

# History of Vietnam

- Vietnam was controlled by France until 1954.
- In 1956 Vietnam is divided into Communist North Vietnam and Democratic South Vietnam.

- North Vietnam was ruled by Ho Chi Minh.
- South Vietnam was ruled by Ngo Dinh Diem, who was put into power by the U.S. He ruled ruthlessly, and also was a Catholic in a mostly Buddhist country. He was assassinated by his own generals in 1963, weeks before Pres. Kennedy was killed.

- In 1964 the U.S. claimed that North Vietnam attacked U.S. Navy ships in the Gulf of Tonkin. Pres. Johnson used this incident to increase American involvement in Vietnam.
- Domino Theory-if S. Vietnam falls to communism, all of Asia will fall as well.

- In the U.S., opposition to the war was growing, with young people protesting all over the country.
- The people of the U.S. began to distrust much of what was being reported about the war.
- Doves vs. Hawks

- While the U.S. had vastly superior weapons, supplies, and numbers in their favor, the nature of the fighting favored the **Viet Cong**.
- The Viet Cong used guerilla warfare tactics, which were met with Search and Destroy missions from the Americans.

- The day to day existence for U.S. soldiers was very stressful, due in part to the tactics of the Viet Cong. They were seldom seen or heard, so a soldier could never relax.
- Many soldiers turned to drugs and alcohol to escape from war's reality.

- The Vietnam War was the first to be covered by television. Nightly news back in the U.S. focused on body counts of both the U.S. and Viet Cong.
- Field reporters were used to show first hand accounts of the war.



- In 1968, as U.S. officials were telling people that the war was being won and winding down, the Viet Cong launched the “Tet Offensive,” showing that the war was far from over.
- The “Tet Offensive” was a series of attacks against cities and bases in South Vietnam. (Tet is the Asian new year)

- The death toll for the attacks was 40,000 Viet Cong killed with 1,100 U.S. killed.
- The reason that the Tet Offensive was considered successful for the Viet Cong was because the American people saw that South Vietnam was not safe and the Viet Cong would not quit under any circumstances.

- Nixon wins in 1968 has a plan.
- The U.S. response was to initially increase its bombing effort of Viet Cong supply routes and centers in neighboring Cambodia, but this proved ineffective.
- Vietnamization-slowly turn fighting over to S nam
- The U.S. began to slowly withdraw troops, and by 1973 most soldiers had come home.
- Saigon finally fell in 1975.

- While North Vietnam did take control of South Vietnam, and the entire country became Communist, the “domino effect” never developed in Southeast Asia.
- Many returning soldiers suffered from various physical and mental problems.
- 58,000 Americans died.