

The Vietnam War

1965-1975



Advantages & Disadvantages

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- US & South Vietnam
 - Advanced technology & financial resources, but fighting a “limited war”
 - Unpopular government in South Vietnam
 - Divided U.S. public opinion and little international support
- North Vietnam & Vietcong
 - Strong ideological commitment (national liberation, communist doctrine)

Leaders

U.S. Government



President
Lyndon Johnson



Secretary of Defense
Robert McNamara



President
Richard Nixon



President
Gerald Ford

South Vietnamese Government



Ngo Dinh Diem



Nguyen van Thieu

U.S. Military



Gen. William Westmoreland

North Vietnamese Government



Ho Chi Minh

North Vietnamese Military



Vo Nguyen Giap

Causes of the War

“Indochina”



Colonization of Vietnam

- Chinese...
- 1800s-1940 – French
- 1940-1945 – Japanese
- 1945-1954 – French
- 1954-1973 – USA?



Battle of Dien Bien Phu

- US financed French war effort
- 1954 – Vietnam gains independence from France



Vietnam Divided

- 17th parallel
- North – Communist
- South – “Nationalist”



Ho Chi Minh

- President of Communist North Vietnam



Ngo Dinh Diem

- US puppet in South Vietnam



Protests Against Diem

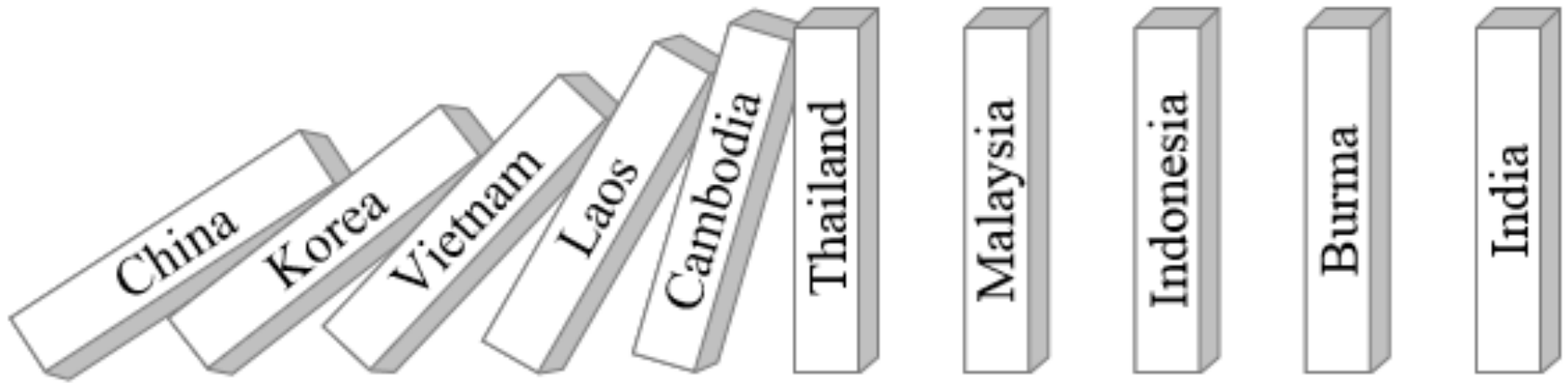


Eisenhower

- Sent 675 military advisors to South Vietnam
- “Domino Theory”



Domino Theory



Kennedy

- Increased military “advisors” to 16,000
- Supported coup against Diem
- Planned withdrawal of troops?



Coup Against Diem



Kennedy Assassination



Johnson

- 1964 Tonkin Gulf incident
- War begins
- Escalation of troop levels

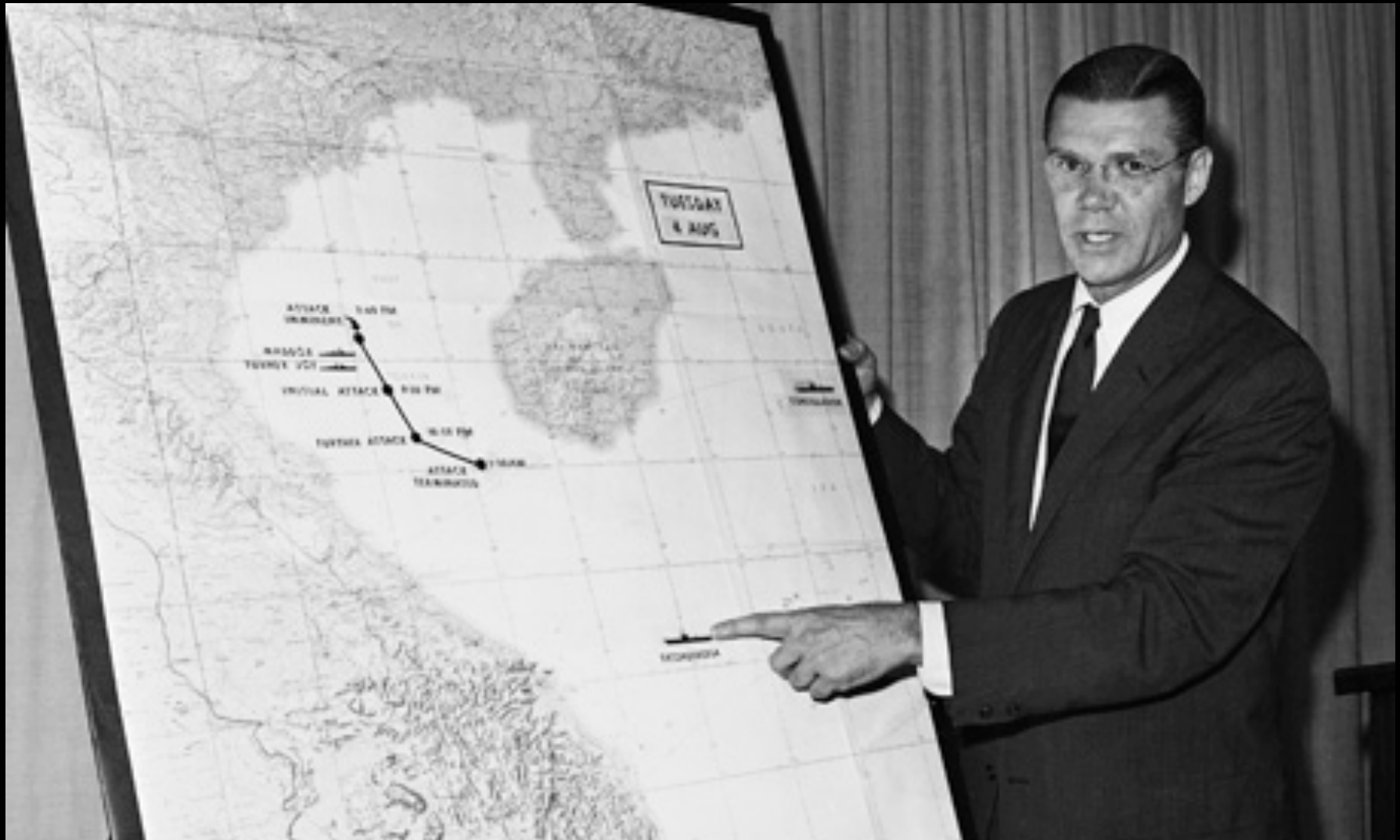


Tonkin Gulf Incident

- 1964
- *USS Maddox* attacked off coast of North Vietnam
- 2nd alleged incident

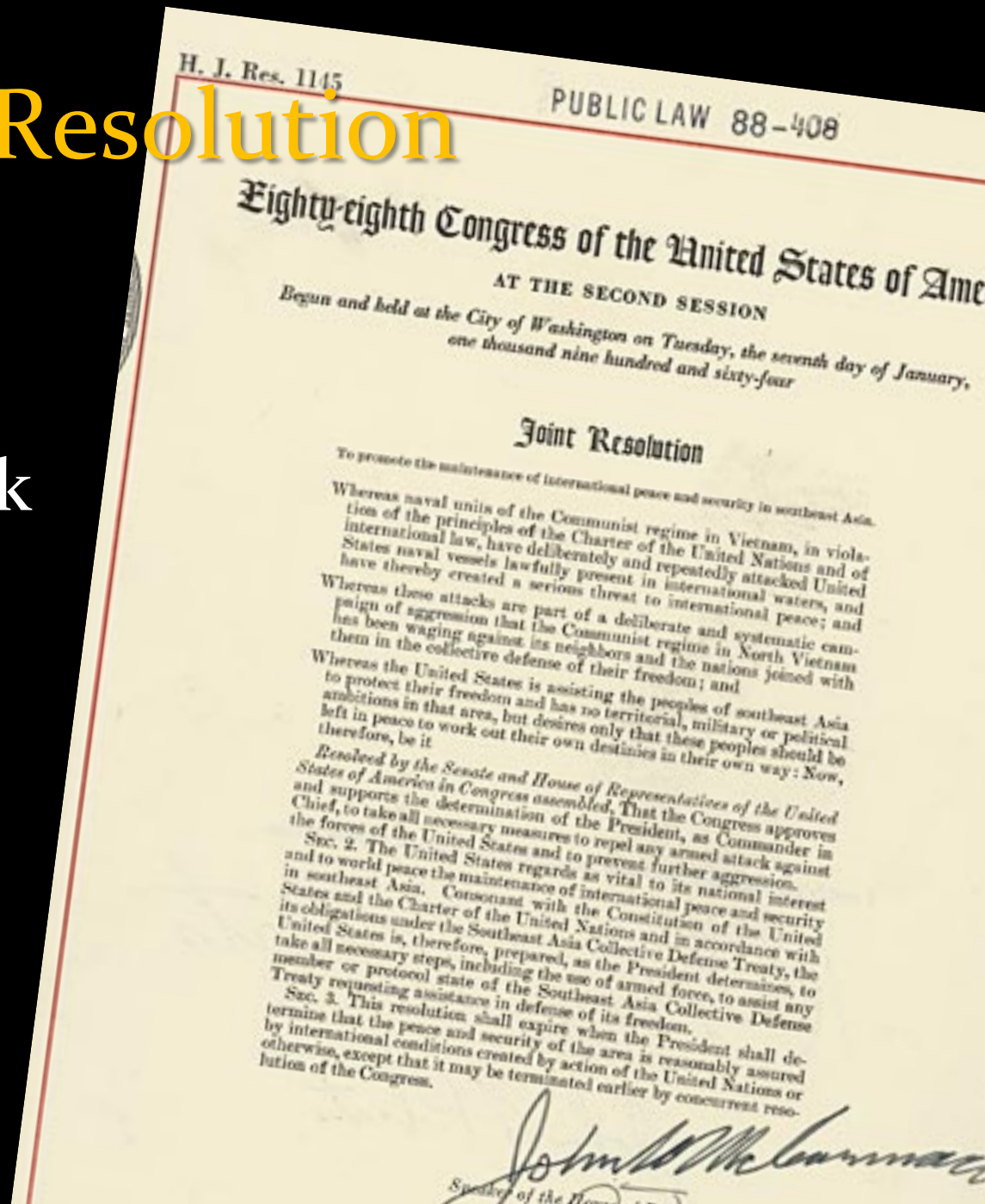


Robert McNamara



Tonkin Gulf Resolution

- Congress gave President Johnson a “blank check”...
- ...not an official declaration of war



Causes of the War

- Long Term
 - Failed French effort to recolonize Vietnam after World War II, supported by U.S. aid
 - Division of Vietnam at 17th parallel under the 1954 Geneva Conference
 - American Cold War policy of containment and the “domino theory”
- Short Term
 - Tonkin Gulf Incident: Congressional resolution gave the president a “blank check”

Fighting the War

Combatants



North Vietnamese
Army (NVA)



Army of the Republic of
South Vietnam (ARVN)

VS.



Viet Cong (VC)



United States



(US)

Strategies

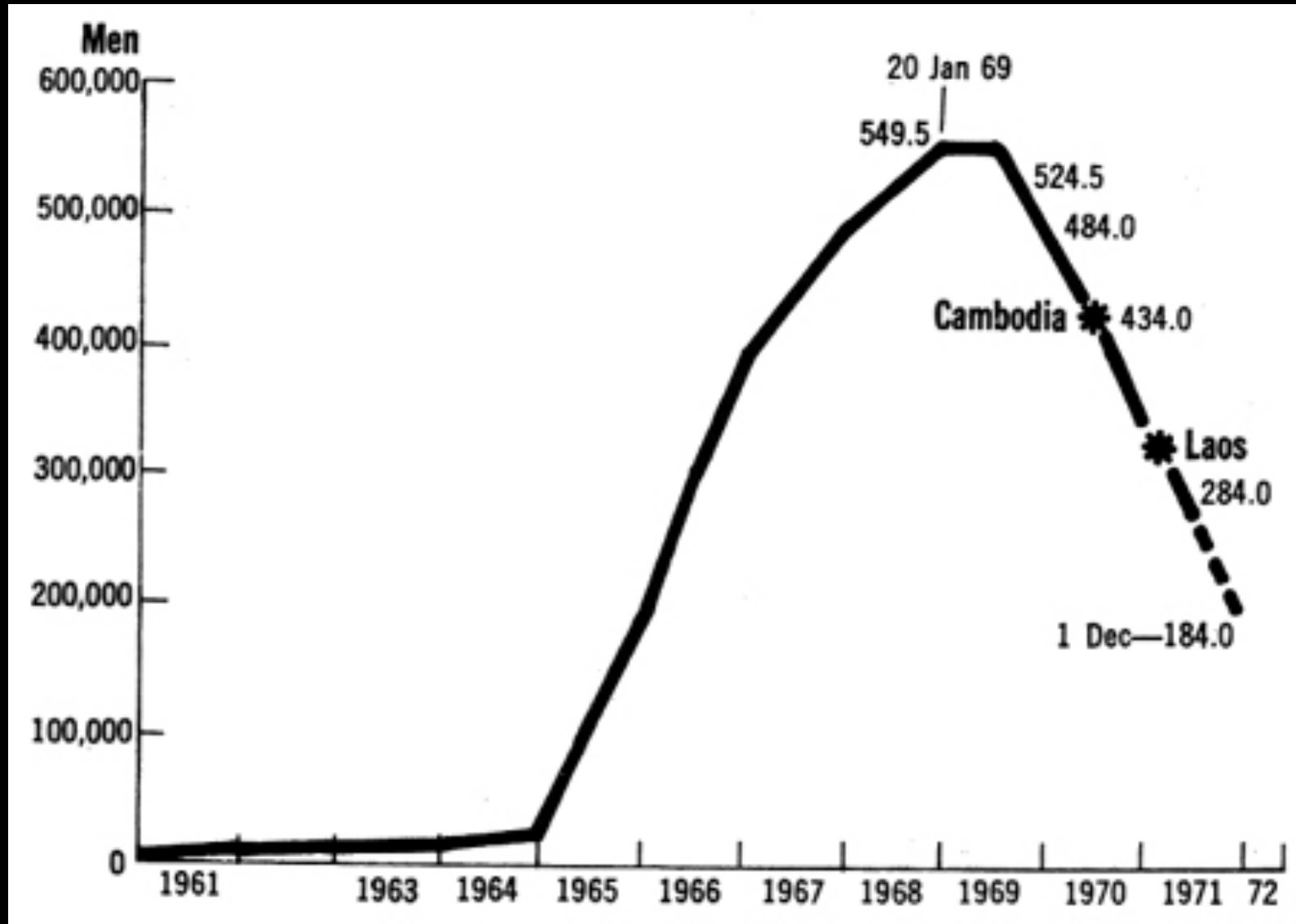
- U.S. & South Vietnam
 - Limited war: bombing, then escalation
 - “Pacification” of South Vietnamese countryside to eliminate Viet Cong
 - Aid to South Vietnamese Army (ARVN)
- North Vietnam & Viet Cong
 - Defensive guerilla war of attrition
 - Supply Viet Cong using the Ho Chi Minh trail inside Laos & Cambodia

Operation Rolling Thunder

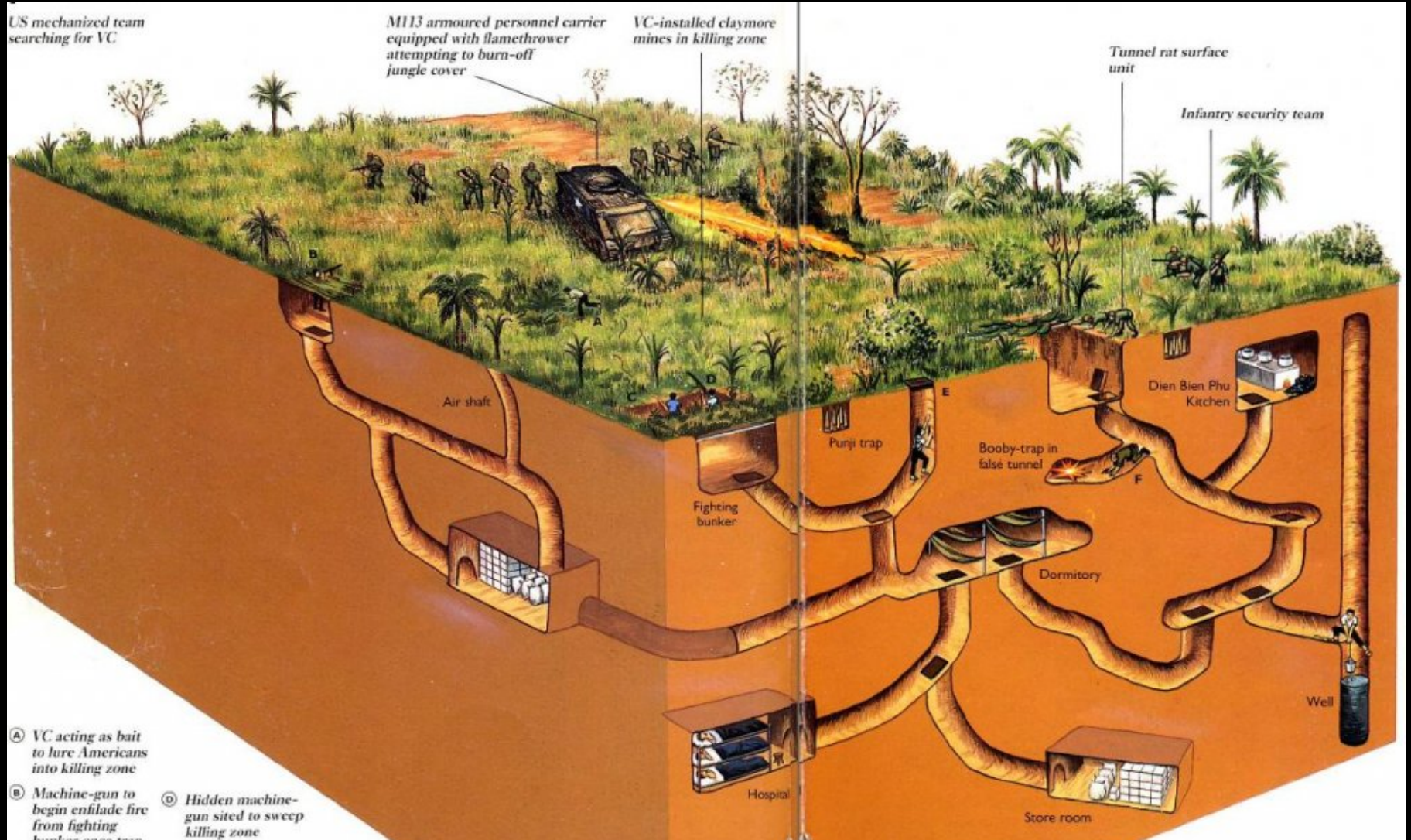


Boeing B-52D 'Stratofortress'
©USAF Museum Photo Archives

Escalation



Guerilla Warfare



Ho Chi Minh Trail



Vietcong



Counter-Insurgency Warfare



Counter-Insurgency Warfare



- “It became necessary to destroy the village in order to save it.”

VC/NVA Atrocities



VC/NVA Atrocities



“Limited War”



Helicopters



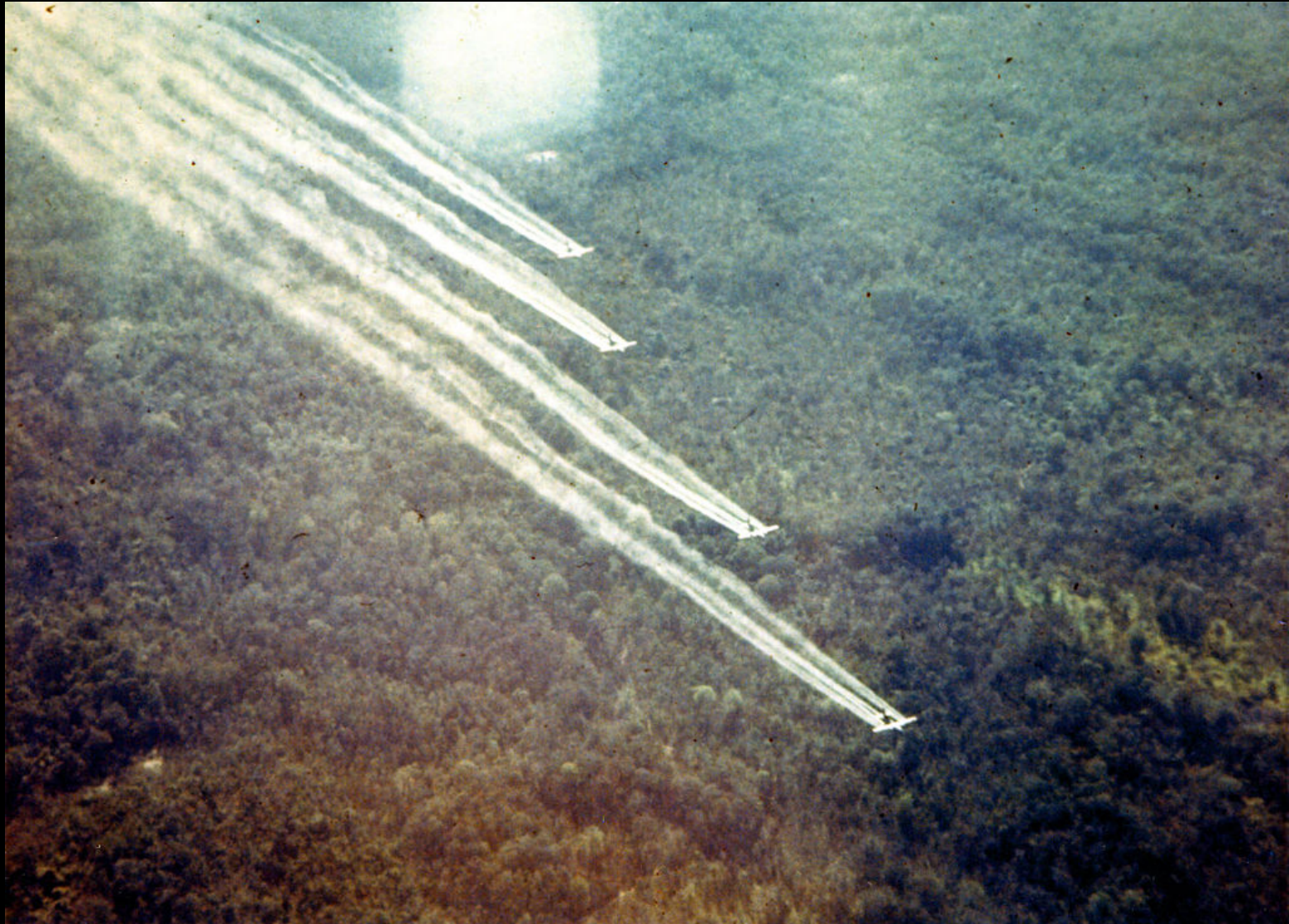
Cluster Bombs



Napalm



Agent Orange



1968: The Turning Point

Gen. William Westmoreland

- “Light at the end of the tunnel”

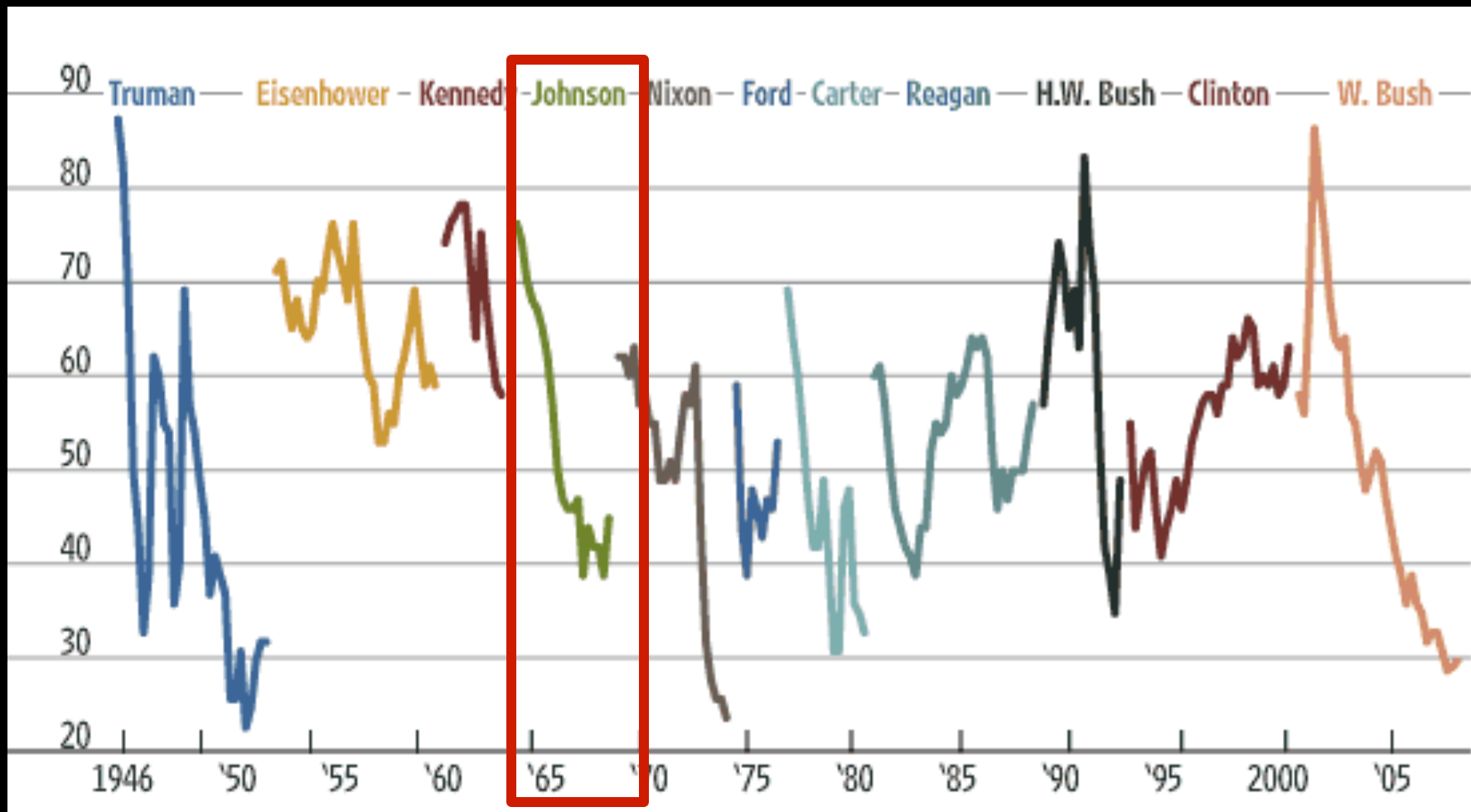


Tet Offensive

- New Year 1968
- Surprise NVA/VC attacks in South Vietnam



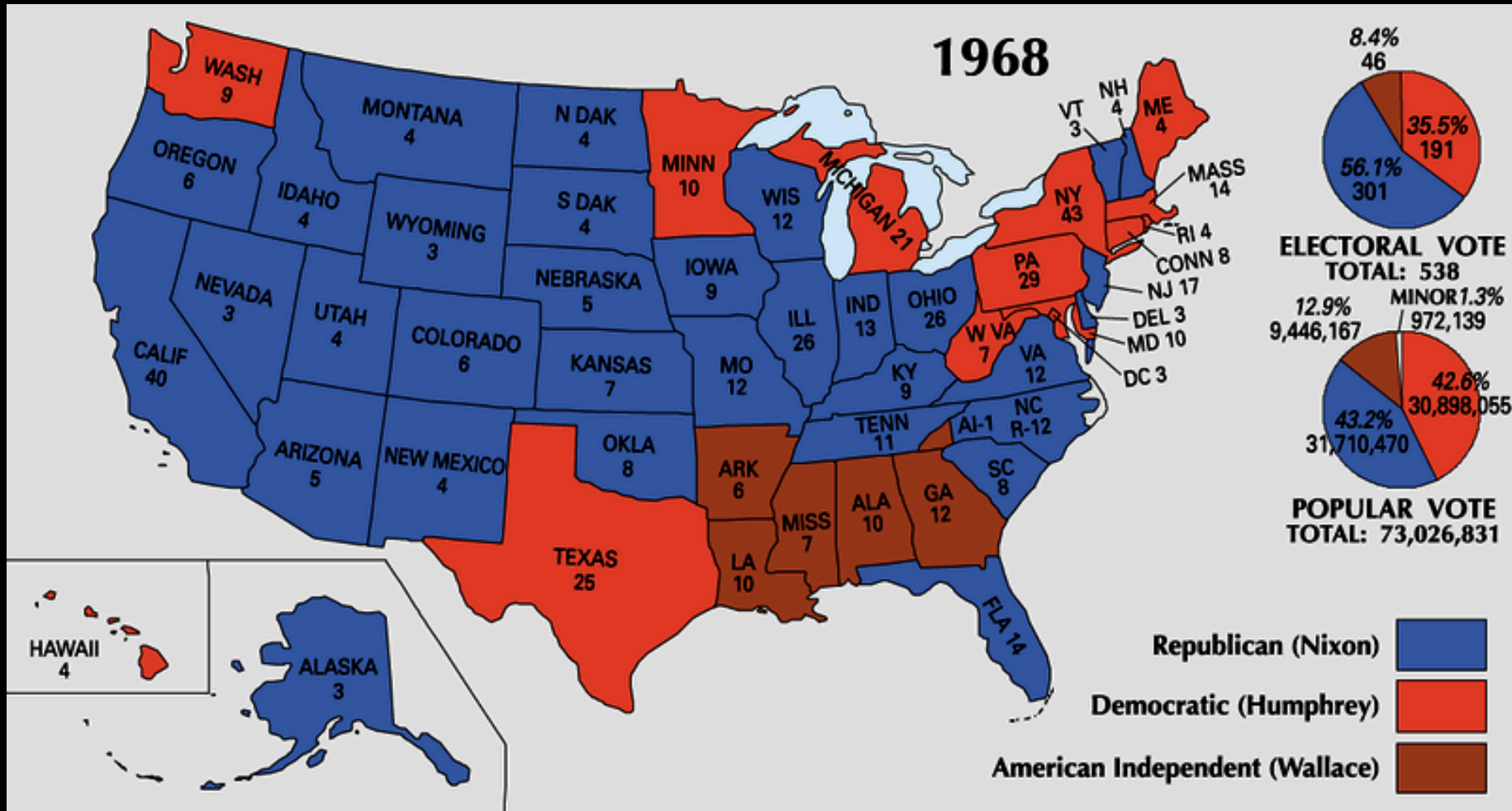
LBJ's Approval Rating



LBJ Steps Aside



1968 Election



Richard Nixon: “Silent Majority”



The War at Home

“The Living Room War”



“The Living Room War”



“The Living Room War”



Walter Cronkite

- Cronkite:
 - “The bloody experience of Vietnam is to end in a stalemate”
- LBJ:
 - “If I’ve lost Cronkite, I’ve lost middle America”



My Lai Massacre



Daniel Ellsberg

- Whistleblower, leaker of the “Pentagon Papers”
- *New York Times v. U.S.*
 - No “prior restraint” on publication
 - 1st Amendment freedom of the press



Draft Resistance



Anti-War Movement



Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)



Democratic Convention Riots



SDS Splinter Group: Weather Underground



Kent State & Jackson State Shootings

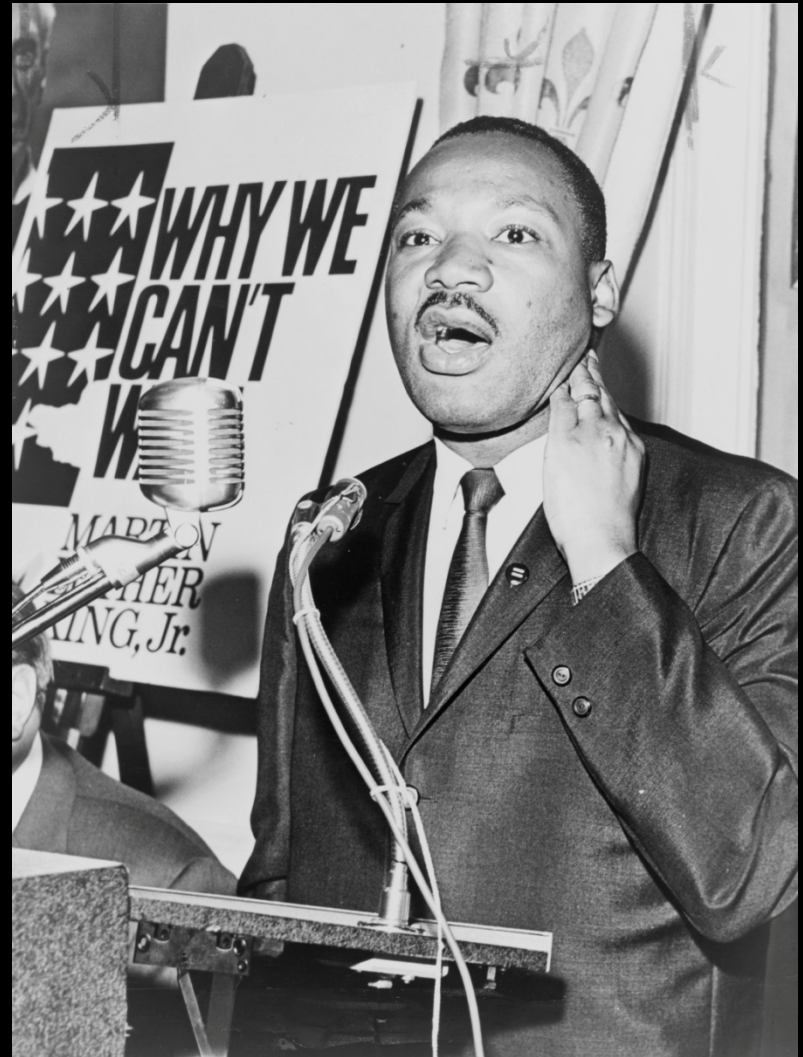


Civil Rights Movement



Martin Luther King, Jr.

“If America's soul becomes totally poisoned, part of the autopsy must read: Vietnam. It can never be saved so long as it destroys the deepest hopes of men the world over.”



Muhammad Ali



Declining Morale



Ho Chi Minh

“You will kill
ten of our men
and we will kill
one of yours,
and in the end
it will be you
who tires of it.”



The War Continues

Richard Nixon

- “Secret plan” & “peace with honor”
- Increased bombing raids
 - North Vietnam
 - Laos & Cambodia
- “Vietnamization”



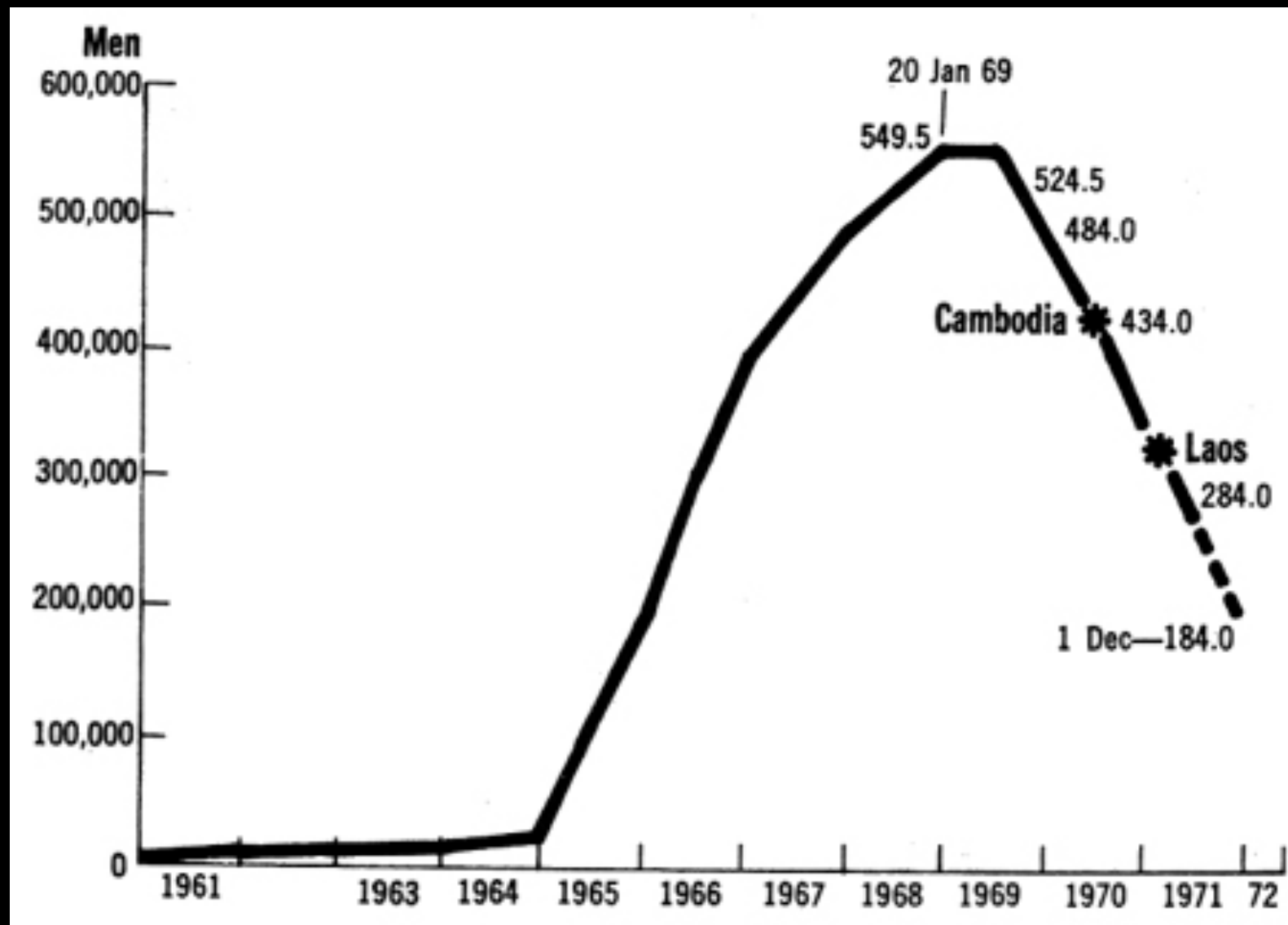
Secret Bombing of Laos & Cambodia



“Vietnamization”



“Vietnamization”



Paris Peace Accords

- Henry Kissinger
- U.S. withdrawal from South Vietnam
- *Détente*



The War Ends

Last U.S. Troops Leave, 1973



Fall of Saigon, 1975



The War Ends, 1975

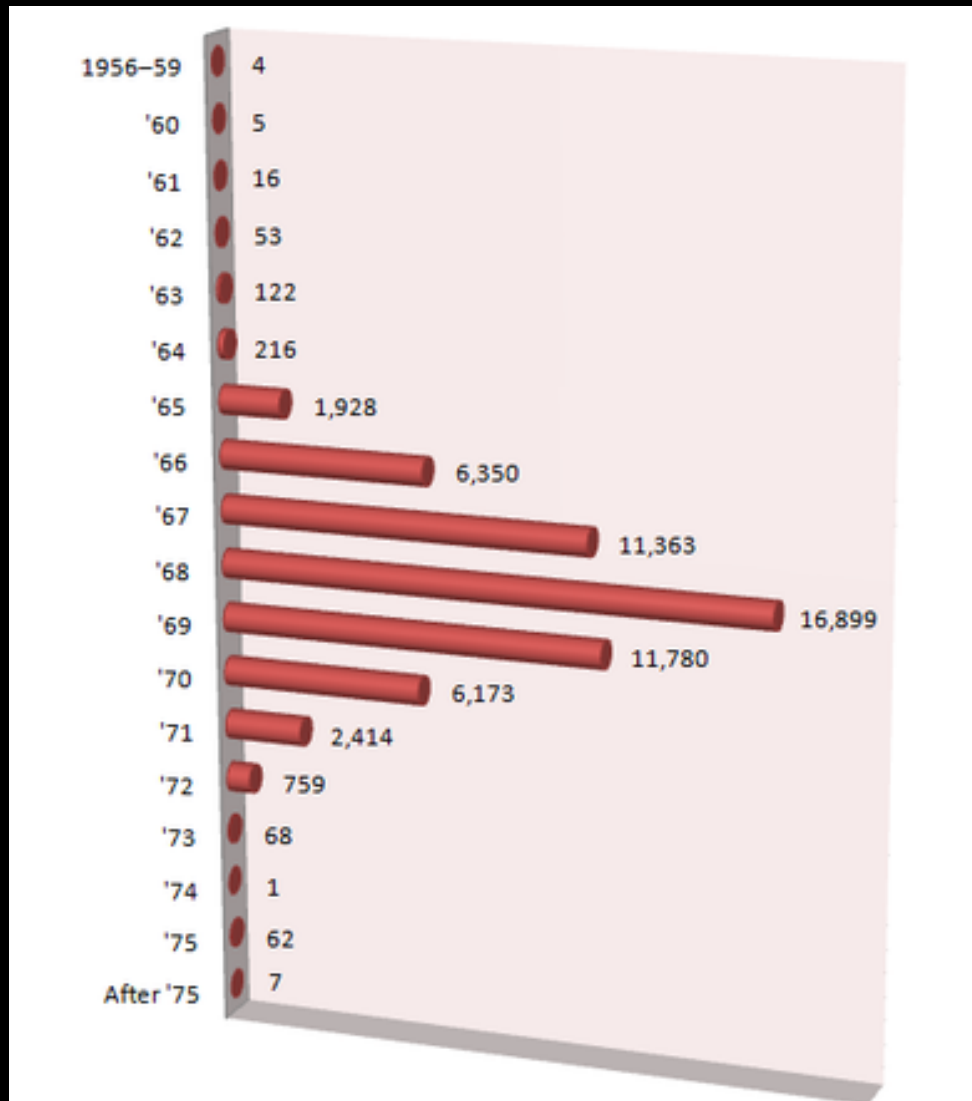


Vietnam Unified



Legacy of the War

U.S. Deaths by Year



Total Deaths

U.S. Military	ARVN	South Vietnamese Civilians	NVA & Viet Cong	North Vietnamese Civilians
58,286	220,000-313,000	195,000-430,000	400,000-1,100,000	50,000-65,000
	<u>Total</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	480,000-807,000		455,000-1,170,000	

Vietnamese Immigration to U.S.



Khmer Rouge: Cambodian Genocide



Health Effects of Agent Orange



Undermining of the Great Society



War Powers Act



26th Amendment

S. J. Res. 7

Ninety-second Congress of the United States of America

AT THE FIRST SESSION

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Thursday, the twenty-first day of January,
one thousand nine hundred and seventy-one

Joint Resolution

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States extending the right to vote to citizens eighteen years of age or older.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein), That the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States within seven years from the date of its submission by the Congress:

“ARTICLE —

“SECTION 1. The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.

“Sec. 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.”

Carl Albert
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Allen Dulles
Vice President of the United States and
President of the Senate. *pro Tempore*

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Prisoners of War



Veterans Issues



All-Volunteer Army



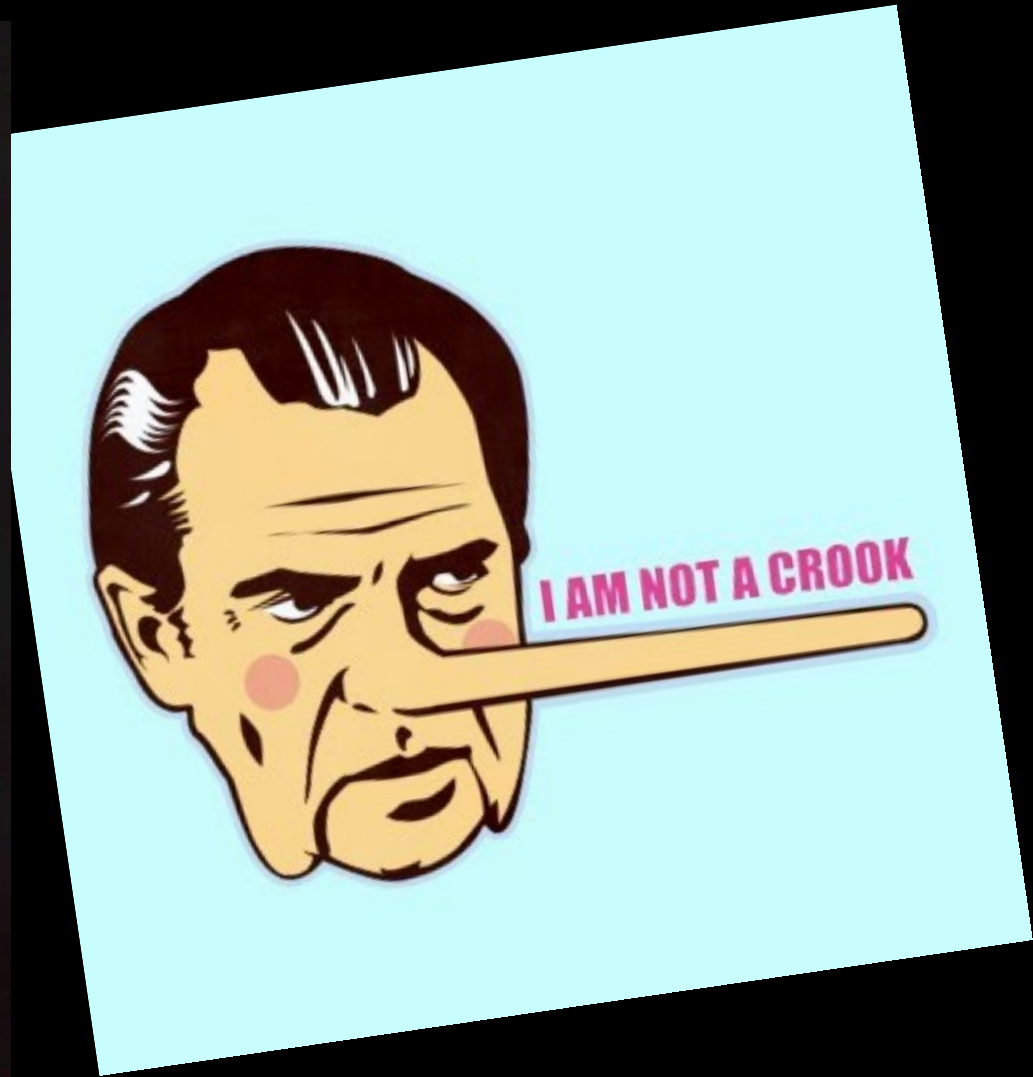
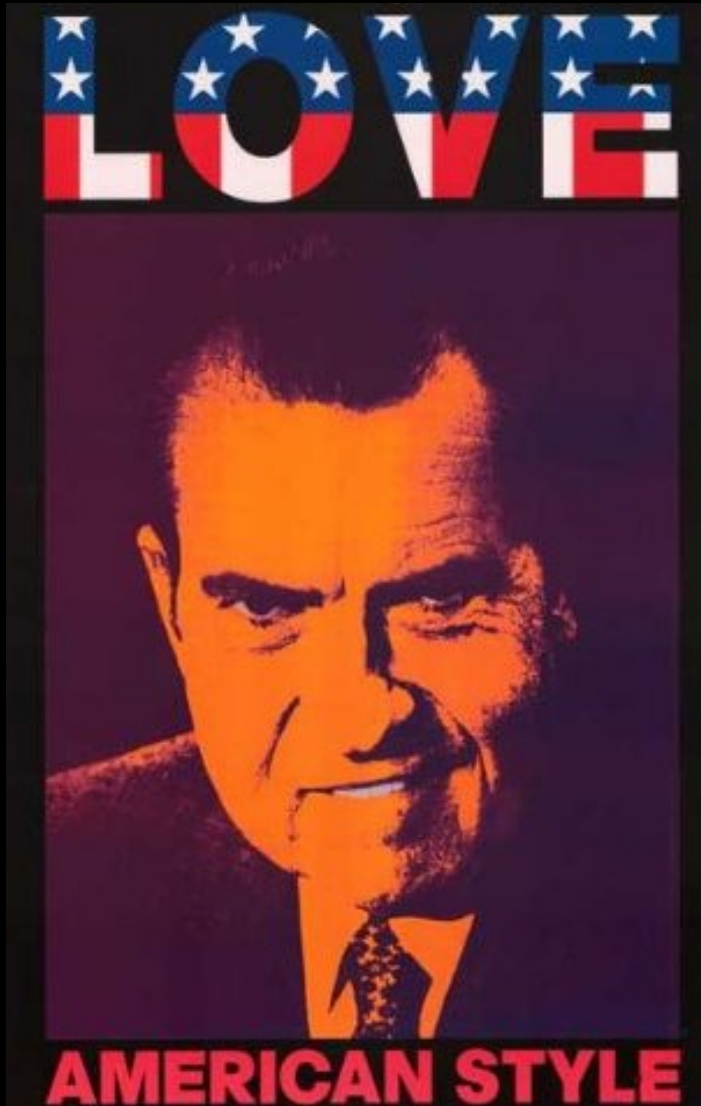
“Embedded” Reporters



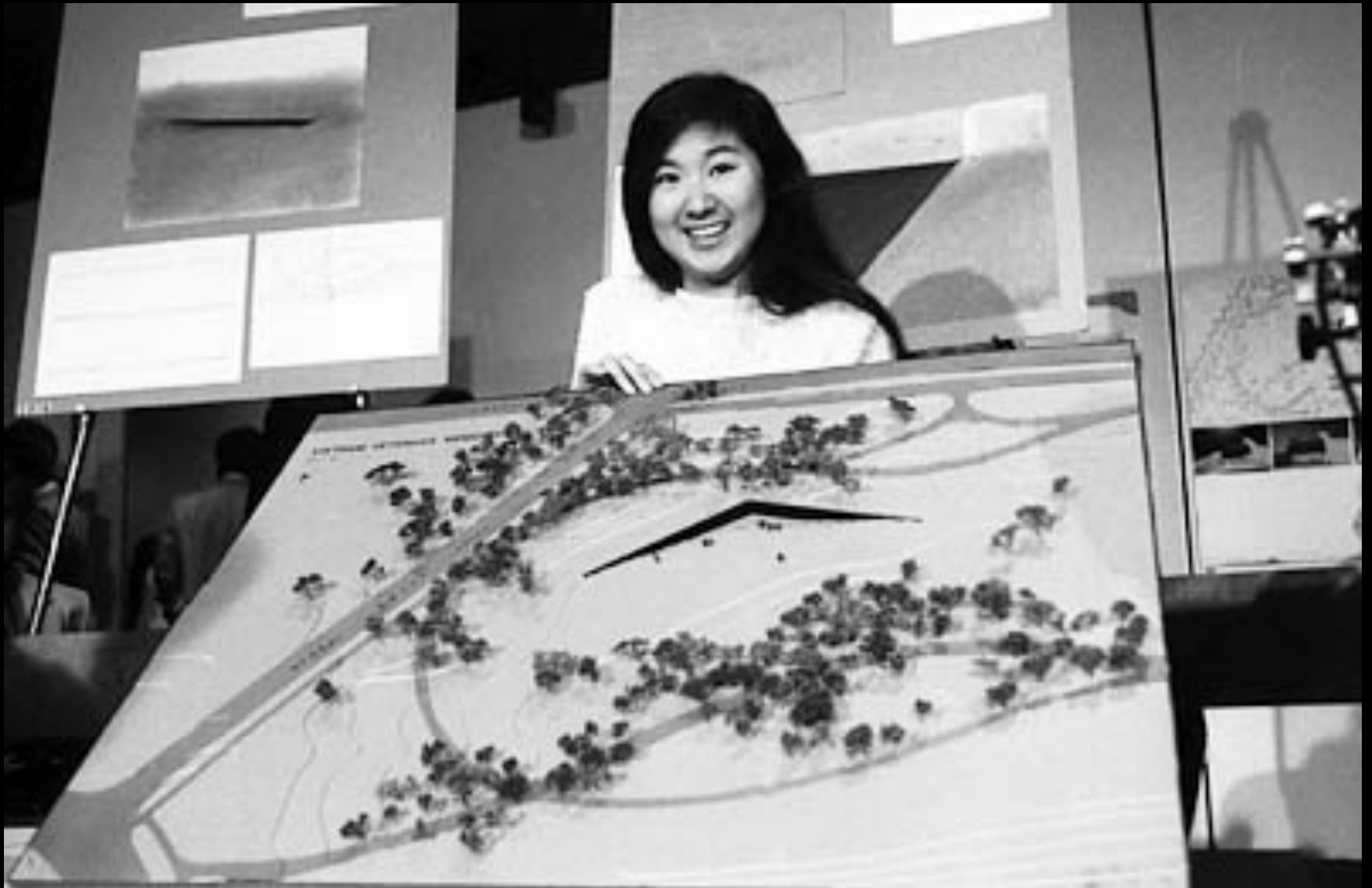
Plumbers... Watergate Scandal



Apathy & Distrust



Vietnam Veterans Memorial



Vietnam Veterans Memorial

