

Ch 30 The Vietnam War Years

Section 1 Moving Toward Conflict

America Supports France in Vietnam

French Rule in Vietnam

- Late 1800s–WW II, France rules most of Indochina
- **Ho Chi Minh**—leader of Vietnamese independence movement
 - helps create Indochinese Communist Party
- 1940, Japanese take control of Vietnam
- **Vietminh**—organization that aims to rid Vietnam of foreign rule
- Sept. 1945, Ho Chi Minh declares Vietnam an independent nation

France Battles the Vietminh

- French troops move into Vietnam; French fight, regain cities, South
- 1950, U.S. begins economic aid to France to stop communism

The Vietminh Drive Out the French

- **Domino theory**—countries can fall to communism like row of dominoes
- 1954, Vietminh overrun French at **Dien Bien Phu**; France surrenders
- **Geneva Accords** divide Vietnam at 17th parallel; Communists get north
- Election to unify country called for in 1956

The United States Steps In

Diem Cancels Elections

- Ho has brutal, repressive regime but is popular for land distribution
- S. Vietnam's anti-Communist president **Ngo Dinh Diem** refuses election
- U.S. promises military aid for stable, reform government in South
- Diem corrupt, stifles opposition, restricts Buddhism
- **Vietcong** (Communist opposition group in South) kills officials
- Ho sends arms to Vietcong along **Ho Chi Minh Trail**

Kennedy and Vietnam

- Like Eisenhower, JFK backs Diem financially; sends military advisers
- Diem's popularity plummets from corruption, lack of land reform
- Diem starts strategic hamlet program to fight Vietcong
 - villagers resent being moved from ancestral homes
- Diem presses attacks on Buddhism; monks burn themselves in protest
- U.S.-supported military coup topples government; Diem assassinated

President Johnson Expands the Conflict

The South Grows More Unstable

- Succession of military leaders rule S. Vietnam; country unstable
- LBJ thinks U.S. can lose international prestige if communists win

The Tonkin Gulf Resolution

- Alleged attack in Gulf of Tonkin; LBJ asks for power to repel enemy
- 1964 **Tonkin Gulf Resolution** gives him broad military powers
- 1965 8 Americans killed, LBJ orders sustained bombing of North
- U.S. combat troops sent to S. Vietnam to battle Vietcong