

FDR, Churchill, Stalin at Potsdam: decided to divide Indochina —
- N. Viet Nam to China - S. Viet Nam to
- French disregarded captured Hanoi in 1946 to regain lost colony —
battle vs. Ho + Viet Minh —

Ho now armed & captured U.S. artillery, amazingly skillful!
- painful, costly war for French — led to final defeat at Dien Bien Phu —
(1st 1953) — Cambodia - China - Laos - USSR - UK - USA - France etc.
met at Geneva 1954, divided Viet Nam at 17th parallel —
- although V Minh dominated country, they agreed to withdraw to
N. Viet Nam on condition of nat'l election to be held & yrs
hence — Ho's victory & foregone conclusion

USA not a signatory of 1954 convention —

- no foreign powers to intervene according to agreement —

Ngô Đình Diệm set up as S. Viet Nam Pres., backed by U.S. — "appointed" president —
former provincial governor — Mme Nhu, Diem's sister-in-law, behind
the scenes control — Diem regime began 1955 — Diem's 3 brothers
ruled entire country

- Diem's abuses & incompetence:

- no land reform — collected 5 yrs' back taxes from peasants by force
- installed his picked men as village chiefs
- favored Catholic minority (2,000,000) over 12,000,000 Buddhist)
- political parties banned
- opposition papers "

- Diem's oppression alienated even non-Communist — USA got increasingly intolerant

U.S. role — Feb 1955 — Dulles visited Viet Nam —

promised Diem econ. & military advisory aid — strings: land reform,
tax reform — no military involvement — mainly economic aid, to be
granted on condition of social reform —

but: military advisory scheme failed — VNese ignored US advisors — corruption
of services — theft, desertion, political favoritism & grafting army
commissions — US advisors ignored need for guerrilla tactics, favored
traditional techniques — overemphasized mechanized warfare, overlooked
guerrilla tactics —

U.S. Defense Dept's errors:

McNamara's delusions — given wrong info by US advisors on scene —

McNamara's insistence on facts led to deceptive statistics - military's presentation to McNamara -

Kennedy Mission: Krulak (Marine Gen) + State Dept delegate -

task finding mission, as distinct had reason - Krulak's optimism vs. Robertson's realistic pessimism

- by late 1965 it was painfully evident: new version had to be taken -

V Cong growing stronger - Feb 7 1965: Johnson decision to bomb N Vietnam as retaliation vs. V Cong mortar attack vs. Pleiku -

- Feb 1965: escalation - US forces under US leadership first committed vs V Cong forces

5 Vietnam = 4 divisions: 1) Top = 8 airborne battalions
(Gen. MacMoreland) 2-3) 2 central US army divisions
4) South = 5 Vietnamese army control

325,000 GIs
115,000 Koreans
4,500 Aussies

VC tactics:
patience - stamina -
mobility - crossbow,
pursuit, sticky, claymore
mines, flamethrower,
invisibility -

Social-political picture.

Strategic hamlet policy (begun 1962) - flap

- overambitious - clumsily implemented w insufficient means

social results

- terrorism
- orphaned children
- drop in rice production
- demoralizing influence of US dollars

US involvement in Viet Nam = expression of 'Global Policy' -

"Rebuild the World in a Generation" (Walt Rostow)

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS:

- coalition of Buddhists, Catholics, S. Vietnamese, Central Vietnamese, Montagnards, elders, young educated VN people primary need.
- all-Viet conferences.
- strengthen Internat'l Control Commission to monitor all borders & DMZ?
- stop escalation & bombing, hold present military status quo, concentrate on economic & social development

- McN: concept of Viet Nam as a test case for new Communist policy of domination through local wars of liberation
cf. U Thant's notion that survival of Viet Nam people = real issue, not a conflict betn 2 world-wide ideologies -