## Going to War in Vietnam

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F.

Chapter 17 Section 1 USH Honors

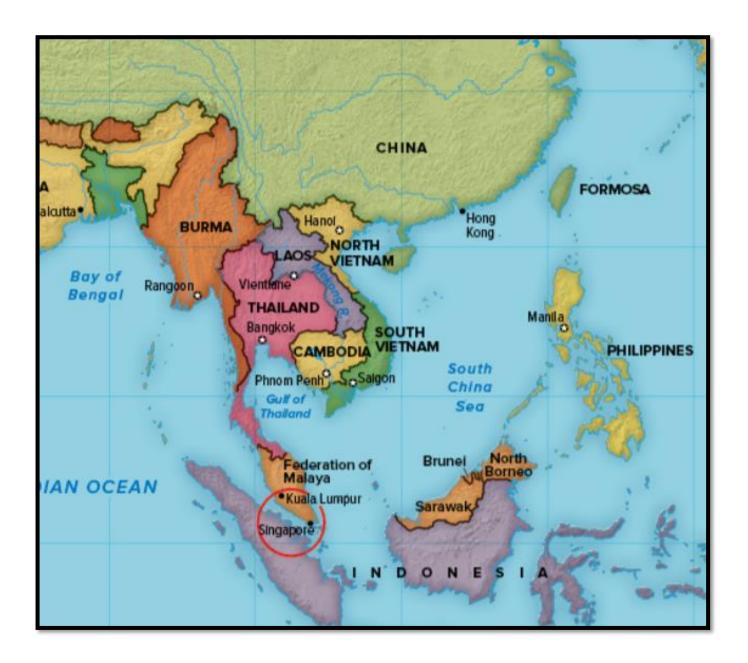


#### Lesson Objectives:

- Students will be able to
  - Explain how the United States became involved in the French Indochina War.
  - Evaluate how American involvement in Vietnam changed during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.
  - Explain why the US could not quickly defeat the North Vietnamese forces.
  - Identify the problems that the Vietnam War caused at home.

## Essential Question:

What were the military and political events of the Vietnam War; and, how did this conflict impact life in the United States?



#### AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM

- 1940: Japan invaded Vietnam not a new concept: MANY nations had ruled this country!
  - China controlled the region for hundreds of years.
  - From the 19<sup>th</sup> century to WWII: France ruled Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia (French Indochina)
- By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century:
  - Nationalism was growing in Vietnam.
  - The people WANT independence.



#### The Growth of Vietnamese Nationalism

- Who is leading this movement?
  Nguyen That Thanh (Ho Chi Minh)
- Who is Ho Chi Minh?
  - Vietnamese national who spent time in Europe, China, and the USSR
  - Returned to Southeast Asia
  - Helped to found the Indochinese Communist Party (1930)
  - Worked to gain independence of the region
- Did EVERYONE like Minh? NO
  - Forced to flee Indochina and live in the Soviet Union and China for years
  - Returned to Vietnam in 1941
  - Organized the Vietminh: united communists & non-communists to remove Japan from Indochina.



#### 1945: Japan surrendered

- Lost control of French Indochina after World War II
- Vietnam briefly became independent.
- France was unwilling to lose the former colony!
- French troops returned in 1946...
- Vietminh driven into hiding!

## Were the Vietminh willing to give up their new-found freedom? NO

- The Vietminh fought back
- Fighting increases and France asks America to help

## Would the US intervene to help a colonial power? NO

- America opposed colonialism: pressured the Dutch and the British
- What changed our mind? The spread of communism
- <u>DOMINO THEORY</u>: the belief that if one nation in Asia fell to communism, others in the region would follow

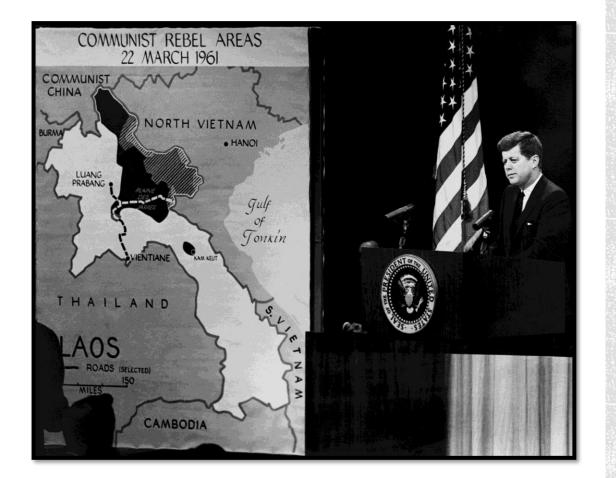
#### America Aids the French

#### The Fall of Dien Bien Phu & the Geneva Accords

- I950s: Vietminh soldiers used guerilla tactics
  - <u>Guerilla warfare</u>: an armed band that carries out surprise attacks and sabotage rather than open warfare.
- What was the turning point? The fall of Dien Bien Phu (1954)
  - France planned to cut the Vietminh resources and force surrender
  - Vietminh forces seized the town forcing the French surrender
  - France would peacefully leave the region...America will NOT let go!
- The Geneva Accords temporarily divided Vietnam between North and South.
- American Involvement in Vietnam:
  - Eisenhower supported Ngo Dinh Diem's plan for open elections by 1956
  - Did Diem hold elections? NO (absolute power corrupts absolutely!)



# AMERICAN DEEPENS



### **Kennedy Takes Over**

- The struggle for unity heats up again after Diem denied elections.
- How did Kennedy respond?
  - 1961: Kennedy supports South Vietnam.
  - Vital to fighting the spread of Communism.
  - Kennedy increased US military in South Vietnam to 16,000.
- Were these troops enough to help the Diem regime? NO
  - Strategic hamlets (fortified villages) presented a problem.
  - Some were forcibly moved to better control the fighting.







# The Overthrow of Diem

- Diem became very unpopular:
  - Discriminated against the Buddhists in Vietnam
  - Banned the traditional religious flags celebrating Buddha's birthday
  - Buddhists protested in the streets
- How did the Buddhists respond?
  - Nonviolent protest: Buddhist monks attempted to economically strike at Diem
  - Buddhist monks set themselves on fire in the busiest streets.
  - Images of self-destruction horrified America.
- 1963: Vietnamese generals launched a coup against Diem.
  - South Vietnam's government weakened after his death.

### Johnson and Vietnam

- President Kennedy was assassinated 3 weeks after Diem.
- Lyndon Johnson succeeded Kennedy as president.
  - Johnson would increase US involvement in Vietnam.
  - Vietnam was critical to Johnson.
- Aug. 2, 1964: Johnson announces the Gulf of Tonkin events
  - US destroyers were torpedoed in the Gulf of Tonkin.
  - Johnson ordered American military escalation
- Gulf of Tonkin Resolution: grants the president "broad military powers"
  - Basically, the president DID NOT have to answer to congress concerning Vietnam <sup>®</sup>

