

St. Benet Biscop Catholic Academy – Humanities Faculty
Knowledge Organiser- Year 10
Topic: Paper Three. The USA conflict at home and abroad, 1954-1975

Key event timeline- US involvement in Vietnam	
Vietnam was a relatively poor country. It had been ruled by the French prior to the war but fell to Japan. When the Japanese left following WW2 France tried to regain control. America began to offer support to the French as China had fell to communism in 1949 and was worried that communism would spread to Vietnam and the rest of Asia.	
1939	Vietnam was part of French Indo-China
1940	Japan invaded Indo-China
13 th Mar 1954	Battle between the Vietnamese and French troops at Dien Bien Phu. French hoped to regain control of Vietnam and had no idea that they were surrounded by Vietminh.
7 th May 1954	French surrender Vietnam at Dien Bien Phu.
21 st July 1954	Geneva Accords. Vietnam is split along 17 th parallel. North ruled by Ho Chi Minh (communist) and South ruled by Bao Dai, the Diem (both anti communist)
Sept 1954	SEATO established
1955	Diem elected as leader of South Vietnam. He is pro America
16 th July 1956	Diem ignores elections promised in Geneva accords
1957	Diem sends ARVN to the countryside to find and arrest communists. 65,000 are arrested and 2000 killed.
Mar 1958	Communists in South Vietnam (VC) begin to fight back and kill 400 of Diems leaders.
May 1959	North Vietnam with the support of China send troops and weapons through the Ho Chi Minh trail. to help the VC
Dec 1960	US support of Diem was reduced. The VC join with other anti- Diem groups to form the National Liberation Front (NFL).
1961	Kennedy becomes president.
Jan 1962	Strategic Hamlets programme begins.
2 nd Jan 1963	ARVN loose at A Bac
11 th Jun 1963	Quang Duc, a Buddhist monk sets himself on fire in protest of the treatment of Buddhists by Diems government
7 th Aug 1964	Gulf of Tonkin resolution passed.
Nov 1964	The North Vietnamese increase supplies to the VC.
1967	Operation Ranch falls

Key figures	
Diem	Pro American leader of South Vietnam. Very little widespread support. He gave privileges to Catholics at the expense of the mainly Buddhist population. He also had little respect for the peasants.
Ho-Chi Minh	Leader of the North of Vietnamese. He wanted an independent Vietnam.
Kennedy	Agreed with the concept of limited war. Increased the number of troops supporting the ARVN. He believed that both military attacks and winning the hearts and minds of the villagers was important.
Johnson	Johnson hoped recognised the threat of communism to Southeast Asia but hoped that the US could withdraw troops initially. However he increased troops as his term went on.
Nixon	Promised to get US out of Vietnam. Began official peace talks and lowered the number of soldiers in Vietnam.

- Enquiry questions**
- Why were the US involved in the conflict?
 - How did the conflict escalate under Johnson?
 - What tactics were used?
 - How did things change under Nixon?

Useful websites
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/history/mw/h/vietnam/>

Exam question stems
 What can you infer from the source about... (4)
 Explain why... (12)
 How useful.... (8)
 How do the interpretations differ?
 Why do the interpretations differ?
 How far do you agree with interpretation... about.... (16)

Selected key words and definitions	
Communism	Ideology followed by USSR. Believed all property should be shared between the people. State control of industry.
Capitalism	Ideology followed by USA. Believed individuals should be able to become privately wealthy. Private ownership of industry
Free trade	All countries free to trade with each other without barriers.
SEATO	The US with 7 other allies agree to act if necessary to stop communism spreading in Southeast Asia.
Vietminh	Ho Chi Minh's communist forces.
Ho Chi Minh Trail	A series of paths that crossed through Laos, Cambodia and both North and south Vietnam along which goods were passed to support the Vietcong.
Guerrillas	Fighters who avoid big battles instead attacking bridges and ambushing their enemy.
Rolling thunder	Heavy bombing that swept across Vietnam.
Gulf of Tonkin Resolution	President Johnson would take all steps necessary to stop attacks on US forces without consulting congress or officially declaring war.
Napalm	A slow burning petrol based liquid that sticks to and burns through the skin and bone.
Agent orange	
Strategic Hamlets	The Green Berets with the help of the ARVN began building 'safe complexes' for peasants. Hospitals, schools and houses provided in the hope that they would not support communism.
Domino theory	If one country falls to communism in Asia, the rest will follow.
Search and destroy	Small units of soldiers searched the jungle for VC camps and supplies. They then called on helicopters to bomb or spray chemicals on them.



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Key event timeline- Reactions to, and the end of, US involvement in Vietnam, 1964-75	
1965	Martin Luther King criticises the war in Vietnam. More black soldiers were drafted than white soldiers and faced heavier casualties.
1965	5.9 million students who wanted social change
2 nd Nov 1965	Norman Morrison burns himself to death outside the Pentagon in protest of the war.
1967	Vietnam Veterans formed Vietnam Veterans Against the War. They spoke at demonstrations and collected evidence of misconduct during the war.
21 st Oct 1967	100,000 strong protest in Washington against the war.
1968	Government report the Tet offensive as a success but CBS's Willie Cronkite reports that it is a stale mate.
16 th March 1968	US troops went to the village of Mai Lai, believing that only Vietcong would be present. The information was incorrect and over 4 hours they killed 347 women, children and elderly. The murders were covered up.
1969	Draft system changed to a lottery. Each man was given number attached to their date of birth. When soldiers were needed numbers were drawn at random but many, particularly the wealthy avoided the draft.
1969	Nixon made a speech appealing to the silent majority who supported the war, when a poll was carried out it showed that 77% of the public supported the war.
1970	8.5 million students many of whom used similar methods to the civil Rights movement to oppose the war.
4 th May 1970	Ohio Guardsmen shoot and kill 4 unarmed students protesting the war at Kent State University.
8 th May 1970	Construction workers beat up protestors campaigning against the war in New York, They became known as the 'Hard hats' and supported the war.
5 th Sept 1970	Lt. Calley, the officer in charge at Mai Lai was charged with murder. Calley was found guilty and sentenced to life in prison. However the following year his sentence was reduced to 20 years and he was released after three and a half.
8 th Oct 1972	Paris talks between the USA and N Vietnam lead to an agreement, however, the South refused to sign and it led to further distrust.
8 th Jan 1973	Paris peace talks resume. Vietnam was to be one country. A ceasefire to begin and US troops and support to be withdrawn. Vietnam was to be a Communist country.



Enquiry questions

- Why was there opposition to the war?
 - Who supported the war?
- What were the terms of the peace agreement?
 - Why did the USA fail in Vietnam?

Useful websites

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Exam question stems

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Selected key words and definitions	
Counter culture	Refusing to live by the cultural rules of your country.
Opinion poll	A test of public opinion by asking a group the same question. The results are analysed to show Public feeling.
Counter demonstration	A demonstration held at the same time as another demonstration to show opposition.
Conscientious objector	A person whose religious belief means they will not fight.
The Draft	Compulsory service in the military. People whose number was called up were given basic training and then sent to the front.
Ceasefire	Agreement to stop fighting.
Veteran	Soldier who has fought in previous campaigns.

