Vietnam War (1954-1975)
Origins of Conflict

1954 – Geneva Accords

- Vietnam gains independence from France, divided at 17th Parallel. (communist North, non-communist south)
- Elections to be held to unite country in 1956.
Origins
Continued

1956 –

- South Vietnam, with U.S. backing, blocks elections
- Viet Cong (S.V. communists), with North Vietnamese support seeks to overthrow South Vietnamese Gov’t
- U.S. sends “advisors” to support repressive South Vietnamese “President” Ngo Dinh Diem
U.S. Involvement

- 1960
  - 2000 advisors (Eisenhower)

- 1963
  - 16000 advisors (Kennedy)
What sort of Government was the U.S. supporting?

President Ngo Dinh Diem – Anti-Communist, limits on free speech, cracked down on buddhists
What kind of war was it by 1960?

Civil War?

War of Aggression?
Gulf of Tonkin Incident
President Johnson escalates U.S. Involvement

- Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. - gave President a “blank check” to increase number of U.S. troops in Vietnam

- Why?
Reasons for U.S. Escalation?

- Malaysia
- Cambodia
- Laos
- Vietnam
Reasons for U.S. Involvement

- Domino Theory – fall of one country to communism will cause others to fall
US TROOPS IN VIETNAM

Figures as of 31 Dec of year concerned

SOURCE: U.S. Army War College
Changing Public Opinion
World War II Coverage

- YouTube - MacArthur Closes In On Manila 1945 Newreel
• YouTube - Tet Offensive 1968, US Embassy & Saigon fighting
My Lai Massacre
Tet Offensive (Feb. 1968)
Changing Public Opinion

- **TET Offensive** - 1968, Vietcong launched surprise attacks on the major cities. Guerillas Stormed the American Embassy in Saigon (Capital of S. Vietnam)
- Vietcong – Poor farmers (guerillas) - wanted Communism
- **My Lai Massacre** - 1968, Violence against civilians during the Vietnam War. American soldiers brutally killed the majority of the population in My Lai. 200-500 unarmed civilian
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Pre-TET</th>
<th>Post-TET</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approves Johnson's handling of job as president</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approves Johnson's handling of Vietnam</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regards war in Vietnam as a mistake</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion classifying themselves as &quot;hawks&quot;</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Growing Opposition to the War

- Media coverage
- The draft – requirement to serve in the army
- Belief war was inconsistent with American values
- Anti-war Movement -
Anti-War Music

- [Credence Clearwater Revival – Fortunate Son](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98XQzRz6_2s)
26th Amendment (1971)

Right to vote – 18 years old (21)
• P.F. Sloan – Eve Of Destruction (1965)

• Al Cleveland - What’s going on
List the issues/conflicts from the 1960s that each song comments on.

- Al Cleveland – What’s Going On” (1971)
- P.F. Sloan – “Eve Of Destruction” (1965)
Election of 1968

- LBJ decided not to seek re-election because of divisions within party over Vietnam
- Republican Richard Nixon won general election over Hubert H. Humphrey
Fall of Saigon

1973 - U.S. withdraws from Vietnam
1974 – North Vietnam Invades South Vietnam
April 1975 – Saigon Falls, Vietnam united under communist government
• Creedence Clearwater Revival - Fortunate Son - YouTube
U.S. Leaves Vietnam

• 1973 – Paris Peace Accords
Gulf of Tonkin

- [YouTube - What Really Happened at Tonkin Gulf? 60 Minutes opening](#)
Was the Vietnam War a Civil War or War of Aggression?

- [YouTube - Robert McNamara admits Vietnam War a mistake.](#)
- [Fog of War - Vietnam - YouTube works](#)