**Prior Causes: History of Vietnam**

* **1887**: In the late 1880s, during the era of Imperialism, the French took control of Vietnam and called it French Indochina.
* **1941:** During World War II, Japan invaded and occupied Vietnam.
* **1941:** Inspired by Chinese and Soviet communism, Ho Chi Minh formed the Viet Minh, or the League for the Independence of Vietnam, to fight both Japan and the French colonial administration.
* **1945:** After the defeat of the Japanese in 1945, Japan withdrew its forces, leaving the French-educated Emperor Bao Dai in control of Vietnam. Bao Dai was a puppet to the west and enjoyed the support of the French.
* **1945:** After the departure of the Japanese, Ho Chi Minh’s Viet Minh forces rose up immediately, seizing the northern city of Hanoi and declaring a Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) with Ho as president.
* **1949:** The French felt threatened by Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh. The French set up a state of Vietnam in South Vietnam with the capital city being Saigon and the puppet leader being Bao Dai.

**Causes: Division of Vietnam**

* **1949-1954:** Fighting between Ho Chi Minh’s communist Viet Minh centered in the North and the French in the South waged on from 1949 to 1954. Armed conflict continued until a decisive battle at Dien Bien Phu in May 1954 ended in French defeat by Viet Minh forces.
* **1954:** Following the war and the departure of the French, treaty negotiations at Geneva split Vietnam along the latitude known as the 17th parallel (with Ho Chi Minh in control in the North and Bao Dai in control of the South) and called for nationwide elections for reunification to be held in 1956. Fearing that the country would vote to be united under the communist regime, the United States blocked the elections.
* **1955:** The strongly anti-communist Ngo Dinh Diem pushed Bao aside to become president of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam (GVN) in South Vietnam. The South Vietnamese received heavy support from the United States.
* **1955:** Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh retained control of North Vietnam. They received weapons and support from the communist Chinese and the Soviet Union.

**Effects: U.S. involvement**

* U.S. involvement in Vietnam was based on the Domino Theory. The Domino Theory was the belief that if one country falls to communism (Vietnam), other Asian countries will follow

**Eisenhower:**

* 1954- United States paying 78 percent of the French cost to fight in Vietnam. U.S. forces were not actively fighting the Viet Minh.

**Kennedy:**

* Advisers War (1956-1965)- Kennedy sent US officers to Vietnam to train the South Vietnamese.
* 800 advisors were present in 1959, by 1965, 17,000 advisors were in Vietnam
* Kennedy supported the assassination and overthrow of the corrupt and hated Diem

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