

The Vietnam War

- I. Causes
 - A. France
 1. Ho Chi Minh – formed Communist Party to get France out
 - a. His group plus other independent fighters = Vietminh
 2. U.S. sides w/France to stop communist threat
 3. French driven out – 1954
 - a. Vietnam split along 17th parallel
 - B. Ngo Dinh Diem – leader of South
 1. became dictator with U.S. support
 - a. opposed within South by Communist Vietcong
 2. moved villagers to protected areas
 3. imprisoned Buddhists & destroyed their temples
 4. stopped elections
 5. killed by U.S. – 1963
 - a. power vacuum leads to chaos
- II. Tonkin Gulf Resolution – 1964 – gave Johnson broad military powers in Vietnam – widely supported
- III. war in the jungle – war of attrition
 - A. Tunnels of Vietcong – see diagram (p. 891 in blue book)
 - B. hard to tell friends from enemies in villages
 - C. booby traps – mines, stakes in ground
- IV. sources of tension
 - A. building credibility gap – due to difference between what government says & does
 - B. manipulate draft – poor man’s war
 - C. students (who usually avoided draft) questioned war
 1. with musicians, some mainstream people (most still supported the war)
 2. increasing feelings of being ignored led to bigger resistance – burn draft cards
- V. 1968
 - A. Tet Offensive – 1968 – Jan.
 1. U.S. claims victory – public doesn’t buy it
 - a. huge increase in credibility gap
 - B. Johnson withdraws from election
 - C. King shot – led to riots
 - D. Robert Kennedy shot
 - E. Presidential election
 1. Democratic convention in Chicago
 2. Riots in streets move onto floor of convention hall – televised
 - a. Democrats become thought of as party of no control
 - b. Nixon wins on law & order platform

VI. Nixon & Vietnam

- A. claims withdrawal while increasing troops
- B. meanwhile, invaded Cambodia without Congressional approval

VII. 1970

- A. General Strike – 1,200 colleges
 - 1. Kent State

VIII. The End

- A. reelection of Nixon
- B. Kissinger negotiates peace – U.S. out with cease fire March 1973
 - 1. by 1975, cease fire collapsed & North conquered South

IX. Effects

- A. Khmer Rouge rises to power – Communists kill 2 million
- B. War Powers Act – President must tell Congress whenever he uses troops (within 48 hours) – and can only use them for 90 days without Congressional consent
- C. cynicism towards government
- D. South Vietnamese put in “reeducation camps”
 - 1. “boat people”