

THE VIETNAM WAR

A GRAPHIC HISTORY



BY DWIGHT JON ZIMMERMAN & WAYNE VARSANT

FOREWORD BY GENERAL CECIL BOWEN (RET.)

THE VIETNAM WAR

A GRAPHIC HISTORY

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ART BY WAYNE VANSANT

FOREWORD BY GENERAL CHUCK HORNER, USAF (RET.)



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LYNDON JOHNSON ASKED THE MEMBERS OF HIS PREDECESSOR'S CABINET TO REMAIN AS PART OF HIS **ADMINISTRATION**. IT WAS AN IMPORTANT DISPLAY OF **UNITY** AND CONTINUITY.

JOHNSON, A FORMER SENATOR FROM TEXAS, WAS A **MASTER** OF THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS AND HAD A KEEN SENSE OF **DOMESTIC ISSUES**. BUT IN MATTERS OF **FOREIGN POLICY**, WHERE HIS HAND WAS LESS SURE, HE WOULD RELY HEAVILY ON THE **ADVICE** OF OTHERS. ONE OF HIS MOST INFLUENTIAL ADVISORS WAS **SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ROBERT S. MCNAMARA**.

...Thus, purely in terms of foreign policy, the stakes are high.
Robert S. McNamara
Secretary of Defense
March 16, 1964

CHINA HAD FALLEN UNDER COMMUNIST CONTROL IN 1949 DURING THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRESIDENT HARRY TRUMAN, A **DEMOCRAT**. SINCE THEN, THE REPUBLICANS HAD BLAMED THE DEMOCRATS FOR **"LOSING CHINA."**

PROPOSAL FOR A NATIONWIDE WAR ON THE SOURCES OF POVERTY

Special Message to Congress
March 16, 1964

FINAL DRAFT

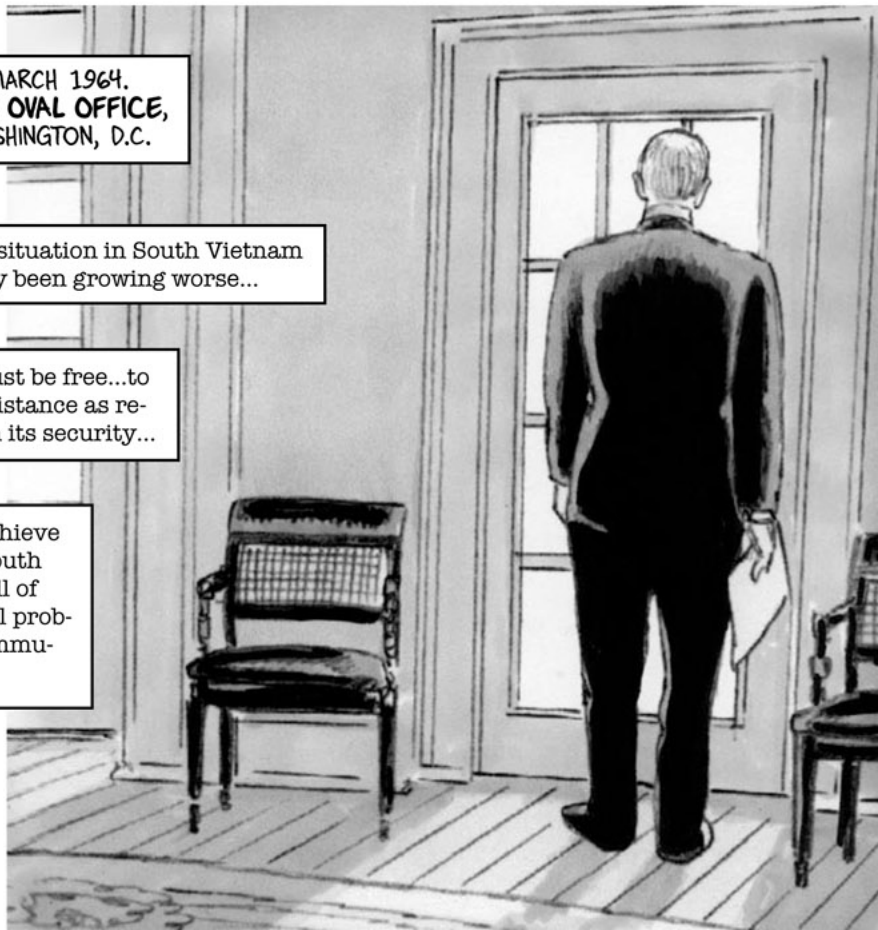


MARCH 1964.
THE OVAL OFFICE,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. President, the situation in South Vietnam has unquestionably been growing worse...

South Vietnam must be free...to accept outside assistance as required to maintain its security...

...Unless we can achieve this objective in South Vietnam, almost all of Southeast Asia will probably fall under Communist dominance...



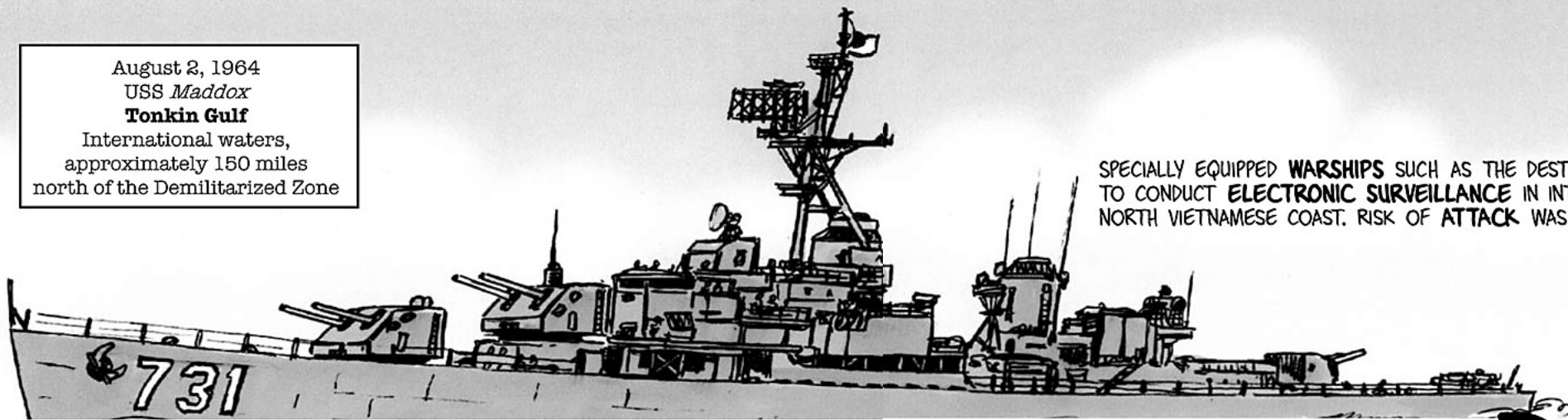
JOHNSON DECIDED VIETNAM COULD NOT "GO THE WAY CHINA WENT," BUT HE ALSO DID NOT WANT TO ASK CONGRESS TO **DECLARE WAR** ON NORTH VIETNAM.

JOHNSON PLANNED AS A **CENTERPIECE** OF HIS ADMINISTRATION A SWEEPING DOMESTIC SOCIAL PROGRAM THAT HE CALLED THE **GREAT SOCIETY**. HE DID NOT WANT A DECLARED WAR TO FOCUS THE NATION'S RESOURCES ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD AND SIPHON AWAY THE **FUNDS** HE NEEDED FOR GREAT SOCIETY PROGRAMS.

HE BELIEVED HE COULD CONTAIN THE CONFLICT IN VIETNAM SO THAT IT WOULD NOT THREATEN HIS GREAT SOCIETY PROGRAM--IF ONLY HE COULD FIND A WAY TO GET CONGRESSIONAL **APPROVAL** SHORT OF A WAR DECLARATION.

FOR SEVERAL WEEKS, THE U.S. NAVY HAD BEEN CONDUCTING **OPERATION DESOTO**.

August 2, 1964
USS *Maddox*
Tonkin Gulf
International waters,
approximately 150 miles
north of the Demilitarized Zone



SPECIALLY EQUIPPED **WARSHIPS** SUCH AS THE DESTROYER *MADDOX* WERE TASKED TO CONDUCT **ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE** IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS OFF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE COAST. RISK OF **ATTACK** WAS REGARDED AS LOW.

AT 4:30 THAT AFTERNOON...

CAPTAIN, WE ARE UNDER ATTACK BY NORTH VIETNAMESE PATROL BOATS! ENEMY TORPEDOES IN THE WATER!

HARD TO PORT!

RETURN FIRE!

KA-BAM

THE GREAT SOCIETY

THE GREAT SOCIETY WAS THE MOST SWEEPING **SOCIAL REFORM PROGRAM** SINCE PRESIDENT FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT'S 'NEW DEAL' OF THE 1930S. ITS PRIMARY GOALS WERE THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL INJUSTICE AND OF POVERTY.

- **CIVIL RIGHTS:** CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 (FORBIDDING JOB DISCRIMINATION AND SEGREGATION IN PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS); VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965 (VOTING REFORMS); IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY SERVICES ACT OF 1965 (ELIMINATING QUOTAS); CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1968 (BANNING HOUSING DISCRIMINATION, EXTENDING CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS TO NATIVE AMERICANS).

- **WAR ON POVERTY:** ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 1964 (FOCUSED ON IMPROVING THE LIFE OF THE POOR THROUGH EDUCATION, JOB TRAINING, AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT).

- **HEALTH CARE:** MEDICARE (1965) AND MEDICAID (1966) WERE CREATED AS A RESULT OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT OF 1965.

- **EDUCATION:** ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965 (PROVIDING FOR THE FIRST TIME SIGNIFICANT FEDERAL AID FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION); HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 1965 (GIVING FEDERAL MONIES FOR UNIVERSITIES, STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS, AND LOW-INTEREST LOANS; AND CREATING THE NATIONAL TEACHER CORPS FOR ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED REGIONS).

- **TRANSPORTATION:** THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (AUTHORIZED 1966) WAS MADE A CABINET-LEVEL POSITION; URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ACT OF 1964.

- **CONSUMER PROTECTION:** CIGARETTE LABELING ACT OF 1965; NATIONAL TRAFFIC AND MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY ACT OF 1966 AND THE HIGHWAY SAFETY ACT OF 1966 (ESTABLISHING FOR THE FIRST TIME VEHICLE SAFETY STANDARDS); CHILD SAFETY ACT OF 1966 AND FLAMMABLE FABRICS ACT OF 1967; WHOLESOME MEAT ACT OF 1967; TRUTH-IN-LENDING ACT OF 1968, AND OTHER MEASURES.

- **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION:** CLEAN AIR, WATER QUALITY, AND CLEAN WATER RESTORATION ACTS AND AMENDMENTS; WILDERNESS ACT OF 1964; LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION ACT OF 1965; SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL ACT OF 1965; MOTOR VEHICLE AIR POLLUTION CONTROL ACT OF 1965; ENDANGERED SPECIES PRESERVATION ACT OF 1966; NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM ACT OF 1968; WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT OF 1968; AIRCRAFT NOISE ABATEMENT ACT OF 1968; AND THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT OF 1969.

- **ARTS AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS:** NATIONAL FOUNDATION ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES ACT OF 1965; PUBLIC BROADCASTING ACT OF 1967; CULTURAL CENTERS INCLUDING THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS WERE ESTABLISHED.

ONE NORTH VIETNAMESE PATROL BOAT WAS SEVERELY DAMAGED. THE OTHERS WERE DRIVEN OFF BY AIRCRAFT FROM THE CARRIER **TICONDEROGA**.



TWO DAYS LATER, ON THE NIGHT OF **AUGUST 4**, THE **MADDOX** AND SISTER SHIP **TURNER JOY** WERE ONCE AGAIN IN **INTERNATIONAL WATERS** OFF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE COAST, APPROXIMATELY 200 MILES NORTH OF THE DMZ, WHEN THEY REPORTED ANOTHER PATROL BOAT ATTACK.



UNDER PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S ORDERS, THE NAVY LAUNCHED **OPERATION PIERCE ARROW** AGAINST THE NORTH VIETNAMESE PETROLEUM STORAGE SITE AT VINH, ABOUT 140 MILES NORTH OF THE DMZ, AND AGAINST NORTH VIETNAMESE NAVAL VESSELS IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA.



THE NAVY FLEW **64 SORTIES** FROM THE AIRCRAFT CARRIERS **CONSTELLATION** AND **TICONDEROGA**. THE PETROLEUM STORAGE SITE WAS **DESTROYED**. A HANDFUL OF VESSELS WERE DAMAGED AND SUNK.

AT THE SAME TIME, SECRETARY OF DEFENSE **MCNAMARA** WAS PRESENTING TO CONGRESS "**UNEQUIVOCAL PROOF**" OF THE "**UNPROVOKED ATTACKS**" AGAINST AMERICAN WARSHIPS.



MOST PEOPLE **APPROVED** OF JOHNSON'S HANDLING OF THE CRISIS. THE WHITE HOUSE QUICKLY SENT CONGRESS A DRAFT **RESOLUTION** REGARDING SOUTHEAST ASIA. THE **KEY PART** OF THE RESOLUTION WAS SUPPORT FOR THE PRESIDENT IN **REPELLING ARMED ATTACKS** AGAINST U.S. FORCES.

SOME MEMBERS ASKED ABOUT THE PHRASE IN **SECTION 2** THAT AUTHORIZED THE PRESIDENT "TO TAKE ALL NECESSARY STEPS, INCLUDING THE USE OF ARMED FORCE." THEY WERE ASSURED THE ADMINISTRATION HAD NO INTENTION OF **ESCALATING U.S. INVOLVEMENT**.



THE **TONKIN GULF RESOLUTION**, AS IT WAS CALLED, WAS PASSED ON AUGUST 7.

SENATOR WAYNE MORSE, A DEMOCRAT, WAS ONE OF ONLY TWO SENATORS TO VOTE **NO**.



...WHICH IS NOW ABOUT TO MAKE SUCH AN **HISTORIC MISTAKE**.

EVENTUALLY, **DOCUMENTS** REVEALED A COLLECTION OF MISTAKES AND **FALSE CLAIMS** SURROUNDING THE TONKIN GULF INCIDENTS. BUT, BY THEN, IT WAS FAR **TOO LATE**.

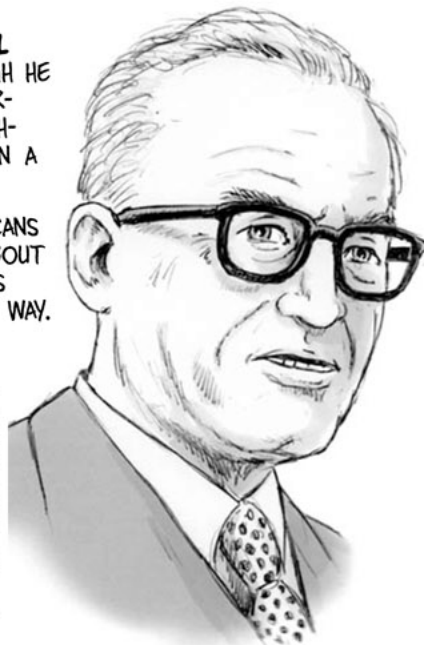
CONGRESS HAD GIVEN PRESIDENT JOHNSON THE POWER TO WAGE **UNDECLARED WAR** IN SOUTH VIETNAM.



1964 WAS A **PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION YEAR**. ALTHOUGH HE NOW HAD ENHANCED AUTHORITY TO WAGE WAR IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA, JOHNSON RAN ON A "**PEACE TICKET**."

AT THE TIME, MOST AMERICANS DIDN'T KNOW **ANYTHING** ABOUT VIETNAM, AND JOHNSON WAS CONTENT TO KEEP IT THAT WAY.

ARIZONA **SENATOR BARRY GOLDWATER** WAS THE REPUBLICAN **CANDIDATE**. HE SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD EITHER GO ALL-OUT MILITARILY, OR GET OUT OF **SOUTHEAST ASIA**.



GOING ALL-OUT WOULD INCLUDE "CARRYING THE WAR TO NORTH VIETNAM" AND WOULD CONSIDER THE OPTION OF LOW-LEVEL ATOMIC WEAPONS TO DEFOLIATE INFILTRATION ROUTES.

DEMOCRATS LABELED GOLDWATER A **WARMONGER**. THEY Aired A TV COMMERCIAL IMPLYING THAT IF ELECTED, GOLDWATER WOULD LEAD THE COUNTRY INTO A **NUCLEAR CONFRONTATION**.



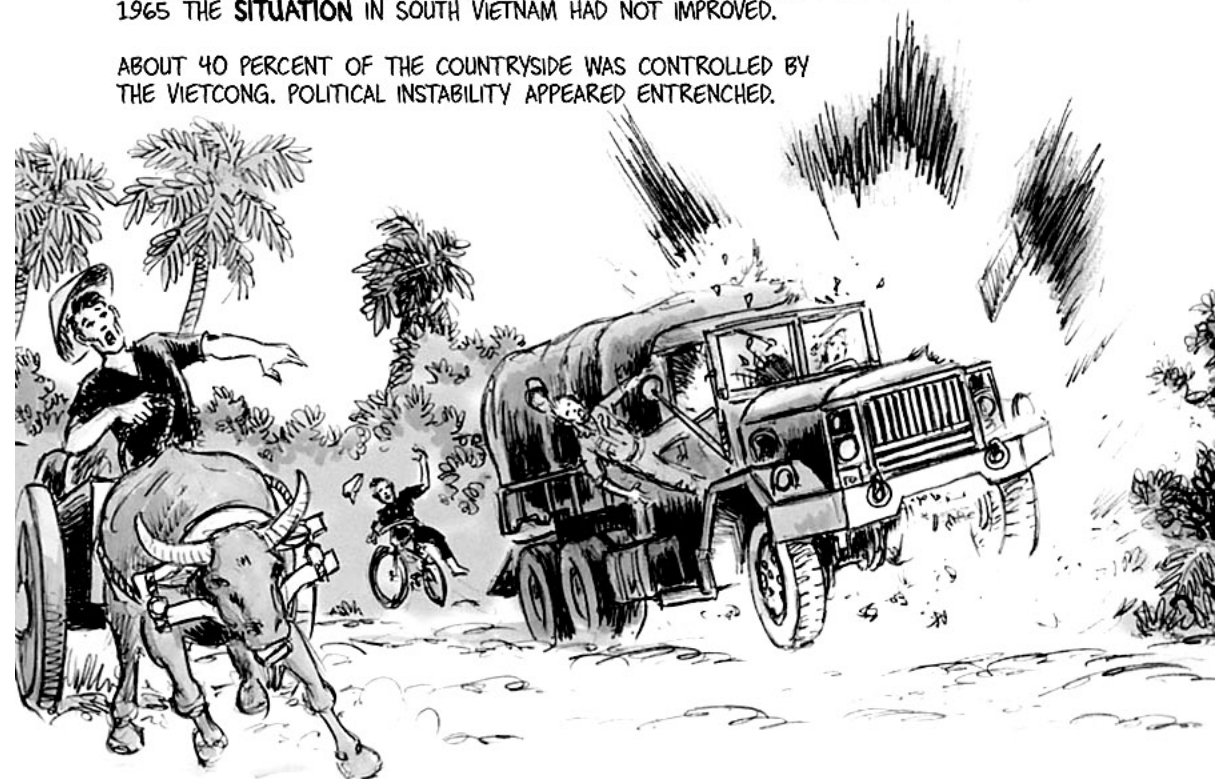
JOHNSON **WON**, RECEIVING ABOUT 61 PERCENT OF THE POPULAR VOTE.

IT IS A MANDATE FOR **UNITY**, FOR A GOVERNMENT THAT SERVES NO **SPECIAL INTEREST**.



DESPITE INCREASED **AMERICAN AID** THAT INCLUDED **MILITARY ADVISORS**, BY EARLY 1965 THE **SITUATION** IN SOUTH VIETNAM HAD NOT IMPROVED.

ABOUT 40 PERCENT OF THE COUNTRYSIDE WAS CONTROLLED BY THE **VIETCONG**. POLITICAL INSTABILITY APPEARED ENTRENCHED.

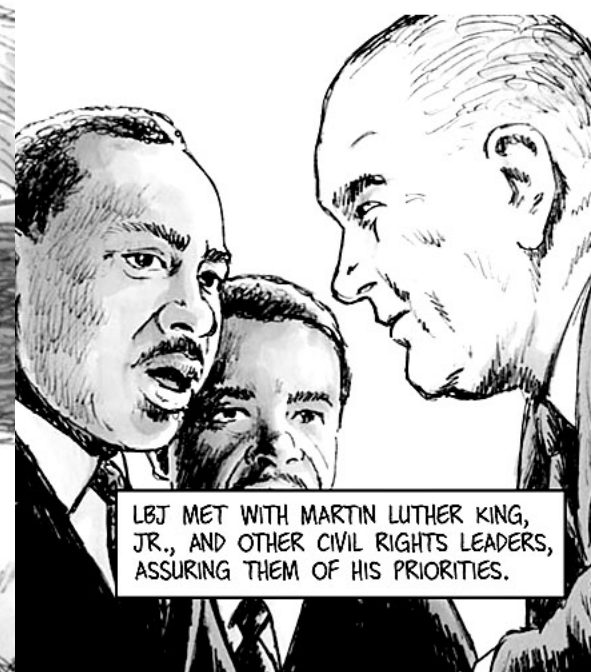


IT WAS LESS THAN TWO YEARS AFTER THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT DIEM IN 1963, AND SOUTH VIETNAM WAS ALREADY ON ITS **NINTH GOVERNMENT**--THIS TIME A MILITARY DICTATORSHIP WITH GENERAL NGUYEN CAO KY AS PREMIER AND GENERAL NGUYEN VAN THIEU AS PRESIDENT.

JOHNSON WAS FRUSTRATED. HE REFERRED TO VIETNAM AS "THAT BITCH OF A WAR" THAT DRAINED MONEY FROM "THE WOMAN I LOVE"...THE GREAT SOCIETY PROGRAM.

JOHNSON WANTED A **LOW-COST SOLUTION** TO THE WAR. HIS AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF, GENERAL CURTIS LEMAY, A WORLD WAR II HERO, HAD ONE.

...AN **ALL-OUT AIR CAMPAIGN**. WE'LL BOMB THE NORTH VIETNAMESE BACK TO THE **STONE AGE**.



LBJ MET WITH MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., AND OTHER CIVIL RIGHTS LEADERS, ASSURING THEM OF HIS PRIORITIES.

