

.Solve the mystery:

What is going on in Vietnam, why does the U.S. care, and how does the U.S. get involved?

Directions: The following paragraphs tell the story of how the U.S got involved with Vietnam, but they are out of order. Read the paragraphs and try to put them in the correct chronological order by cutting and pasting (but keep the numbers as they are so it is easy to check your work). Think about CAUSE and EFFECT. HINT: Scroll down to the very end of the document and you will find some helpful information.

1. Vietnamese patriots in South begin organizing to try to reunite Vietnam. Vietnamese in the Communist North begin sending soldiers and supplies secretly to the South to try to reunite the country.
2. The French go to war against the Vietnamese to take back their valuable colony. The U.S. gives substantial financial support to the French. The French are defeated by the Vietnamese at Dien Bien Phu.
3. Kennedy meets with his advisors to decide what to do about the “Buddhist Crisis” in Vietnam. South Vietnamese military officers contact the US to see what the US response would be to a military **coup** [overthrow] of Diem’s government in **Saigon** [the capital of South Vietnam].
4. After the French defeat, the Geneva Accords—a peace treaty— says Vietnam will be temporarily divided at the 17th parallel (latitude line that divides North and South). Elections will then be held in North and South to decide which leader will rule a reunited Vietnam.
North=Ho Chi Minh, Communist
South=Bao Dai, a pro-French Vietnamese Emperor
5. November 1, 1963 - The South Vietnamese Army--funded in large part by the U.S.--overthrows President Diem. Diem is assassinated the next day.
6. Buddhist monks protest against Diem’s rule by lighting themselves on fire. This makes front page news around the world and shows how unpopular Diem has become in South Vietnam.
7. Ngo Dinh Diem takes over South Vietnam from Bao Dai. Diem refuses to hold elections to reunite North and South Vietnam.
8. Ho Chi Minh declares Vietnamese independence from France on September 2, 1945. The first lines of his speech quote from the Declaration of Independence: “All men are created equal. They are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among them are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.” He ends the speech by announcing Vietnamese independence and saying that the Vietnamese people “are determined to mobilize all their physical and mental strength, to sacrifice their lives and property in order to safeguard their independence and liberty.”
9. Ho Chi Minh* and other Vietnamese patriots approach Woodrow Wilson in Versailles following World War I. Quoting the Declaration of Independence, they want him to support Vietnamese

independence from France. He does not meet with the Vietnamese. Around this time, Ho Chi Minh becomes a Communist, believing that communism is the best way to fight against European powers. (*Ho Chi Minh will later become the leader of North Vietnam.)

10. As President, Diem is very anti-communist, anti-nationalist, anti-North Vietnam. He outlawed all political parties except his own. His policies in the countryside turn many South Vietnamese in support of the North and Communists. Many of them will soon join the Vietcong (South Vietnamese soldiers who support the North). He is also Catholic but the majority of the people are Buddhists.

11. Eisenhower sends “advisors” to Vietnam to train the South Vietnamese army so they can defend themselves against the North. This marks the official beginning of U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

12. Vietnam had been a colony of France. During World War II, the Japanese take over Vietnam from the French. After the War, the French take back control of Vietnam.

Helpful information on dates

World War II - 1939-1945	
President Truman 1945-1953	Truman wins election of 1948
President Eisenhower 1953-1961	Eisenhower wins election of 1952, 1956
President Kennedy 1961-1963	Kennedy wins election of 1960
President Johnson 1963-1969	LBJ is JFK's VP, becomes President when JFK is assassinated; wins election of 1964
President Nixon, 1969-1974	Nixon wins election of 1968, 1972

How do the documents below help solve the mystery? How do they explain why the United States was involved with Vietnam?

Document A: “Dominoes”

1949 - Soviet Union successfully detonates an atomic bomb

1949 - China becomes Communist

1950 - North Korean (communist) troops enter South Korea

1950 - Communist government of North Vietnam recognized by China and USSR

Document B: Eisenhower, speaking about the problem in Vietnam

“The French have a knotty problem on that one--the campaign out there is a draining sore in their side. Yet if they quit and Indochina falls to Commies [Communists], it is easily possible that the entire Southeast Asia and Indonesia will go, soon to be followed by India. That prospect makes the whole problem one of interest to us all.”

Document C: John F. Kennedy

"Burma, Thailand, India, Japan, the Philippines and obviously Laos and Cambodia are among those whose security would be threatened if the Red Tide of Communism overflowed into Vietnam."

Document D: Lyndon B. Johnson

"I am not going to lose Vietnam. It is on this spot that we have to break the war in Vietnam. If we don't break it here we will have to face it again, in Thailand, Venezuela, and elsewhere."