

## **Ch 30 Section 2 U.S. Involvement and Escalation**

### **Johnson Increases U.S. Involvement**

#### **Strong Support for Containment**

- LBJ hesitates breaking promise to keep troops out; works with:
  - Secretary of Defense **Robert McNamara**, Secretary of State **Dean Rusk**
- Congress, majority of public support sending troops

#### **The Troop Buildup Accelerates**

- General **William Westmoreland**—U.S. commander in South Vietnam
- Thinks southern **Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN)** ineffective
- Requests increasing numbers; by 1967 500,000 U.S. troops

#### **Fighting in the Jungle**

##### **An Elusive Enemy**

- Vietcong use hit-and-run, ambush tactics, move among civilians
- Tunnels help withstand airstrikes, launch attacks, connect villages
- Terrain laced with booby traps, land mines laid by U.S., Vietcong

##### **A Frustrating War of Attrition**

- Westmoreland tries to destroy Vietcong morale through attrition
- Vietcong receive supplies from China, U.S.S.R.; remain defiant
- U.S. sees war as military struggle; Vietcong as battle for survival

##### **The Battle for “Hearts and Minds”**

- U.S. wants to stop Vietcong from winning support of rural population
- Weapons for exposing tunnels often wound civilians, destroy villages
  - **napalm**: gasoline-based bomb that sets fire to jungle
  - **Agent Orange**: leaf-killing, toxic chemical
- **Search-and-destroy missions** move civilian suspects, destroy property
- Villagers go to cities, refugee camps; 1967, over 3 million refugees

##### **Sinking Morale**

- Guerrilla warfare, jungle conditions, lack of progress lower morale
- Many soldiers turn to alcohol, drugs; some kill superior officers
- Government corruption, instability lead S. Vietnam to demonstrate

##### **Fulfilling a Duty**

- Most U.S. soldiers believe in justice of halting communism
- Fight courageously, take patriotic pride in fulfilling their duty

##### **The Early War at Home**

##### **The Great Society Suffers**

- War grows more costly with more troops; inflation rate rising
- LBJ gets tax increase to pay for war, check inflation
  - has to accept \$6 billion funding cut for Great Society

##### **The Living-Room War**

- Combat footage on nightly TV news shows stark picture of war
- Critics say **credibility gap** between administration reports and events
- Senator J. William Fulbright’s hearings add to doubts about war