The Vietnam War At Home

The Draft
- Three ways to Avoid the Draft – college enrollment, medical exemption, married/children – all favored?
- Poor Man’s War
- MLK called this a “crue irony”

Student Movements
- Students For a Democratic Society (SDS) – U. of Michigan, goal?
  - The “New Left”, the Weather Underground – radical faction of SDS – bombings
- Free Speech Movement (FSM) – on college campuses, Columbia University takeover, the “machine”

Methods of Protest and Resistance Used At Home
- SDS Marches – U.S. should not be world’s policeman, loss of young, a Vietnamese Civil War only
- Vietnam veterans join the protest movements
- Popularity of protest songs – counterculture
- Central Park 1967 – huge march speeches, burning of draft cards
- Thought of selves as patriots – loyal to U.S. because of protests
- Many fled to Canada to avoid the draft – 4000 resisters arrested
- March on Pentagon 1967 – tear gassed by police and National Guard

Hawks vs. Doves
- Hawks – wanted increased forces in Vietnam
- 1967 – 67% of Americans supported the war despite the “credibility gap” – living room war
- saw protests as acts of disloyalty
- Doves – protested – called for withdrawal from Vietnam

End of 1967
- President Johnson reacts to critics in Congress and protesters – “nervous nellies”
- Protesters – misguided and misinformed
- Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara resigns
- War was a stalemate, didn’t make sense to continue with high body counts
- 1968 will become one of the worst years in the 20th century

Nixon – elected 1968
- Policy of Vietnamization 1969
- Peace talks in Paris 1969 – stalemate, “peace with honor”
- influence of the Silent Majority
- discovery of the My Lai Massacre – Lt. William Calley
- Nixon orders the invasion of Cambodia – April 1970 – Congress not notified
- Kent State and Jackson State students killed – May 1970
- Response of public to student deaths?
- Congress repeals the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution 1971
- Pentagon Papers revealed – what did they say?
- Reaction of public to Pentagon Papers
Conclusion of the War
• **Henry Kissinger** – Secretary of State – “peace is at hand” – October 1972
• Christmas bombings 1972 on Hanoi (NV)
• Calls worldwide to end war – Beijing/Moscow
• January 27, 1973 – war ends, NV troops remained in SV
• April 1975 – **Saigon falls**, Ho Chi Minh City today

Effects of War on Veterans
• Americans were indifferent and hostile – no celebrations
• Post-traumatic stress syndrome defined – 15%
• Widespread drug and alcohol abuse
• POWs – thousands remained for 1-8 years after war, many still missing
• 1982 – War Memorial Dedicated in Washington D.C.

Effects of the War on the United States
• Divisions continue
• Hawks – war could have been won, blamed protesters for decreasing morale
• Doves – argue that the NV would have never surrendered, that China and the SU could have entered
• New American point of view on foreign policy – consider risks before involvement
• New American point of view on U.S. government – cynicism, doubt, mistrust, suspicion – credibility gap remains

Policy Changes
• **War Powers Act** 1973 – President must inform Congress within 48 hours of sending out troops, troops may only remain 90 days unless war declared
• The draft is abolished