

## II.H.10

### From the Cold War to the Fall of the Berlin Wall

# The Vietnam War – Colonialism, Cold War and Concessions

Nach einer Idee von Dr. Ingeborg Braisch



Bild: Ronald A. Wilson, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Während eines Machtvakuums nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg rief Ho Chi Minh die Demokratische Republik Vietnam aus und löste auch das Ende der französischen Kolonialherrschaft. Aus dem anschließenden Krieg gegen die Rekolonisierung durch Frankreich wurde alsbald ein langer und verlustreicher Stellvertreterkrieg gegen die Vereinigten Staaten. Am Vietnamkrieg zeigt sich die folgenreiche Symbolpolitik des Kalten Krieges in besonders tragischer Weise.

#### KOMPETENZPROFIL

**Klassenstufe:** 10–13

**Dauer:** ca. 6 Unterrichtsstunden

**Kompetenzen:** Quellen analysieren und historisch einbetten; monokausale und eindimensionale Argumentationen erkennen; Kontroversen reflektieren; Mythen und Fakten differenzieren; Medien nutzen

**Thematische Bereiche:** Dekolonisation; Erster/Zweiter Indochinakrieg; Kalter Krieg; Ost-West-Konflikt; europäisch-amerikanisches Sendungsbewusstsein; Nationalismus; Kommunismus; Entmenschlichung des Gegners

**Medien:** Quelltexte, Infotexte, Romanauszüge, Feldpostbriefe, Lieder, Flyer, Filme, Briefmarken

## Auf einen Blick

### 1./2. Stunde

**Thema:** Ho Chi Minh and the Struggle Against Colonialism

**M 1** Who Was "Ho Chi Minh"?

**M 2** French Colonialism in Southeast Asia

**Inhalt:** Die Lernenden erarbeiten sich biografische Fakten und die zentralen politischen Ziele Ho Chi Minhs. Sie setzen sich im Rahmen einer Gruppenarbeit mit der kolonialen Vorgeschichte in Indochina auseinander.

**Benötigt:** Internetzugang

### 3. Stunde

**Thema:** Political Climate Change – Vietnam and the US After WWII

**M 3** From Friend to Foe – Vietnamese-American Relations

**M 4** The Cold War – Doctrines and Fears

**Inhalt:** Die Schülerinnen und Schüler identifizieren die unterschiedlichen Interessen Vietnams und der USA als Grund für die Entzweiung und setzen sich mit dem politischen Klima und den wichtigsten Doktrinen des Kalten Krieges auseinander.

**Benötigt:** Internetzugang

### 4.–6. Stunde

**Thema:** The Three Phases of the Vietnam War

**M 5** They Died for Democracy – The War Under Eisenhower

**M 6** Have no Fear of Escalation – The War Under Johnson

**M 7** The "Vietnamization" of the War Under Nixon

**Inhalt:** Die Lernenden beschäftigen sich mit der Veränderung der amerikanischen Interessen und Strategien im Laufe des Kriegs. Sie verstehen die symbolische Dimension des Stellvertreterkrieges im Rahmen der allgemeinen amerikanischen Außenpolitik.

**Benötigt:** Internetzugang

M 4

The Cold War – Doctrines and Fears

After 1946, the emerging Cold War reshaped the relationship between the Viet Minh and the US. They now fought on opposite sides. What happened?

Task 1

Research the term "proxy war" online. Give a short definition and briefly apply it to the example of the Korean War (1950–1953).

Task 2

Analyze the pamphlet from 1960.

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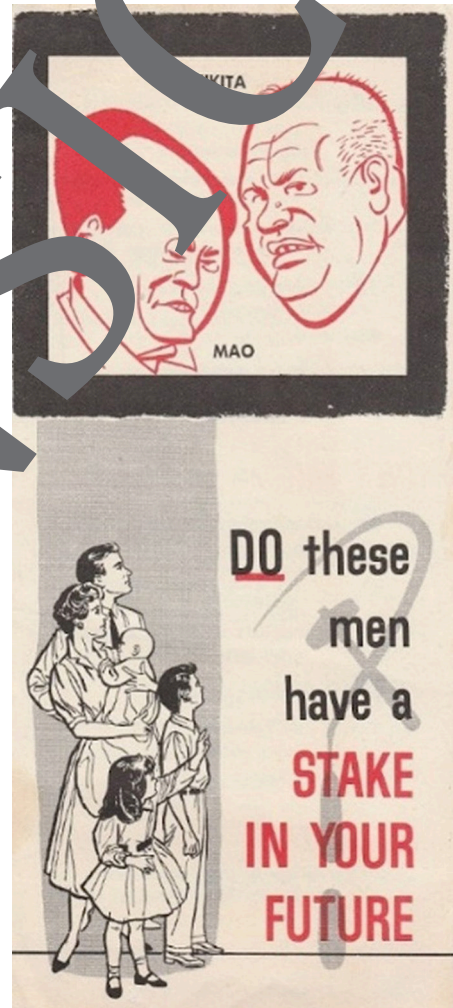
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Quelle: Original-Flyer aus dem Jahr 1960, Grafik: Fred Schwartz, The Christian Anti-Communism Crusade

Annotations

**Nikita Khrushchev:** Soviet Prime Minister – **Mao Zedong:** Founder of the People’s Republic of China

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## Have no Fear of Escalation – The War Under Johnson

M 6

In November 1963, Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson takes the place of the assassinated President Kennedy. One year later, he is officially reelected. Regarding Vietnam, he upholds the policies of his predecessors. Important waymarks are the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution of 1964, the use of American infantry after 1965, the heavy bombardment of North Vietnam, and the My Lai Massacre. During his presidency, many anti-war protests took place in the US and around the world.

### Tasks

1. Listen to the protest song "Lyndon B. Johnson Told the Nation" (by Tom Paxton, 1965): <https://raabe.click/Vietnamkrieg-SongLyndonBJohnson>. Focus on the lyrics.
2. Read the letters. Summarize, how their authors think about the Vietnamese and the Viet Cong. What consequence might arise from such a view?
3. Compare the two statements to the Vietnamese postage stamp. How do they contradict each other?
4. Read Ho Chi Minh's letter to President Johnson. Summarize his complaints and give your opinion on them.
5. Research the "My Lai Massacre" online and write a newspaper article about it. Optionally choose a specific perspective for your article, e. g. an American pro-Johnson newspaper, an American anti-war newspaper, or a Northern Vietnamese newspaper.



### Two Letters from American Soldiers in Vietnam

*Sergeant Paul Kelly to his mother, July 15, 1969:*

We went to some villages and searched for VC or weapons. All we found were some tools. We took them from the dinks. I still can't believe how these people live. They're just like animals. They live way out in the middle of nowhere. There isn't even a road for miles. It's all just unused rice paddies. Their homes are made of grass and mud. They crouch down to eat their little bowl of rice and I don't know what else but it smells like dead dog. They don't mind the flies all over their food. When they go to the bathroom they just do it where they may be ... [Kelly talks about an impressive system of tunnels into which the Americans throw hand grenades or TNT] They can dig miles of tunnel but there's no dirt to be found anywhere. They must eat it. Some of these people are treacherous. They say "GI number one" when we're in their village, but at night the dirty little rats are VC.

*Corporal Cameron Donald to his mother, January 13, 1969:*

[While on patrol, Cameron and his men come across a large stash of weapons, some of them clearly recognizable as Soviet guns. They are waiting for a helicopter to collect the troops and the weapons.]  
They were only 10 of us and we were afraid the gooks might try to overrun the place to get all that stuff back. They lit our lines every night with Chicom grenades, and kept everyone on his toes.

*Source: Dear America. Letters Home from Vietnam. Hrsg. von Edelman, Bernard. Pocket Books, New York, N. Y. u. a. 1988. S. 71-72.*



### Claim against claim

- In 1965, journalist Robert Shaplen visits the American aircraft carrier "Ranger" off the Vietnamese coast. His colleague notes: "They just ought to show this ship to the Vietcong – that would make them give up."
- On May 19, 1967, US foreign minister McNamara describes North Vietnam as "a tiny backward nation".



© Interfoto

Vietnamese postage stamp from 1966 showing the defense of the island fortress Con Co. The artillery gun is an up-to-date anti-aircraft cannon that North Vietnam received from the USSR in 1965.

### Letter from Ho Chi Minh to President Johnson, February 15, 1967

"On February 10, 1967, I received your message. This is my reply. Vietnam is thousands of miles away from the United States. The Vietnamese people have never done any harm to the United States. But contrary to the pledges made by its representative at the 1954 Geneva conference, the U.S. has senselessly intervened in Vietnam, it has unleashed and intensified the war of aggression in North Vietnam with a view to prolonging the partition of Vietnam and turning South Vietnam into a neocolony and a military base of the United States. For over two years now, the U.S. government has, with its air and naval forces, carried the war to the Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam, an independent and sovereign country. The U.S. government has committed crimes, crimes against peace and against mankind. In South Vietnam, half a million U.S. and satellite troops have resorted to the most inhuman weapons and most barbarous methods of warfare, such as napalm, toxic chemicals and gases, to massacre our compatriots, destroy crops, and raze villages to the ground. In North Vietnam, thousands of U.S. aircraft have dropped hundreds of thousands of tons of bombs, destroying towns, villages, factories, schools. In your message, you apparently deplore the sufferings and destruction in Vietnam. May I ask you: Who has perpetrated these monstrous crimes? It is the United States and satellite troops. The U.S. government is entirely responsible for the extremely serious situation in Vietnam. The U.S. war of aggression against the Vietnamese people constitutes a challenge to the countries of the Socialist camp, a threat to the national independence movement, and a serious danger to peace in Asia and the world."

Text: online unter: [https://tamilnation.org/intframe/670115ho\\_chi\\_minh.htm](https://tamilnation.org/intframe/670115ho_chi_minh.htm) [zuletzt geprüft: 02.12.2022].

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