Chapter 20 Vietnam **Presidents Involved in Vietnam**: *Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon –* **(IN ORDER)**  
Section 1 – Leading up to Vietnam

1. **French Indochina vs. Vietnam – President Harry Truman** 
   1. Before World War III France had colonies in: Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos.
   2. The French made French laws and high taxes, French controlled the mineral wealth. (Rice and Rubber)
   3. Vietnam was the first to want to become independent.
      1. **Ho Chi Minh**
         1. Anti-French Vietnamese nationalist who travelled the world.
         2. Went to USA and learned about Democracy, He went to Moscow to learn Communism.
         3. USA didn’t help him with Vietnam rebellion. Soviet Union did.
         4. Created the ***Vietminh***
            1. An abbreviation of the League for the Independence of Vietnam
   4. France could not stop Ho Chi Minh’s Vietminh, so USA helped because USA wanted France as an ally.
   5. President **Harry Truman** said helping French in Vietnam would **help stop communist spread in SE Asia.**
      1. **Harry Truman believed in the Domino Theory**
         1. If Vietnam fell to communism, then its surrounding neighbor countries would to.
   6. America gave 2.6 billion to France to aid its fight against Ho Chi Minh and the Vietminh
2. **French Indochina vs. Vietnam – President Dwight D. Eisenhower**
   1. Eisenhower had the same policy in Vietnam as Harry Truman.
   2. **Vietminh defeat the French** in Vietnam at **Dien Bien Phu**,
      1. **Peace Conference at Geneva, Switzerland** 
         1. Granted Independence to Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.
         2. It divided Vietnam into Communist North Vietnam & USA Controlled South Vietnam.
         3. Divided Vietnam at the 17th Parallel
         4. Created for an election in 1956 to unify Vietnam
   3. **America aided South Vietnam with military and money**
      1. Created the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)
         1. Goal was to contain spread of communism in Southeast Asia
      2. America helped create the South Vietnamese government.
         1. Led by Ngo Dinh Diem an anti-communist.
   4. **Election of 1956 to unify Vietnam**
      1. **Ngo Dinh Diem (SOUTH) vs. Ho Chi Minh (NORTH)**
      2. Ho Chi Minh – Very Popular Ngo Dinh Diem – Very Unpopular
      3. USA realized Diem was not going to win, so USA told Diem not to participate
   5. **Creation of the Vietcong vs. Ngo Dinh Diem**
      1. Communist rebel group in South Vietnam that hated Diem’s government
      2. Vietcong created by the National Liberation Front (NLF)
      3. Vietcong hated the Diem anti-communist government
      4. Vietcong assassinated government officials, destroyed roads and bridges
      5. Used guerrilla warfare – hit and run tactics
   6. **Ngo Dinh Diem Demise and end in South Vietnam – President John F. Kennedy**
      1. Diem pushed for Roman Catholicism, anti-Buddhist in a Buddhist region of the world.
      2. Diem allowed for Buddhist monks to set themselves on fire in protest.
      3. Kennedy becomes President and sends Special Forces to South Vietnam to help.
      4. USA and Kennedy wanted to overthrow Diem in South Vietnam, It was done then Diem and JFK was then assassinated.
3. **President Lyndon B. Johnson and Vietnam**
   1. North Vietnamese boats fired on the, *USS Maddox*, patrolling North Vietnamese Gulf in Tonkin.
   2. USS Maddox was missed but it made Johnson order an air strike on North Vietnam.
      1. **Gulf of Tonkin Resolution**
         1. **This authorized the President** to, “take all measures to put down attacks against the USA and stop further aggression.”
         2. Allowed Johnson to send troops to South Vietnam to fight North Vietnam
         3. Allowed it where he did not need to ask Congress for a declaration of war.
         4. This divided the nation into 2 groups – **Hawks and Doves**
            1. **Hawks** – supported Johnson’s war and containment of communism
            2. **Doves** – Doves led by J. William Fulbright, didn’t like Johnson’s war policy and questioned why USA was there.
   3. **Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara & American Commander William Westmoreland** wanted more military. So Johnson initiated Operation Rolling Thunder.
      1. **Operation Rolling Thunder**
         1. First bombing campaign in North Vietnam
         2. Hoped that the bombings would convince Ho Chi Minh to stop giving support to the Vietcong in South Vietnam.
         3. Also bombed locations where the South Vietnam Vietcong were hiding.
            1. **Napalm**

Napalm is a jellied gasoline dropped and explodes on impact. And it will stick to anything and is hard to put extinguish.

* + - * 1. **Agent Orange**

Agent Orange is a herbicide meant to kill plant life. It was to stop enemy food supply, scientists believed it caused cancer.

* + 1. **Helicopters**
       1. Marines were dropped in locations and were called commandos.
       2. Helicopters came to and from the battle zones.

1. **Strategies for North Vietnam and USA**
   1. **Vietnam – Leader Ho Chi Minh**
      1. Ho Chi Minh believed to drag out the war.
      2. He wanted his Vietcong to use hit and run tactics to wear down the USA.
      3. He made his army use hit and run tactics, and carry light equipment for faster movement.
      4. He asked them to infiltrate USA bases, set off explosives, and creates booby traps.
   2. **USA – Led by President Johnson**
      1. Johnson wanted to use Operation Rolling Thunder to bomb
      2. Johnson wanted limited American casualties, however that failed.
      3. Main strategy was to win the hearts of the South Vietnam and create a new government. That failed as well because of corruption.
      4. Johnson did not want China or Soviet Union to enter the war, this was successful.
   3. **Problems for the Americans**
      1. The enemy knew the terrain and used it well.
      2. Their allies in South Vietnam looked the same as their Vietcong enemies in South Vietnam
      3. Most of the fighting was done at night, made it hard to use artillery, planes, and troop visibility.
      4. Soldiers that once fought to stop communist spread are now being drafted that hated war.
      5. The cost of the war was so great that Johnson had to raise taxes.
2. **President Johnson’s Draft & Television**
   1. **Draftees**
      1. Young men drafted into the military service.
         1. **Selective Service Act of 1948**
            1. Created a draft and allowed the creation of the **Selective Service System**
            2. Made men have to register for the draft at age 18
         2. **Selective Service System**
            1. Gave local draft board more power in who to choose to draft.
            2. Gave out **deferments**

A deferment was a postponement of draft to anyone who is going to college.

It also gave deferments to selective people in certain jobs.

Most of the soldiers drafted were African-American

* + - * 1. Created a **draft lottery**

This was designed to stop draft boards from choosing who they wanted to go to war.

Also created to make a more diverse (non-racial) selection process.

* 1. **Anti-Draft**
     1. Most of the anti-war movements came straight from college campuses
     2. Students going to college increased from 2 million to 8 million
        1. *University of Michigan* 
           1. **Created the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)**

Campaigned to end the war

* + - 1. *University of California at Berkley*
         1. Freedom Speech Movement

Pushed for free speech to protest the war on college campuses.

* + 1. Students pushed for, “teach-ins” & male eligible draftees to sign, “We Won’t Go” petitions.
  1. **Television**
     1. First televised war. Americans saw the stalemate and the lack of progress in Vietnam.
     2. Americans were tired of hearing Johnsons Administration saying the end is near.
        1. A **“credibility gap”** emerged
           1. America distrusted the statements made by Johnson and his government.

1. **Tet Offensive - End of Johnson**
   1. Johnson brings home General Westmoreland from Vietnam to speak about how America is doing in the war.
   2. Westmoreland says that the Vietcong and North Vietnam can no longer advance and victory is near.
      1. Vietcong and North Vietnam create **Tet Offensive**
         1. Named after the Vietnamese lunar year.
         2. It was an assault on 36 provinces and 5 cities that were controlled by USA in South Vietnam.
         3. Of those was the US embassy in Saigon
         4. The USA won the attacks.
         5. Tet Offensive proved that the Vietcong and North Vietnam was not done fighting.
   3. Johnson asked new Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford for more troops.
      1. Sec of Def. Clifford looked deep into Vietnam War and realized more troops meant:
         1. Higher Taxes for troops
         2. More deaths of troops
         3. Mad citizens
         4. Deeper draft rolls
         5. Calling up of reserve army
      2. Sec of Def Clifford told Johnson, “it’s time to switch from war…..to peace”
      3. As a result, Johnson said he was not going to run for President again because the nation hated him.
2. **President Richard Nixon in Vietnam War – Peace Negotiations (FAILED)**
   1. Nixon a Republican ran for President in 1968 and won.
   2. Nixon’s campaign was about “peace with honor” in Vietnam.
      1. **What the USA and South Vietnam wanted in Peace talks**
         1. Asked for all North Vietnam troops to be removed in South Vietnam
         2. Wanted all POW’s returned to both sides.
      2. **What the North Vietnam wanted for Peace Talks.**
         1. Asked for the immediate withdraw of USA out of Vietnam
         2. Asked for the South Vietnam government be made with Vietcong representatives in it.
   3. **Nixon refused** to accept North Vietnam’s terms.
   4. **Nixon said he would** slowly remove USA troops out of Vietnam. But he didn’t
      1. The plan **Vietnamization** –
         1. Where USA lets the South Vietnam, “Army of the Republic” (ARVN) fights the Vietcong.
         2. Nixon would continue to fund South Vietnam, and let them fight the war.
   5. **Nixon secretly helped the South Vietnamese fight the war.**
      1. He bombed the supply line for North Vietnam called, **“Ho Chi Minh Trail” in Cambodia**
      2. Problem with this was, Cambodia was neutral.
   6. **All Peace talks were failing, and neither side could come to an agreement.**
3. **Vietnam War in Cambodia & in the USA President Richard Nixon**
   1. **In Cambodia**
      1. Nixon got impatient with the peace negotiations.
      2. Nixon ordered a ground attack into Cambodia.
         1. Nixon only ordered an attack on North Vietnam and Vietcong camps in Cambodia.
         2. Nixon was hoping that he would get help from the Cambodian government would help him.
         3. USA and South Vietnam, Army of the Republic (ARVN) captured lots of weapons and supplies.
         4. However, the Vietcong and North Vietnamese army kept fighting.
         5. North Vietnam, “Peace on **our** terms, or NO PEACE AT ALL!”
   2. **In the United States**
      1. College campuses erupt as a result of the invasion of Cambodia.
         1. Kent State & Jackson State University
            1. At Kent State students threw rocks at National Guard, one guard fired, the rest fired and killed 4 students.
4. **Mai Lai Massacre & Pentagon Papers – President Richard Nixon (Pressured to End War)**
   1. 1971, Nixon got more pressure on him to end the war and remove troops because of two events
      1. **1st Event – Mai Lai Massacre**
         1. Located in Mai Lai in South Vietnam
         2. American troops killed innocent unarmed Vietnamese in the village of Mai Lai.
            1. American unit commanded by Lt. William Calley

Many of Lt. Calley’s soldiers did not shoot innocent Vietnamese

Lt. Calley said he was only following orders

Lt. Calley was put on trial, but the military did not look deep into it.

* + - * 1. One man died to try to protect some of the innocent.
      1. ***Life Magazine* published the Mail Lai Massacre**
         1. Posted pictures of the incident, it went viral among American people.
         2. As a result American’s were outraged by the cover-up by the government.
    1. **2nd Event - Pentagon Papers**
       1. 1971 the Pentagon Papers were published in the ***New York Times***
          1. The papers were about the History of American government in Vietnam.
          2. Information given by **Daniel Ellsberg**
          3. ***The New York Times*** showed how America did not inform Americans fully and lied to Congress on many occasions

1. **War Ends in Vietnam – President Richard Nixon**
   1. **Paris Peace Accords**
      1. Creates a **cease fire** and ends fighting
      2. Parties involved: USA, North Vietnam, Vietcong, and South Vietnam
   2. **Terms of Paris Peace Accords**
      1. U.S. Troops withdraw from Vietnam
      2. POW’s exchanged
      3. North Vietnamese troops would remain in North Vietnam
      4. South Vietnam government would remain in power of South Vietnam non-communist.
      5. The **National Liberation Front (Vietcong)** would become an official political party in South Vietnam
   3. **South Vietnam Capital of Saigon Falls to North Vietnam**
      1. Shortly after the Peace Accords, North Vietnam attacked South Vietnam.
      2. The South Vietnam Army of the Republic tried to fight back, but were no match
      3. South Vietnam had no support from the Americans. So they lost vs. North Vietnam.
      4. Vietnam becomes unified as a communist country as a result
2. **As a Result of Vietnam War :**
   * 1. Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos all end up becoming Communist
     2. 2.5 Men enlisted for war or were drafted in Vietnam War. **58,000 dead.**
        1. America Passes the **War Powers Act**
           1. War Powers Act Restricted the Presidents War Making Powers.
           2. **President must inform Congress 48** hours prior to making a foreign attack
     3. **Nixon establishes good relations with China and Soviet Union**
        1. Nixon Signs **the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty or (SALT 1)**
           1. Placed limits on missiles but did not alter stockpiling missiles.
     4. **Nixon making good relations** with Communists helps the **start of the end of the Cold War**