

## Vietnam Document Analysis

### Document A: Tonkin Gulf Resolution (1964)

Eighty-Eight Congress of the United States of America

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That the Congress approves and supports the determination of the President, as Commander in Chief, to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression.

The United States regards as vital to its national interest and to world peace the maintenance of international peace and security in southeast Asia...the United States is, therefore, prepared, as the President determines, to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty requesting assistance in defense of its freedom.

1. According to the document, why is it necessary to use force in Vietnam?
2. According to the document, who will determine if force is necessary?
3. How does the Tonkin Gulf Resolution impact the war powers of the President?

### Document B: Speech from President Johnson at John Hopkins University, April 7 1965

The World as it is in Asia is not a serene or peaceful place. The first reality is that North Viet-Nam has attacked the independent nation of South Viet-Nam. Its object in total conquest... trained men and supplies orders and arms, flow in a constant stream from north to south. This Support is the heartbeat of the war.

Why are these realities our concern? Why are we in South Viet-Nam? We are there because we have a promise to keep. Since 1954 every American President has offered support to the people of South Viet-Nam. We have helped to build, and we have helped to defend. Thus, over many years, we have made a national pledge to help South Viet-Nam defend its Independence. And I intend to keep that promise.

1. According to President Johnson why was the United States involved in Vietnam?
2. Can you think of any other reasons why the United States was involved in Vietnam?

### **Document C Statements by John Kerry**

Source: John Kerry, of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, testimony to the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, April 23, 1971.

I would like to talk on behalf of all those veterans, In our opinion and from our experience, there is nothing in South Vietnam which could happen that realistically threatens the United States of America. And to attempt to justify the loss of one American life in Vietnam, Cambodia or Laos by linking such loss to the preservation of freedom. . .is to us the height of criminal hypocrisy, and it is that kind of hypocrisy which we feel has torn this country apart. . .

We found most people [in Vietnam] didn't even know the difference between communism and democracy. They only wanted to work in rice paddies without helicopters strafing [repeatedly attacking] them and bombs with napalm burning their villages and tearing their country apart. . .

We rationalized destroying villages in order to save them. . . We learned the meaning of free fire zones, shooting anything that moves, and we watched while America placed a cheapness on the lives of orientals. . .

Each day . . . someone has to give up his life so that the United States doesn't have to admit something that the entire world already knows, so that we can't say that we have made a mistake. Someone has to die so that President Nixon won't be, and these are his words, "the first President to lose a war."

We are asking Americans to think about that because how do you ask a man to be the last man to die in Vietnam? How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake? We wish that a merciful God could wipe away our own memories of that service as easily as this administration has wiped away their memories of us.

1. What does Kerry say about US containment policy in Vietnam?
2. Why does Kerry feel the US wants to continue the war?
3. How is the perspective in document C different from documents A and B. Which document do you believe to be the most credible?

### **Document D: Speech by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. "Beyond Vietnam" April 4, 1967**

I come to this platform tonight to make a passionate plea to my beloved nation. There is at the outset a very obvious...connection between the war in Vietnam and the struggle that I and others have been waging in America. A few years ago...it seemed as if there was a real promise of hope for the poor, both black and white, through the poverty program. There were experiments, hopes new beginnings. Then came the build up in Vietnam, and I watched this program broken and eviscerated [gutted] ....And I knew that America would never invest in the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as adventures like Vietnam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demonic, destructive suction tube.

1. What gave Dr. King hope about America's poor?
2. Why does Dr. King no longer have that same hope?

## Document E – LBJ Economic Cartoon

"THERE'S MONEY ENOUGH TO SUPPORT BOTH OF YOU ....  
NOW, DOESN'T THAT MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER?"



## Document F: Richard Nixon Address to the nation Outlining a New Economic Policy: "The Challenge of Peace."

One of the cruelest legacies of the artificial prosperity produced by war is inflation. Inflation robs every American, every one of you. The 20 million who are retired and living on fixed incomes--they are particularly hard hit. Homemakers find it harder than ever to balance the family budget. And 80 million American wage earners have been on a treadmill. For example, in the 4 war years between 1965 and 1969, your wage increases were completely eaten up by price increases. Your paychecks were higher, but you were no better off.

We have made progress against the rise in the cost of living. From the high point of 6 percent a year in 1969, the rise in consumer prices has been cut to 4 percent in the first half of 1971. But just as is the case in our fight against unemployment, we can and we must do better than that.

The time has come for decisive action--action that will break the vicious circle of spiraling prices and costs.

I am today ordering a freeze on all prices and wages throughout the United States for a period of 90 days.<sup>1</sup> In addition, I call upon corporations to extend the wage-price freeze to all dividends.

1. How are LBJ's domestic programs pictured in the cartoon versus Vietnam?
2. According to the cartoon, what is happening economically to the US?
3. According to Nixon, how has the war affected Americans economically?
4. What is the war doing to the US economy?
5. What is Nixon's solution?

