



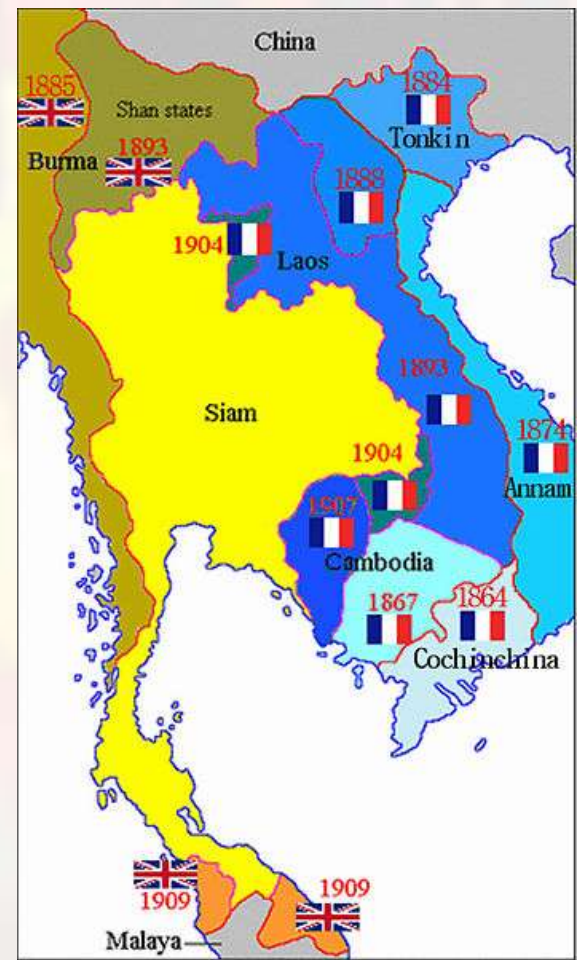
Power Point to accompany Consortium Lessons: “*The Vietnam War and Protest Music*” and/or “*Presidential Decisions & the Vietnam War*”, available in the Database of Civic Resources

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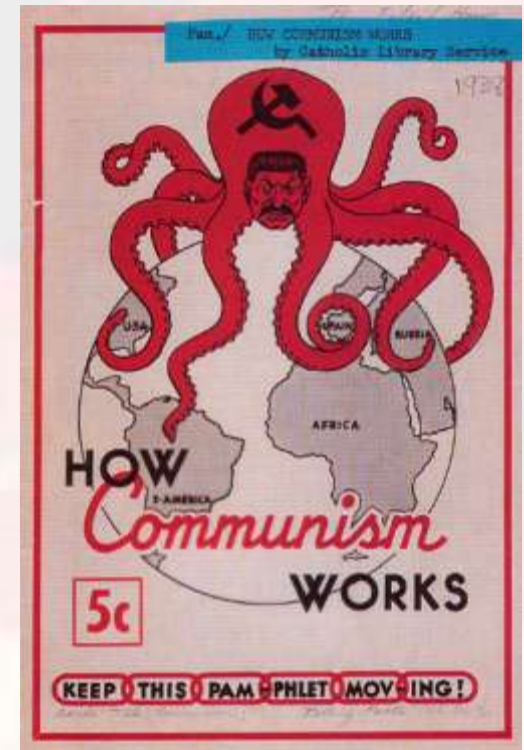
France and Vietnam (1945 - 1953)

- **Indochina** (later Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia) was a French colony and after WWII they wanted to be free
- France denied the Vietnamese independence, so they fought back.
- **Vietminh**
 - Vietnamese freedom fighters led by **Ho Chi Minh**



The US and Vietnam

- The US did not get involved in the conflict until **1949 – 1950**.
- The US did not support French colonialism, but they did not support Ho Chi Minh's communism.
- Two events caused the US to support France:
 1. **China becomes communist in 1949**
 2. **The Korean War**
- Presidents Truman and Eisenhower believed in the **Domino Theory**.
 - the idea that if one country falls to communism, the surrounding countries will too.



France Falls (1954 - 1956)

- France could not defeat the resistance – the Vietminh **guerilla war** tactics were too difficult to defend against
- **Dien Bien Phu (1954)**
 - Battle where the French were badly beaten by the Vietminh. This loss convinced the French to leave Vietnam



Geneva Accords (1954)

- Agreement to end fighting between French and Vietminh
- Divided **Indochina** into three countries
 1. Vietnam
 2. Cambodia
 3. Laos
- Also divided Vietnam into two sections:
 1. Communist north led by Ho Chi Minh →
 2. Pro-Western south led by Ngo Dinh Diem



Geneva Accords

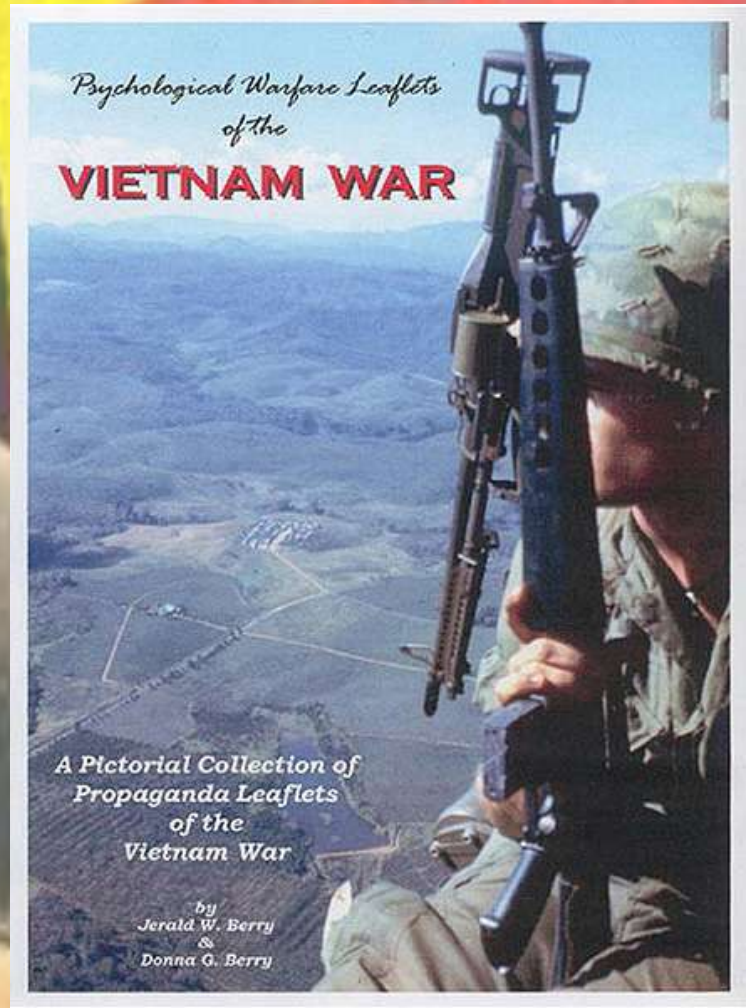
- Elections were to be held in 1956 to determine the governments of North and South Vietnam
- Diem refused to hold elections because he knew he would lose.
- Now the country was headed towards **civil war** with the US caught in the middle



Ngo Dinh Diem

Vietnam: Escalation

• 1961 - 1965



Vietcong



- The newly organized N. Vietnamese Guerilla Army that was based in S. Vietnam
- Effective at staging guerilla attacks
- Difficult to defeat, so Diem began to look to US for more help in fighting the Vietcong (VC)

John F. Kennedy Becomes President



- Kennedy needed to appear tough on communism, so he increased aid and advisors to Vietnam
- He also urged Diem to make democratic reforms to increase his popularity --> these reforms had little effect



JFK explaining the Vietnam situation to reporters shortly after being elected.

Diem's Unpopularity

- Diem was a Catholic and persecuted the Buddhists
- As a response some Buddhist monks committed self-immolation

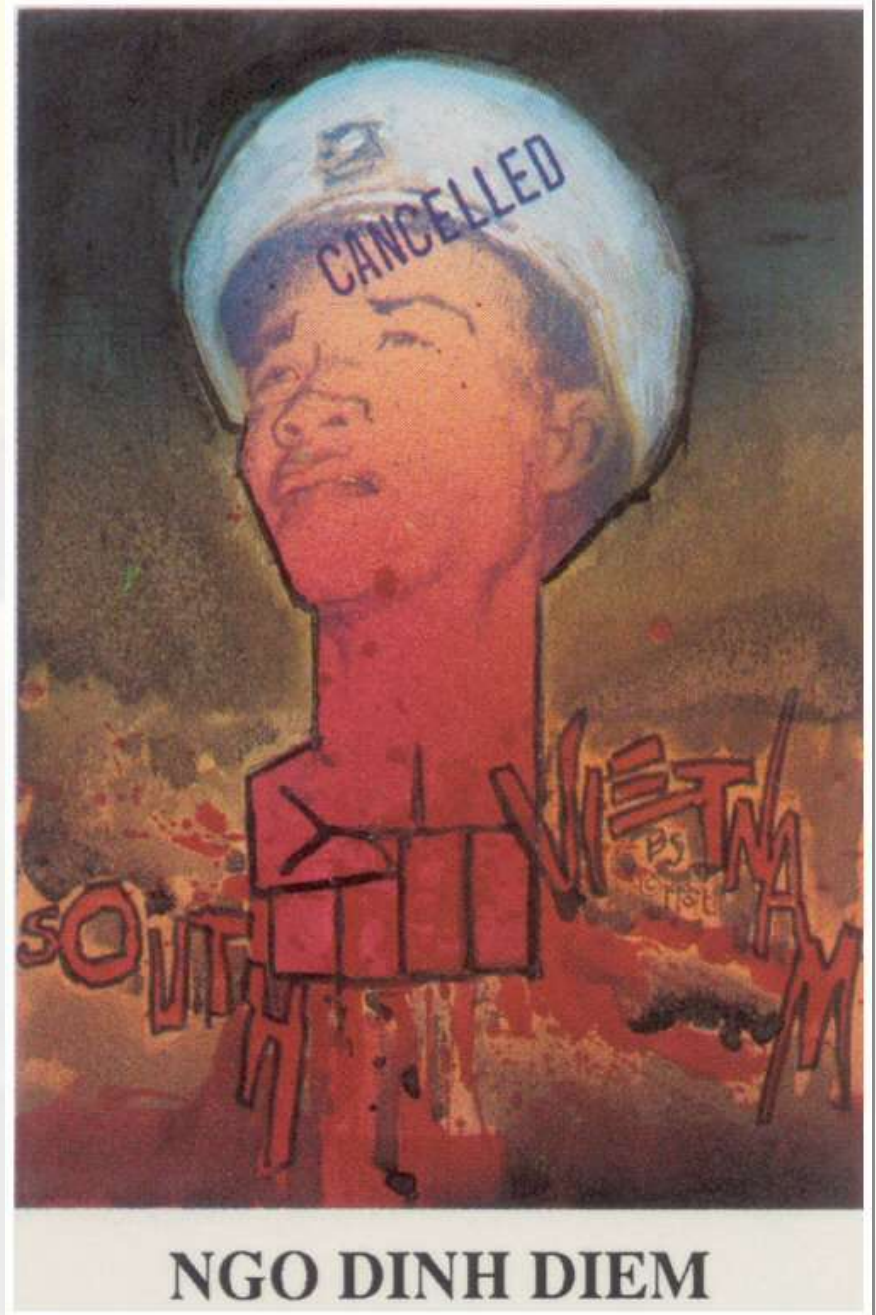


Self-Immolation



Diem's Downfall

- With US approval, he was overthrown and executed by his generals on Nov 2, 1963
- This severely weakened the S. Vietnamese gov't and forced the US to get more involved to help the S. Vietnamese
- President Kennedy was assassinated a few weeks later on November 22nd. VP Lyndon Baines Johnson replaces JFK.



NGO DINH DIEM

Gulf of Tonkin Incident

- August 2nd and 4th 1964
- President Lyndon Johnson tells the nation that Vietnamese ships have fired upon US destroyers
- He asks Congress to authorize the use of force to defend American forces
- In 2005 a declassified study stated that the second incident never happened



Gulf of Tonkin Resolution

- August 7, 1964
- Gulf of Tonkin Resolution authorized the President to “take all necessary measure to repel any armed attack against the forces of the US and to prevent further aggression.”



War

- The US began to increase the amount of troops in 1964 - 66
- The US was supremely confident it would be an “easy” war and a majority of the US public supported the war too
- But as we quickly found out, the war wasn't easy



VC tactics

- Blend in with general population by not wearing uniforms.
 - Who is friend?
 - Who is foe?
- Ambushes
- Booby traps
- Guerilla warfare



Vietcong



Traditional Vietnamese Farmer

US Response to VC tactics

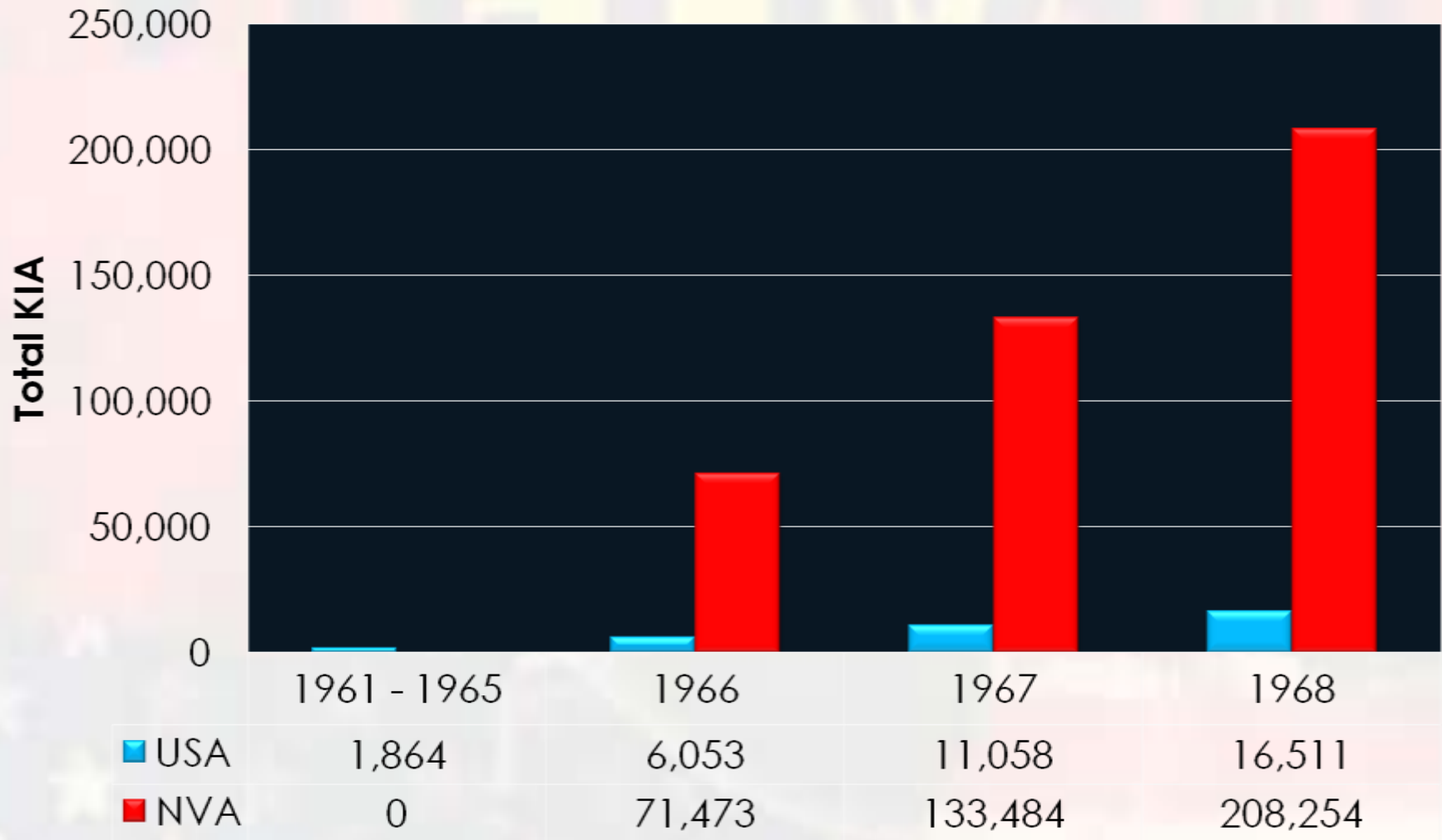
- “Search and destroy” missions
- Destroy landscape to get rid of VC cover
 - Napalm
 - Jellied gasoline that explodes and sticks to surfaces. It is very difficult to extinguish
 - Agent Orange
 - a chemical that destroys the foliage so the US could see troop movement from the sky



Agent Orange being sprayed from a helicopter



Killed in Action 1961 - 1968



Note: KIA figures for the NVA are unknown from 1961 - 1965

Increasing Difficulties

- The VC did not surrender despite our tactics
- They were not going to give up their homeland easily and they were willing to accept massive amounts of casualties
- The US also refused to invade N. Vietnam because we didn't want a full scale war with China
- This made it very difficult to win for the US



Ho Chi Min Trail

- The N. Vietnamese's series of jungle supply paths
- Passed through the countries of Laos and Cambodia
- Because Laos and Cambodia weren't involved in the war, LBJ refused the order to bomb the trail





Vietnam Part II: Teach-ins to Tet

1965 - 1968

Post Gulf of Tonkin

- Many of the President's advisors supported an expansion of the war.
- **Robert McNamara** the **Secretary of Defense** was one of the biggest supporters.
- In March 1965, Johnson expanded the war by continuously **bombing** North Vietnam – this became known as **Operation Rolling Thunder**.



Robert McNamara

Operation Rolling Thunder

- Sustained bombing campaign against N. Vietnam
- Goal was to overwhelm the N. Vietnamese and convince them to stop supplying the Viet Cong.



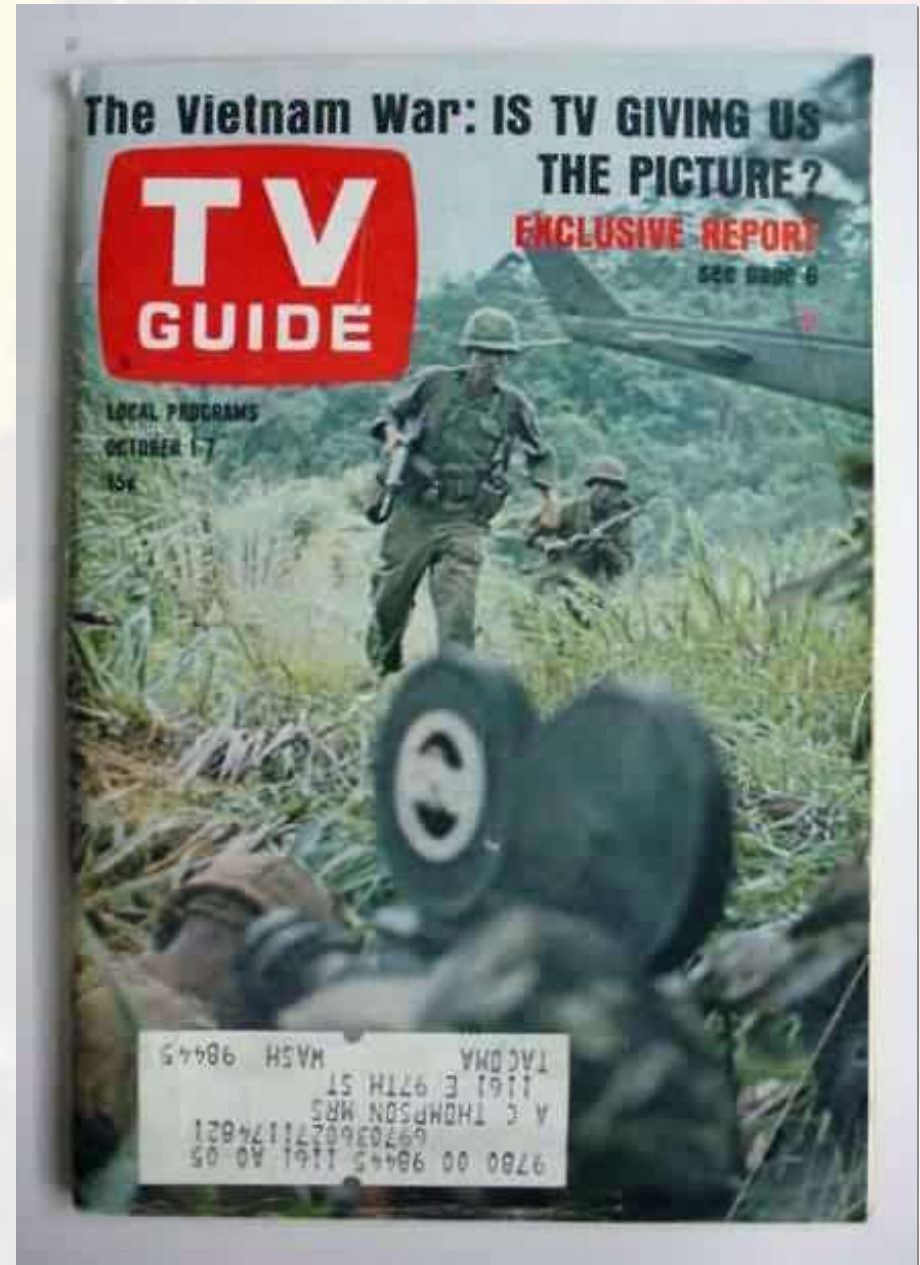
Television War

- At the beginning of the war, **General William Westmoreland** kept declaring that the enemy is on the brink of defeat
- The TV news reports showed a different story. Every night Americans saw young men dying and wounded and began to doubt the reports.



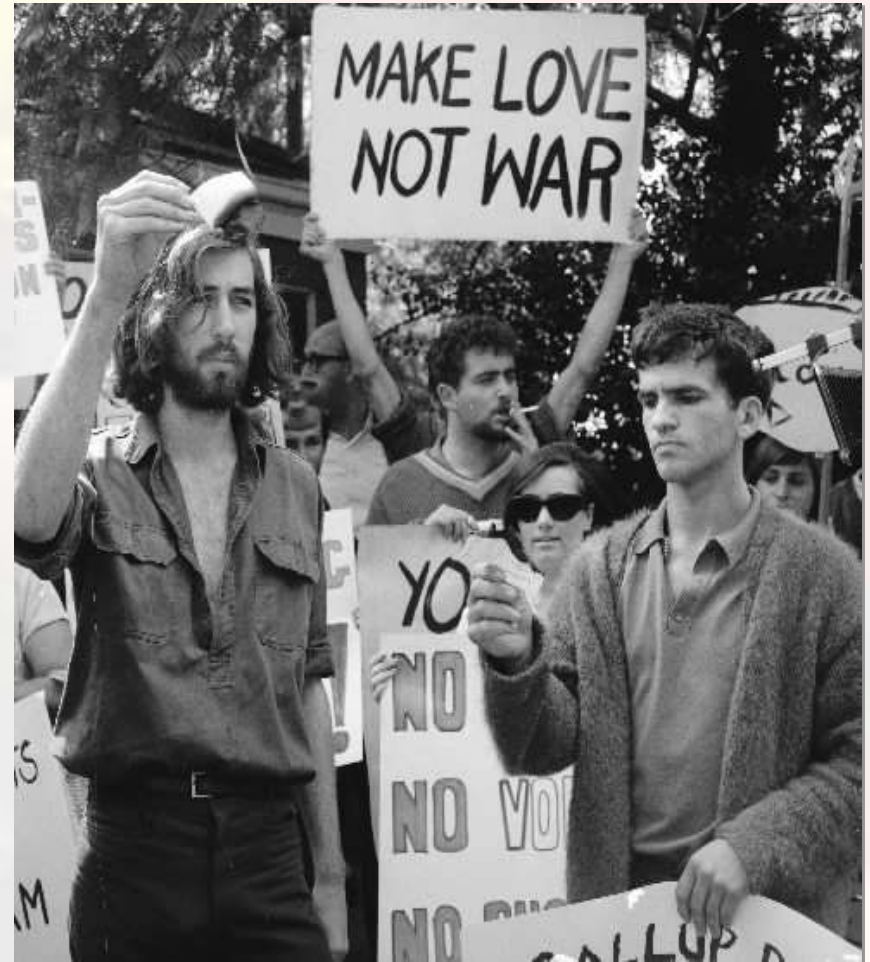
Television War

- A **Credibility Gap** developed, meaning it was hard to believe the rosy government reports.
- Vietnam was the first **Television War** because **footage of combat was shown nightly**.
- This helped lead to an anti-war movement.

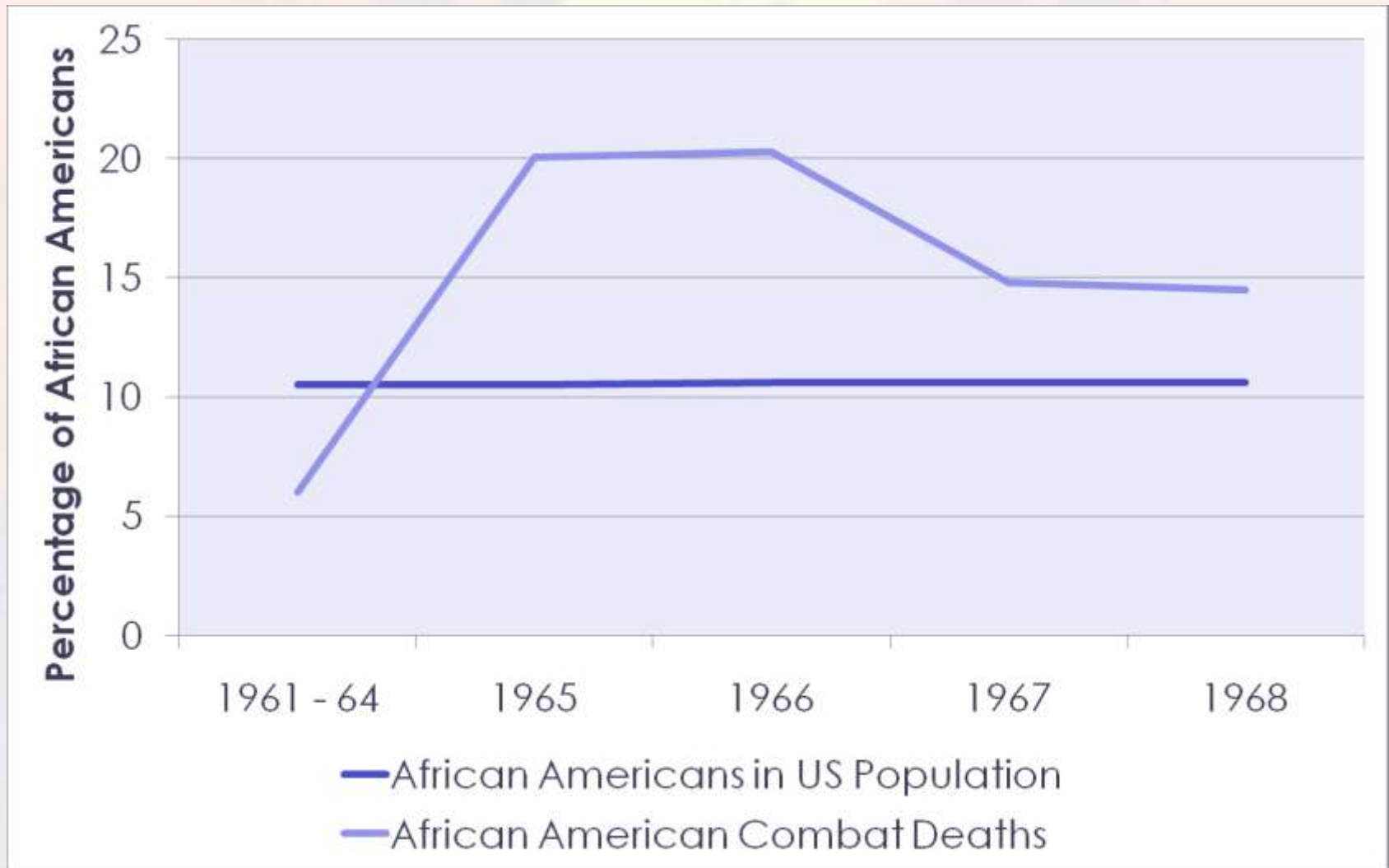


Anti-War Movement

- The anti-war movement was heavily influenced by the Civil Rights Movement
- **Teach-ins** – students and teachers across US colleges abandoned their classes to discuss the Vietnam War and their opposition to it
- **Burning Draft Cards** – many young men did not want to fight in a conflict they felt was wrong so they burned **draft cards** to protest



Dr. King Protests the War – King began to publicly criticize the war when it became apparent that many of the soldiers fighting and dying were poor and African American.



Hawks and Doves

- By **1968** polls showed that the country was almost **split down the middle** on support for Vietnam.
- **Doves**
 - Americans who wanted to withdraw from Vietnam
- **Hawks**
 - Americans who wanted to stay in Vietnam



1968 - Boom Goes the Dynamite

- **Tet Offensive**

- The year started with a **Vietcong** surprise attack on US troops
- The VC managed to attack almost all major US airbases and many Southern Vietnamese cities – this became known as the **Tet Offensive**.
- The **Tet Offensive** was a huge **military failure** for the VC, but it still shocked the **American public**.
- How could an enemy that is so close to defeat launch an attack of that size?



Famous Tet Photo...



Famous Tet Photo

“The general killed the Viet Cong; I killed the general with my camera. Still photographs are the most powerful weapon in the world. People believe them, but photographs do lie, even without manipulation. They are only half-truths...What the photograph didn't say was, 'What would you do if you were the general at that time and place on that hot day, and you caught the so-called bad guy after he blew away one, two or three American soldiers? How do you know you wouldn't have pulled the trigger yourself?’”

- Eddie Adams, Photographer

1968 - Boom Goes the Dynamite

- **Johnson does not run for re-election**
- **Due to unpopularity over the Vietnam War and two strong Democratic candidates, Johnson decides not to run for President.**



1968

- **Dr. Martin Luther King**
 - Dr. King is assassinated in Memphis by **James Earl Ray**.
- **Robert Kennedy**
 - JFK's younger brother and Democratic presidential candidate is killed by **Sirhan Sirhan**.
- **Riots in Chicago**
 - at the **Democratic National Convention** in Chicago, **police and protesters** clashed in a highly publicized riot – it was all over TV.



Assassination of Dr. King

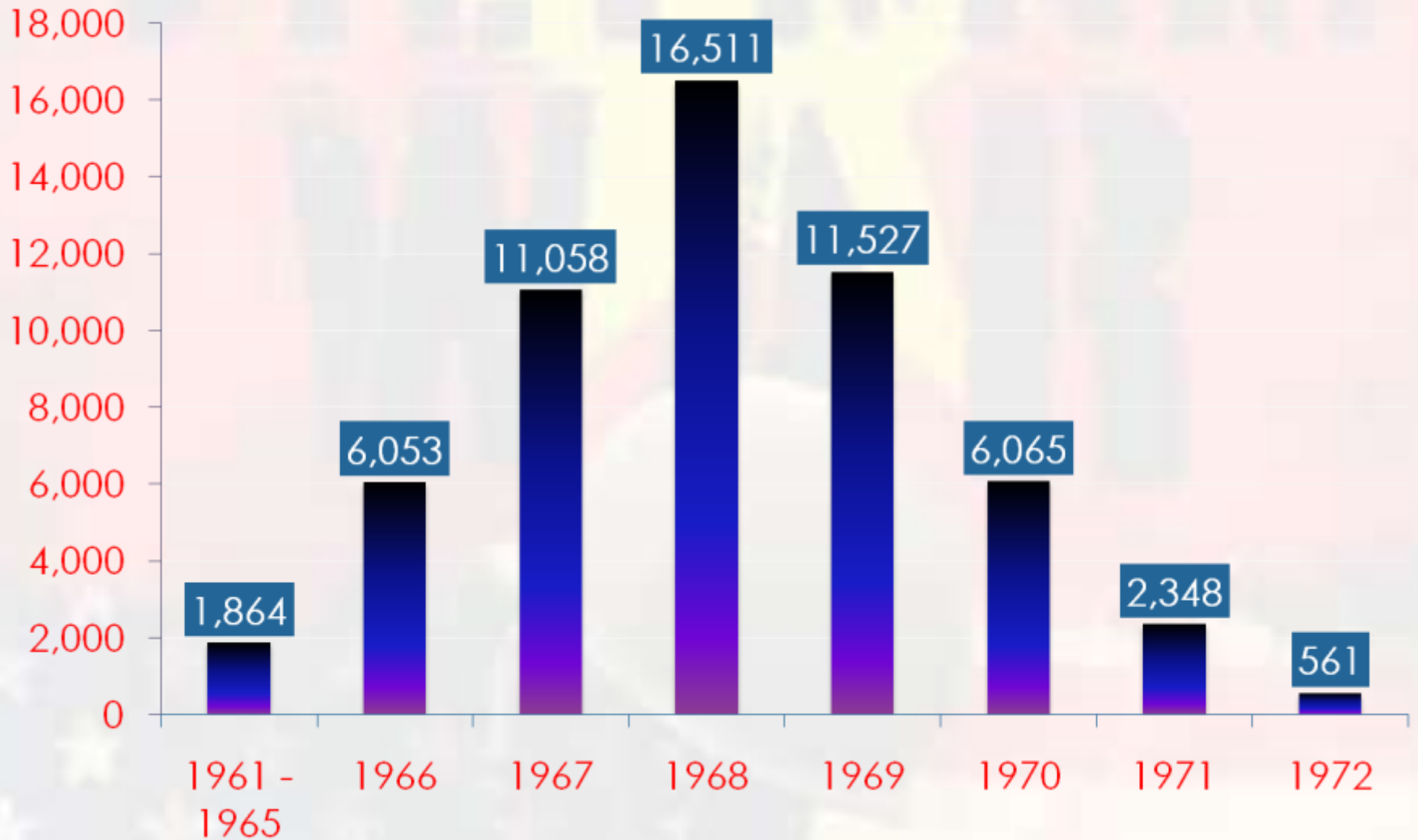


Robert F. Kennedy's
Assassination



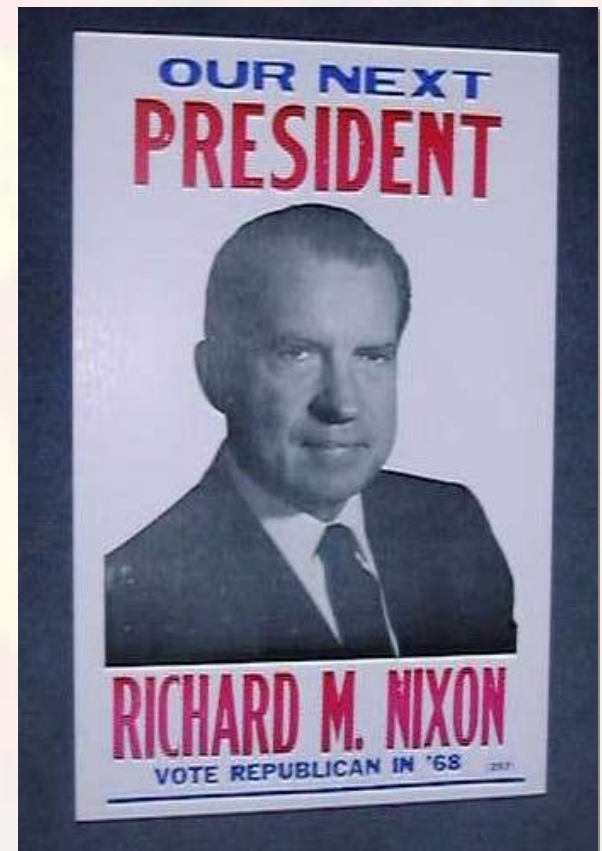
Clashes at the Democratic
National Convention in Chicago

US Troops Killed in Action 1961 - 1972



Election of 1968

- **Richard Nixon (Republican) vs. Hubert Humphrey (Democrat) vs. George Wallace (American Independent)**
- **Nixon wins and he promises to “Bring Us Together,” and also end the war**



My Lai Massacre

- March 16, 1968
- US Soldiers killed 347 to 504 unarmed citizens in South Vietnam
- When the incident became public knowledge in 1969, it prompted widespread outrage around the world. The massacre also reduced U.S. support at home for the Vietnam War.



Nixon and 'Nam



Famous image from
Kent State Shootings

- **Vietnamization**
 - Nixon's strategy for "peace with honor"
 - a gradual withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam
 - Turn control of the war over to the S. Vietnamese
- **Invasion of Cambodia**
 - Nixon expanded the war into Cambodia to stop VC
 - sparked protests
- **Kent State University Protests**
 - Response to expansion of war into Cambodia
 - College protesters killed by National Guard

Nixon and 'Nam

- Paris Peace Accords
 - January 19, 1973
 - US and N. Vietnam reach peace
- South Vietnam falls 1975



Famous Image from the
Fall of Saigon in 1975

Legacy of 'Nam

- Cost \$150 Billion
- Over 58,000 American Deaths
- Over 3 million total Vietnamese deaths (civilians/military)
- Considered by many to be the first US military defeat
- Disrespect of troops upon returning home
 - “That was the feeling in the air that we were unclean.” – Jan Scruggs, founder of Vietnam Veterans Memorial



Legacy of 'Nam

- Americans became more distrustful of government
 - Pentagon Papers: Secret study of US involvement in Vietnam that was leaked to the NY Times
 - Revealed that American leaders lied to Congress and the American people regarding Vietnam
- **War Powers Act**
 - limited President's powers, had to get consent from Congress before sending troops

