

## WHO IS ARROGANT?

### A Fact Sheet on the Vietnamese Struggle for Independence

- 1945 The Vietnamese, under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, defeat the Japanese and declare independence for all of Vietnam. France, former colonial ruler of Indochina, refuses to respect Vietnamese independence and sends in troops to regain control. The U.S. sends military aid to France.
- 1954 Vietnamese freedom fighters defeat French invaders at Dien Bien Phu. An end to the French-Indochina War is negotiated at Geneva. The Geneva Accords subscribed to by all parties including the U.S., provide for general elections to be held throughout Vietnam within 2 years.
- 1956 South Vietnamese Prime Minister Diem, supported by the U.S., refuses to hold the elections specified by the Geneva Accords. According to President Eisenhower, if the elections had been held, 80% of the Vietnamese people would have voted for Ho Chi Minh.
- Sixties South Vietnamese, desiring independence and re-unification of their country, organize against Diem. The National Liberation Front is formed. Buddhist uprising against Diem leads to his overthrow. U.S. sends aid and military advisors.
- The NLF and independence forces expand. 43% of villagers are Vietcong and only 34% are controlled by the Saigon Government, according to 1964 official U.S. Government report. The U.S. responds to the growing liberation movement by sending in ground combat troops. By 1968, there are 500,000 American troops in Vietnam, but the independence movement cannot be defeated.
- 1970 In order to decrease American casualties, Nixon begins withdrawing American ground combat troops. At the same time he expands the war to Cambodia. Laos becomes the most heavily bombed country in history. But the desire for independence grows as numerous South Vietnamese groups, including the Women's Association for Defense of the Right to Live, Catholic Labor Youth, and the Saigon Student Council, all call for total and unconditional American withdrawal.
- April 1972 North Vietnamese Army crosses the DMZ and moves South to help the NLF. Although the Geneva Accords specifically state that the 17th parallel (DMZ) "is provisional and should not in any way be interpreted as constituting a political or territorial boundary," President Nixon labels the North Vietnamese actions an "invasion across international boundaries" in an attempt to justify a major build-up of American air and naval forces.
- May 8 1972 President Nixon announces mining of Haiphong Harbor and massive bombing of North Vietnam to disrupt all transportation of military supplies. Nixon risks nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union and China in order to defeat the Vietnamese independence movement.

WHO IS ARROGANT? THE PEOPLE OF VIETNAM, FIGHTING FOR THEIR INDEPENDENCE, OR PRESIDENT NIXON?