Vietnam War

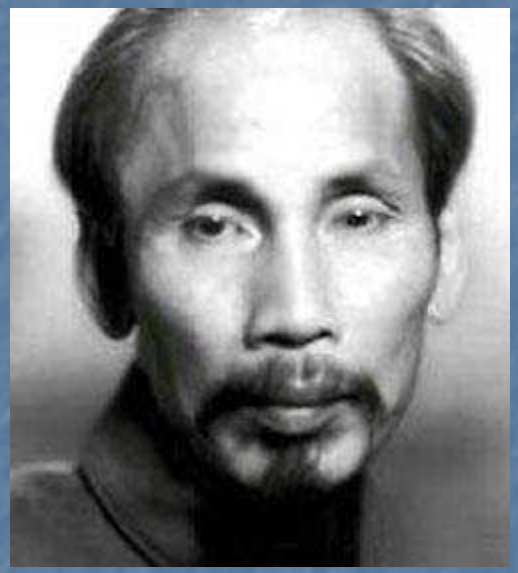
Hanoi
Hue
Danang
Hoi An
LAOS
THAILAND
Nha Trang
Da Lat
CAMBODIA
VIETNAM
Phan Thiet
Ho Chi Minh City
(Saigon)
My Tho

Vietnam War

- Key to stopping the spread of Communism was Vietnam
- France controlled Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia in what was called *French Indochina*

Indochina

- During WWII Japan took control of the area
- *Ho Chi Minh* who was a communist supporter who formed the *Vietminh* to over throw Japanese forces that took control during WWII
- Being enemies of Japan the U.S. sent military aid to the Vietminh
- When Japan lost WWII, Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam independent



- French troops invade to drive out the Vietminh
- France appealed to U.S. for help, but U.S. was torn
  - Anti-colonization and Anti- communist
- With China falling to communism and the start of the Korean War the U.S. decides to give France military aid
- By 1954 the U.S. is paying for ¾ of France's war costs

Domino Theory

- U.S. defends this by stressing the possibility of the **domino theory**
- Soviet Union – China – Koreas – Vietnam?

Geneva Accords

- Vietnam is also divided in ½ at the 17th parallel

  -North led by Ho Chi Minh

  -South led by Ngo Ding Diem (with U.S. as protectorate)

  -free elections were to be held in 1956
- Diem refused to allow elections in 1956 because Minh was sure to win
- Vietnam heads for a Civil War with the U.S. caught in the middle

Ngo Dinh Diem

Ho Chi Minh

American Involvement in Vietnam

Eisenhower and Kennedy Administrations

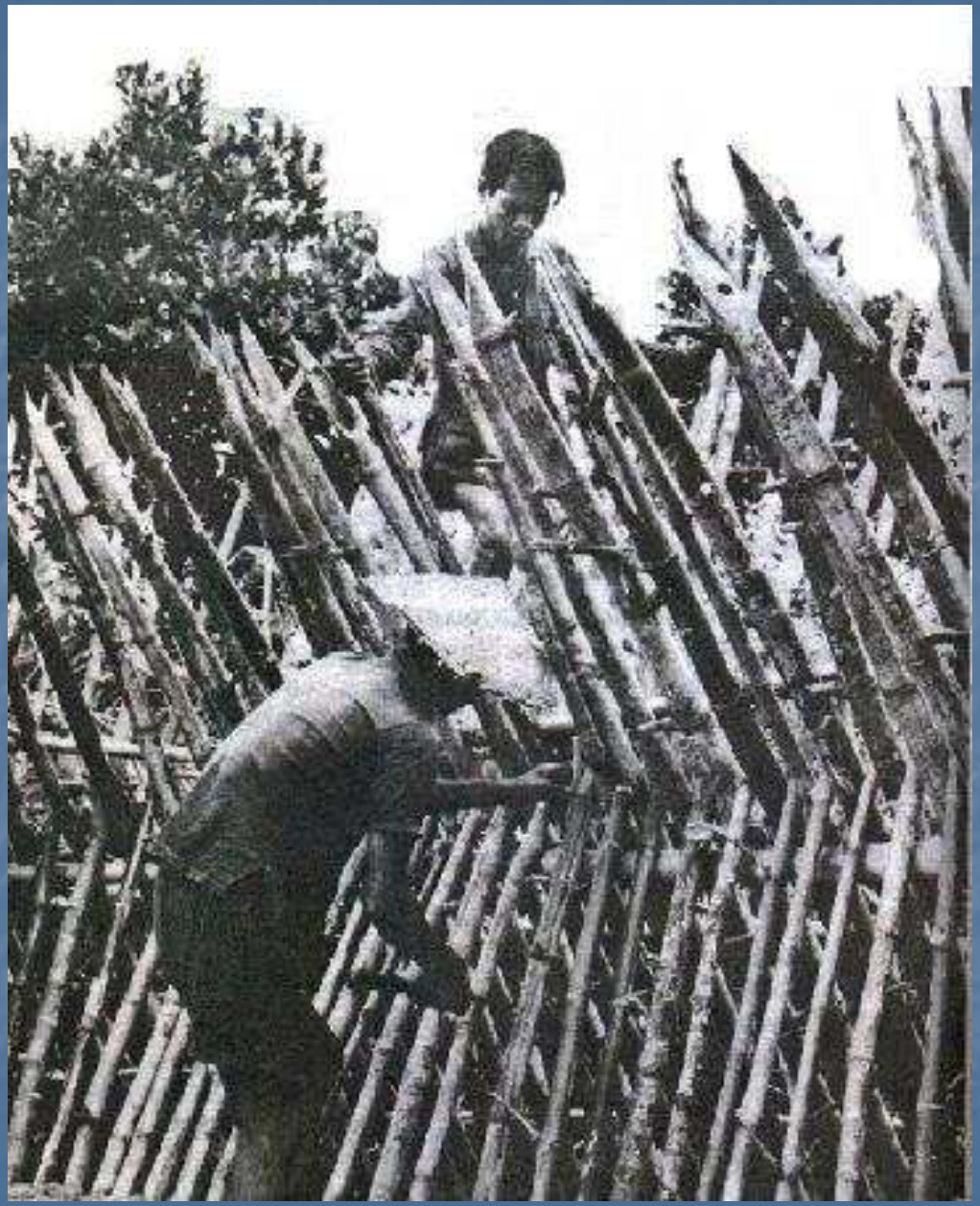
- Ho Chi Minh formed a new guerrilla army including some south Vietnamese called the ***Vietcong***
- US sent military advisors to train S Vietnam
- But the Vietcong were too powerful

KEM
Chiên Cạo
đậu đỏ, nước ngọt

(NATIONAL ARCHIVES)

Strategic Hamlets

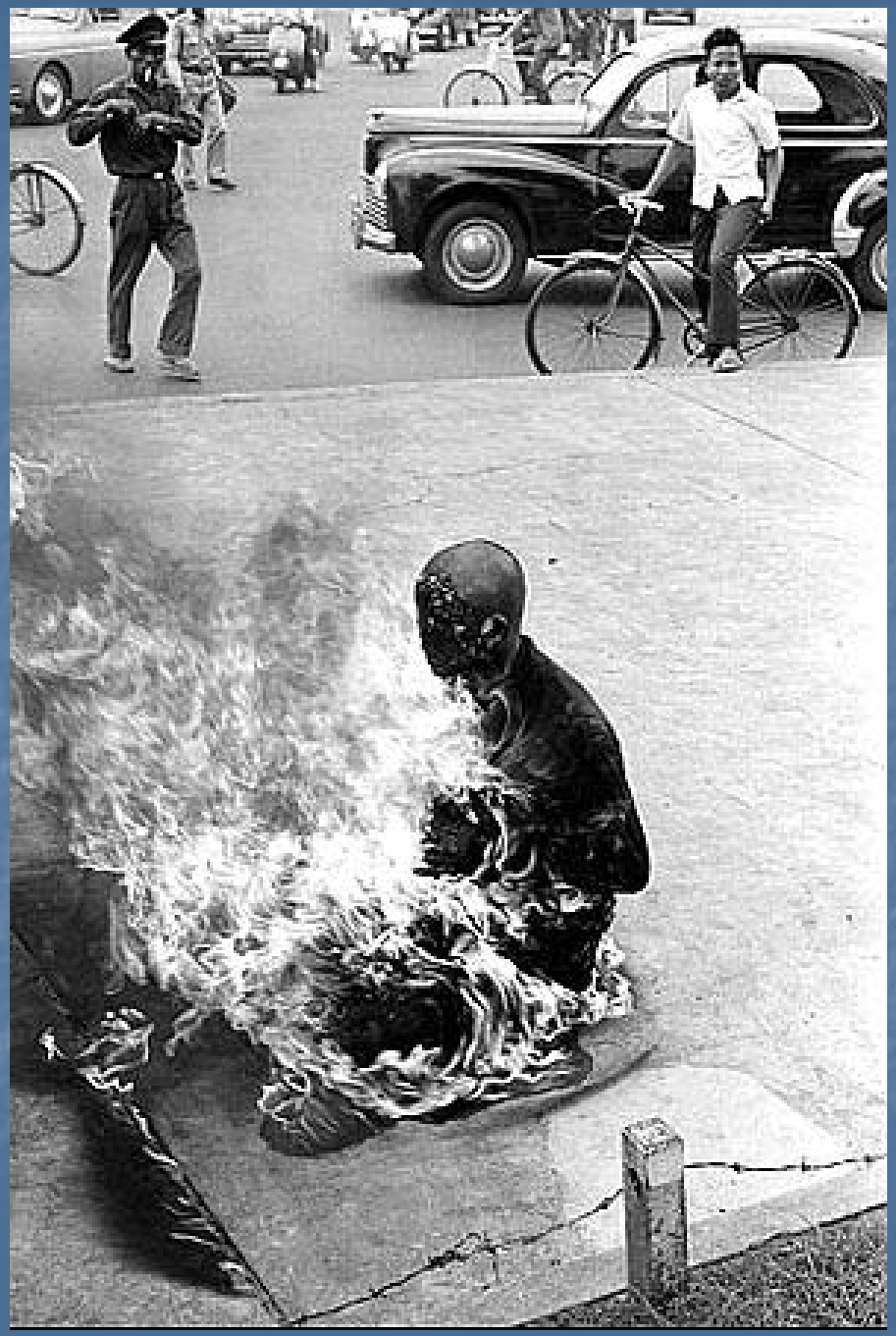
- Diem with urging from the US established ***strategic hamlets***
- Basically containment camps to keep S. Vietnamese in and safe; and from helping the Vietcong



VIEWIMAGES

Diem's reign of Terror

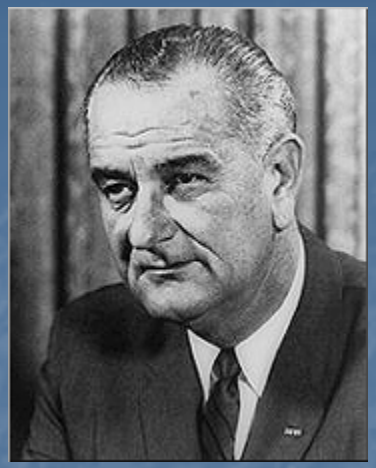
- Corrupt administration
- Very unpopular
- Discriminated against Buddhism
  - One of the most popular religions in Vietnam
  - 9 people were killed by Diem's police during religious protests
- Vietnamese Generals assassinated Diem with the support of the US



Diem's assassination

- However unpopular Diem had been he was also a strong political leader
- Without Diem South Vietnam collapses
- US must get more involved

Johnson and Vietnam

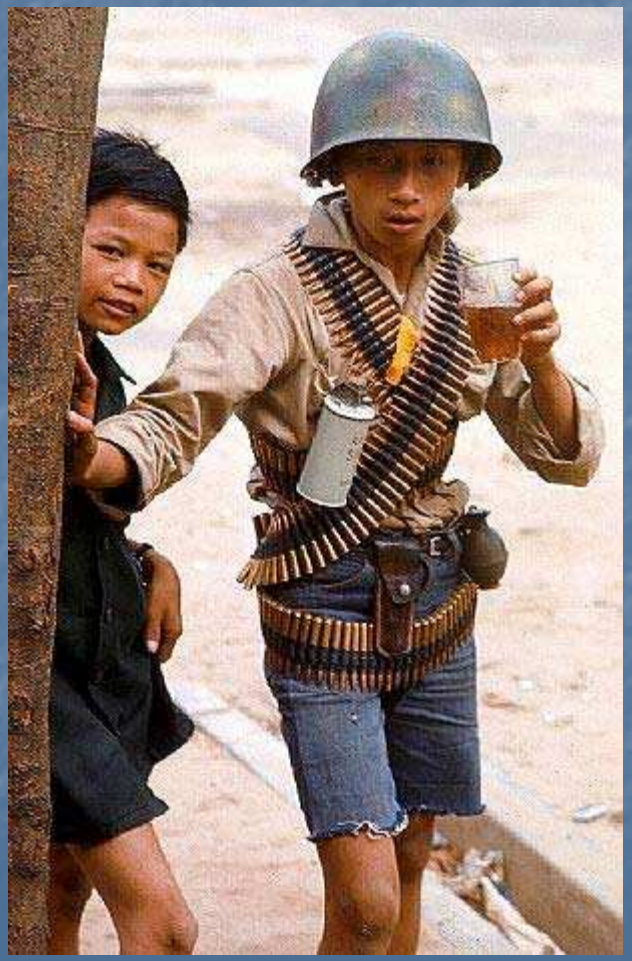


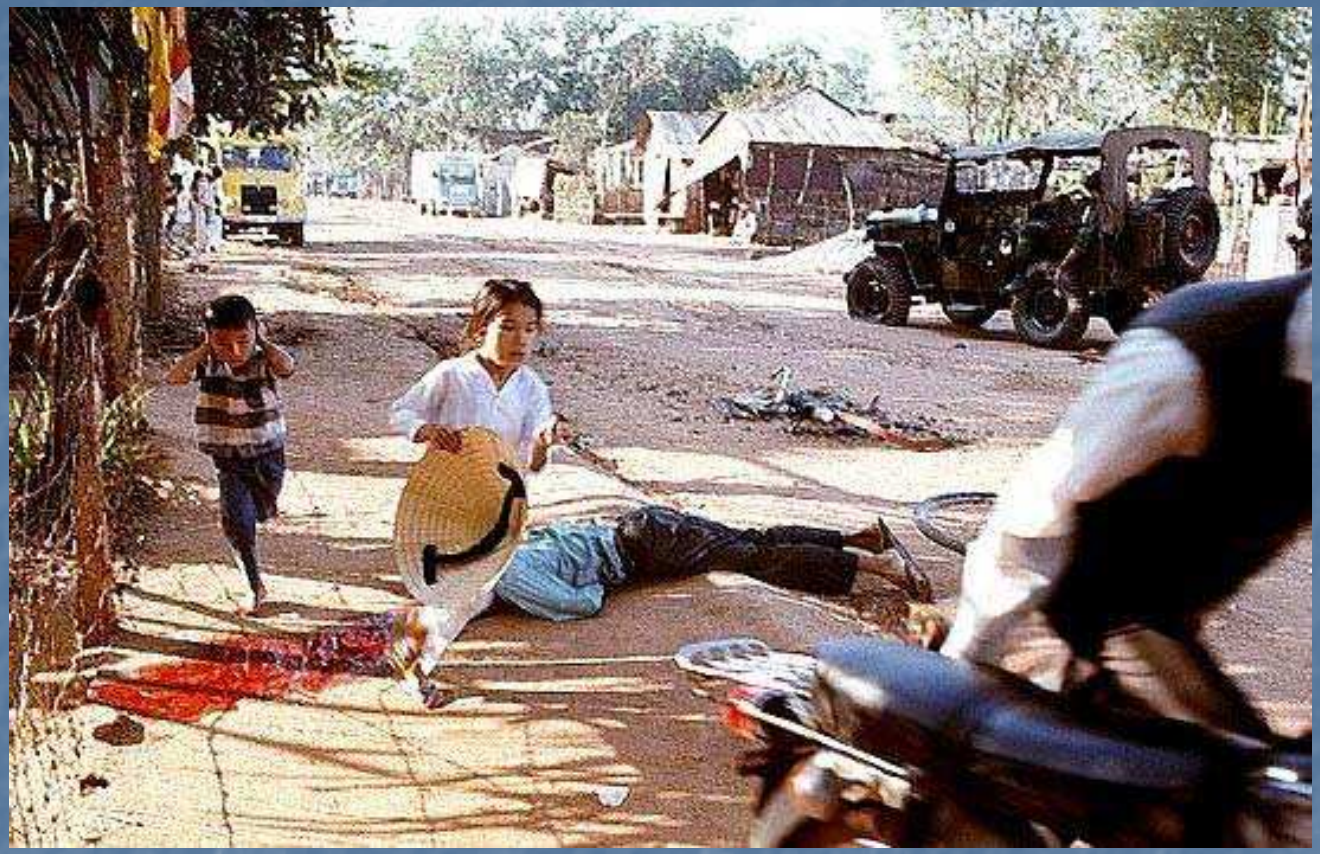
- didn't want a bigger war, but had to be strong against Communism
- Gulf of Tonkin
  - Johnson claims US destroyers were fired upon by N. Vietnamese boats unprovoked
  - Johnson fails to mention that the US ships had been spying on the Vietcong

Difficult Warfare

- US arrogantly believed that it would be an eary war to win
- Ambushes
- Booby traps
- Guerrilla tactics
- Vietcong blended in with civilians

"a war where nothing is ever quite certain and nowhere is ever quite safe"





US tactics

- Search and destroy missions
  - Find the enemy, bomb them, destroy the supply lines, and force them out into the open
- Napalm
- Agent Orange- burn out jungle cover

Agent Orange Dangers

- Dangerous side effects on civilians and soldiers
  - Birth defects
  - Spin Bifida
  - Cancers
  - Skin disorders

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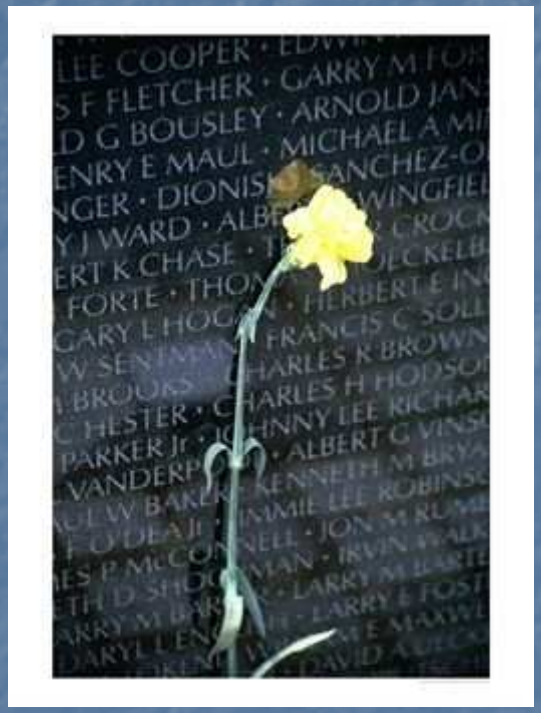
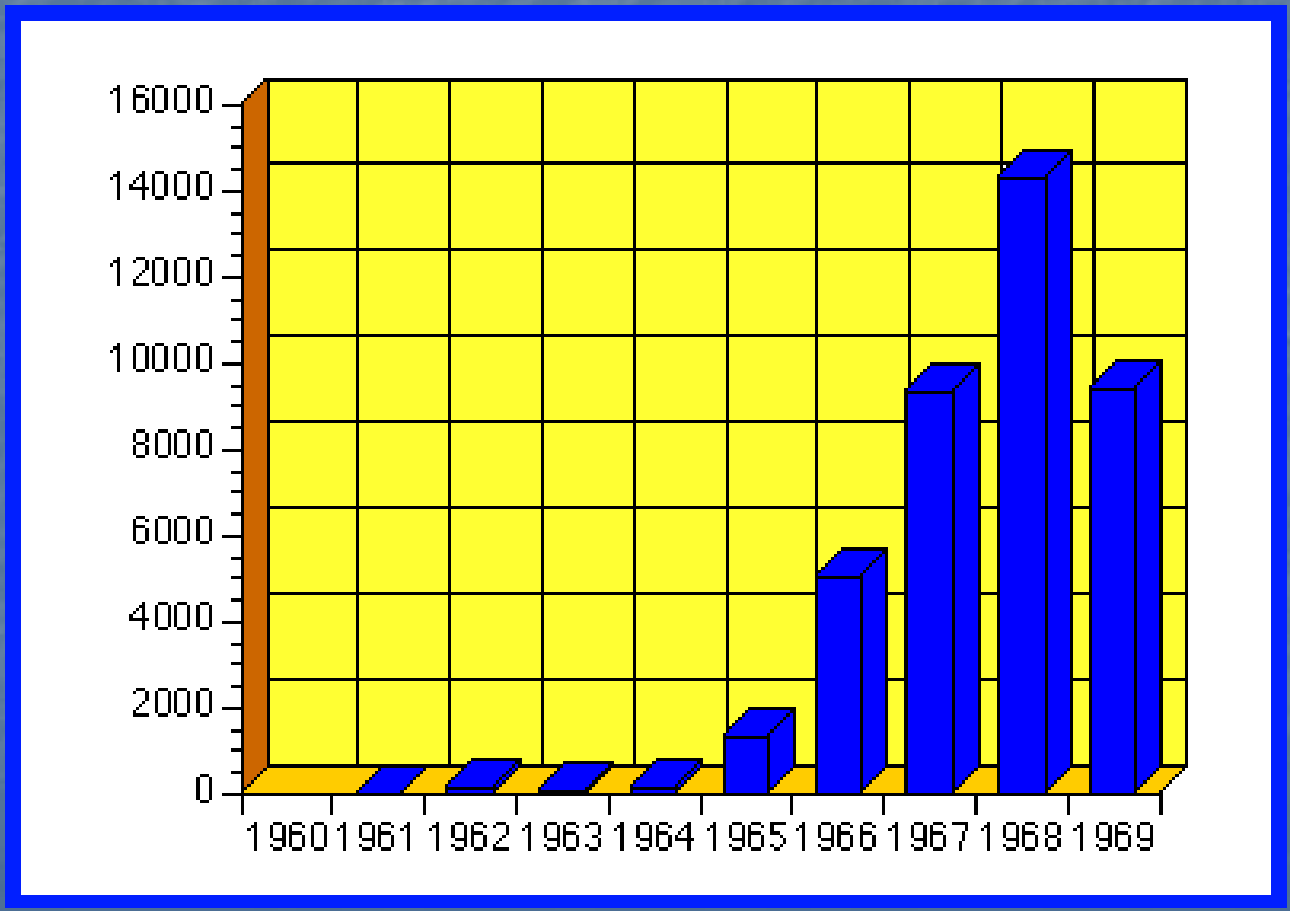
- North Vietnam sent supplies to the Vietcong in the south through the ***Ho Chi Minh Trail***

- US underestimated the Vietcong strength and endurance
- Vietcong were willing to suffer huge casualties
- SU and China both aided N. Vietnam
- US was forced to fight a war of attrition
- 1969 US pulls out troops; South Vietnam is taken over and becomes Communist

Vietnam War Memorial



Remembering Vietnam

US Vietnam War Death Totals