



Summary

The USA became increasingly concerned with the growth and spread of communism in South East Asia after the French were defeated at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954. The Geneva Agreement of 1954 allowed North Vietnam to remain communist and be led by Ho Chi Minh and South Vietnam became a capitalist 'democracy' led by Diem. The corrupt nature of the South Vietnamese regime meant that many people wanted the communist Ho Chi Minh to rule them and the Vietcong emerged who carried out terrorist activities against the South Vietnamese government. As such, the US presidents began to send advisors and money to help the South Vietnamese army (ARVN) and government. However, the Vietcong were so strong by 1965, and following the Gulf of Tonkin Incident in 1964, President Johnson sent US troops to Vietnam. The USA, though they has military might and money, using chemical warfare and bombing campaigns, could not win against the North Vietnamese and Vietcong who relied on guerrilla tactics and supplies carried down the Ho Chi Minh trail.



Key Figures

Dwight Eisenhower	American president who increased US involvement in the USA. He came up with the term 'Domino Theory'.
JFK—President Kennedy	Increased US advisors in Vietnam, established the Strategic Hamlets Programme and backed a plan to execute Diem.
Ho Chi Minh	Fought against the Japanese in WW11 and the French afterwards with his 'Vietminh' army. He became the communist leader of the north in 1954 but wanted to unite the country.
Diem	Capitalist and corrupt leader of South Vietnam after 1954. Rigged the 1956 election and appointed family members to positions of power. Persecuted Buddhists. Executed 1963.
Quang Duc	Buddhist monk who set himself on fire, killing himself, in the middle of Saigon in 1963. He did this to protest against Diem's corrupt and oppressive regime.

US Tactics

Bombing raids (Operation Rolling Thunder) began in 1965 and lasted until 1968. Agent Orange was sprayed across the jungle to remove leaves and expose the Vietcong. Bombs also contained napalm, petroleum jelly that burned at a high temperature. Search and Destroy raids dropped troops by helicopter to search villages for Vietcong and

Vietcong Tactics

Guerrilla warfare was preferred. Hit and run attacks and ambushes were used. Booby traps like the spike trap pit were used. The Vietcong lived in tunnels underground and blended in with local villagers. They also offered to help with the farmers to win 'hearts and minds' in the south. The Ho Chi Minh trail provided weapons, ammunition, food and

1954 French defeat and Vietnam split in two

1960 Vietcong created

1961 Kennedy sends 16000 US advisers to Vietnam

1965 First US troops arrive. Bombing of N. Vietnam begins

1968 The Tet Offensive, military defeat for the Vietcong

1969 Nixon begins Vietnamization

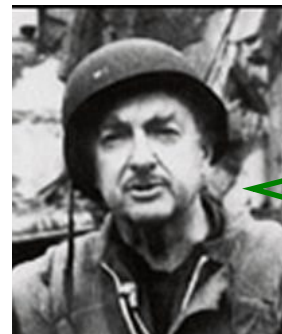
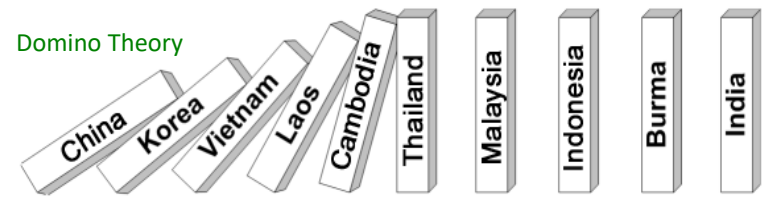
1973 Cease-fire. US troops leave

1975 S Vietnam defeated. The Republic of Vietnam created

TIMELINE OF THE VIETNAM WAR



Key Concepts	
Domino Theory	The USA wanted to 'contain' or STOP the spread of Communism. Domino Theory was the idea that if South Vietnam fell to Communism then all neighbouring countries would fall too—like a row of dominoes. It became very important to the USA to protect South Vietnam's capitalist government.
Tet Offensive	On January 31st 1968 the Vietcong launched a surprise attack on over 100 towns and cities all across South Vietnam. They even managed to get inside the walls of the US embassy in Saigon for a few hours. The USA eventually regained control but many saw this attack as a turning point. Many Americans, shocked at the pictures on their TV, turned against the Vietnam War.



What the hell is going on? I thought we were winning this war? *Walter Cronkite, reporting on the Tet Offensive 1968*

JG7TZ-RC98G—Schoology

Other Resources
https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z89hg82/revision/1
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpfTgMHwtEs



SCAN ME

Key Vocabulary	
Communism	A political system which aims to make people more equal but restricts personal freedom.
Vietminh	A force set up to resist the Japanese occupation of Vietnam 1940-45
Dien Bien Phu	The battle which signalled the final French defeat and saw them withdraw from Vietnam in 1954
Geneva Agreement	International Conference in 1954. It was agreed to split Vietnam in two along the line of the '17th Parallel'.
NVA	North Vietnamese Army
ARVN	South Vietnamese Army (Army of the Republic of Vietnam)
Military Advisers	Did not fight but helped to train the ARVN
Strategic Hamlets	Small villages with fences around them to stop the Vietcong from infiltrating them
Gulf of Tonkin	Area of sea where a US Navy ship was torpedoed by North Vietnam. This incident meant President Johnson declared war.
Operation Rolling Thunder	The bombing of North Vietnam which lasted for 3.5 years.
Vietcong	Communist resistance fighters in South Vietnam. They wanted to reunify Vietnam with one Communist government.
Search and Destroy	American tactic of searching villages for Vietcong and then setting fire to their houses and food.
Napalm	Petroleum jelly that was dropped in bombs on Vietnam. It burnt at a very high temperature.
Agent Orange	Instructions from physicians to wash, exercise and eat well to maintain good health.
Guerrilla warfare	A type of warfare which avoids open battles with the enemy. Secret raids and ambushes are preferred.
Ho Chi Minh Trail	Trail used to supply the Vietcong with weapons, food and medical supplies it ran from North to South through Cambodia
Vietnamization	Nixon's plan to withdraw from Vietnam by training the ARVN to continue the war on their own.

Challenge

Do you think that US involvement in a war in Vietnam was inevitable? Explain why or why not.

List the pros and cons of the tactics used by the USA and the Vietcong.