

Objective: To examine the causes and effects of the Vietnam War.
USHC 8.3

Remembering Vietnam



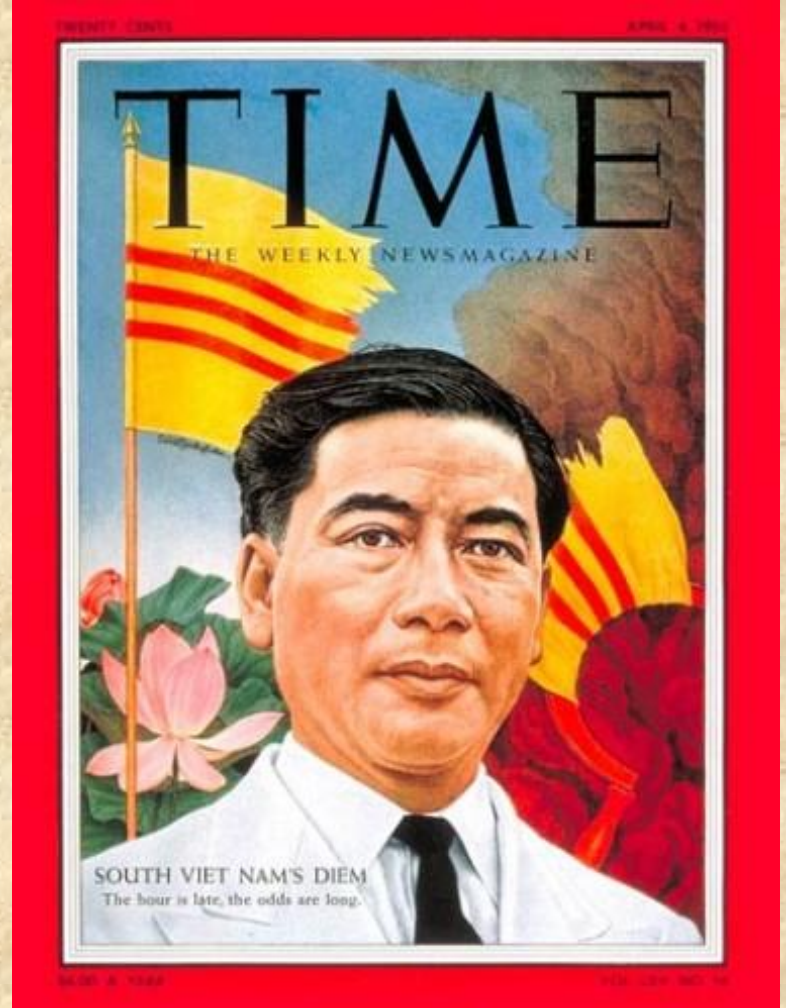
The Two Vietnams

- Vietnam, a former French colony, was divided into two sections in 1954.





- North Vietnam, led by Ho Chi Minh, was communist and backed by the Soviet Union.



- South Vietnam, led by Ngo Dinh Diem, was democratic and backed by the U.S.

- Many South Vietnamese distrusted Diem and joined the *Vietcong*, a communist guerilla group supported by North Vietnam.

*An
execution
of a
Vietcong
prisoner
Feb. 1,
1968*





(NATIONAL ARCHIVES)

South Vietnamese paratroopers jump from U.S. Air Force transports in an air assault against the Viet Cong, March 1963



A Viet Cong base camp burns as Pfc. Raymond Rumpa of St. Paul, Minnesota, walks away with his 45-pound 90mm rifle in My Tho, Vietnam, April 1968

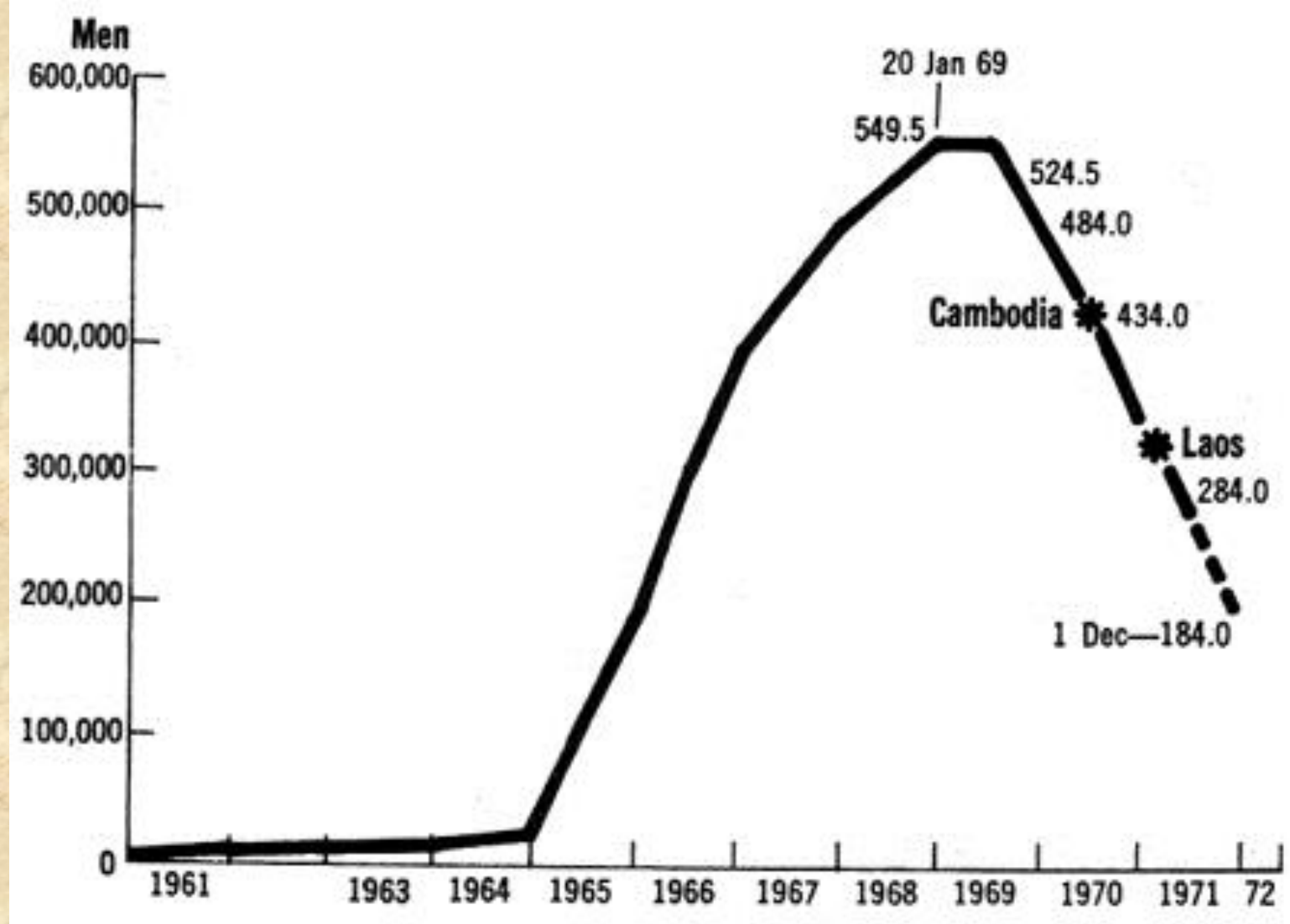
Growing American Involvement

- The U.S. believed that if South Vietnam fell to the communists, the rest of the nations in Southeast Asia would as well in a theory called the *domino theory*.

The Domino Theory



· By 1968, over half a million Americans were fighting in the Vietnam War.



· As the fighting escalated, the U.S. relied on the draft for raising troops.



- In August 1964, U.S. military officials believed that the North Vietnamese had torpedoed an American ship in the Gulf of Tonkin.

- In response, the U.S. passed the *Gulf of Tonkin Resolution*, which allowed the U.S. to begin bombing enemy targets within North and South Vietnam.



On Aug. 4, 1964, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara reported to Pres. Johnson that an American destroyer in the region was under torpedo attack by the North Vietnamese. That brief conversation was the tipping point for the entire Vietnam War.



The Uncertain Enemy

- Jungle warfare was difficult, and it was hard to locate the enemy.
- In addition, it was very difficult to identify which South Vietnamese were our allies and which were supporting the Vietcong.

Ex Vietcong showing secret tunnels, November 7, 2004



This Pulitzer Prize winning photograph is of Kim Phuc Phan Thi, center, running down a road near after a napalm bomb was dropped on her village by a plane of the Vietnam Air Force. The village was suspected by US Army forces of being a Viet Cong stronghold. Kim Phuc survived by tearing off her burning clothes.

"Napalm is the most terrible pain you can imagine," said Kim Phuc. "Water boils at 100 degrees Celsius. Napalm generates temperatures of 800 to 1,200 degrees Celsius." Phuc sustained third-degree burns to half her body and was not expected to live. Thanks to the assistance of South Vietnamese photographer Nick Ut, and after surviving a 14-month hospital stay and 17 operations, Phuc eventually recovered.



Agent Orange was the nickname given to a herbicide and defoliant used by the U.S. military in its Herbicidal Warfare program during the Vietnam War. Cropdusting in Vietnam during Operation Ranch Hand lasted from 1962 to 1971.

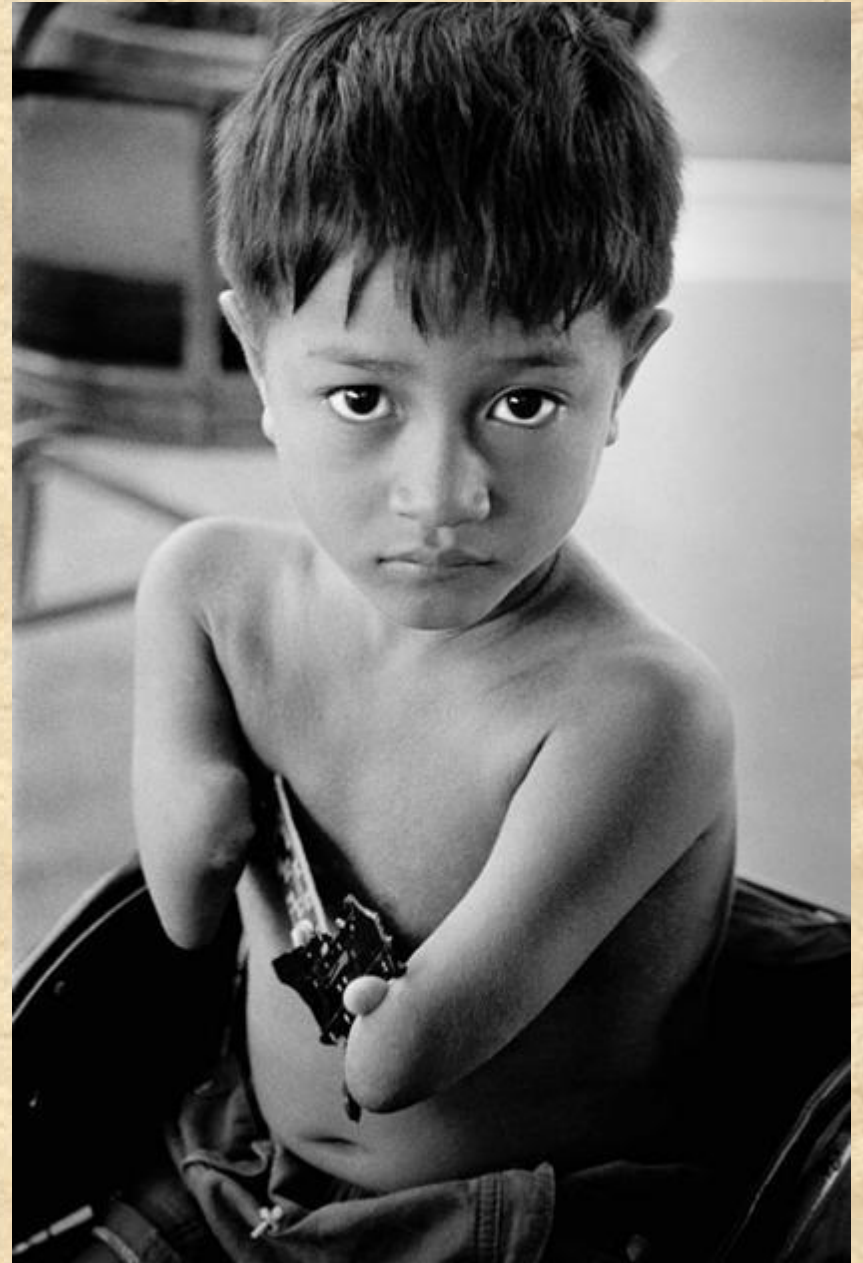


A guerrilla in the Mekong Delta paddles through a mangrove forest defoliated by Agent Orange (1970).

Effects of Agent Orange

Images taken from Agent Orange: "Collateral Damage" in Vietnam by Philip Jones Griffiths





Protests at Home

- Thousands of Americans protested against the war, especially on college campuses.



*Anti-Vietnam
War protests,
Ohio State
University*

• On May 4, 1970, the Ohio National Guard killed 4 anti-war protesters at Kent State University.



This Pulitzer Prize winning photo shows Mary Ann Vecchio screaming as she kneels over the body of student Jeffrey Miller at Kent State University. National Guardsmen had fired into a crowd of demonstrators, killing four and wounding nine.

“Ohio”

Crosby Stills Nash & Young

Tin soldiers and Nixon's comin'.
We're finally on our own.
This summer I hear the drummin'.
Four dead in Ohio.

(chorus) Gotta get down to it.
Soldiers are cutting us down.
Should have been done long ago.
What if you knew her and
Found her dead on the ground?
How can you run when you
know?

Na, na, na, na, na, na, na, na.
Na, na, na, na, na, na, na, na.
Na, na, na, na, na, na, na, na.
Na, na, na, na, na, na, na, na.

(chorus)

Tin soldiers and Nixon's
comin'.
We're finally on our own.
This summer I hear the
drummin'.
Four dead in Ohio. (9X)

The Tet Offensive: A Turning Point

- In January of 1968, the Vietcong launched surprise attacks on cities throughout South Vietnam.
- The American embassy was attacked as well in the South Vietnamese capital of Saigon.



- The attacks were known as the *Tet Offensive* because they occurred during Tet, the Vietnamese New Year's holiday.
- The Tet Offensive proved to the world that no part of South Vietnam was safe, even with the presence of half a million American troops.



Peace Without Victory

- In January 1973, the U.S. reached a cease-fire agreement with North Vietnam and brought their troops home.
- However, the U.S. continued to send billions of dollars in support of the South Vietnamese.



- In April of 1975, the communists captured the South Vietnamese capital of Saigon, renamed it Ho Chi Minh City, and reunited Vietnam under one communist flag.

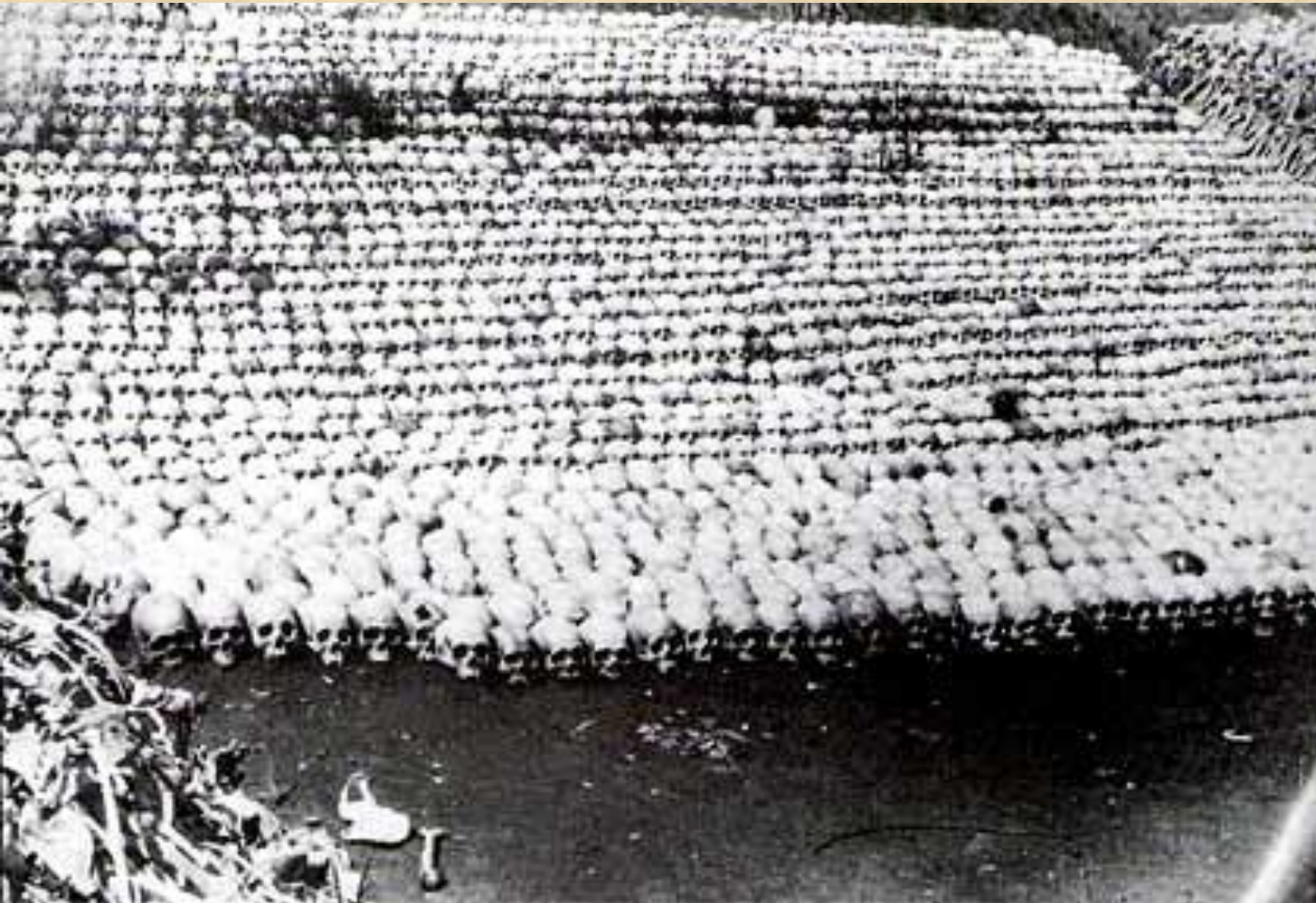


Civil War in Cambodia

• The U.S. and South Vietnamese began to secretly bomb communist bases in Cambodia used by the North Vietnamese.



- Cambodia soon fought a civil war, which was won by the communist Khmer Rouge in 1975, whereupon they changed the name of the country to Kampuchea.



- The Khmer Rouge were brutal leaders, killing approximately two million people in just a few short years.

Vietnam Balance Sheet

- Between 1961 and 1973 over 58,000 Americans died in the Vietnam War.



- During the same time period, over 1,500,000 Vietnamese died as well.

*Vietnam War Memorial,
Washington, D.C.*

