Vietnam: French colony; U.S. tried to aid France in regaining control after WWII

Domino Theory: can’t let Vietnam fall to communism, must contain it—if you let one country go, they will all fall like dominos

Ho Chi Minh: Leader of communist North Vietnam, supported Vietcong in South

Dien Bien Phu: Battle where Vietminh defeated the French and forced the Geneva Accords

Ngo Dinh Diem: Corrupt leader of South Vietnam, suppressed the people and greatly led to the people’s hatred toward U.S. and wanting of communism

Geneva Accords: divides Vietnam into two zones along the 17th parallel—north is communist and the south is democratic

Vietminh (North Vietnam Military): Soldiers, who sometimes used guerrilla tactics, whose goal was to free South Vietnam from foreign control

Vietcong (South Vietnamese Civilians): a group of guerrilla fighters who operated in South Vietnam and were supported by Ho Chi Minh

Ho Chi Minh Trail: a network of paths along the borders of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia which allowed the Minh and the North to supply the Vietcong fighters.

Strategic hamlet program: program started by Diem in which he moved villagers from their ancestral lands to find enemies—villagers resent the move

Gulf of Tonkin Resolution: without declaring war, granted the president (LBJ) the power to fight military battles at his discretion—take “all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression”

Operation Rolling Thunder: an escalation in the war that saw the U.S. launch a sustained bombing operation against North Vietnam

William Westmoreland: U.S. commander in South Vietnam, extremely well liked by his men
Robert McNamara: appointed Secretary of Defense by Kennedy and was kept on under LBJ, his growing disagreement with the conflict in Vietnam led to his eventual resignation

Dean Rusk: Secretary of State, he was consistently hawkish; believed that abandoning South Vietnam would be disastrous for U.S.

“Heart and Minds”: measures to stop the Vietcong from winning support of rural population—“If you win the people over to your side, the communist guerrillas have no place to hide”

napalm: gasoline-based bomb that sets fire to jungle and expose Vietcong tunnels and hideouts

Agent Orange: leaf-killing, toxic chemical—Years Later, many blame for cancers in Vietnamese civilians and U.S. veterans

Search-and-Destroy Missions: U.S. forces tried to search out enemy troops, uproot their villagers suspected to have ties to Vietcong, bomb their positions, destroy their supply lines, and force them out into the open for combat

Living Room War: used to describe Vietnam War because it was first conflict in which the citizens view the nightly news coverage on TV and saw footage of the war

Credibility Gap: citizens started questioning government’s honesty since the reports and footage on the nightly TV news shows was completely different than what the government was telling them

Working Class War: 80% of U.S. soldiers came from lower economic levels—many mostly white, affluent—get college deferment or doctor notes

Students for a Democratic Society (SDS): criticized big business and large government institutions for taking over American, they called for restoration of “participatory democracy” and greater individual freedom.

Free Speech Movement (FSM): gained prominence at University of California at Berkeley out of a clash between students and administrators over free speech on campus.

Doves: strongly oppose war; believe U.S. should withdraw from Vietnam

Hawks: strongly favor war; believe in sending greater forces to win the war
Silent Majority: in an attempt to win support for his war policies, Nixon made a special appeal to this group; believing that the majority of American were in support of him and his policies but that we never hear of their support, just the outrage of the “loud MINORITY”

Tet Offensive: surprise attack by Vietcong on Tet (Vietnamese new year), attacked over 100 towns and 12 U.S. airbases; U.S defeated the offensive after only 1 month—however, from a psychological standpoint, the Tet Offensive greatly shook the American pullback and widened the credibility gap of the Johnson Administration

Clark Clifford: LBJ’s new Secretary of Defense following McNamara’s resignation, believed the war was unwinnable

Eugene McCarthy: senator who runs for Democratic presidential nomination as dove

Robert Kennedy: enters presidential race after originally deciding not to out of support for LBJ; was assassinated (over support of Israel) following victory speech after winning California primary

Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ): president after Kennedy, escalated war in Vietnam, did not seek reelection in 1968

Hubert Humphrey: LBJ’s Vice-President and winner of the 1968 Democratic primary

George Wallace: third-party candidate for the 1968 presidential election; champions segregation and states’ rights

Richard M. Nixon: won the 1968 presidential election promising to restore law and order as well as to end war in Vietnam (but gave no details of his plan to do so).

Henry Kissinger: Nixon’s National Security Advisor

Détente: the flexible policy, involving a willingness to negotiate and an easing of tensions, that was adopted by President Nixon and Kissinger in their dealings with communist nations.

Vietnamization: U.S. troops withdraw as South Vietnam troops (trained by U.S) take over
“Peace with Honor”: the strategy of getting out without necessarily winning but maintain our dignity because we got out when peace was in existence.

**My Lai Massacre**: a massacre by U.S. soldiers of hundreds of unarmed Vietnamese civilians, mostly women and children; became a symbol of US-American war crimes in Vietnam and prompted widespread outrage around the world and reduced public support for the war in the United States.

**Invasion of Cambodia**: In 1970, US troops successfully invaded Cambodia to clear out enemy supply centers along the Ho Chi Minh Trail; led to millions of college protesters as they saw Nixon escalating the war rather than getting out of it.

**Escalation**: military expansion or an increase in troop and/or equipment level.

**Pentagon Papers**: leaked papers that showed plans to enter war under LBJ and no plan to end the war as long as the North Vietnamese persisted—completely went against what government was telling the people and increased the credibility gap.

**War Powers Act**: in an effort to restrict the power of the president—president must inform Congress within 48 hours of deploying troops; 90 day maximum deployment without Congressional approval.

**Legacy of Vietnam**: government abolishes military draft; War Powers Act; war contributes to cynicism about government, political leaders.

**Conscientious Objector**: a person who refuses to fight or carry arms in battle for moral or religious reasons.

**Counterculture**: a movement made up of mostly white, middle-class college youths who had grown disillusion with the war in Vietnam, mistrust of government, and injustices in American during the 1960s.

**Woodstock**: a free music festival that attracted more than 400,000 young people to a farm in upstate New York.
Describe some of the most important effects of the Vietnam War on the United States and the American people. (Think About: the effects on those who served in the war, the effect on society as citizens formed differing opinions about the war, how the war affected people’s perceptions of government)

ANSWER: Thousands of Americans were killed, wounded, imprisoned, made gravely ill, or driven to suicide by the war. The government finally abolished the draft, which had been a point of great controversy during most of the war (“Working Class War”), and placed limits on the president’s powers through the War Powers Act of 1973 (president must inform Congress within 48 hours of deploying troops and 90 day maximum deployment without Congressional approval). During much of the war, Americans were deeply divided (Living-Room War). Those who supported (hawks) and those who opposed (doves) the war often felt great hostility toward one another. Americans developed a more cynical attitude toward government and politicians as a result of war-related lies, deceptions, and questionable activities carried out by the Johnson and Nixon administrations (Pentagon Papers). Americans became more cautious about foreign policy decisions that might require sending US troops to intervene in other nations’ affairs.

What were the goals of the United States in Vietnam? Which of those goals were not achieved, and why? (Think About: attitudes toward communism at the time, the amount of US involvement expected, Nixon’s goal of “peace with honor”)

ANSWER: The main goal was to contain communism in Southeast Asia. The United States failed to achieve this goal because it wasn’t willing to sacrifice as much to win the war as the Vietnamese Communists were. The US invasion of Cambodia led to a civil war in which the Communists won. Before the war, the United States wanted to keep US soldiers out of Vietnam. The United States failed to achieve this goal because it's main goal—the containment of communism—required the commitment of US troops. Nixon’s goal of “peace with honor” also was not reached. There was no
hiding the fact that the United States had lost the war, especially after the Communists overran South Vietnam. War veterans returning from Vietnam were not greeted as heroes, further underscoring the fact that Americans did not feel a sense of pride or honor about US involvement in the war.

**What important lessons about modern warfare did the Vietnam War offer the United States? Explain your ideas. (Think About: how the U.S. assessed the capabilities of the Vietcong, the effectiveness of bombing campaigns against entrenched forces, the role of the United States as the world’s police force, involvement in other country’s civil wars, and the importance of soldiers’ feelings personally committed to a struggle)**

**ANSWER:** The capability of small rebel forces should not be underestimated, as the United States did with the Vietcong. The effects of bombs should not be overestimated, as the United States did by relying heavily on bombing campaigns. The ability of the United States to police the world is limited, as we learned when it failed to force the Vietnamese to do what it wanted. Patriotism and nationalism make a people strong, as we learned when the United States attempted to bomb these feelings out of the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong. It’s best to avoid fighting in another nation’s civil war. Outsiders naturally care less about the outcome than the warring parties do and are willing to sacrifice less. In Vietnam, the battle for their survival and were willing to pay any price for victory.

**Discuss the causes and results of the US invasion of Cambodia in 1970. (Think About: reasons the United States had for invading Cambodia, Nixon and Kissinger’s negotiations to end the war, reactions on American college campuses, and the Khmer Rouge)**

**ANSWERS:** The invasion of Cambodia came at a time when the United States was withdrawing troops from Vietnam. Nixon ordered the invasion both to knock out Vietcong sanctuaries in Cambodia and to make his position at the negotiating table stronger. He wanted the North Vietnamese to think he was so obsessed with rooting out communism that he would do anything, perhaps even used nuclear weapons. Many Americans reacted to the invasion
with outrage, especially on college campuses. A general student strike closed down around 1,200 campuses. A massive student protest at Kent State University led to the deaths of four people. The invasion of Cambodia also led to a civil war that allowed the Communist Khmer Rouge to seize power. Under this brutal regime, at least one million Cambodians were killed by their own government.

**Briefly explain the power granted by the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution and the effects that the resolution had on war. Then discuss how the War Powers Act counteracted the resolution.** *(Think About: the power given by the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, the way that power was used, and the restrictions of the War Powers Act)*

**ANSWER:** The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution granted President Johnson the power to take “all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression.” Shortly after being granted this power, Johnson began Operation Rolling Thunder, bombing North Vietnam. In less than six months, troops were battling the Vietcong and the Americanization of the war had taken place. As a result of the events accompanying and following the Vietnam War, the country took steps to restrict the president’s war-making powers. Congress passed the War Powers Act, stipulating that a president must inform Congress within 48 hours of sending forces into a hostile area without a declaration of war. Also, troops may remain there no longer than 90 days unless Congress approves the president’s actions or declares war.