



Entry into the Morass

Ho Chi Minh

- 1890-1969
- 1911-19 – Rejected from school (FRA), baker (USA), waiter/chef (UK)
- 1919-23 – Learns communism in FRA →
- 1923 – Lives in Moscow & works for Comintern
- 1924 – Lived in CHN & married
- 20s & 30s – USSR, FRA, THI, Hong Kong, ITA
- 1941 – Home to Vietnam
 - Leader of communist **Vietminh** since 1941



“Bringer of Light”

- Fought in WWII & jailed by Chaing
- 1945 – Leads communists against FRA
 - Met w/ Mao & Stalin in 1950
- 1956 – After Geneva, he loses power to **Le Duan**
- Remains president until his death
 - Figurehead to a degree, but still held clout in government and decided when to negotiate



The Best of Intentions

- America lost track of the basic principle of Richelieu's foreign policy: The thing that is to be supported and the force that is to support it should stand in geometric proportion to each other (621)
- CHN vs. VIE
- US altruism had no political or geographic bounds
 - American exceptionalism turned on itself (622)



Domino Theory

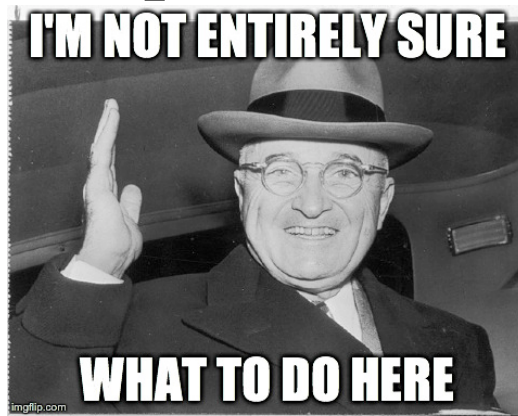
- Outlined in **NSC-64** & 68 (623)
- Did USSR really have power in these areas?
 - US thought so; fought the surrogate of a surrogate (624)
- US didn't realize Europe & SE Asia were different
 - Existing states vs. Emerging states
 - No tradition of cooperation



"You have a row of dominoes set up," said President Eisenhower, "you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly. "

Truman

- Korea → Indochina (aid to FRA) → 7th Fleet to ROC
 - By 1952, 1/3 of FRA effort in VIE from US
- Ideology based upon geopolitical strategy, NOT in support of imperialism
 - Caught between support of FRA & Containment (625)
 - 1950 – US determines Indochina can't become communist → can't spare troops → incentivize FRA
- KISS – Large enough to get US entangled, not significant enough to prove decisive (626)



US& FRA Adventures in Indochina

- US presses FRA to let Indochina be independent & keep fighting **Vietminh** to save it from communism
- Acheson – US can't defend Indochina in Indochina
 - Would be another Korea; Might attack CHN!? (627)
- HST's legacy to Ike was \$200M military aid program and a strategic theory in search of a policy



- FRA not really cooperating; engaged in guerrilla war against Vietminh (629)
 - Neither FRA nor US won guerrilla wars in VIE, but FRA did it faster
 - FRA losing severely b/c war would focus on where they were not.
 - **KISS** – Casualties kept mounting while criteria to defend progress remained elusive (630)



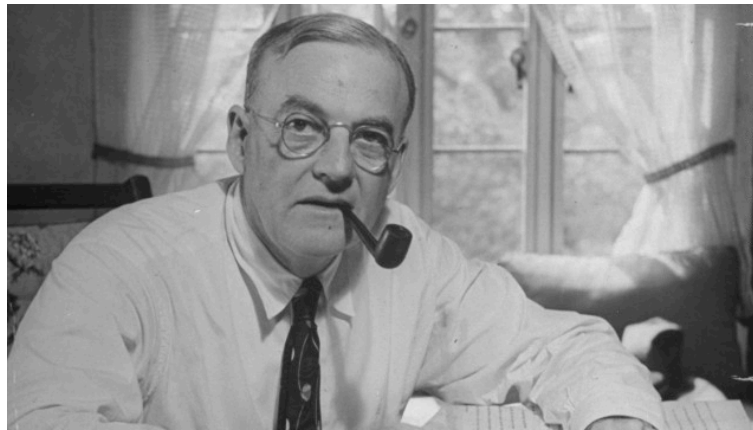
Dien Bien Phu

- FRA tried to lure Vietminh into war of attrition
 - KISS: Reduced options to irrelevance or defeat (630)
 - Lose definitively b/c they underestimate their rivals
- **3/13/1954** – All out attack by Vietminh on DBP



United Action

- Decision whether to back the Domino Theory w/ military action
- Dulles proposes coalition of US, UK, FRA, NZE, AUS & Indochina → “**United Action**”
 - Ike wanted to avoid war
 - Churchill/Eden not committed to UA
 - Dien Bien Phu falls to communists while they talk (5/7)
 - **KISS**: UA turned into an alibi for doing nothing (633)



Geneva Accords

- July 1954 – Partition of VIE @ 17th Parallel
- Official: Administrative arrangement for facilitating the regrouping of military forces prior to internationally supervised elections
 - Elections in 2 years; foreigners out in 1 year
 - KISS: Uneasy stalemate (635)



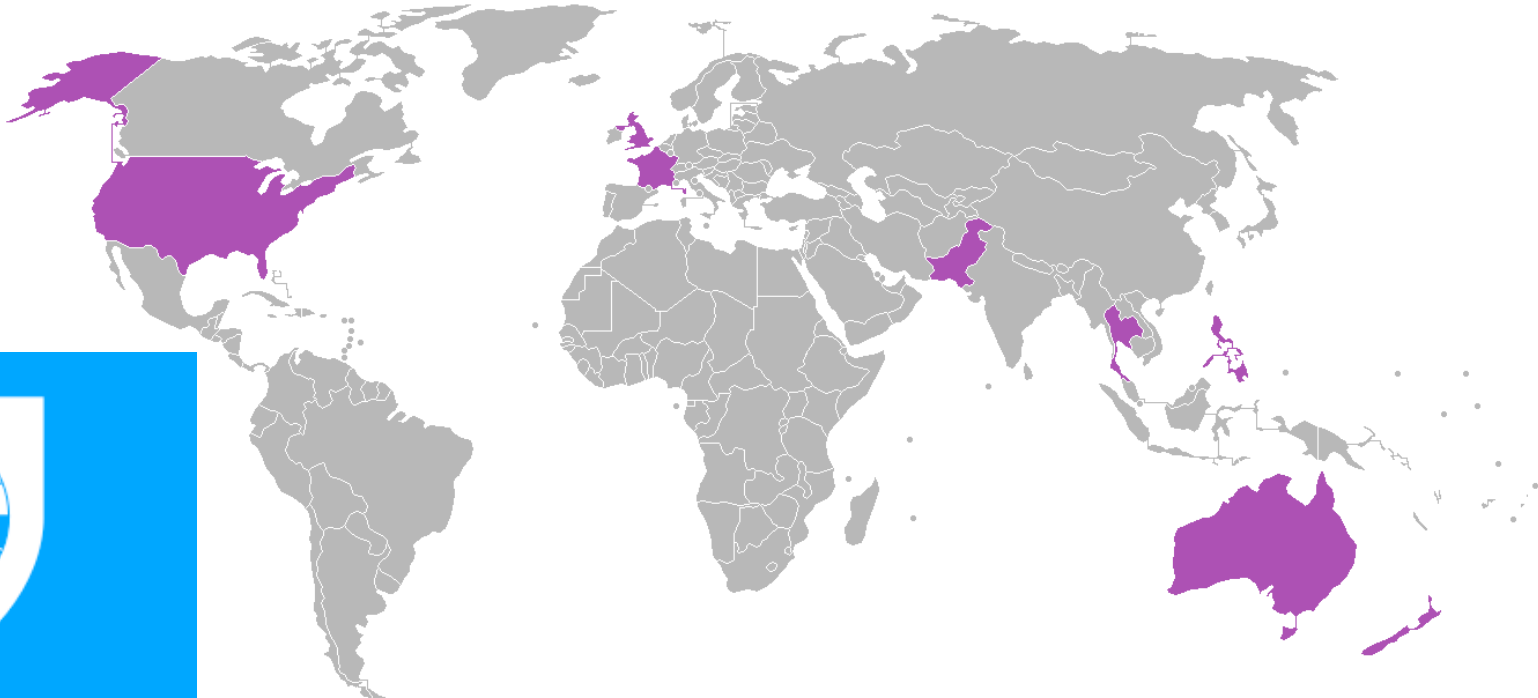
Vietnamese Statecraft

- Didn't go great
 - Lots of death in N. VIE & concentration camps
 - Mass migration from N to S
 - US installs **Ngo Dinh Diem** in S. VIE
 - KISS: Devotion to democracy proved not to be his forte (636)



SEATO

- 1954 – Southeast Asian Treaty Organization
 - US, FRA, UK, PAK, PHI, THI, AUS, NZ
 - No CHN, RUS, IND, Indonesia, Malaya, Burma
- No common political objective or means for mutual support



Ngo Dinh Diem

- Thought US would bring democracy
 - Revolutionaries find trouble reconciling with demo.
 - **KISS**: Heroes don't make comfortable companions (638)
 - Confucianism maintains objective truth, which clashes w/ democracy as well
 - Dulles: “The only horse available”



Diem in Action

- Oct. '54 – Ike promises aid in exchange for maintenance of a stable government
 - \$1B by 1961 + 1500 US military personnel
- In the beginning, things go pretty well (639)
 - Nation building obscured lagging pace of democratic reform (640)
- 1959 – Guerrilla uprisings start up again
 - 1960 – 2500 S.VIE officials assassinated each year



Military Preparedness

- US trains S. VIE army to fight conventional war
– WHY?!
- During preparation, N.VIE invade Laos & set up supply route—The Ho Chi Minh Trail
- Ike tells JFK his top priority in FP is defending Laos

