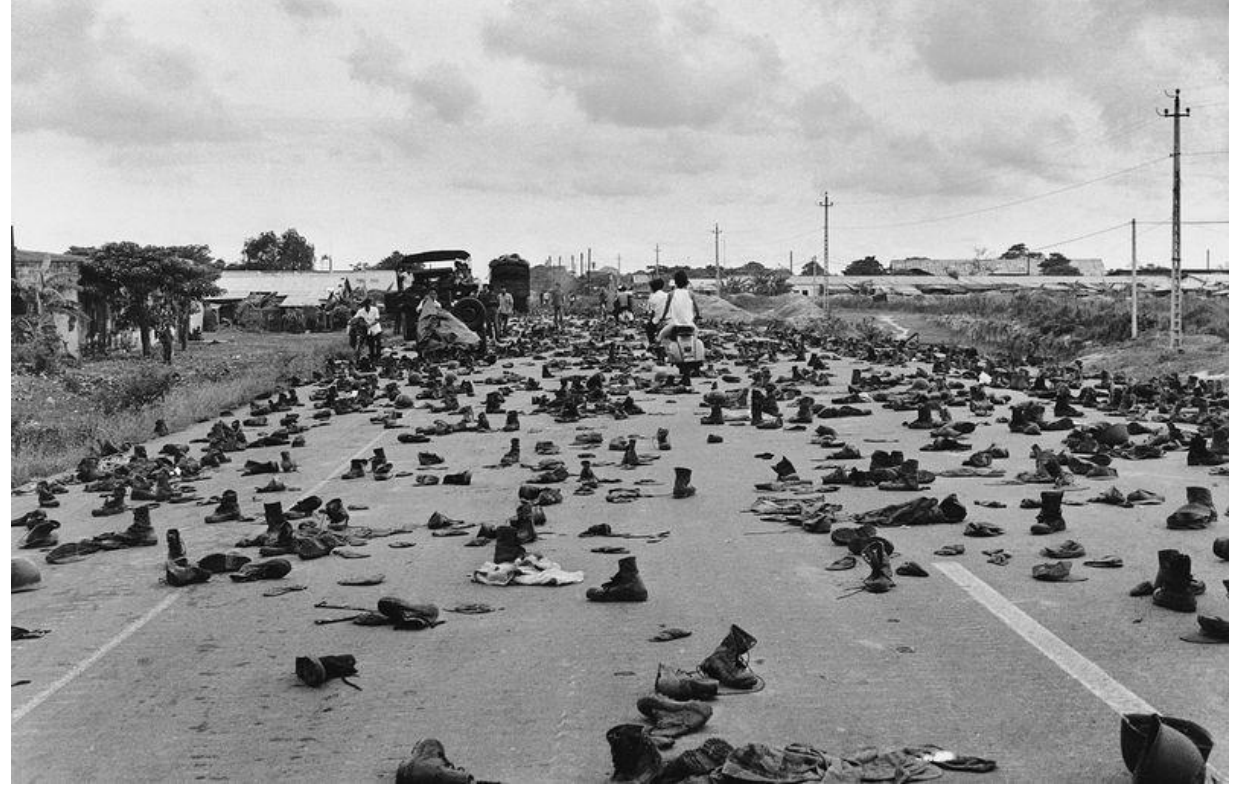


A VIETNAMESE WAR, A REGION ON FIRE





As they swam the sound of the choir again reached them, the twilight deepened and they got further and further from the bank. He recalled this had been the last peaceful stretch in the river of his life; ahead of him from that moment on there was a long, new stretch of river, full of fire.

War.

*

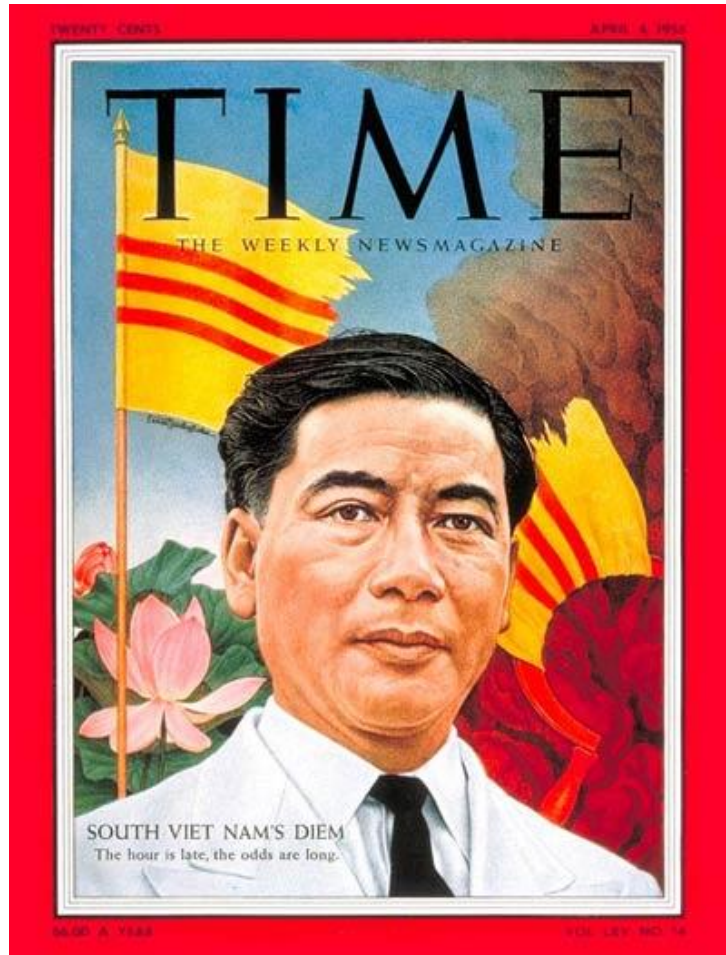
MAIN ACTORS: HO CHI MINH (1890-1969)



MAIN ACTORS: BAO DAI (1913-1997)



MAIN ACTORS: NGO DINH DIEM (1901-1963)



MAIN ACTORS: LE DUAN (1907-1986)



MAIN ACTORS: NGUYEN VAN THIEU (1923-2001)



MAIN ACTORS: 'MADAME' NGUYEN THI BINH (B.1928)



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM (NORTH)

- ❑ 1954: North-South split, exodus
- ❑ 1953-56: Attempts to create socialism
 - ❑ Imitation of China
 - ❑ Land reform
 - ❑ Radicalization, spins out of control
- ❑ 1956: Nhan Van-affair
- ❑ Collective farming
- ❑ Unified, tightly controlled, unitary state
- ❑ Increasingly geared for 'total' war



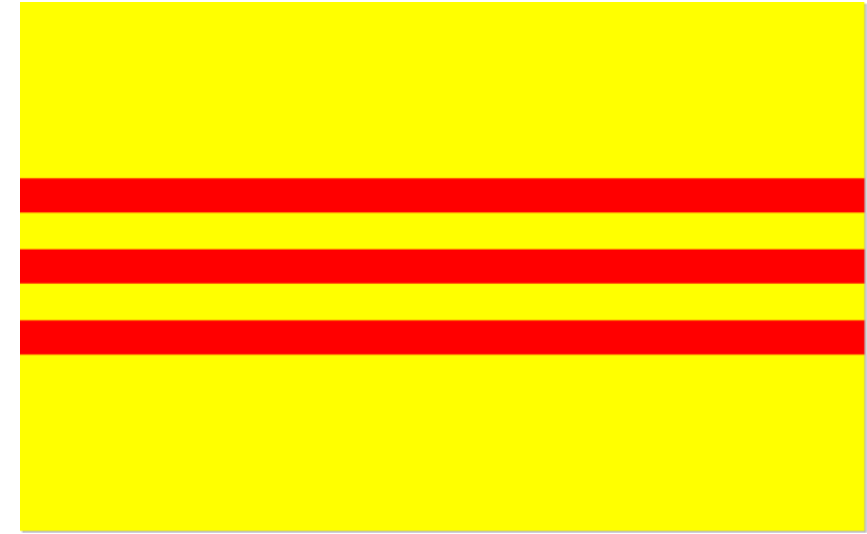
THE SEARCH FOR A WINNING STRATEGY

- ❑ Strongly influenced by a power struggle between a 'North First'-faction (inc. Giap) and 'South First' (inc. Le)
- ❑ The search for a winning strategy:
 - ❑ '54: 'People's War' in the South put off
 - ❑ '59: 15th Plenum: 'violent struggle' necessary
 - ❑ Le Duan: a grand strategy including a police state, control over revolutionaries in the South, balancing SU/China, and General Offensive
 - ❑ '64: military escalation, 1st attempt Gen. Offensive
 - ❑ '68: 2nd attempt Gen. Offensive – Tet
 - ❑ '68-72: 'Fighting while Talking', awaiting US exit
 - ❑ '72: 3rd General Offensive attempt



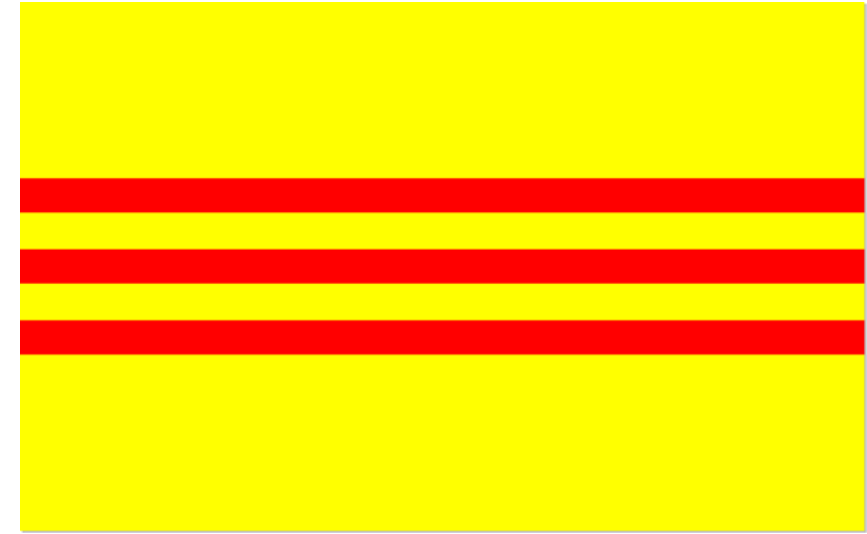
REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM (SOUTH VIETNAM)

- ❑ 1955: Elections cancelled, Republic of Vietnam; battle for Saigon
- ❑ 1955-60: repression of communists, others; national army (ARVN) crash program; 'Land reform'; 'spontaneous' rebellions
- ❑ 1960: NLF insurgency; (attempted) parallel NLF governments South-Vietnam
- ❑ 1961: Strategic Hamlet Program, Agent Orange
- ❑ 1964: Political chaos, growing NLF strength and control, increased infiltration, attempted pushover of S-Vietnam

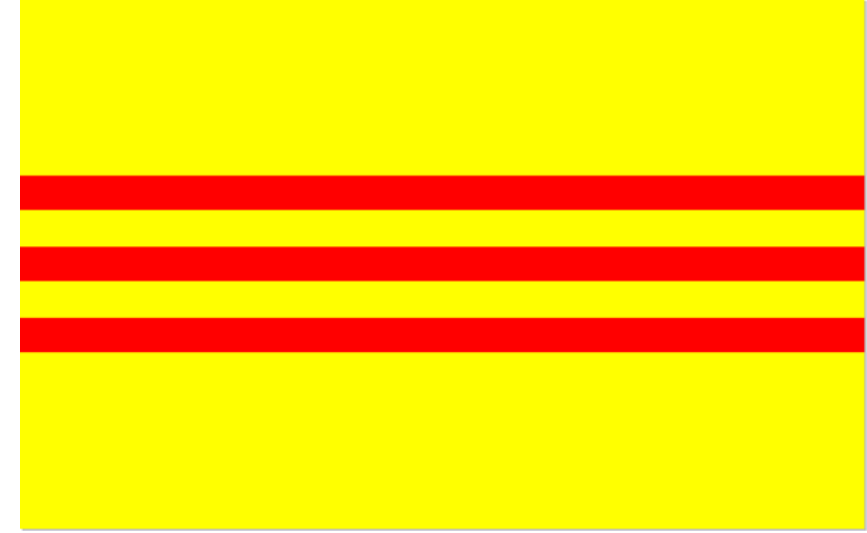


REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM (SOUTH VIETNAM)

- ❑ 1965: Thieu/Ky; American takeover of war
- ❑ 1965-68: war for Vietnamese countryside, pacification attempts, 'refugee generation' in NLF areas
- ❑ 1967: Rigged elections, Thieu president
- ❑ 1968: Tet Offensive, spike in violence
- ❑ 1969-70: NLF on defensive, 'Vietnamization'
- ❑ 1972: Easter Offensive, serious peace talks
- ❑ 1973: S-Vietnam resumes war, represses 'Third Force'
- ❑ 1975: South-Vietnam, Saigon fall



SOUTH VIETNAM: A VIABLE STATE?



❑ **Ngo Vinh Long:**

- ❑ Immense destruction of South Vietnam, mainly by US, ARVN
- ❑ All prospects for peaceful solution – including communists, various religious groups, conservatives – killed by immensely cynical, corrupt, violent Thieu regime.

❑ **Gabriel Kolko** (*Anatomy of a War*):

- ❑ South Vietnam: Purposefully corrupt regime, no popular support, no real economy
- ❑ American policy sought to stem ‘the immense economic wounds the war was inflicting long enough to allow its vague military objectives to be attained’.

❑ **Bui Diem** (Wilson Center):

- ❑ Vietnamese nationalists mangled between ‘obduracy of France’, ‘overpowering dynamic’ of the U.S., and ‘ideological obsession’ of Vietnam’s communists
- ❑ ‘South Vietnam was full of pluralistic ferment, and possibilities for change’
- ❑ ‘One leader after another tried to carve out a role (..) but were pushed to the periphery’

A REUNIFIED VIETNAM

- ❑ After the war: no murderous reckoning, but ideological and anti-capitalist campaigns, re-education camps, massive resettlement
- ❑ Distrust, dominance revolutionaries North over South
- ❑ Internal purges of Communist Party
- ❑ 1978: Vietnamese-Cambodian War
- ❑ 1979: Third Indochina War (with China)
- ❑ Economic collapse, intern. isolation, stark unitary state
- ❑ 1986: Doi Moi – Economic reforms, gradual end of collective agriculture
- ❑ '90s: Re-establishing intern. ties, tight political controls
- ❑ After 2000: very high ec. growth, marxist republic



LAOS



- ❑ Laotian Civil War, 1953-75, Pathet Lao vs. Royal Lao Government
- ❑ After '53 fighting pause, 1959: N-Vietnamese invasion
- ❑ 1960: Draws in US, Thailand, Soviet Union
- ❑ From 1962 on: 'Secret War'
- ❑ Continuous fighting throughout war period, also involving Thai, US, South Vietnamese special forces
- ❑ Very intense US bombardment of border areas,
- ❑ Air America: covert aid. And drugs (according to McCoy: *The Politics of Herion in SE Asia*)
- ❑ 1971: US/South Vietnamese invasion
- ❑ 1975: Pathet Lao/PAVN victory



CAMBODIA



- ❑ 1945: Kingdom under Sihanouk; French colony again
- ❑ 1953: Independence under Sihanouk
- ❑ Increasing difficulty to stay out of Vietnam War, esp. after 1969: air bombardment of border areas
- ❑ 1970: Lon Nol coup, 'Cambodian incursion'
- ❑ 1975: Khmer Rouge victory; genocidal policies
- ❑ 1978-79: Vietnamese invasion
- ❑ Debate remains over US culpability for destabilizing Cambodia, paving way for Khmer Rouge and subsequent genocide

