

The Vietnam War

1954–1975

- SECTION 1** Going to War in Vietnam
- SECTION 2** Vietnam Divides the Nation
- SECTION 3** The War Winds Down

American soldiers march up a hill in Vietnam in 1968, as fires behind them send smoke into the air.

Eisenhower
1953–1961



1955

- U.S. military aid and advisers are sent to South Vietnam

Kennedy
1961–1963



Johnson
1963–1969



1964

- Congress passes Gulf of Tonkin Resolution

1965

- U.S. combat troops arrive in Vietnam

U.S. PRESIDENTS

U.S. EVENTS

WORLD EVENTS

1954

- France leaves Indochina; Geneva Accords divide Vietnam in two

1958

- U.S. troops land in Lebanon

1960

- U-2 spy plane is shot down



MAKING CONNECTIONS

Should Citizens Support the Government During Wartime?

During the Cold War, the United States sent troops to Vietnam to stop the spread of communism. Winning in Vietnam proved to be difficult and, as the war dragged on, many Americans began to protest. Eventually, the United States pulled out of Vietnam.

- *Why do you think the United States sent troops to Vietnam?*
- *Why do you think Vietnam divided Americans?*



1968

- Tet Offensive begins
- Anti-war protest in Chicago

Nixon
1969–1974



1970

- National Guard troops kill student protesters at Kent State

1973

- Last U.S. troops leave Vietnam

1970

1970

- Nixon orders invasion of Cambodia

1975

- Saigon falls to North Vietnamese invasion

FOLDABLES™

Defining Vietnam Terminology

Make a Vocabulary Book Foldable to aid your review of the Vietnam War. Select terms for a 10-tab Vocabulary Book. Example terms include: *Ho Chi Minh*, *Containment*, and *Gulf of Tonkin Resolution*. Define the terms under the appropriate tab.



History  **ONLINE Chapter Overview**
Visit glencoe.com to preview Chapter 26.

Section 1

Going to War in Vietnam

Guide to Reading

Big Ideas

Trade, War, and Migration American involvement in the war in Vietnam was the result of its Cold War strategy.

Content Vocabulary

- domino theory (p. 883)
- guerrilla (p. 883)
- napalm (p. 889)
- Agent Orange (p. 889)

Academic Vocabulary

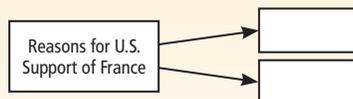
- strategic (p. 885)
- traditional (p. 885)

People and Events to Identify

- Ho Chi Minh (p. 882)
- Dien Bien Phu (p. 884)
- Geneva Accords (p. 884)
- Ngo Dinh Diem (p. 884)
- Vietcong (p. 885)
- Gulf of Tonkin Resolution (p. 886)
- Ho Chi Minh trail (p. 889)

Reading Strategy

Organizing Complete a graphic organizer similar to the one below by providing reasons why the United States aided France in Vietnam.



In the late 1940s and early 1950s, most Americans knew little about Indochina, France's colony in Southeast Asia. During the Cold War, however, American officials became concerned the region might fall to communism. Eventually, American troops were sent to fight in Vietnam.

American Involvement in Vietnam

MAIN Idea The Cold War policy of containment led the United States to become increasingly involved in events in Vietnam.

HISTORY AND YOU Have you met anyone who was born in Vietnam? Do you know why he or she left? Read to learn about Vietnam's complicated and tragic history.

In 1940, the Japanese invaded Vietnam. The occupation was only the latest example of foreigners ruling the Vietnamese people. The Chinese Empire had controlled the region for hundreds of years. Then, beginning in the late 1800s and lasting until World War II, France ruled Vietnam as well as neighboring Laos and Cambodia—a region known collectively as French Indochina.

The Growth of Vietnamese Nationalism

The Vietnamese did not want to be ruled by foreigners, and by the early 1900s, nationalism had become a powerful force in the country. The Vietnamese formed several political parties to push for independence or for reform of the French colonial government. One of the leaders of the nationalist movement for almost 30 years was Nguyen Tat Thanh—better known by his assumed name, **Ho Chi Minh**. At the age of 21, Ho Chi Minh traveled to Europe where he lived in London and then Paris. In 1919 he presented a petition for Vietnamese independence at the Versailles Peace Conference, but the peace treaty ignored the issue. Ho Chi Minh later visited the Soviet Union where he became an advocate of communism. In 1930 he returned to Southeast Asia, helped found the Indochinese Communist Party, and worked to overthrow French rule.

Ho Chi Minh's activities made him a wanted man. He fled Indochina and spent several years in exile in the Soviet Union and China. In 1941 he returned to Vietnam. By then, Japan had seized control of the country. Ho Chi Minh organized a nationalist group called the Vietminh. The group united both Communists and non-Communists in the struggle to expel the Japanese forces. Soon afterward, the United States began sending aid to the Vietminh.



President Eisenhower warned that if Vietnam fell to communism, the whole region might fall, like dominos. But why would it matter if the region became communist? This map shows why.

Malaysian Rubber and Tin
Malaysia produces large amounts of tin and rubber needed by Western industries. If it fell to communism, the supplies might be cut off.

Food for Japan
Japan was a key U.S. ally, helping to contain communism in Asia. Japan had to import food, and South Vietnam was a major supplier of rice for the region.

Oil From Indonesia
Japan also depended on imported oil. If Southeast Asia fell to communism, oil supplies might be cut off.

Strait of Malacca
Much of the world's shipping passes through this narrow strait. If Vietnam became communist, bombers would be in range to threaten to block this strait.

Analyzing GEOGRAPHY

- Regions** What two aspects of a Communist Vietnam threatened the economy of Japan?
- Location** What was the threat to world shipping if Vietnam became a Communist country?



America Aids the French

When Japan surrendered to the Allies in 1945, it gave up control of Indochina. Ho Chi Minh quickly declared Vietnam to be an independent nation. France, however, had no intention of allowing Vietnam to become independent. Seeking to regain their colonial empire in Southeast Asia, French troops returned to Vietnam in 1946 and drove the Vietminh forces into hiding in the countryside.

The Vietminh fought back against the French-dominated regime and slowly gained control of large areas of the countryside. As the fighting escalated, France appealed to the United States for help. The request put American officials in a difficult position. The United States opposed colonialism. It had pressured the Dutch to give up their empire in Indonesia and supported the British decision to give India independence in 1947. In Vietnam, however, the independence movement had become entangled with the Communist movement. American officials did not want France to control Vietnam, but they also did not want Vietnam to be communist.

Two events convinced President Truman to help France—the fall of China to communism and the outbreak of the Korean War. The latter, in

particular, indicated that the Soviet Union had begun a major push to impose communism on East Asia. Shortly after the Korean War began, Truman authorized military aid to French forces in Vietnam. President Eisenhower continued Truman's policy and defended his decision with what became known as the **domino theory**—the idea that if Vietnam fell to communism, the rest of Southeast Asia would follow:

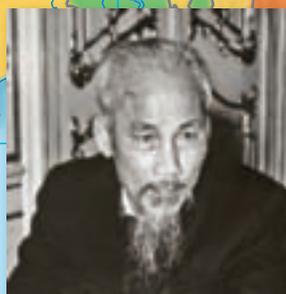
PRIMARY SOURCE

"You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly. ... Asia, after all, has already lost some 450 million of its peoples to Communist dictatorship, and we simply can't afford greater losses."

—quoted in *America in Vietnam*

Defeat at Dien Bien Phu

Despite aid from the United States, the French continued to struggle against the Vietminh, who consistently frustrated the French with hit-and-run and ambush tactics. These are the tactics of **guerrillas**, irregular troops who blend into the civilian population and are difficult for regular armies to fight.



▲ Ho Chi Minh, communist leader of North Vietnam, was determined to reunite Vietnam and began arming Vietcong guerrillas to seize power in South Vietnam.



▲ Mao Zedong, leader of Communist China, supported North Vietnam.



▲ Ngo Dinh Diem, South Vietnam's president, accepted American aid to fight the Vietcong.

Analyzing GEOGRAPHY

- Regions** Why do you think Mao supported North Vietnam?
- Human-Environment Interaction** What difficulties would North Vietnam face in sending aid to the Vietcong?

The mounting casualties and the inability of the French to defeat the Vietminh made the war very unpopular in France. Finally, in 1954 the struggle reached a turning point when the French commander ordered his forces to occupy the mountain town of **Dien Bien Phu**. Seizing the town would interfere with the Vietminh's supply lines and force them into open battle. Soon afterward, a huge Vietminh force surrounded Dien Bien Phu and began bombarding the town. On May 7, 1954, the French force at Dien Bien Phu fell to the Vietminh. The defeat convinced the French to make peace and withdraw from Indochina.

Geneva Accords

Negotiations to end the conflict were held in Geneva, Switzerland. The **Geneva Accords** divided Vietnam along the 17th parallel, with Ho Chi Minh and the Vietminh in control of North Vietnam and a pro-Western regime in control of the South. In 1956 elections were to be held to reunite the country under a single government. The Geneva Accords also recog-

nized Cambodia's independence. Laos had gained independence in the previous year.

Shortly after the Geneva Accords partitioned Vietnam, the French troops left. The United States became the principal protector of the new government in the South, led by a nationalist leader named **Ngo Dinh Diem** (NOH DIHN deh•EHM). Like Ho Chi Minh, Diem had been educated abroad, but, unlike the North Vietnamese leader, Diem was pro-Western and fiercely anti-Communist. A Catholic, he welcome the roughly one million North Vietnamese Catholics who migrated south to escape Ho Chi Minh's rule.

The elections mandated by the Geneva Accords never took place. In a special referendum, Diem became president of the new Republic of Vietnam in the South. He then refused to permit the 1956 elections, fearing Ho Chi Minh would win. Eisenhower approved Diem's actions and increased American aid to South Vietnam.

Reading Check Summarizing Why did Ho Chi Minh lead a resistance movement against France?

America Becomes Involved in Vietnam

MAIN Idea Political pressures in the United States led the nation to become deeply involved in the civil war in Vietnam.

HISTORY AND YOU Do you have a relative or family friend who fought in the Vietnam War? Read on to find out why the United States got involved in this complicated conflict.

After Ngo Dinh Diem refused to hold national elections, Ho Chi Minh and the Communists began an armed struggle to reunify the nation. They organized a new guerilla army of South Vietnamese Communists, which became known as the **Vietcong**. As fighting began between the Vietcong and South Vietnam's forces, President Eisenhower sent hundreds of military advisers to train South Vietnam's army.

Despite American assistance, the Vietcong continued to grow more powerful because many Vietnamese opposed Diem's government. The Vietcong's use of terror was also effective. By 1961, the Vietcong had assassinated thousands of government officials and established control over much of the countryside. In response Diem looked increasingly to the United States to keep South Vietnam from collapsing.

Kennedy Takes Over

On taking office in 1961, President Kennedy continued the nation's policy of support for South Vietnam. Like Presidents Truman and Eisenhower before him, Kennedy saw the Southeast Asian country as vitally important in the battle against communism.

In political terms, Kennedy needed to appear tough on communism, since Republicans often accused Democrats of having lost China to communism during the Truman administration. From 1961 to late 1963, the number of American military personnel in South Vietnam jumped from about 2,000 to around 15,000.

American officials believed that the Vietcong continued to grow because Diem's government was unpopular and corrupt. They urged him to create a more democratic government and to introduce reforms to help Vietnam's

peasants. Diem introduced some limited reforms, but they had little effect.

One program Diem introduced, at the urging of American advisers, made the situation worse. The South Vietnamese created special fortified villages known as **strategic** hamlets. These villages were protected by machine guns, bunkers, trenches, and barbed wire. Vietnamese officials then moved villagers to the strategic hamlets. The program proved to be extremely unpopular. Many peasants resented being uprooted from their villages, where they had worked to build farms and where many of their ancestors lay buried.

The Overthrow of Diem

Diem made himself even more unpopular by discriminating against Buddhism, one of the country's most widely practiced religions. In the spring of 1963, Diem, a Catholic, banned the **traditional** religious flags for Buddha's birthday. When Buddhists took to the streets in protest, Diem's police killed 9 people and injured 14 others. In the demonstrations that followed, a Buddhist monk poured gasoline over his robes and set himself on fire, the first of several Buddhists to do so. Images of their self-destruction horrified Americans as they watched the footage on television news reports. These extreme acts of protest were a disturbing sign of the opposition to the Diem regime.

In August 1963 American ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge arrived in Vietnam. He quickly learned that Diem's unpopularity had so alarmed several Vietnamese generals that they were plotting to overthrow him. When Lodge expressed American sympathy for their cause, the generals launched a military coup. They seized power on November 1, 1963, and executed Diem shortly afterward.

Diem's overthrow only made matters worse. Despite his unpopularity with some Vietnamese, Diem had been a respected nationalist and a capable administrator. After his death, South Vietnam's government grew increasingly weak and unstable. The United States became even more deeply involved in order to prop it up. Coincidentally, three weeks after Diem's death, President Kennedy was assassinated. The presidency, as well as the growing problem of Vietnam, now belonged to Kennedy's vice president, Lyndon Johnson.

Johnson and Vietnam

Initially, President Johnson exercised caution and restraint regarding the conflict in Vietnam. “We seek no wider war,” he repeatedly promised. At the same time, Johnson was determined to prevent South Vietnam from becoming communist. “The battle against communism,” he declared shortly before becoming president, “must be joined . . . with strength and determination.”

Politics also played a role in Johnson’s Vietnam policy. Like Kennedy, Johnson remembered that many Republicans blamed the Truman administration for the fall of China to communism in 1949. Should the Democrats also “lose” Vietnam, Johnson feared, it might cause a “mean and destructive debate that would shatter my Presidency, kill my administration, and damage our democracy.”

 For the text of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution see R57 in **Documents in American History**.

The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution On August 2, 1964, President Johnson announced that North Vietnamese torpedo boats had fired on two American destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin. Two days later, the president reported that another similar attack had taken place. Johnson was campaigning for the presidency and was very sensitive to accusations of being soft on communism. He insisted that North Vietnam’s attacks were unprovoked and immediately ordered American aircraft to attack North Vietnamese ships and naval facilities. Johnson did not reveal that the American warships had been helping the South Vietnamese conduct electronic spying and commando raids against North Vietnam.

Johnson then asked Congress for the authority to defend American forces and American allies in Southeast Asia. Congress agreed to Johnson’s request with little debate. Most members of Congress agreed with Republican representative Ross Adair of Indiana, who defiantly declared, “The American flag has been fired upon. We will not and cannot tolerate such things.”

On August 7, 1964, the Senate and House passed the **Gulf of Tonkin Resolution**, authorizing the president to “take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression.” With only two dissenting votes, Congress had, in effect, handed its war powers over to the president.

The United States Sends in Troops

Shortly after Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, the Vietcong began to attack bases where American advisers were stationed in South Vietnam. The attacks began in the fall of 1964 and continued to escalate. After a Vietcong attack on a base at Pleiku in February 1965 left eight Americans dead and more than 100 wounded, President Johnson decided to respond. Less than 14 hours after the attack, American aircraft bombed North Vietnam.

After the air strikes, one poll showed that Johnson’s approval rating on his handling of Vietnam jumped from 41 percent to 60 percent. Further, nearly 80 percent of Americans agreed that without American assistance, Southeast Asia would fall to the Communists. An equivalent number believed that the United States should send combat troops to Vietnam

Debates

IN HISTORY

Should America Fight in Vietnam?

As the war in Vietnam dragged on, Americans became increasingly divided about the nation’s role in the conflict. In January 1966, George W. Ball, undersecretary of state to President Johnson, delivered an address to indicate “how we got [into Vietnam] and why we must stay.” George Kennan, a former ambassador to the Soviet Union, testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in that same year, arguing that American involvement in Vietnam was “something we would not choose deliberately if the choice were ours to make all over again today.”

to prevent that from happening. The president's actions also met with strong approval from his closest advisers, including Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy.

Some officials in the White House disagreed, chief among them Undersecretary of State George Ball, a long-time critic of U.S. policy in Vietnam. He warned that if the United States got too involved in Vietnam, it might become difficult to get out. "Once on the tiger's back," he warned, "we cannot be sure of picking the place to dismount."

Most of the advisers who surrounded Johnson, however, firmly believed the nation had a duty to halt communism in Vietnam, both to maintain stability in Southeast Asia and to ensure the United States's continuing power and prestige in the world. In a memo to the president, Bundy argued:

PRIMARY SOURCE

"The stakes in Vietnam are extremely high. The American investment is very large, and American responsibility is a fact of life which is palpable in the atmosphere of Asia, and even elsewhere. The international prestige of the U.S. and a substantial part of our influence are directly at risk in Vietnam."

—quoted in *The Best and the Brightest*

In March 1965, President Johnson expanded American involvement by beginning a sustained bombing campaign against North Vietnam code-named Operation Rolling Thunder. That same month, the president also ordered the first combat troops into Vietnam. American soldiers would now fight alongside South Vietnamese troops against the Vietcong.

 **Reading Check** **Describing** How did politics play a role in President Johnson's Vietnam policy?

YES

George W. Ball Undersecretary of State

PRIMARY SOURCE

"[T]he conflict in Vietnam is a product of the great shifts and changes triggered by the Second World War. . . . The Soviet Union under Stalin exploited the confusion to push out the perimeter of its power and influence in an effort to extend the outer limits of Communist domination by force or the threat of force.

The bloody encounters in [Vietnam] are thus in a real sense battles and skirmishes in a continuing war to prevent one Communist power after another from violating internationally recognized boundary lines fixing the outer limits of Communist dominion. . . .

In the long run our hopes for the people of South Vietnam reflect our hopes for people everywhere. What we seek is a world living in peace and freedom."

—Speech delivered January 30, 1966



NO

George F. Kennan Former Diplomat

PRIMARY SOURCE

"Vietnam is not a region of major military and industrial importance. . . . Even a situation in which South Vietnam was controlled exclusively by the Vietcong, . . . would not, in my opinion, present dangers great enough to justify our direct military intervention.

And to attempt to crush North Vietnamese strength to a point where Hanoi could no longer give any support to Vietcong political activity in the South would. . . . have the effect of bringing in Chinese forces at some point. . . .

Our motives are widely misinterpreted; and the spectacle of Americans inflicting grievous injury on the lives of a poor and helpless people. . . . produces reactions among millions of people throughout the world profoundly detrimental to the image we would like them to hold of this country."

—Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, February 10, 1966



DBQ Document-Based Questions

- 1. Summarizing** Why does Ball believe that the United States is justified in fighting in Vietnam?
- 2. Explaining** What are the three main points of Kennan's argument?
- 3. Contrasting** What is the fundamental difference between the views of Ball and Kennan?
- 4. Evaluating** With which position do you agree? Write a paragraph to explain your choice.

A Bloody Stalemate

MAIN Idea The failure of United States forces to defeat the Vietcong and the deaths of thousands of American soldiers led many Americans to question the nation's involvement in Vietnam.

HISTORY AND YOU Have you ever heard people compare a contemporary military conflict to the Vietnam War? Read on to find out why some people fear becoming involved in a similar conflict today.

By the end of 1965, more than 180,000 American combat troops were fighting in Vietnam. In 1966 that number doubled. Since the American military was extremely strong, it marched into Vietnam with great confidence. "America seemed omnipotent then," wrote Philip Caputo, one of the first marines to arrive. "We saw ourselves as the champions of a 'cause that was destined to triumph.'"

Lacking the firepower of the Americans, the Vietcong used ambushes, booby traps, and

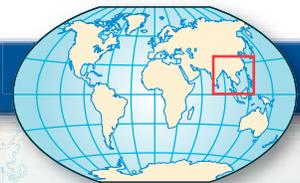
other guerrilla tactics. Ronald J. Glasser, an American army doctor, described the devastating effects of one booby trap:

PRIMARY SOURCE

"Three quarters of the way through the tangle, a trooper brushed against a two-inch vine, and a grenade slung at chest high went off, shattering the right side of his head and body. . . . Nearby troopers took hold of the unconscious soldier and, half carrying, half dragging him, pulled him the rest of the way through the tangle."

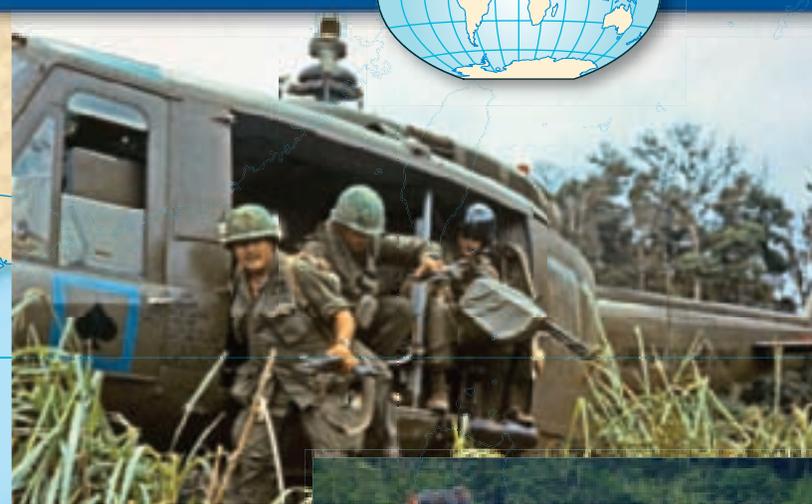
—quoted in *Vietnam, A History*

The Vietcong also frustrated American troops by blending in with the general population and then quickly vanishing. "It was a sheer physical impossibility to keep the enemy from slipping away whenever he wished," explained one American general. Journalist Linda Martin noted, "It's a war where nothing is ever quite certain and nowhere is ever quite safe."



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

The Vietnam War, 1965–1973



▲ Although helicopters helped American troops cope with Vietnam's jungles and mountains, napalm bombs (right) were also used to counter the thick foliage.



Analyzing GEOGRAPHY

- Places** What countries were invaded during the Vietnam War?
- Movement** Why was it difficult to seal South Vietnam's border?

“Search and Destroy”

To counter the Vietcong’s tactics, American troops went on “search and destroy” missions. They tried to find enemy troops, bomb their positions, destroy their supply lines, and force them out into the open for combat.

The Vietcong evaded American forces by hiding out in the thick jungle or escaping through tunnels dug in the earth. To take away the Vietcong’s ability to hide, American forces literally destroyed the landscape. American planes dropped **napalm**, a jellied gasoline that explodes on contact. They also used **Agent Orange**, a chemical that strips leaves from trees and shrubs, turning farmland and forest into wasteland. For those South Vietnamese still living in the countryside, danger lay on all sides.

United States military leaders underestimated the Vietcong’s strength. They also misjudged the enemy’s stamina and the support they had among the South Vietnamese. American generals believed that continuously bombing and killing large numbers of Vietcong would destroy the enemy’s morale and force them to give up. The guerrillas, however, had no intention of surrendering, and they were willing to accept huge losses to achieve their goals.

The Ho Chi Minh Trail

In the Vietcong’s war effort, North Vietnamese support was a major factor. Although the Vietcong forces were made up of many South Vietnamese, North Vietnam provided arms, advisers, and leadership. As Vietcong casualties mounted, North Vietnam began sending North Vietnamese Army units to fight.

North Vietnam sent arms and supplies south by way of a network of jungle paths known as the **Ho Chi Minh trail**. The trail wound through the countries of Cambodia and Laos, bypassing the border between North and South Vietnam. Because the trail passed through countries not directly involved in the war, President Johnson refused to allow a full-scale attack on the trail to shut it down.

North Vietnam itself received military weapons and other support from the Soviet Union and China. One of the main reasons President Johnson refused to order a full-scale invasion of North Vietnam was his fear that such an attack would bring China into the war, as had happened in Korea. By placing limits on the war, however, Johnson made it very difficult to win. Instead of conquering enemy territory, American troops were forced to fight a war of attrition—a strategy of defeating the enemy forces by wearing them down. This strategy led troops to conduct grisly body counts after battles to determine how many enemy soldiers had been killed. The U.S. military began measuring “progress” in the war by number of enemy dead.

Bombing from American planes killed as many as 220,000 Vietnamese between 1965 and 1967. By the end of 1966, more than 6,700 American soldiers had been killed. The notion of a quick and decisive victory grew increasingly remote. As a result, many citizens back home began to question the nation’s involvement in the war.

 **Describing** What tactics did the United States adopt to fight the Vietcong?

Section 1 REVIEW

Vocabulary

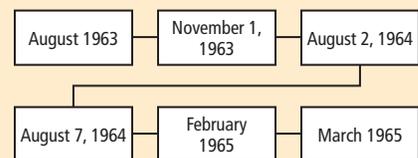
1. **Explain** the significance of: Ho Chi Minh, domino theory, guerrilla, Dien Bien Phu, Geneva Accords, Ngo Dinh Diem, Vietcong, Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, napalm, Agent Orange, Ho Chi Minh trail.

Main Ideas

2. **Explaining** What convinced the French to pull out of Vietnam?
3. **Determining Cause and Effect** What was the result of the overthrow of Diem in Vietnam?
4. **Analyzing** Why did fighting in Vietnam turn into a stalemate by the mid-1960s?

Critical Thinking

5. **Big Ideas** How did American Cold War politics lead to the United States fighting a war in Vietnam?
6. **Sequencing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to sequence events that led to U.S. involvement in Vietnam.



7. **Analyzing Visuals** Study the map on page 883. Why is China’s location significant in relation to the Cold War struggles in Southeast Asia?

Writing About History

8. **Persuasive Writing** Suppose you are a member of Congress in August 1964. Write a statement supporting or opposing the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.



Study Central To review this section, go to glencoe.com and click on Study Central.

GEOGRAPHY & HISTORY

The Ho Chi Minh Trail

North and South Vietnam were long narrow countries. As a result, the border between them was very narrow and easy to defend. In order to send supplies and troops to the south, the North Vietnamese had to find a way around the border. They achieved this by crossing (illegally) into Laos and Cambodia, two neutral nations to the west, then heading south bypassing South Vietnam's northern border. The mountains and rainforests of the region provided cover for people using the trails and roads that ran south. The Americans referred to the elaborate network of roads, trails, forest paths, bridges, tunnels, and shelters as the Ho Chi Minh trail.

How Did Geography Influence the Ho Chi Minh Trail?

The Ho Chi Minh Trail followed the topography—or natural physical features—of the region. When viewed from aircraft, the trail often disappeared and blended into the surrounding countryside, making it very difficult to attack. Furthermore, it provided access to multiple points along South Vietnam's long western border, which was much harder for American and South Vietnamese troops to defend. By 1967, an estimated 20,000 Vietnamese soldiers traveled the route each month. The American military tried to disrupt the flow of people and goods, but this proved very difficult to do. By the end of the war, the Ho Chi Minh Trail stretched some 12,000 miles (19,312 km) through the canopied rain forests.



Analyzing GEOGRAPHY

- 1. Movement** What diplomatic and international problems were caused by the route of the Ho Chi Minh Trail?
- 2. Human-Environment Interaction** What kinds of challenges did the geography of Southeast Asia pose for fighting a war?



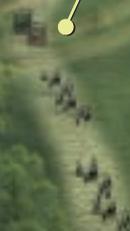
▲ In an effort to close the trail and ambush enemy troops using it, American troops set up “firebases” on hilltops overlooking part of the trail. Helicopters helped American troops overcome the region’s difficult terrain. They could quickly move men and supplies over the rainforest.



American aircraft tried to destroy troops and vehicles on the trail by dropping bombs, including napalm—a jellied gasoline that would catch fire and burn a wide area.



▲ The Vietnamese moved goods along the trail in many ways. Most porters carried goods on their back; others strapped goods to bicycles. Trucks carried supplies and people on wider parts of the trail.



To deprive the enemy of cover, American aircraft sprayed areas near the trail with defoliants that killed all plant life leaving a barren area. The most famous chemical used was Agent Orange.

Section 2

Vietnam Divides the Nation

Guide to Reading

Big Ideas

Group Action Many Americans protested to end their country's involvement in the Vietnam War.

Content Vocabulary

- credibility gap (p. 892)
- teach-in (p. 893)
- dove (p. 895)
- hawk (p. 895)

Academic Vocabulary

- media (p. 892)
- disproportionate (p. 893)

People and Events to Identify

- William Westmoreland (p. 892)
- Tet Offensive (p. 895)

Reading Strategy

Organizing Complete a graphic organizer similar to the one below to list the reasons for opposition to the Vietnam War.



As casualties mounted in Vietnam, many Americans began to protest against the war. Discouraged by domestic conflict over the war, rising violence, and the apparent lack of progress in Vietnam, President Johnson announced he would not seek another term as president.

An Antiwar Movement Emerges

MAIN Idea The Vietnam War produced sharp divisions between Americans who supported the war and those who did not, and the resulting political turmoil led President Johnson to decide not to run again for president.

HISTORY AND YOU Do you know people who did not support the war in Iraq and those who did? Read on to find out how differences over the Vietnam War began to divide the country.

When American troops first entered the Vietnam War in the spring of 1965, many Americans supported the military effort. A Gallup poll published soon afterwards showed that 66 percent of Americans approved of the policy in Vietnam. As the war dragged on, however, public support began to drop. Suspicion of the government's truthfulness about the war was a significant reason. Throughout the early years of the war, the American commander in South Vietnam, General **William Westmoreland**, reported that the enemy was on the brink of defeat. In 1967 he confidently declared that the "enemy's hopes are bankrupt" and added, "we have reached an important point where the end begins to come into view."

Contradicting such reports were less optimistic **media** accounts, especially on television. Vietnam was the first "television war," with footage of combat appearing nightly on the evening news. Day after day, millions of people saw images of wounded and dead Americans and began to doubt government reports. In the view of many, a **credibility gap** had developed, meaning it was hard to believe what the Johnson administration said about the war.

Congress, which had given the president a nearly free hand in Vietnam, soon grew uncertain about the war. Beginning in February 1966 the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held "educational" hearings on Vietnam, calling in Secretary of State Dean Rusk and other policy makers to explain the administration's military strategy. The committee also listened to critics, such as American diplomat George Kennan. Although Kennan had helped to create the policy of containment, he argued that Vietnam was not strategically important to the United States.

Should America Stay in Vietnam?



▲ An axe labeled "Vietnam Issue" splits the nation in two.



◀ Ho Chi Minh sends a telegram praising antiwar protesters.

Analyzing VISUALS

- Finding the Main Idea** What is the main message of the cartoon on the left?
- Making Inferences** The cartoon on the right was drawn before the one on the left. Do you think that differences between the two indicate a change in attitude toward antiwar protests? Explain.

Teach-ins Begin

In March 1965, a group of faculty members and students at the University of Michigan abandoned their classes and joined together in a **teach-in**. They discussed the issues surrounding the war and reaffirmed their reasons for opposing it. The gathering inspired teach-ins at many campuses. In May 1965, 122 colleges held a "National Teach-In" by radio for more than 100,000 antiwar demonstrators.

People who opposed the war did so for different reasons. Some saw the conflict as a civil war in which the United States had no business interfering. Others viewed South Vietnam as a corrupt dictatorship and believed that defending it was immoral and unjust.

Anger at the Draft

Young protesters especially focused on what they saw as an unfair draft system. Until 1969, a college student was often able to defer military service until after graduation. By contrast, young people from working class families were more likely to be drafted and sent to Vietnam

because they were unable to afford college. Draftees in the military were most likely to be assigned to combat units where they faced grave dangers. In 1969 draftees made up 62 percent of battle deaths.

The majority of soldiers who served in Vietnam, however, were volunteer enlistees. Holding out the military as an avenue to vocational training and upward social mobility, military recruiters encouraged youth in poor and working-class communities to enlist. Thus, a **disproportionate** number of working class youths, many of them minorities, were among the volunteers who served in Vietnam.

The Vietnam War coincided with the high tide of the civil rights movement. From early in the war, the treatment of African American soldiers came under scrutiny. Between 1961 and 1966, African Americans constituted about 10 percent of military personnel while African Americans composed about 13 percent of the total population of the United States. Because African Americans were more likely to be assigned to combat units, however, they accounted for almost 20 percent of combat-related deaths.

The high number of African Americans and poor Americans dying in Vietnam angered African American leaders, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In April 1967 King publicly condemned the conflict:

PRIMARY SOURCE

"[It is] the suffering poor of Vietnam and the poor of America who are paying the double price of smashed hopes at home and death and corruption in Vietnam. . . . The great initiative in this war is ours. The initiative to stop must be ours."

—quoted in *A Testament of Hope*

In response to such criticisms, military officials strived to lower the number of African American casualties. By the end of the conflict, African Americans accounted for about 12 percent of America's dead, roughly equivalent to their presence in the national population.

As the war escalated, American officials increased the draft call, putting many college students at risk. An estimated 500,000 draftees refused to go. Many burned their draft cards or simply did not show up for induction. Some fled the country, moving to Canada,

Sweden, or other nations. Others stayed and went to prison rather than fight in a war they opposed.

Between 1965 and 1968, officials prosecuted more than 3,300 Americans for refusing to serve. The draft became less of an issue in 1969 when the government introduced a lottery system, in which only those with low lottery numbers were subject to the draft.

Protests against the war were not confined to college campuses. Demonstrators held public rallies and marches in towns across the country. In April 1965 Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), a left-wing student organization, organized a march on Washington, D.C., that drew more than 20,000 participants. Two years later, in October 1967, a rally at Washington's Lincoln Memorial drew tens of thousands of protesters, as well.

Anger over the draft also fueled discussions about the voting age. Many draftees argued that if they were old enough to fight, they were old enough to vote. In 1971 the Twenty-sixth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified, giving all citizens age 18 and older the right to vote in all state and federal elections.

PRIMARY SOURCE

A Divided Nation



▲ An antiwar protest in New York City in 1969.



▲ The war split the nation. Above, construction workers march in New York City in support of the war effort.



◀ Antiwar demonstrators burn their draft cards in front of the Pentagon in 1972.

Hawks and Doves

In the face of growing opposition to the war, President Johnson remained determined to continue fighting. He assailed his critics in Congress as “selfish men who want to advance their own interests.” He dismissed the college protesters as too naive to appreciate the importance of resisting communism.

The president was not alone in his views. In a poll taken in early 1968, 53 percent of the respondents favored stronger military action in Vietnam, compared to 24 percent who wanted an end to the war. Of those Americans who supported the policy in Vietnam, many openly criticized the protesters for a lack of patriotism.

By 1968 the nation seemed to be divided into two camps. Those who wanted the United States to withdraw from Vietnam were known as **doves**. Those who insisted that the country stay and fight came to be known as **hawks**. As the two groups debated, the war appeared to take a dramatic turn for the worse, and the nation endured a year of shock and crisis.

Reading Check Explaining What led to the ratification of the Twenty-sixth Amendment?

1968: The Pivotal Year

MAIN Idea The Tet Offensive increased doubt that the United States could win in Vietnam.

HISTORY AND YOU Have you ever participated in a public-opinion poll? Read how Johnson’s plummeting approval rating made him decide not to run for re-election in 1968.

The most turbulent year of the chaotic 1960s was 1968. The year saw a shocking political announcement, two traumatic assassinations, and a political convention held amid strident anti-war demonstrations. First, however, the nation endured a surprise attack in Vietnam.

The Tet Offensive

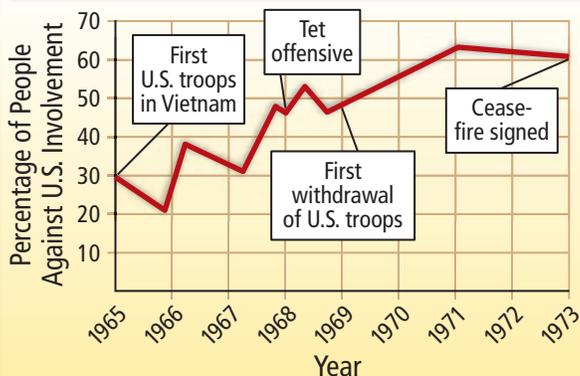
On January 30, 1968, during Tet, the Vietnamese New Year, the Vietcong and North Vietnamese launched a massive surprise attack. In this **Tet Offensive**, guerrilla fighters attacked most American airbases in South Vietnam and most of the South’s major cities. Vietcong even blasted their way into the American embassy in Saigon.

Militarily, Tet was a disaster for the Vietcong. After about a month of fighting, the American and South Vietnamese soldiers repelled the enemy troops, inflicting heavy losses on them. President Johnson triumphantly noted that the enemy’s effort had ended in “complete failure.” Later, historians confirmed that Tet nearly destroyed the Vietcong.

The North Vietnamese, however, had scored a major political victory. The American people were shocked that an enemy supposedly on the verge of defeat could launch such a large-scale attack. When General Westmoreland requested 209,000 troops in addition to the 500,000 already in Vietnam, he seemed to be admitting the United States could not win.

To make matters worse, the media, which had tried to remain balanced in their war coverage, now openly criticized the effort. “The American people should be getting ready to accept, if they haven’t already, the prospect that the whole Vietnam effort may be doomed,” declared the *Wall Street Journal*. Television newscaster Walter Cronkite announced that it seemed “more certain than ever that the bloody experience in Vietnam is to end in a stalemate.”

Opposition to the Vietnam War



Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States.

Analyzing VISUALS

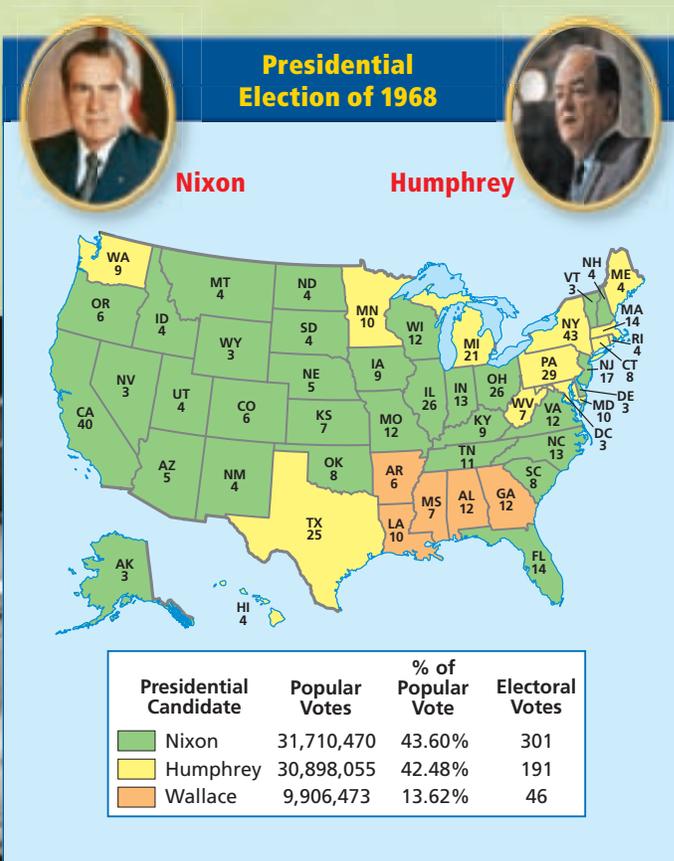
- Interpreting** During which two years was opposition to the war lowest? What event occurred around that time?
- Synthesizing** In what year did opposition to the war peak? How was this sentiment logically related to the withdrawal of American troops?

1968: A Year of Turmoil

The election year 1968 was tumultuous. The country was divided over Vietnam. President Johnson chose not to run again. Protesters fought with police at the Democratic National Convention. Race riots erupted in several American cities and both Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy were killed.



▲ Robert Kennedy campaigns for the Democratic nomination (top left) in January 1968. Soon afterward, George Wallace (left) entered the race as an independent. Above, police confront protestors at the Democratic National Convention in August 1968.



Analyzing VISUALS

- Regions** In what area of the country did George Wallace receive the most votes?
- Regions** Do you think Richard Nixon would have won if Wallace had not been in the race?

Public opinion no longer favored the president. In the weeks following the Tet Offensive, the president's approval rating plummeted to a dismal 35 percent, while support for his handling of the war fell even lower, to 26 percent. The administration's credibility gap now seemed too wide to repair.

Johnson Leaves the Race

With the war growing increasingly unpopular and Johnson's credibility all but gone, some Democrats began looking for an alternative candidate to nominate for president in 1968. In November 1967, even before the Tet disaster, a little-known liberal senator from Minnesota, Eugene McCarthy, became the first dove to declare he would challenge Johnson for the

Democratic presidential nomination. In March 1968 McCarthy stunned the nation by winning more than 40 percent of the votes in the New Hampshire primary. Realizing that Johnson was vulnerable, Senator Robert Kennedy, who also opposed the war, quickly entered the race for the Democratic nomination.

With both the country and his own party deeply divided, Johnson addressed the public on television on March 31, 1968. He stunned viewers by announcing, "I have concluded that I should not permit the presidency to become involved in the partisan divisions that are developing in this political year. Accordingly, I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your President."

A Season of Violence

Following Johnson's announcement, the nation endured even more shocking events. In April, James Earl Ray was arrested for killing Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Just two months later, another assassination rocked the country—that of Robert Kennedy. Kennedy, who appeared to be on his way to winning the Democratic nomination, was gunned down on June 5. The assassin was Sirhan Sirhan, an Arab nationalist angry over the candidate's pro-Israeli remarks a few nights before.

The violence that seemed to plague the country in 1968 culminated with a chaotic and well-publicized clash between antiwar protesters and police at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Thousands of protesters surrounded the convention center, demanding that the Democrats adopt an antiwar platform.

Despite the protests, the delegates chose Hubert Humphrey, President Johnson's vice president, as their presidential nominee. Meanwhile, in a park not far from the convention hall, the protesters and police began fighting. As officers tried to disperse demonstrators with tear gas and billy-clubs, demonstrators taunted the authorities with the chant, "The whole world is watching!" A subsequent federal investigation of the incident described the event as a "police riot."

Nixon Wins the Presidency

The violence and chaos now associated with the Democratic Party benefited the 1968 Republican presidential candidate, Richard Nixon. Although defeated by John Kennedy in the 1960 election, Nixon had remained active in national politics. A third candidate, Governor George Wallace of Alabama, decided to run in 1968 as an independent. Wallace, an outspoken segregationist, sought to attract Americans who felt threatened by the civil rights movement and urban social unrest.

Public opinion polls gave Nixon a wide lead over Humphrey and Wallace. Nixon's campaign promise to unify the nation and restore law and order appealed to Americans who feared their country was spinning out of control. Nixon also declared that he had a plan for ending the war in Vietnam.

At first Humphrey's support of President Johnson's Vietnam policies hurt his campaign. After Humphrey broke with the president and called for a complete end to the bombing of North Vietnam, he began to move up in the polls. A week before the election, President Johnson helped Humphrey by announcing that the bombing had halted and that a cease-fire would follow.

Johnson's announcement had come too late, however. In the end, Nixon's promises to end the war and restore order at home were enough to sway the American people. On Election Day, Nixon defeated Humphrey by more than 100 electoral votes, although he won the popular vote by a slim margin of 43 percent to 42. Wallace partially accounted for the razor-thin margin by winning 46 electoral votes and more than 13 percent of the popular vote.

Reading Check **Explaining** Why did President Johnson say he would not run for reelection in 1968?

Vocabulary

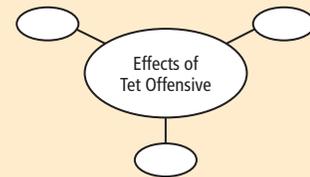
- 1. Explain** the significance of: William Westmoreland, credibility gap, teach-in, dove, hawk, Tet Offensive.

Main Ideas

- 2. Explaining** Why did some people view the draft as unfair?
- 3. Summarizing** What are three important events that made 1968 such a violent year in the United States?

Critical Thinking

- 4. Big Ideas** Why did support of the war dwindle by the late 1960s?
- 5. Organizing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to list the effects of the Tet Offensive.



- 6. Analyzing Visuals** Study the cartoon on the right on page 893. What is the message of the telegram beyond its literal meaning?

Writing About History

- 7. Expository Writing** Suppose that you are living in 1968. Write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper in which you explain your reasons for either supporting or opposing the Vietnam War.



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Section 3

The War Winds Down

Guide to Reading

Big Ideas

Trade, War, and Migration

The Vietnam War changed the way Americans viewed the government and the military, and led them to question how the armed forces were deployed.

Content Vocabulary

- linkage (p. 898)
- Vietnamization (p. 898)

Academic Vocabulary

- generation (p. 899)
- unresolved (p. 903)

People and Events to Identify

- Henry Kissinger (p. 898)
- Pentagon Papers (p. 900)
- War Powers Act (p. 903)

Reading Strategy

Organizing Complete a graphic organizer similar to the one below by listing the steps that President Nixon took to end American involvement in Vietnam.

Steps Nixon Took

Shortly after taking office, President Nixon moved to end the nation's involvement in the Vietnam War. The final years of the conflict, however, yielded more bloodshed and turmoil, as well as a growing cynicism in the minds of Americans about the honesty and effectiveness of the United States government.

Nixon Moves to End the War

MAIN Idea While unrest and suspicion of the government grew, the United States finally withdrew its troops from Vietnam.

HISTORY AND YOU Have you ever protested against something you felt was wrong? Read on to find out how college students reacted to what they viewed as a widening of the Vietnam War.

As a first step to fulfilling his campaign promise to end the war, Nixon appointed Harvard professor **Henry Kissinger** as special assistant for national security affairs and gave him wide authority to use diplomacy to end the conflict. Kissinger embarked upon a policy he called **linkage**, which meant improving relations with the Soviet Union and China—suppliers of aid to North Vietnam—so that he could persuade them to cut back on their aid.

Kissinger also rekindled peace talks with the North Vietnamese. In August 1969 Kissinger entered into secret negotiations with North Vietnam's negotiator, Le Duc Tho. In their talks, which dragged on for four years, Kissinger and Le Duc Tho argued over a possible cease-fire, the return of American prisoners of war, and the ultimate fate of South Vietnam.

Meanwhile, Nixon reduced the number of American troops in Vietnam. Known as **Vietnamization**, this process involved the gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops while the South Vietnamese assumed more of the fighting. On June 8, 1969, Nixon announced the withdrawal of 25,000 soldiers, but he was determined to keep a strong American presence in Vietnam to ensure bargaining power during peace negotiations. In support of that goal, the president increased air strikes against North Vietnam and—without informing Congress or the public—began secretly bombing Vietcong sanctuaries in neighboring Cambodia.

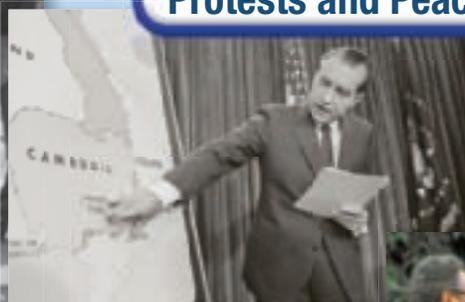
Turmoil at Home Continues

Even though the United States had begun scaling back its involvement in Vietnam, the American home front remained divided and volatile, as Nixon's war policies stirred up new waves of protest.



▲ To convince North Vietnam to settle for a negotiated peace, Nixon ordered troops into Cambodia to destroy North Vietnamese bases there. The invasion led to mass protests in the United States and to the tragic shooting of four students by National Guard troops at Kent State University (above).

PRIMARY SOURCE
Protests and Peace Talks

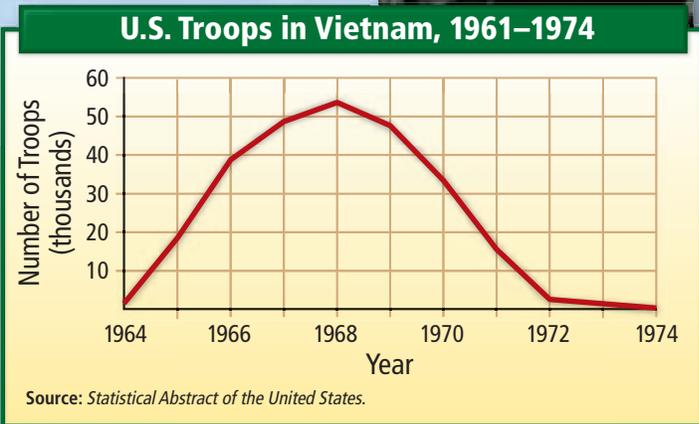


▲ President Nixon (above) describes the invasion of Cambodia in 1970. Two years later, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger met for peace talks with North Vietnam's representative Le Duc Tho (right).



Analyzing VISUALS

- 1. Determining Cause and Effect** How did the invasion of Cambodia lead to the shootings at Kent State?
- 2. Specifying** In what year did the troop level in Vietnam reach its peak?



Massacre at My Lai In late 1969 Americans learned that, in the spring of 1968, an American platoon under the command of Lieutenant William Calley had massacred unarmed South Vietnamese civilians in the hamlet of My Lai. Most of the victims were old men, women, and children. Calley eventually went to prison for his role in the killings.

Most American soldiers acted responsibly and honorably during the war. The actions of one soldier, however, convinced many people that the war was brutal and senseless. Jan Barry, a founder of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, viewed My Lai as a symbol of the dilemma his **generation** faced in the conflict:

PRIMARY SOURCE

"To kill on military orders and be a criminal, or to refuse to kill and be a criminal is the moral agony of America's Vietnam war generation. It is what has

forced upward of sixty thousand young Americans, draft resisters and deserters to Canada, and created one hundred thousand military deserters a year. . . ."

—quoted in *Who Spoke Up?*

The Invasion of Cambodia Sparks Protest Americans heard more startling news when Nixon announced in April 1970 that American troops had invaded Cambodia. The troops were ordered to destroy Vietcong military bases there.

Many viewed the Cambodian invasion as a widening of the war, and it set off many protests. At Kent State University on May 4, 1970, Ohio National Guard soldiers, armed with tear gas and rifles, fired on demonstrators without an order to do so. The soldiers killed four students. Ten days later, police killed two African American students during a demonstration at Jackson State College in Mississippi.

In addition to sparking violence on campuses, the invasion of Cambodia cost Nixon significant congressional support. Numerous legislators expressed outrage over the president's failure to notify them of the action. In December 1970 an angry Congress repealed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which had given the president nearly complete power in directing the war in Vietnam.

The Pentagon Papers Support for the war weakened further in 1971 when Daniel Ellsberg, a disillusioned former Defense Department worker, leaked what became known as the **Pentagon Papers** to the *New York Times*. The documents revealed that many government officials during the Johnson administration privately questioned the war while publicly defending it.

The documents contained details of decisions that were made by the presidents and their advisers to expand the war without the consent of Congress. They also showed how the various administrations had tried to convince Congress, the press, and the public that the situation in Vietnam was better than it really was. The Pentagon Papers confirmed what many Americans had long believed: the government had not been honest with them.

The United States Pulls Out

By 1971, polls showed that nearly two-thirds of Americans wanted to end the Vietnam War as quickly as possible. In April 1972 President Nixon dropped his longtime insistence that North Vietnamese troops had to withdraw from South Vietnam before any peace treaty could be signed. In October, less than a month before the presidential election, Kissinger emerged from his secret talks with Le Duc Tho to announce that “peace is at hand.”

A month later, Americans went to the polls to decide on a president. Senator George McGovern, the Democratic candidate, was an outspoken critic of the war. He did not appeal to many middle-class Americans, however, who were tired of antiwar protesters. Nixon was reelected in a landslide, winning 60.7 percent of the popular vote.

Just weeks after the presidential election, the peace negotiations broke down. South Vietnam's president, Nguyen Van Thieu, refused to agree to any plan that left North Vietnamese

troops in the South. Henry Kissinger tried to win additional concessions from the Communists, but talks broke off on December 16, 1972.

The next day, to force North Vietnam to resume negotiations, the Nixon administration began the most destructive air raids of the entire war. In what became known as the “Christmas bombings,” American B-52s dropped thousands of tons of bombs on North Vietnamese targets for 11 straight days, pausing only on Christmas Day.

In the wake of the bombing campaign, the United States and North Vietnam returned to the bargaining table. Thieu finally gave in to American pressure and allowed North Vietnamese troops to remain in the South. On January 27, 1973, the warring sides signed an agreement “ending the war and restoring the peace in Vietnam.”

The United States promised to withdraw its troops, and both sides agreed to exchange prisoners of war. The parties did not resolve the issue of South Vietnam's future, however. After almost eight years of war—the longest war in American history—the nation ended its direct involvement in Vietnam.

South Vietnam Falls

Two years after the United States pulled its troops out of Vietnam, the peace agreement collapsed. In March 1975 the North Vietnamese army launched a full-scale invasion of the South. Thieu desperately appealed to Washington, D.C., for help.

President Nixon had assured Thieu during the peace negotiations that the United States “[would] respond with full force should the settlement be violated by North Vietnam.” Nixon, however, had resigned under pressure following Watergate, a scandal that broke as the war was winding down. The new president, Gerald Ford, asked for funds to aid the South Vietnamese, but Congress refused.

Without American assistance, the South Vietnamese Army was unable to stop the invasion. On April 30, the North Vietnamese captured Saigon, South Vietnam's capital, and united Vietnam under Communist rule. They then renamed the city Ho Chi Minh City.

 **Evaluating** What did the Pentagon Papers confirm for many Americans?



Can the Government Put Limits on the Press?

★ *New York Times v. United States, 1971*

Background to the Case

In 1971 Daniel Ellsberg leaked classified documents, known as the Pentagon Papers, to the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. When the newspapers attempted to publish these documents, the Nixon administration argued that publication would threaten national security. The case centered on the First Amendment guarantee of a free press.

How the Court Ruled

In a 6-to-3 per curiam opinion—*per curiam* meaning that the decision was issued by the whole Court and not specific justices—the Court found that the Nixon administration had failed to prove that publication of the Pentagon Papers would imperil the nation in any way. The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* could publish the Pentagon Papers.

PRIMARY SOURCE

Concurring View

“The Government’s power to censor the press [via the First Amendment] was abolished so that the press would remain forever free to censure the Government. . . . And paramount among the responsibilities of a free press is the duty to prevent any part of the government from deceiving the people and sending them off to distant lands to die of foreign fevers and foreign shot and shell. In my view, far from deserving condemnation for their courageous reporting, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and other newspapers should be commended for serving the purpose that the Founding Fathers saw so clearly. In revealing the workings of government that led to the Vietnam War, the newspapers did precisely that which the Founders hoped and trusted they would do.”

—Justice Hugo Black in *New York Times v. United States*



▲ Daniel Ellsberg (above, left) leaked the classified documents known as the Pentagon Papers.

PRIMARY SOURCE

Dissenting View

The First Amendment, after all, is only one part of an entire Constitution. Article II of the great document vests in the Executive Branch primary power over the conduct of foreign affairs and places in that branch the responsibility for the Nation’s safety. . . . What is needed here is a weighing, upon properly developed standards, of the broad right of the press to print and of the very narrow right of the Government to prevent. Such standards are not yet developed. The parties here are in disagreement as to what those standards should be. But even the newspapers concede that there are situations where restraint is in order and is constitutional.”

—Justice Harry Blackmun, dissenting in *New York Times v. United States*

DBQ Document-Based Questions

- 1. Explaining** Why did Justice Black agree with the Court’s decision? What did he imply about the government’s actions?
- 2. Contrasting** Why did Justice Blackmun disagree with the Court’s decision?
- 3. Assessing** Do you think the government can ever justify media censorship, even based on national security concerns? Explain.

The Legacy of Vietnam

MAIN Idea The Vietnam War made a negative impact on the way in which Americans viewed international conflicts, as well as their own government.

HISTORY AND YOU Do you think that leaders at the highest levels of the federal government are trustworthy? Read on to find out how the Vietnam War and other events led Americans to lose some trust in their leaders.

“The lessons of the past in Vietnam,” President Ford declared in 1975, “have already been learned—learned by Presidents, learned by Congress, learned by the American

people—and we should have our focus on the future.” Vietnam had a deep and lasting impact on American society.

The War’s Human Toll

The United States paid a heavy price for its involvement in Vietnam. The war had cost the nation over \$170 billion in direct costs and much more in indirect economic expenses. It had also resulted in the deaths of approximately 58,000 young Americans and the injury of more than 300,000. In Vietnam, around one million North and South Vietnamese soldiers died in the conflict, as did countless civilians.

History ONLINE
Student Web Activity Visit glencoe.com and complete the activity on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

PRIMARY SOURCE

The Legacy of Vietnam



▲ The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is inscribed with the names of the 58,249 people killed or missing in Vietnam.

The War Powers Act

- Requires the president in all cases to consult with Congress before making any troop commitments
- Requires the president to inform Congress of any commitment of troops abroad within 48 hours
- Requires the president to withdraw troops in 60 to 90 days, unless Congress explicitly approves the troop commitment



▲ Along with returning troops, many freed prisoners of war, or POWs, such as Lt. Colonel Robert Stirm, were joyfully greeted by their families. Sadly, some did not come home and were labeled as MIAs, or “missing in action,” and remain so to this day.

Analyzing VISUALS

1. **Explaining** How did the War Powers Act seek to curb the power of the president?
2. **Assessing** Do you think that the legacy of Vietnam has been a lasting one? Why or why not?

Even after they returned home from fighting as in other wars, soldiers found it hard to escape the war's psychological impact. Army Specialist Doug Johnson recalled the problems he faced:

PRIMARY SOURCE

"It took a while for me to recognize that I did suffer some psychological problems in trying to deal with my experience in Vietnam. The first recollection I have of the effect took place shortly after I arrived back in the States. One evening . . . I went to see a movie on post. I don't recall the name of the movie or what it was about, but I remember there was a sad part, and that I started crying uncontrollably. It hadn't dawned on me before this episode that I had . . . succeeded in burying my emotions."

—quoted in *Touched by the Dragon*

One reason why it may have been harder for some Vietnam veterans to readjust to civilian life was that many considered the war a defeat. Many Americans wanted to forget the war. Thus, the sacrifices of many veterans often went unrecognized. There were relatively few welcome-home parades and celebrations after the war.

The war also remained **unresolved** for the American families whose relatives and friends were classified as prisoners of war (POWs) or missing in action (MIA). Despite many official investigations, these families were not convinced that the government had told the truth about POW/MIA policies.

The nation finally began to come to terms with the war almost a decade later. In 1982 the nation dedicated the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., a large black granite wall inscribed with the names of those killed and missing in action in the war. "It's a first step to remind America of what we did," veteran Larry Cox of Virginia said at the dedication of the monument.

The War's Impact on the Nation

The war also left its mark on the nation as a whole. In 1973 Congress passed the **War Powers Act** as a way to reestablish some limits on executive power. The act required the president to inform Congress of any commitment of troops abroad within 48 hours, and to withdraw them in 60 to 90 days, unless Congress explicitly approved the troop commitment. No president has recognized this limitation, and the courts have tended to avoid the issue as a strictly political question. Nonetheless, every president since the law's passage has asked Congress to authorize the use of military force before committing ground troops to combat. In general, the war shook the nation's confidence and led some to embrace isolationism, while others began to question the policy of containing communism and instead urged more negotiation with the Soviet Union instead.

On the domestic front, the Vietnam War increased Americans' cynicism about their government. Many felt the nation's leaders had misled them. Together with Watergate, Vietnam made Americans more wary of their leaders.

 **Describing** How did the Vietnam War affect Americans' attitudes toward international conflicts?

Section 3 REVIEW

Vocabulary

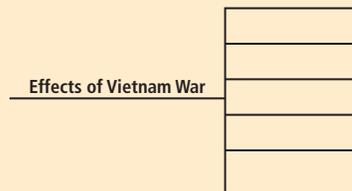
1. **Explain** the significance of: Henry Kissinger, linkage, Vietnamization, Pentagon Papers, War Powers Act.

Main Ideas

2. **Explaining** Why was the United States unable to help South Vietnam following the full-scale invasion by North Vietnam in 1975?
3. **Describing** How was the aftermath of the Vietnam War different for its veterans than postwar periods had been for veterans of earlier U.S. wars?

Critical Thinking

4. **Big Ideas** Why did Congress pass the War Powers Act? How did it reflect distrust of the executive branch of government?
5. **Organizing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to list the effects of the Vietnam War on the nation.



6. **Analyzing Visuals** Study the left photo on page 902. Why do you think it is important for society to have war memorials?

Writing About History

7. **Descriptive Writing** Suppose you are a college student in 1970. Write a journal entry expressing your feelings about the events at Kent State University and Jackson State College.



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Causes of the Vietnam War

- During World War II, the United States help the people of Indochina fight the Japanese, who had invaded the region.
- After World War II, France refuses to give independence to the people of Indochina and sends troops to reestablish control.
- Led by Ho Chi Minh, the Vietminh fight the French. Ho Chi Minh wants Vietnam to be independent but also wants to build a Communist society in Vietnam.
- Concerned about the spread of communism, President Eisenhower sends aid to help the French retain control in Vietnam.
- After losing the battle of Dien Bien Phu, France pulls out of Vietnam. The Geneva Accords create North and South Vietnam.
- Ho Chi Minh becomes the leader of North Vietnam and makes it a Communist nation allied with the USSR and China. North Vietnam begins arming guerrillas to fight the South Vietnamese government.
- American leaders become worried that a "domino effect" might cause all of Southeast Asia to fall to communism if South Vietnam falls.
- President Kennedy sharply increases military aid to South Vietnam.
- President Johnson escalates U.S. involvement and gains war powers after the Gulf of Tonkin incident.



► U.S. troops arrive in Vietnam in 1965 (above). Fighting communist guerrillas proved difficult in the dense jungle terrain (right).



▲ The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., is a stark reminder of the costs of the Vietnam War.

Effects of the Vietnam War

- Americans applaud President Johnson's response to a Vietcong attack with aggressive air strikes.
- United States commits over 380,000 ground troops to fighting in Vietnam by the end of 1966.
- American people question the government's honesty about the war, creating the so-called "credibility gap."
- The war casualties and the unfair draft system cause civil unrest.
- The wartime economy hurts domestic spending for programs such as the Great Society.
- President Nixon is elected largely on promises to end the war and unite a divided country.
- Congress passes the War Powers Act to limit the power of the president during wartime.

STANDARDIZED TEST PRACTICE

TEST-TAKING TIP

Do not spend too much time trying to figure out the right answer to a question. Move on, and then come back to that question when you have answered all the questions you do know. If you still do not know the answer, select the one that you think is the most logical.

Reviewing Vocabulary

Directions: Choose the word or words that best complete the sentence.

- Eisenhower cited the _____ as the reason why the United States had to support South Vietnam.
 - credibility gap
 - self-determination theory
 - domino theory
 - Communist way
- A person who supported the war effort in Vietnam might be called a
 - hawk.
 - dove.
 - guerrilla.
 - linkage.
- As the war in Vietnam escalated, a _____ developed as Americans began to find it hard to believe what the Johnson administration said about the conflict.
 - linkage
 - credibility gap
 - domino theory
 - teach-in
- The Vietcong were Communist _____ located in South Vietnam.
 - elected officials
 - generals
 - diplomats
 - guerrillas

Reviewing Main Ideas

Directions: Choose the best answer for each of the following questions.

Section 1 (pp. 882–889)

- Who was the leader of the North Vietnamese?
 - Mao Zedong
 - Ho Chi Minh
 - Dien Bien Phu
 - Ngo Dinh Diem
- One reason why President Johnson did not order a full-scale attack on North Vietnam was because
 - he did not think that the United States could win.
 - the military lacked the manpower to launch an assault.
 - he did not want to bring China into the war.
 - he did not want to lose the 1968 election.
- Which of the following temporarily established North and South Vietnam and recognized Cambodia's independence?
 - the Treaty of Paris
 - Gulf of Tonkin Resolution
 - the Truman Doctrine
 - the Geneva Accords

Section 2 (pp. 892–897)

- Many Americans objected to the draft because they believed it
 - forced young men to flee to Canada.
 - unfairly targeted the poor and minorities.
 - did not include women.
 - did not raise the necessary number of troops.

Need Extra Help?

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Chapter 26

9. Which of the following events was significant in turning American public opinion against the war in Vietnam?
- A the National Teach-in
 - B the 1968 Democratic National Convention
 - C the assassination of President Kennedy
 - D the Tet Offensive

Section 3 (pp. 898–903)

10. The gradual removal of U.S. troops from Vietnam was known as
- A Agent Orange.
 - B containment.
 - C linkage.
 - D Vietnamization.
11. Which of the following was part of the legacy of the Vietnam War?
- A Americans' increased cynicism about their government
 - B Americans' belief that the policy of containment worked
 - C Americans' confidence that the United States would win the Cold War
 - D Americans' paranoia about the intentions of the North Vietnamese government
12. The purpose of the War Powers Act was to ensure that the president would
- A have greater authority over the military.
 - B consult Congress before committing troops in extended conflicts.
 - C have the authority to sign treaties without Senate approval.
 - D have a freer hand in fighting the spread of communism.

Critical Thinking

Directions: Choose the best answers to the following questions.

13. The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution increased the powers of which part of government?
- A the presidency
 - B the Supreme Court
 - C the armed forces
 - D Congress

Base your answer to question 14 on the map below and on your knowledge of Chapter 26.



14. The Ho Chi Minh trail ran through which two nations?
- A Laos and Japan
 - B Laos and Thailand
 - C Laos and China
 - D Laos and Cambodia

Need Extra Help?

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15. On which idea is the Twenty-sixth Amendment based?
- A Women should be allowed to serve in the armed forces.
 - B The president, not Congress, should decide where and when troops will fight.
 - C A person who is old enough to fight is old enough to vote.
 - D A draft is an old-fashioned and unworkable system for selecting soldiers.

Analyze the cartoon and answer the questions that follow. Base your answers on the cartoon and on your knowledge of Chapter 26.



16. In this cartoon, the Vietnam War is represented by Johnson and his aides walking through
- A a dark jungle.
 - B a dense fog.
 - C a blinding storm.
 - D a dark tunnel.
17. The cartoonist is expressing the opinion that
- A the Johnson administration has no idea of how to get out of Vietnam.
 - B President Johnson is being pulled back by his cabinet to stay in the conflict.
 - C Vietnam is a conflict with an easy solution.
 - D President Johnson is a great leader with a solution to the problems in Vietnam.

Document-Based Questions

Directions: Analyze the document and answer the short-answer questions that follow the document.

In the 1960s many young Americans enlisted or were drafted for military service. Some believed that they had a duty to serve their country. Many had no clear idea of what they were doing or why. In the following excerpt, a young man expresses his thoughts about going to war:

"I read a lot of pacifist literature to determine whether or not I was a conscientious objector. I finally concluded that I wasn't. . . .

The one clear decision I made in 1968 about me and the war was that if I was going to get out of it, I was going to get out in a legal way. I was not going to defraud the system in order to beat the system. I wasn't going to leave the country, because the odds of coming back looked real slim. . . .

With all my terror of going into the Army . . . there was something seductive about it, too. I was seduced by World War II and John Wayne movies. . . . I had been, as we all were, victimized by a romantic, truly uninformed view of war."
—quoted in Nam

18. What options did the young man have regarding the war?
19. Do you think World War II movies gave him a realistic view of what fighting in Vietnam would be like?

Extended Response

20. The conflict in Vietnam has been called the first "television war." Americans could watch scenes of death and destruction unfold in front of them from their living rooms. Write an expository essay about how television changed the way Americans view war in general and how it contributed to the unpopularity of the Vietnam War specifically. Your essay should include an introduction and at least three paragraphs that explore this issue.

STOP

History  **ONLINE**

For additional test practice, use Self-Check Quizzes—Chapter 26 at glencoe.com.

Need Extra Help?

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