# America and Vietnam

Huge topic in the 1960s. In the first half there was a lot of support and a lot of opposition. As the war went on, more opposition grew. Draft was in place, and many drafted soldiers fought in Vietnam.

Vietnam was possessed by the French. During WWII, Japan took it over and after the war it was split into 2: North Vietnam was communist and South Vietnam was western oriented. North Vietnam tried to take over the South to make it communist and the US stepped in. US involvement began in 1954.

## Kennedy and Vietnam

* 1961: JFK sent many more troops to Vietnam to train the Vietnamese soldiers
* Used special forces, especially the green berets
* Overthrow of SV President Ngo Dinh Diem (allowed a cout to take place)

US and South Vietnamese were fighting two enemies: the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong (in South Vietnam).

## The Gulf of Tonkin Incident - 1964

US involvement in Vietnam increased after this. 3 NV boats attacked a US ship, and Johnson initiated combat operations in Vietnam. Troop levels went from 23k to 536k over 4 years.

Johnson was kind of a micromanager.

## Operation Rolling Thunder - 1965-1968

This was an asymmetrical war, the advanced US military was basically fighting rice farmers. US dropped more bombs in Vietnam than in WWII.

Johnson had rules of engagement, for example: pilots could not engage enemy SAM sites until they engaged the pilots.

## 1968 Tet Offensive

The US Government was saying there was a light at the end of the tunnel. Vietnamese were celebrating Tet, and the North Vietnamese decided to launch a surprise attack during this holiday, despite a cease fire. American fire power was able to repel the North Vietnamese. Communist forces suffered far greater casualties. Tet offensive turned the tide in the US, and there was strong opposition to US forces in Vietnam. The communists knew they couldn’t beat the US militarily, so they wanted to turn the Americans against the war.

Test question: Paul Johnson identifies 3 major reasons Americans turned against the war:

1. The controversy over the draft
2. Tet offensive, and how the media reported it
3. Many Americans though Washington wasn’t fighting aggressively enough

## 1960s Counterculture - Sex, Drugs, and Rock n Roll

Americans were questioning whether or not America is a good or bad force in the world, and questioning American history.

American counterculture was getting big. Drugs got massively more popular. Woodstock (1969) was a massive music festival with rampant drug use.

## Election of 1968

Johnson decides to not run again. Democrats are torn between an anti-war or pro-war candidate. Nixon is a republican, and wants to end the war through “peace with honor”. Wants to bring Americans home on their own terms. Nixon wanted to be the “law and order” candidate. Nixon wins.

## Vietnamization

Nixon wanted to gradually bring troops out of Vietnam and turn the war back over to the Vietnamese. Wanted to leave the South Vietnamese well trained and well armed. Only 50 troops by 1973.

## Taking the War into Cambodia

Nixon took the war into Cambodia. North Vietnamese were going through neutral Cambodia to get supplies to the Viet Cong in the South. Nixon goes into Cambodia to stop this.

## Operation Linebacker

Nixon used more firepower than Johnson did. Lots of air power and bombing. Nixon wanted to get North Vietnamese to negotiate peace talks.

Communist forces negotiate peace but they don’t really abide by it, they’re just waiting to recuperate and strike again.