLF held about half of South Vietnam.)
- Their weapons were cheap and reliable.
 - The AK47 assault rifle out-performed the American M16
 - The portable rocket launcher took out many US vehicles & aircraft.
 - They recycled dud bombs dropped by the Americans. Deadly booby-traps could inflict huge damage on young American conscripts!



Tunnel Complexes

- The Vietnamese built large tunnel complexes such as the ones at Cu Chi near Saigon. This protected them from the bombing raids by the Americans and gave them cover for attacking the invaders.



Search & Destroy Tactics

- The United States countered with “Search and Destroy” tactics. In areas where the NLF were thought to be operating, troops went in and checked for weapons. If they found them, they rounded up the villagers and burned the villages down.
- This often alienated the peasants from the American/South Vietnamese cause.
 - As one marine said – “If they weren’t Vietcong before we got there, they sure as hell were by the time we left”.
 - The NFL often helped the villager’s re-build their homes and bury their dead.



Protracted War Strategy

- After “Operation Rolling Thunder,” the Communist Party moved to a protracted war strategy: the idea was to get the United States bogged down in a war that it could not win militarily and create unfavorable conditions for political victory.

