

Domino theory – theory stating that if a country fell to communism, nearby countries would fall to communism

Dien Bien Phu – Former French airbase; Vietnamese forces seize and defeat the French. Afterwards the France withdraws completely from Vietnam, ending a bitter 8-year struggle against the Viet Minh in which 400,00 soldiers from all sides had died.

Geneva Accords – May 8, 1954: United States, Britain, China, Soviet Union, France, Viet Nam (Viet Minh and representatives of Southern government), Cambodia and Laos meet to discuss a solution for Southeast Asia. An agreement is reached dividing the North and South of Vietnam along the 17th parallel, or at 17 degrees latitude. The Accords also provide for elections to be held in all of Vietnam within two years to reunify the country. The United States opposes the unifying elections, fearing a likely victory by Ho Chih Minh.

Hawks – those who wanted to send bombers and fighting troops to Vietnam; they wanted to get involved

Doves – those who did not want to get involved in a war with North Vietnam

French Indochina – from the late 1800s until World War II, France ruled Vietnam as part of its colony called French Indochina. The colony also included neighboring Laos and Cambodia.

Ho Chih Minh – a revolutionary leader who united three Communist groups to form the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP). The party called for an independent Vietnam controlled by peasants and other workers.

Viet Cong – a Vietnamese Communist

What role should the U.S. take in world events?

Did the United States have a responsibility to stop the spread of communism?

Be sure to make the connection to the domino theory

The United States government feared the dangers to this country if friendly countries became communist. Many feared the loss of Vietnam would lead to the loss of other Southeast Asian countries and would encourage Communists to try to take over countries elsewhere.

The Vietnam War opposition had reached the point that Buddhist monks demonstrated dramatically against Diem's rule and the war by self-immolation

Escalation – increasing military involvement

Green Beret Advisors – military personnel sent by Kennedy to reinforce Diem in 1961

Gulf of Tonkin Resolution – a Congressional decision to give the president power to use military force in Vietnam

Ho Chi Minh Trail – a network of paths the Viet Cong used to move soldiers and supplies during the war

Offensive - An act of aggression; hostile action; assault.

Paris Accords – 1972; a peace agreement was signed, allowing North Vietnamese troops to remain in the South, an official recognizing of the National Liberation Front, and continued military support of the Thieu government. The agreements did not last long as the United States' government voted to end all bombing in Indochina and stop any future military moves in the area without previous Congressional approval

Sanction - An action taken by one or more nations and designed to force another nation to comply with a legal, ethical, or moral code.

Vietnamization – a strategy of gradually withdrawing United States forces and turning the ground fighting over to the South Vietnamese

Agent Orange – a chemical that kills plants; sprayed by United States planes over the jungles

Guerilla warfare – surprise attacks by small bands of fighters, a tactic the VIET Cong relied on because they could not match American firepower

Napalm – jellied gasoline that burns violently; dropped by United States planes over wide areas

Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) - After falling to Communist forces in 1975, Saigon was renamed Ho Chi Minh City. The site of uprisings and violence, Vietnam's most populous city remained unruly and volatile even under Communist rule.

Pacification – Because NLF guerillas were difficult to distinguish from the civilian population; U.S. military commanders resulted to “pacification” tactics such as “free fire zones” and “search and destroy” missions. “Free Fire Zones” were areas in which anything that moved was considered to be the enemy and attacked. “Search and Destroy” frequently responded to a sniper attack from a village by destroying the entire village and relocating any survivors.

Guerilla warfare – irregular warfare used by the lightly armed National Liberation Front who were very familiar with the territory

Communist - a person or government that practices or supports communism, the political and economic system in which goods and means of production are owned by the state

Demonstration - a public display of group opinion about an issue, cause, or person

New Left – opponents of the United States government's policy in Vietnam built coalitions with advocates of equal rights, environmental activists, and supporters of “new lifestyles”

Pentagon Papers – Daniel Ellsberg, a writer who had helped write secret defense department papers, called the Pentagon Papers, release these papers to the New York Times in 1971. They showed that the Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson presidential administrations had not been honest with the United States public about United States involvement and goals in Vietnam.

War Powers Act – passed in 1973, this limits the president's war making powers without consulting Congress