



The Vietnam War

1965-1975

Battle of Dien Bien Phu

- US financed French war effort
- 1954 – Vietnam gains independence from France



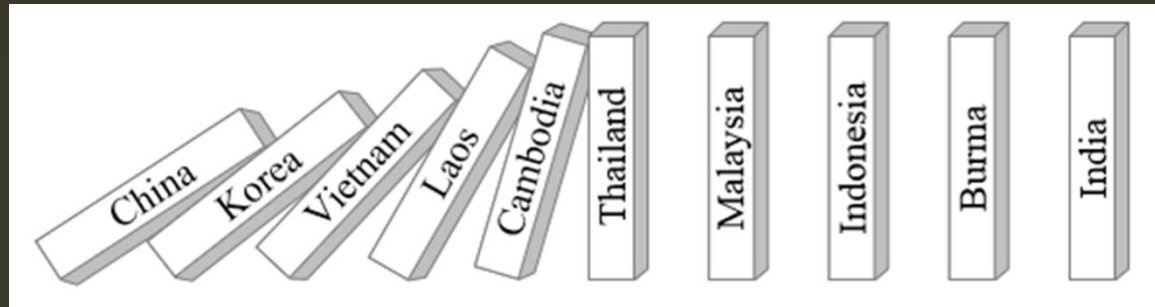
Vietnam Divided

- North Communist
 - Ho Chi Minh
- South Nationalist
 - Ngo Dinh Diem



US Foreign Policy

- Eisenhower: Sent 675 military advisors to South Vietnam
 - “Domino Theory”



- Kennedy:
 - Increased military “advisors” to 16,000
 - Supported coup against Diem
 - Planned withdrawal of troops?
- LBJ:
 - Gulf of Tonkin
 - War begins
 - Escalates troop levels

Gulf of Tonkin Incident

- USS Maddox attacked off of coast of North Vietnam





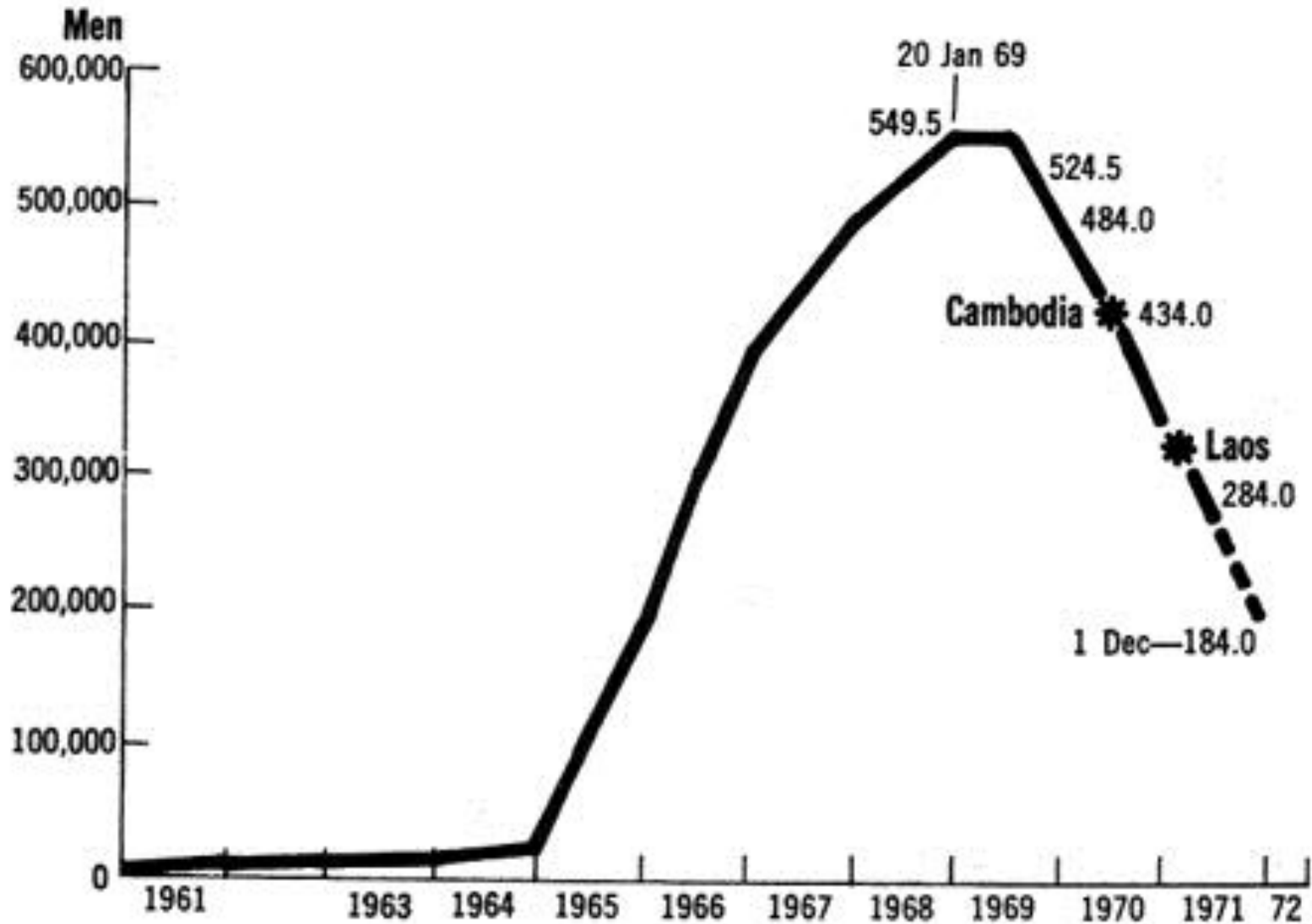
Causes of the war

- Long Term
- Failed French effort to recolonize Vietnam after World War II, supported by U.S. aid
- Division of Vietnam at 17th parallel under the 1954 Geneva Conference
- American Cold War policy of containment and the “domino theory”
- Short Term
- Tonkin Gulf Incident: Congressional resolution gave the president a “blank check”

OPERATION ROLLING THUNDER



Boeing B-52D 'Stratofortress'
©USAF Museum Photo Archives



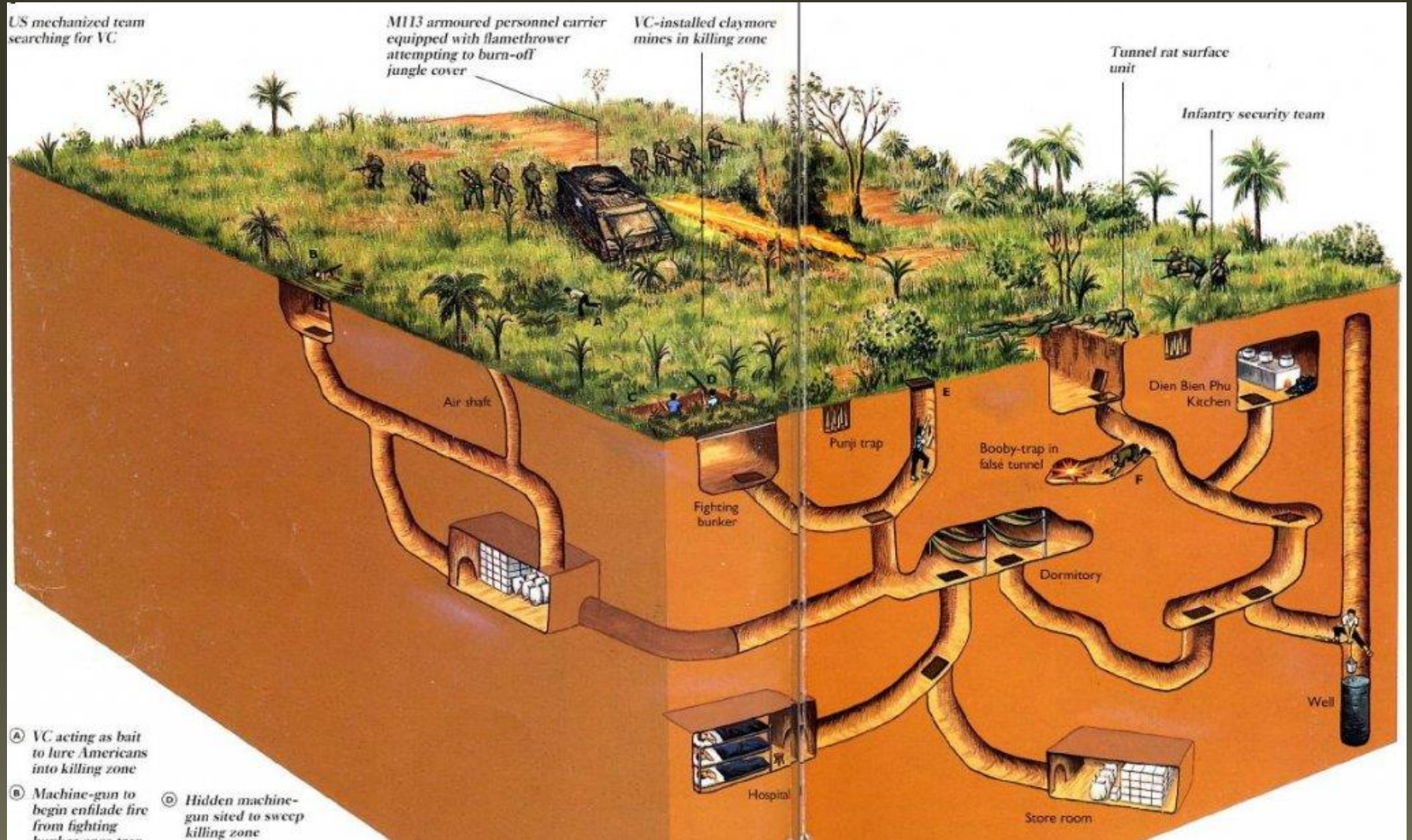
US mechanized team searching for VC

M113 armoured personnel carrier equipped with flamethrower attempting to burn-off jungle cover

VC-installed claymore mines in killing zone

Tunnel rat surface unit

Infantry security team



A VC acting as bait to lure Americans into killing zone

B Machine-gun to begin enfilade fire from fighting bunker once trap

C Hidden machine-gun sited to sweep killing zone

Ho Chi Minh Trail



Vietcong



Helicopters



Cluster Bombs



Napalm



Agent Orange



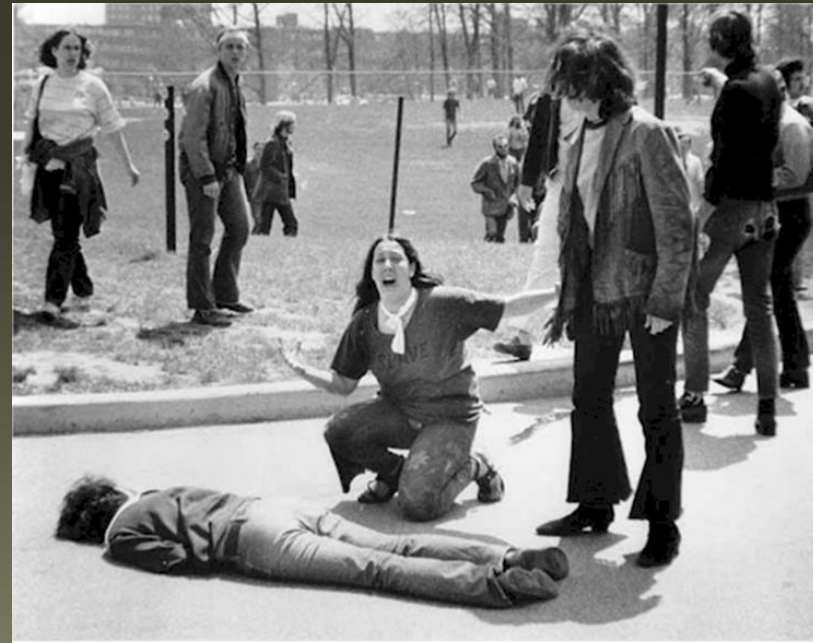
1968 Democratic Convention

- One of the most famous incidents in the anti-war movement was the police riot in Chicago during the 1968 Democratic National Convention.
- Hundreds of thousands of people came to Chicago in August 1968 to protest American intervention in Vietnam and the leaders of the Democratic Party who continued to prosecute the war.



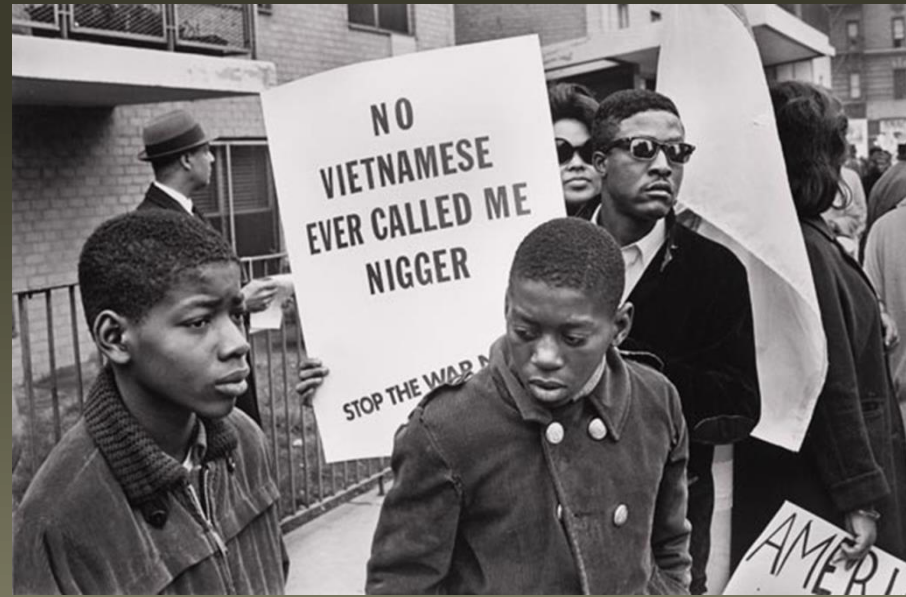
Campus Protests & Shootings

- The intense bombing campaigns and intervention in Cambodia in late April 1970 sparked intense campus protests all across America.
- Kent State
- Jackson State



Civil Rights

- Martin Luther King - “If America's soul becomes totally poisoned, part of the autopsy must read: Vietnam. It can never be saved so long as it destroys the deepest hopes of men the world over.”
- Disproportionate Draft



The Tet Offensive

- By 1968, things had gone from bad to worse for the Johnson administration. In late January, North Vietnam and the NLF launched coordinated attacks against major southern cities.
- These attacks, known as the Tet Offensive, were designed to force the Johnson administration to the bargaining table.



The My Lai Massacre

A serious blow to U.S. credibility came with the exposure of the My Lai massacre (March 1968).

Hushed up at the time and only discovered by a tenacious journalist, this involved the killing of 400 men, women and children by US troops.



Pentagon Papers

- [Link](#)
- Daniel Ellsberg
- *New York Times Co. v. United States*



Nixon's Plan

- Nixon's secret plan involved a process called "Vietnamization." This strategy brought American troops home while increasing the air war over North Vietnam and relying more on the South Vietnamese army for ground attacks.
- The Nixon years also saw the expansion of the war into neighboring Laos and Cambodia, violating the international rights of these countries in secret campaigns, as the White House tried desperately to rout out Communist sanctuaries and supply routes.



The Paris Peace Agreement

- In early January 1973, the Nixon White House convinced Saigon that they would not abandon the South Vietnamese army if they signed the peace accord.
- On January 23, therefore, the final draft was initialed, ending open hostilities between the United States and North Vietnam.
- The Paris Peace Agreement did not end the conflict in Vietnam, however, as Saigon continued to battle Communist forces.



The Fall to Communism

- From March 1973 until the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975, the South Vietnamese army tried desperately to save the South from political and military collapse.
- The end finally came when North Vietnamese tanks rolled south along National Highway One.
- On the morning of April 30, Communist forces captured the presidential palace in Saigon, ending the Vietnam War.



Causes/Lasting Effects

- 1. US Strategy
 - Underestimated resolve and aims of the Vietnamese
- 2. Peace Movement/Lack of Support
 - Morale

- Legacy
 - 1. immigration
 - 2. Khmer Rouge in Cambodia
 - 3. Undermined LBJ's Great Society
 - 4. War Powers Act
 - 5. 26th amendment
 - 6. Distrust of the Gov.
 - 7. First TV war
 - 8. POW/Veterans Affairs