



# The Vietnam War

# Conflict Between France and Vietnam

- France had controlled Vietnam since the 1850s
- By 1954, General Vo Nguyen Giap (communist) forced the French to leave Vietnam



# Why does the U.S. get involved in Vietnam?

- The United States becomes involved to stop the spread of communism (Truman Doctrine)
- One of the longest wars in American History (1955-1973)



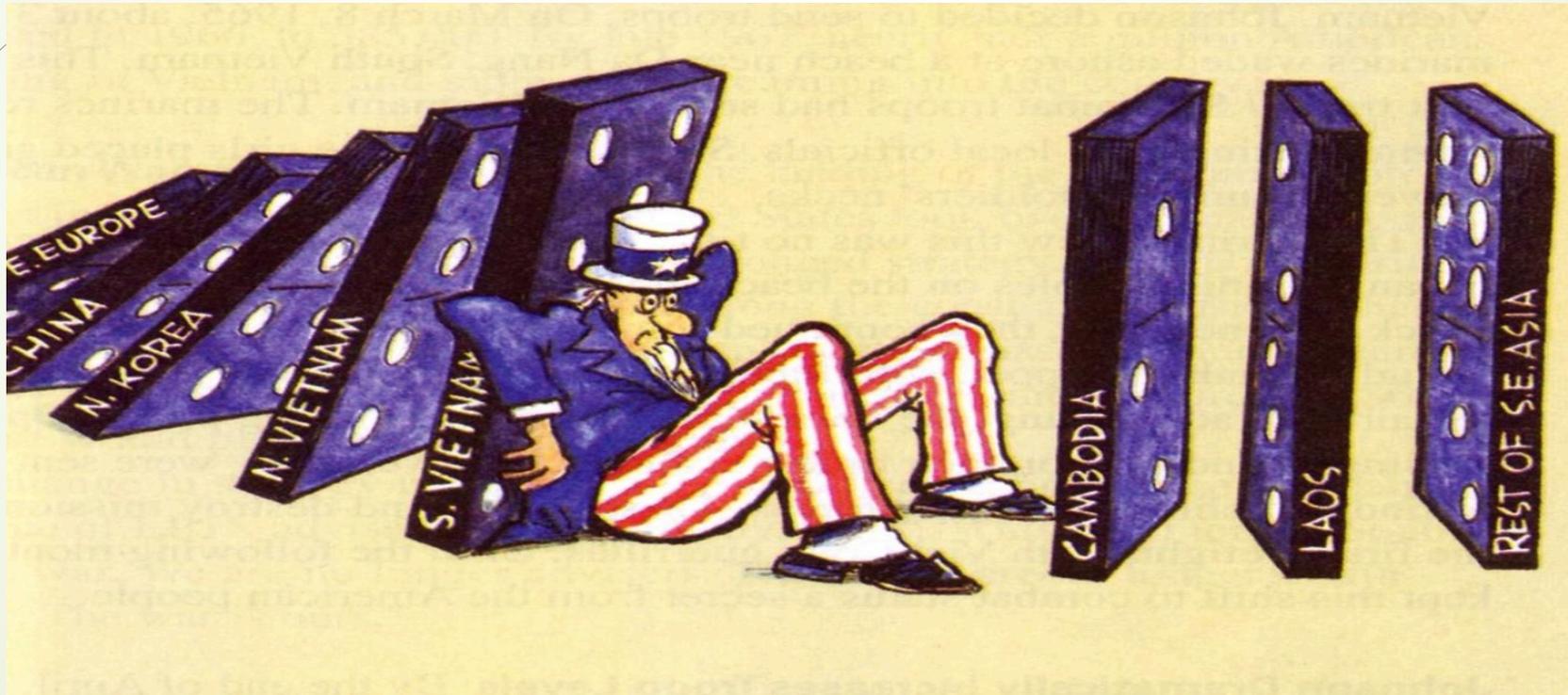
# The Geneva Peace Accords



- ▶ Vietnam splits at the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel (Communists controlled the North)
  - ▶ Ho Chi Minh in charge
- ▶ U.S. not happy with the Geneva conference
  - ▶ Free elections were supposed to take place, but the U.S. knew the Communists would win
- ▶ U.S. sets up anti-Communist country in the South
  - ▶ Led by Ngo Dinh Diem

# Domino Theory

- ▶ If South Vietnam turns Communist, then Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Burma, India and Pakistan would also turn Communist.



# Opposition to Diem

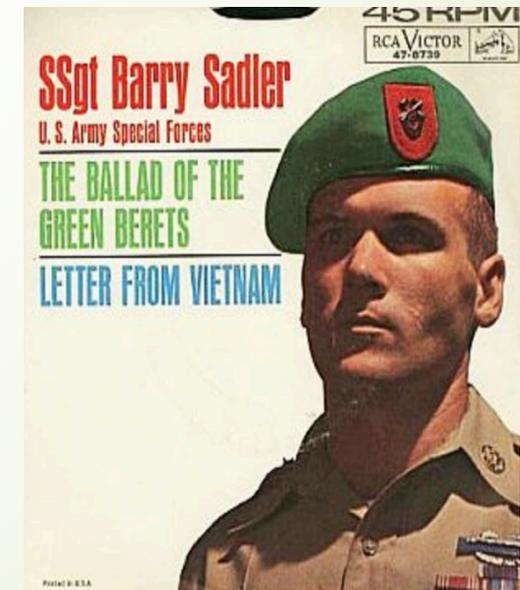
## National Liberation Front

- Brought Communists and non-Communists together to fight Diem's rule
- Become known as the Viet Cong, a guerrilla army



## December 1961 White Paper

- Kennedy sends a group of men to assess situation in Vietnam
  - Need troops on the ground
- Kennedy refuses, instead, sends supplies and advisors (Green Berets) to help South Vietnamese



# Diem: The Failed Leader

- Most people in South Vietnam did not like Diem
  - Threw people in jail, would kill them
  - Angered Buddhists, the main religion in S. Vietnam
- U.S. organizes a coup to get rid of Diem and put forth new leader, Duong Van Minh, but nobody liked him either



# Golf of Tonkin

- ▶ In August of 1964, N. Vietnamese attack American ships in Golf of Tonkin due to the S. Vietnamese and Americans spying on them
- ▶ Congress than passes **Golf of Tonkin Resolution**, allowing the President a full declaration of war without having to get Congress' approval
  - ▶ Aka, President (LBJ) could do whatever he wanted



# Operation Rolling Thunder

- Bombing campaign that began in 1965
  - Continuous bombing over N. Vietnam, escalates the war
- By the end of 1965, nearly 400,000 American Troops were in Vietnam





# Tactics

## Americans

- Attrition- wear down the Vietnamese with large casualties
- Napalm- flammable jelly that causes severe burns
- Agent Orange- herbicide meant to get rid of trees, but dangerous chemical that caused respiratory issues, birth defects and cancer

## Viet Cong

- Guerilla Tactics
  - Booby Traps
  - Mines
  - Punji Traps
- Spread out (no clear targets)









# Search and Destroy

- To counter the Viet Cong, the U.S. would raid villages where they thought they kept weapons. Would then gather the villagers (whether innocent or not) and burn down the villages
  - This alienated those who were sympathetic to the Americans cause



# 1968

- Things go from bad to worse
- Tet Offensive-  
Launched in January 1968, coordinated attacks in Southern Cities
- My Lai Massacre- in March of 1968, it was discovered that a village of 400 men, women and children were killed



# Anti War Sentiment

- Outrage of the war begins to grow
- BY 1969, the U.S. institutes a draft lottery



# Johnson and Nixon

- After the Tet Offensive, Johnson announces he won't seek re-election
- Richard Nixon (R) runs on the campaign promise of ending the Vietnam War (Vietnamization). He wins.



# Cambodia and Laos

- Although Nixon leads troops out of Vietnam, he leads them illegally into Cambodia and Laos
- This leads to protests at college campus' where the Ohio National Guard shoots dead 4 college students at Kent State



# Vietnam End



- By 1973, the Paris Peace Agreement is signed, ending conflict in Vietnam.
- By 1975, N. Vietnam enters S. Vietnam, ending the war and all of Vietnam falling to Communism

# Most Unpopular 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.
- They lost

