1

## 2 Background

### to the War

★ France controlled "Indochina" since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century

- ★ Japan took control during World War II
- ★ With U.S. aid, France attempted re-colonization in the postwar period

### 3 Background to the War

- The French lost control to Ho Chi Minh's - Viet Minh forces in 1954 at a fortress in Dien Bien Phu
- President Eisenhower declined to intervene on behalf of France, but gave economic aid for containment.

4 🔲 Background to the War

- \* International Conference at Geneva (April 1954)
  - Vietnam was divided at 17th parallel (July 1954)
    - \*Ho Chi Minh's nationalist forces controlled the North
    - \*Ngo Dinh Diem, a French-educated, Roman Catholic (in a largely Buddhist country) claimed control of the South

## 5 🔲 Background to the War

- ★A date (in 1956) was set for democratic elections to reunify Vietnam
- ★Diem backed out of the elections, leading to military conflict between North and South
- 6 🔲 U.S. Military

### **Involvement Begins**

★Repressive dictatorial rule by Diem

- Diem's family holds all power
- Wealth is hoarded by the elite
- Buddhist majority persecuted
- Torture, lack of political freedom prevail

★The U.S. aided Diem's government

- Ike sent financial and military aid
- 675 U.S. Army advisors sent by 1960.

7

## 8 🔲 U.S. Military Involvement Begins

- ★ Kennedy elected 1960
- ✤ Increases military "advisors" to 16,000
- ★ 1963: JFK supports a Vietnamese military coup d'état Diem and his brother are murdered as they flee (Nov. 2)
- \* Kennedy was assassinated just weeks later (Nov. 22)

## 9 🔲 Johnson Sends Ground Forces

★ Remembers Truman's "loss" of China → Domino Theory revived

### 10 Johnson Sends Ground Forces

- Advised to rout the communists by Secretary of State, Robert S. McNamara
- ★ Tonkin Gulf Incident → 1964 (acc. to Johnson, the attacks were unprovoked)
- Tonkin Gulf Resolution
  - -"The Blank Check"
    - President had complete control over Vietnam w/o an official declaration of war from Congress
- 11 U.S. Troop Deployments in Vietnam
- 12 The Ground War 1965-1968

- \* No territorial goals
- Body counts on TV every night (first "living room" war)

- Viet Cong supplies over the Ho Chi Minh Trail
- 13
- 14 🔲 The Air War

1965-1968

- \* 1965: Sustained bombing of North Vietnam
- \* Operation Rolling Thunder (March 2, 1965)
- \* 1966-68: Ongoing bombing of Hanoi nonstop for 3 years! Esp. targets the Ho Chi Minh Trail.
- ✤ Downed Pilots: P.O.W.s
- \* Carpet Bombing napalm

15 🔲

- 16 Who Is the Enemy?
  - ★ Vietcong:
    - Farmers by day; guerillas at night.
    - Very patient people willing to accept many casualties.
    - The US grossly underestimated their resolve and their resourcefulness.

17 Who Is the

### Enemy?

18 War Perspectives

Ballad of the Green Berets - Sing Along Music + Lyrics with Sgt. Barry Sadler by Brownielocks.

\*Country Joe and the Fish: <u>"Fixin' to Die Rag"</u>

### <sup>19</sup> The Ground War 1965-1968

★ General Westmoreland, late 1967:

### 20 The Tet Offensive, January 30, 1968

- N. Vietnamese Army + Viet Cong attack South simultaneously (67,000 attack 100 cities, bases, and the US embassy in Saigon)
- \* Take every major southern city
- **★** U.S. + ARVN beat back the offensive
- ✤ Viet Cong destroyed
- \* N. Vietnamese army debilitated
- \* BUT...it's seen as an American defeat by the media
- 21

# 22 Impact of the

### Tet Offensive

- ★ Domestic U.S. Reaction: Disbelief, Anger, Distrust of Johnson Administration
- 23 🔲
- 24

### 25 🔲 Impact of the Vietnam War

...I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your President.

26 American Morale Begins to Dip

- \* Disproportionate representation of poor people and minorities.
- \* Severe racial problems.
- Major drug problems.
- Officers in combat
  6 mo.; in rear
  6 mo. Enlisted
  men in combat for 12 mo.

Are We Becoming the Enemy?
Image: Second Sec

- Nixon's 1968 Campaign promised an end to the war: Peace with Honor
  - Appealed to the great "Silent Majority"
- ★ Vietnamization
- ★ Expansion of the conflict → The "Secret War"
  - Cambodia
  - Laos
- ★ Agent Orange

(chemical defoliant)

37 🔲 "Pentagon Papers,"

### 1971

- Former defense analyst Daniel Ellsberg leaked govt. docs. regarding war efforts during Johnson's administration to the New York Times.
- ★ Docs.→ Govt. misled Congress & Amer. People regarding its intentions in Vietnam during mid-1960s.
  - -Primary reason for fighting not to eliminate communism, but *to avoid humiliating defeat*.
  - -New York Times v. United States (1971)

# 38 🔲 The Ceasefire,

## 1973

- **★** Peace is at hand  $\rightarrow$  Kissinger, 1972
  - North Vietnam attacks South
  - Most Massive U.S. bombing commences
- \* 1973: Ceasefire signed between
  - U.S., South Vietnam, & North Vietnam

\* Peace with honor (President Nixon)

39 🔲

## 40 🔲 The Ceasefire,

### 1973

- ★ Conditions:
  - 1. U.S. to remove all troops
  - 2. North Vietnam could leave troops already in South Vietnam
  - 3. North Vietnam would resume war
  - 4.No provision for POWs or MIAs
- ★ Last American troops left South Vietnam on March 29, 1973
- ★ 1975: North Vietnam defeats South Vietnam

Saigon renamed Ho Chi Minh City
41
42
43
44
<ul> <li>45 The Costs</li> <li>1. ~3,000,000 Vietnamese killed</li> </ul>
2. 58,000+ Americans killed; ~300,000 wounded
<ol> <li>Under-funding of Great Society programs</li> <li>\$150,000,000,000 in U.S. spending</li> </ol>
5. U.S. morale, self-confidence, trust of government, decimated
46 🔲 The Impact
★ 26 <sup>th</sup> Amendment: 18-year-olds vote
Nixon abolished the draft; now all-volunteer army
★ War Powers Act, 1973 *
<ul> <li>President must notify Congress within 48 hours of deploying military force</li> </ul>
–President must withdraw forces unless he gains
Congressional approval within 60 days
<ul> <li>★ Disregard for Veterans → seen as "baby killers"</li> <li>★ POW/MIA issue lingered</li> </ul>
48
49
If we have to fight, we
will fight. You will kill ten of our men and we will kill one of yours, and in the
ten of our men and we will kill one of yours, and in the end it will be <u>you</u> who tires of it.
50 Suggestions

7

## for Future American Presidents

- 1. Wars must be of short duration.
- 2. Wars must yield few American casualties.
- 3. Restrict media access to battlefields.
- 4. Develop and maintain Congressional and public support.
- 5. Set clear, winnable goals.
- 6. Set deadline for troop withdrawals.
- 57 **AND TODAY**.....
- 58

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