

MI OPEN BOOK PROJECT

United

Reconstruction to Today

States

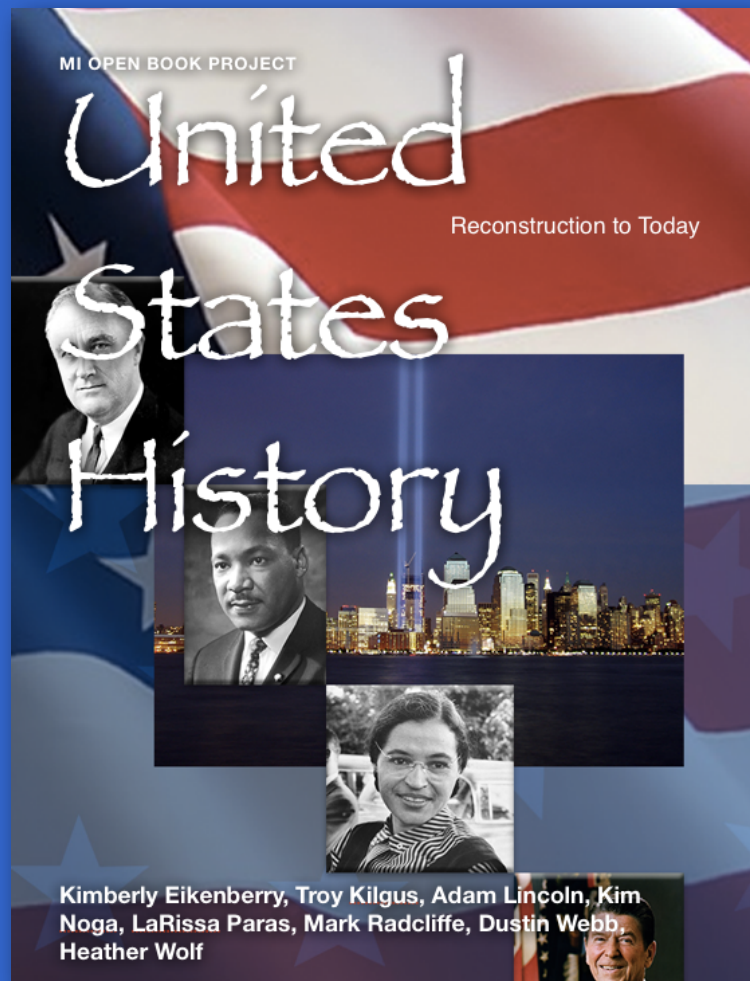
History



Kimberly Eikenberry, Troy Kilgus, Adam Lincoln,
Kim Noga, LaRissa Paras, Mike Radcliffe, Dustin
Webb, Heather Wolf



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This is version 1.4 of this resource, released in August 2018

Information on the latest version and updates are available on the project homepage: <http://textbooks.wmisd.org/dashboard.html>



MICHIGAN OPEN BOOK PROJECT

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The Michigan Open Book Project

Project Manager: Dave Johnson, Wexford-Missaukee Intermediate School District

HS US Team Editor: Rebecca Bush, Ottawa Area Intermediate School District

Authors

Kimberly Eikenberry, Grand Haven Public Schools

Troy Kilgus, Standish-Sterling Schools

Adam Lincoln, Ithaca Schools

Kim Noga, Ionia Public Schools

LaRissa Paras, Greenville Public Schools

Mike Radcliffe, Greenville Public Schools

Dustin Webb, Lake City Area Schools

Heather Wolf, Shepherd Public Schools



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Kimberly Eikenberry

Grand Haven High School

Grand Haven Area Public Schools

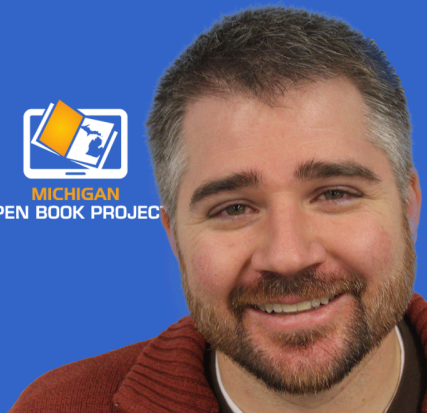
Kim has a B.A. in History and Social Studies and a M.A. in Educational Leadership, both from Western Michigan University. She has served in many roles during her thirteen years as an educator, including department chair, curriculum director, and administrator. Kim currently teaches World History and Economics at Grand Haven High School.

Troy Kilgus

Standish-Sterling Central High School

Standish-Sterling Community Schools

Troy Kilgus serves as the high school social studies chair at Standish-Sterling Central High School. In his eight years of teaching, he has taught various social studies courses including AP US History and multiple levels of French. Mr. Kilgus earned his undergraduate degree in French Education and his Masters in Teaching from Saginaw Valley State University.

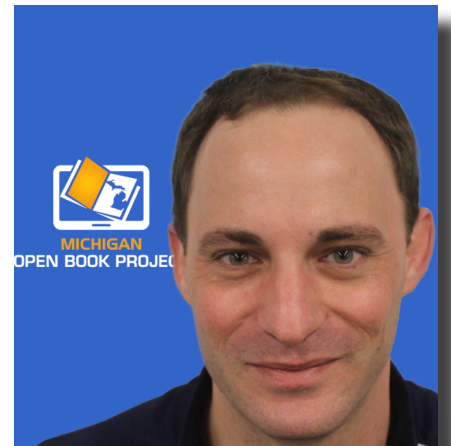


Adam Lincoln

Ithaca Jr/Sr High School

Ithaca Schools

Adam began his teaching career at Cadillac High School in Cadillac, Michigan where he taught US History, Global Studies, and AP World History. After 7 years, he moved back home to central Michigan to teach at Ithaca Public Schools. While his main charge has been teaching World History and starting the AP World History program, Adam also teaches 8th Grade History, US History, History in Popular Culture and all sorts of computer science classes. Adam coaches Model United Nations, and runs the Jumbotron at Ithaca Community Stadium during events. Adam has served as a member of the Michigan Council for the Social Studies for over a decade and has worked to unite his twin passions of Social Studies and effectively integrating technology into the classroom. Outside of school, Adam has served on the Content Advisory Committee, as a Social Studies item writer for the Department of Education, and worked for the PASST project. Adam teaches History and Social Studies methods classes at Alma College as adjunct faculty. Apart from the world of education, Adam enjoys spending time with his family especially traveling on new adventures.





Kim Noga

Ionia Public Schools

Ionia High School

Kim has a B.A. in History/ Social Studies and an M.A. in Curriculum and Teaching, both from Michigan State University. For the past 14 years she has been employed at Ionia High School where she teaches Economics, U.S. History, and Humanitarian Studies. Her hobbies include reading and traveling the world.

LaRissa Paras

Greenville High School

Greenville Public Schools

LaRissa is an alumni of Central Michigan University and the State University of New York. She is a tenured teacher in New York and now in Michigan where she works and resides with her husband and two rambunctious boys. Currently she is teaching World History and Current Issues at Greenville High School. She and her husband founded LP Inspire, LLC to encourage young people to grow into their best selves. She is also the proud creator of The Lotus Project, a successful mentoring program to help young women become empowered and rise above adversity in a positive way. In her spare time she enjoys reading, yoga, and being outdoors.



Mike Radcliffe

Greenville High School

Greenville Public Schools

Mike Radcliffe is a native of South Lyon, Michigan. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in history from Colorado State University, followed by a Masters of Arts degree in American Studies from the University of Colorado. Over his 23 years of teaching students in Colorado and Michigan, he has taught Advanced Placement United States History, American Popular Culture, World History, World Geography, Sociology, and Economics. He currently serves as the department chair for the social studies department at Greenville High School, where he has taught the past 15 years. His previous textbook projects include serving as a teacher consultant for textbooks in US History and World Geography for Teachers Curriculum Institute. His interests include his wife of twenty-five years, three amazing children, mountain biking, and really bad puns.

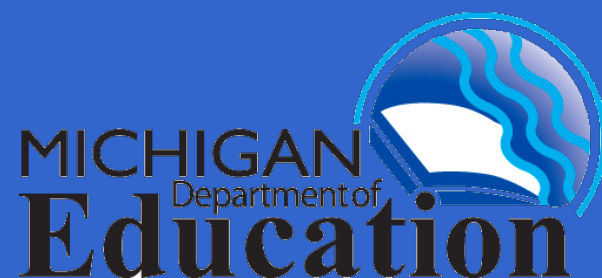


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Eric Hemenway - Director of Repatriation, Archives and Records, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians

Jim Cameron, Michigan Department of Education

Melissa Kieswetter, Michigan Department of



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Dustin Webb

Lake City High School

Lake City Area Schools

Dustin graduated from the University of Michigan in 2009 with degrees in history and English. Since then, he has been teaching US History and directing the school play and forensics program at Lake City High School in Lake City, Michigan.

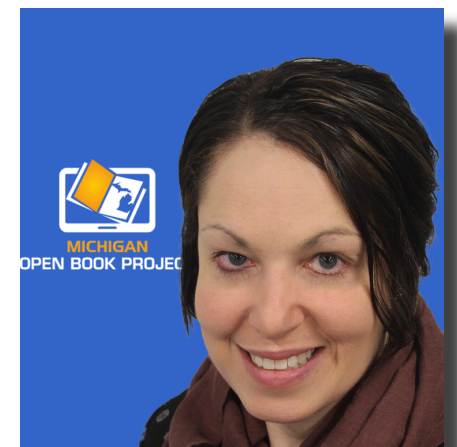
Outside of teaching, Dustin is an avid cyclist and competes in amateur mountain bike races. He is also an avid sailor and enjoys spending his summers in Northport, MI where he teaches sailing to young sailors. Dustin lives in Lake City with his wife and fur child (dog) Otis.

Heather Wolf

Shepherd Public Schools

Shepherd High School

Heather has taught Social Studies at Shepherd High School for 16 years. She currently teaches American History and Law, but has also taught Modern American History, Civics, Current Events, and History of American Wars in the past. Heather is a graduate of Central Michigan University, where she earned both her undergraduate degree, as well as a Master of Arts in History. She also teaches Social Studies Methods and Pre-Student Teaching courses at CMU. Heather also is the chair of the Social Studies Department at Shepherd High School and is involved in many other facets of the school and community. Heather was named 2009 High School Educator of the Year by the Michigan Council for the Social Studies. She enjoys reading, traveling and spending time with her family.



Rebecca Bush

Instructional Consultant

Ottawa Area Intermediate School District

Rebecca Bush is currently the Social Studies Consultant at the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District (OAISD), where she assists K-12 social studies teachers in developing curriculum, modeling instructional strategies in social studies literacy, and designing district-level formative and summative assessments. Additionally, as Project Director, she has written and received multiple Teaching American History grants, working with teachers throughout an eight-county radius. She has presented at various national conferences on multiple topics surrounding social studies instruction as well as innovative techniques and topics in formative and summative assessment design. Currently she is Co-Project Director of The Performance Assessments of Social Studies Thinking (PASST) Project and assists with the professional development of teacher writers for the MI Open Book Project where she serves as an editor of several of the project's texts. Rebecca currently leads the Michigan Social



Chapter 12

What impact did the war in Vietnam have on American politics, economics, and social issues domestically as well as abroad?

1. Under what circumstances were the French ousted from Vietnam post-WWII?
2. In what ways was the government of President Diem responsible for the intensifying unrest within Vietnam?
3. How did the U.S. misinterpret Vietnam's civil war as a component in the global struggle between communism and democracy that defined the Cold War?
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9. What ramifications of the Vietnam War are still evident in American society today?



Section 1

Roots of American Involvement

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE INQUIRY

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TERMS, PLACES, PEOPLE

Ho Chi Minh

Viet Minh

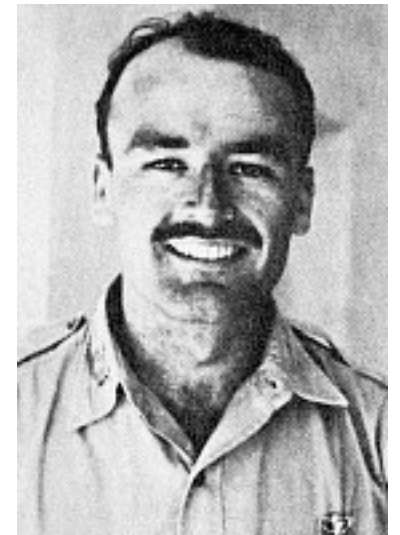
Domino Theory

Geneva Accords

Gulf of Tonkin incident

The First of Many

The surrender of Imperial Japan was announced on August 15th and formally signed on September 2nd, 1945, officially ending WWII. Less than a month later, on the morning of September 26th, American Lieutenant Colonel A. Peter Dewey was shot in the head at a Vietnamese roadblock in Saigon. Serving in the Office of Strategic Services, the chief intelligence-gathering body of U.S. military, Dewey had been sent to Vietnam (recently freed from Japanese rule during WWII), as the leader of a seven person team instructed to assess what was becoming an explosive situation in Vietnam.



In accordance with the provisions of the Potsdam Conference, the British were assigned the responsibility of disarming Japanese soldiers south of the 16th parallel. When the Japanese surrendered, **Ho Chi Minh** and the **Viet Minh** declared themselves as the rightful government of Vietnam. French colonial officials and the remaining French soldiers who had been disarmed and imprisoned by the Japanese were angered by the declaration and urged British Maj. Gen. Douglas D. Gracey to help them regain governmental control. Gracey, who was not fond of the Viet Minh or their cause, rearmed 1,400 French soldiers

to help his British troops maintain order. The next day, French and British forces ousted the Viet Minh from the offices that they had only recently occupied. Lt. Col. Dewey's sympathy was with the Viet Minh, many of whom were nationalists who did not want to see a return to colonial rule by the French. The American officer was an outspoken man who soon angered British Maj. Gracey, eventually resulting in the British general ordering him to leave Indochina. On the way to the airport, accompanied by another OSS officer, Capt. Henry Bluechel, Dewey refused to stop at a roadblock manned by three Viet Minh soldiers. He yelled back at them in French and they opened fire, killing Dewey instantly. Bluechel was unhurt and escaped on foot. It was later determined that the Viet Minh had fired on Dewey thinking he was French. Dewey would prove to be the first of nearly 59,000 Americans killed in Vietnam between 1945 and 1973.

Interactive 12.1 The First American Casualties



Causes of the Vietnam Conflict

The first major involvement of the United States in Vietnam was a result of Japanese expansion in Southeast Asia during World War II. Indochina, including the modern countries of Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam had been under direct French rule since 1887, while French missionaries had been in the region for centuries. During World War II, the French lost control of much of the region to the Japanese. While some countries decided to end their colonial presence in the region like the British in Burma in 1948 and the United States in the Philippines in 1946, others tried to reassert their pre-war presence.

The French fought against the Vietminh to reestablish their colony in Vietnam. Led by communist Ho Chi Minh, the Vietminh's main goal was nationalistic--independence from the French. Between 1946 and 1954, the French and Vietminh fought over control of Vietnam and at the Dien Bien Phu valley. The French surrendered after being surrounded by Ho's artillery where it bombarded the French base. Ironically, the ideas of US President Woodrow Wilson in his Fourteen Points inspired Ho to fight for the independence of Vietnam under Wilson's idea of self-determination and even quoted the US Declaration of Independence as he declared Vietnam's independence from the French in September of 1945.

As World War II ended, a new conflict was surfacing between those that supported the ambitions of the United States and other western allies and those that supported the USSR. The United States embarked on a quest of containment to halt the spread of communism. In an address on April 7, 1954, President Eisenhower addressed the importance of “Indochina.” Answering a question asked by a reporter, he stated:

You have, of course, both the specific and the general when you talk about such things. First of all, you have the specific value of a locality in its production of materials that the world needs. Then you have the possibility that many human beings pass under a dictatorship that is inimical to the free world. Finally, you have broader considerations that might follow what you would call the "falling domino" principle. 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. So you could have a beginning of a disintegration that would have the most profound influences.

Now, with respect to the first one, two of the items from this particular area that the world uses are tin and tungsten. They are very important. There are others, of course, the rubber plantations and so on. Then with respect to more people passing under this domination, Asia, after all, has already lost some 450 million of its peoples to the Communist dictatorship, and we simply can't afford greater losses.

...So, the possible consequences of the loss are just incalculable to the free world.

Even though Eisenhower didn't coin the phrase “**Domino Theory**,” this response would influence US policy not just in Southeast Asia, but in other parts of the world during the Cold War for years to come. From Eisenhower's perspective it seemed logical that the next domino to fall would be in Southeast Asia.

The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917 formed a communist USSR. In 1949, the communist revolution occurred in China. In the aftermath of the Korean War between northern communist forces and the United Nations in the South, the United States believed it was the duty of the United States to aid in the suppression of communist influence in Vietnam. In order for the US to continue the policy of containment, the president believed the US may need to increase its involvement in the region. Since the Vietminh were successful in ousting the French and were supported by both the Soviets and communist China, all of Vietnam would potentially be the next country to end up under communist control.

Formally ending French colonialism in Vietnam, the main players at the Geneva Conference eventually adopted an agreement that spelled out what superficially seemed to be a sensible path to peace and independence for Vietnam. The signatories of the **Geneva Accords** agreed to the following provisions:

1. The French would remove themselves from Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.
2. Vietnam would be divided temporarily along the 17th parallel for two years into North and South thus attempting to end hostilities between pro-French forces and pro-Communist forces.
3. Elections would be held the following July in 1956 to decide the governmental system of Vietnam under the supervision of international observers.
4. Both sides of the conflict agreed not to enter any military alliances with outside powers.

Even though these accords were agreements and not treaties, most of the countries at the conference agreed to be bound by them with two major exceptions--the United States and the South Vietnamese government.

Even though the United States under President Harry Truman had been sending military aid to the French since 1950, the Eisenhower administration continued to help fund the French effort to defeat the Vietminh and then in 1955, after the Geneva Accords, sent military advisors. The United States continued to support South Vietnam and by 1956, the new President of the Republic of Vietnam, Ngo Dinh Diem. The support of the Diem government would continue during the Eisenhower administration and the first part of the Kennedy administration even though Diem

became increasingly autocratic and unpopular with the South Vietnamese. He prevented the elections that were intended to reunite the North and South of Vietnam. Diem had difficulty consolidating his control over the Buddhist majority and primarily ruled through military might and economic support from the United States. Diem was fighting a civil war between South Vietnam and the Vietcong--supporters of the North Vietnamese communist government. By September of 1963, President Kennedy firmly believed that the U.S. should only play a limited role in the country's involvement in South Vietnam and the Diem regime. Watch the short clip below to hear President Kennedy's stance on U.S. involvement.

Interactive 12.2 JFK's Stance on Vietnam



As unrest grew as a result of Diem's military, social, and political policies, the Kennedy administration began to back away from Diem. The final act of the Diem regime involved an intensified attack on Buddhism. A devout Catholic, Diem became fed up with ongoing public demonstrations by Buddhist monks and nuns, imprisoning hundreds and destroying their temples. In protest, several nuns and monks publicly burned themselves to death. This prompted American officials, horrified by what was happening, to urge Diem to stop the persecution of Buddhists. Diem refused. It was clear that Diem and his regime would have to go. On November 1, 1963, a U.S. supported military coup ended Diem's regime. Against the wishes of President Kennedy, Diem was executed. Only a few weeks after the killing of Diem, John Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas on November 22, 1963. Vice-President Lyndon Baines Johnson succeeded Kennedy as U.S. involvement in Vietnam would reach new levels.

Johnson and Vietnam

Less than a month before his death, President Kennedy had announced his intent to withdraw U.S. forces from Vietnam in a press conference on the last day of October, 1963. View the clip below:

Interactive 12.3 Kennedy Announces Intent to Withdraw



As Lyndon Johnson assumed the presidency, chaos ensued in Vietnam. A string of military leaders attempted to lead the country after Diem's death, but to no avail. While each consecutive regime proved to be more unstable than the previous regime, the Vietcong's influence across the countryside was steadily increasing. To the new President, a takeover of South Vietnam by Communist forces would be disastrous. Terrified of being viewed as the president who "lost Vietnam," Johnson approved OPLAN 34A-64 on January 16, 1964, calling for stepped up infiltration and covert operations against North Vietnam to be transferred from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to the military. After operation Hop Tac failed to clear Communist guerillas from areas near Saigon, Johnson approved NSAM 288 in late March 1964, calling for more U.S. involvement in South Vietnamese affairs and a greater use of U.S. force, including planning for air strikes against North Vietnam.

By August, 1964, there were incidents that happened in the Gulf of Tonkin near the North Vietnamese coast. On August 2, the USS Maddox fired on and was attacked by North Vietnamese torpedo boats. The second Vietnamese attack on a US ship supposedly took place on August 4, 1964. Robert McNamara, Secretary of Defense at the time, later admitted that the attack on August 2nd happened but the incident on August 4th did not. Regardless of what actually occurred, the Johnson administration was able to use the Gulf of Tonkin incident to ask Congress for the funding to escalate US involvement in Southeast Asia. President Johnson

addressed the American people the evening of August 4th stating:

My fellow Americans:

As President and Commander in Chief, it is my duty to the American people to report that renewed hostile actions against United States ships on the high seas in the Gulf of Tonkin have today required me to order the military forces of the United States to take action in reply.

...In the larger sense this new act of aggression, aimed directly at our own forces, again brings home to all of us in the United States the importance of the struggle for peace and security in southeast Asia. Aggression by terror against the peaceful villagers of South Viet-Nam has now been joined by open aggression on the high seas against the United States of America.

Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution on August 7, 1964 giving the Johnson administration nearly a blank check and nearly unlimited power to fight the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong.



Primary Source: The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution

Eighty-eighth Congress of the United States of America

AT THE SECOND SESSION

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Tuesday, the seventh day of January, one thousand nine hundred and sixty-four

Joint Resolution

To promote the maintenance of international peace and security in southeast Asia.

Whereas naval units of the Communist regime in Vietnam, in violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law, have deliberately and repeatedly attacked United States naval vessels lawfully present in international waters, and have thereby created a serious threat to international peace; and

Whereas these attackers are part of deliberate and systematic campaign of aggression that the Communist regime in North Vietnam has been waging against its neighbors and the nations joined with them in the collective defense of their freedom; and

Whereas the United States is assisting the peoples of southeast Asia to protest their freedom and has no territorial, military or political ambitions in that area, but desires only that these people

should be left in peace to work out their destinies in their own way: Now, therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Congress approves and supports the determination of the President, as Commander in Chief, to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression.

Section 2. The United States regards as vital to its national interest and to world peace the maintenance of international peace and security in southeast Asia. Consonant with the Constitution of the United States and the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with its obligations under the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, the United States is, therefore, prepared, as the President determines, to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty requesting assistance in defense of its freedom.

Section 3. This resolution shall expire when the President shall determine that the peace and security of the area is reasonably assured by international conditions created by action of the United Nations or otherwise, except that it may be terminated earlier by concurrent resolution of the Congress.

Escalation of War

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE INQUIRY

1. Under what circumstances were the French ousted from Vietnam post-WWII?
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TERMS, PLACES, PEOPLE

Guerrilla warfare

Vietcong

Ho Chi Minh Trail

Search and destroy

Agent Orange

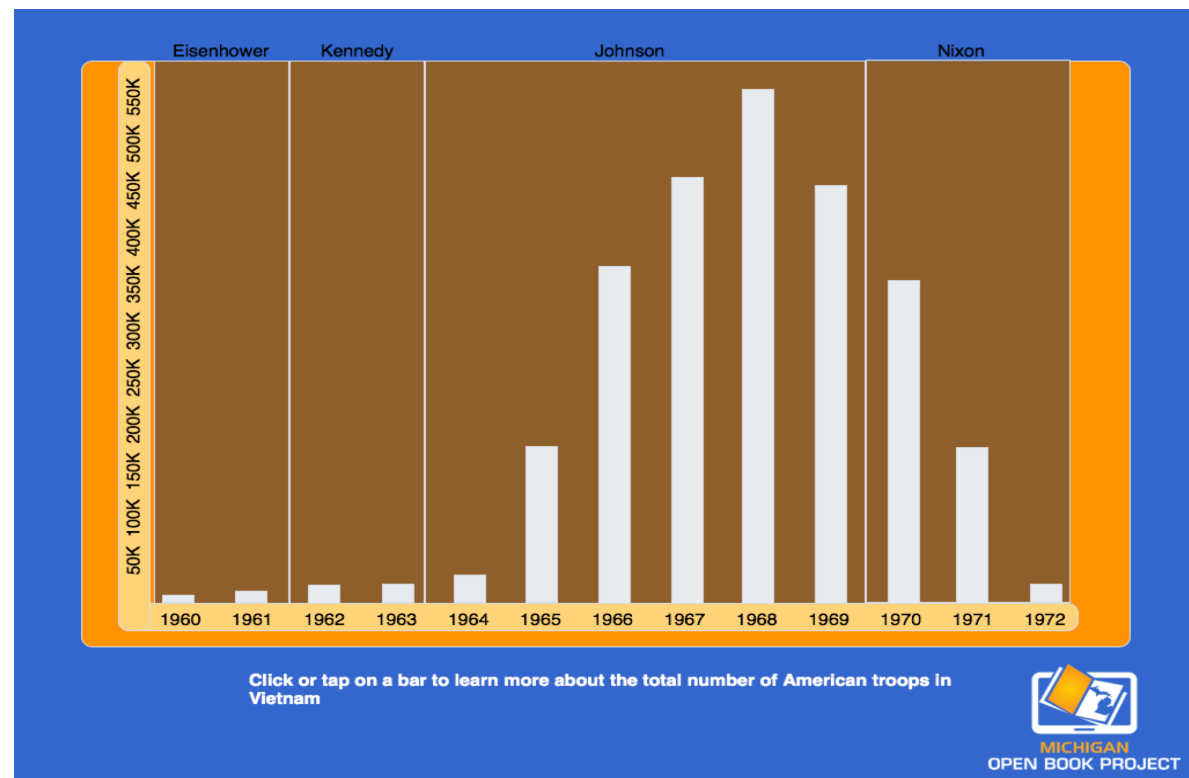
Napalm

Credibility gap

Waging the War in Vietnam

The US ramped up its military involvement in Vietnam with the passage of the **Gulf of Tonkin** Resolution. Beginning in 1965, the Johnson administration started sending a large number of troops to Vietnam. By the end of the year there were over 184,000 US troops in Vietnam--eight times the number of troops present in 1964. The U.S. commander in South Vietnam, General William Westmoreland, continued to request more troops. The Johnson administration complied with

Interactive 12.4 Vietnam Troops Interactive Timeline



Westmoreland's requests. By 1967, the number of U.S. troops in Vietnam had reached approximately 500,000.

War in the Jungle

Both the geography and topography of Vietnam impacted how the war was fought. The climate of Vietnam ranges from tropical in the south to more temperate in the north. Its land area is about 1.25 greater than that of Michigan. Vietnam has highlands, valleys in many areas in the north and center of the country and a massive river delta in the South. Parts of the year and depending on location, there are massive monsoon rains.

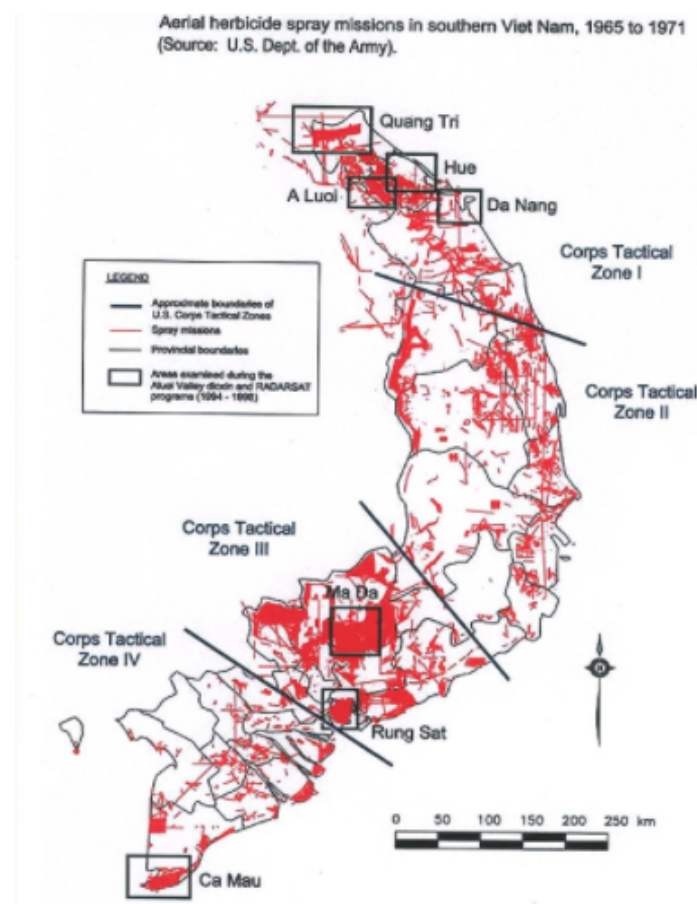
US Troops were asked to accomplish a difficult task. In a conflict where it is a challenge to tell ally from foe, how does one know who the enemy is? Guerilla warfare became the way that the **Vietcong** (VC) fought, often engaging US troops in a hit and run style. In many areas there were networks of tunnels where the Vietnamese could go underground and have bases for supplies and shelter. In the south, the Vietcong were supplied from a supply line running on the border with Cambodia. This route was known as the **Ho Chi Minh trail**. The supply line was vital to providing those fighting for the North Vietnamese in their fight against the United States and South Vietnamese.



In order to combat the guerrilla style warfare of the Vietcong and North Vietnamese, US troops often engaged in “**search and destroy**” missions. During these missions the objective was to seek out and destroy the enemy and their supply lines. American troops were often dropped into an area via helicopter, and evacuated out upon completion of the mission.

Fighting in dense forest and jungle provided its own set of challenges for US forces in Vietnam. Starting in 1961, the Diem government of South Vietnam asked the United States to begin aerial spraying of a herbicide-defoliant often referred to as **Agent Orange**. Agent Orange was sprayed over vast swaths of territory especially near the Mekong River delta. By defoliating the trees and plants, it was harder for the Vietcong to hide from spotters in the air. The United States between 1961 and 1971 sprayed nearly 4.5 million acres of Vietnam with herbicides and defoliants.

Interactive 12.5 The Girl in the Picture CBS News Sunday Morning



The US also used **napalm** which was an incendiary created and first used in World War II. Napalm was originally used in flamethrowers, but as the war progressed it was later dropped by bombers. Napalm had devastating human cost. The gel-like consistency stuck to skin and continued to burn and melt flesh.

In a conflict that people saw nightly on their televisions in the United States, the images of people being burned by napalm had a tremendously negative effect on how the war was viewed.

Morale Dwindles

The combination of **guerrilla warfare**, brutal conditions in the jungle, and one military failure after another in making substantial headway against the enemy took their toll on the morale of U.S. troops. As the war continued, morale continued to dwindle; many soldiers turned to alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs to try and cope with life as a soldier in an unpopular war. Some soldiers even resorted to the murder of their superior officers by lobbing grenades at them during battles.

Another obstacle that soldiers couldn't overcome was the corrupt and unstable government in South Vietnam. Refusing to step down, Nguyen Cao Ky remained in power from 1965-1967, while South Vietnam continued to fight a civil war within a civil war, leaving U.S. officials angry and confused.

Johnson's Great Society is a Casualty of the War

As the numbers of troops involved in Vietnam continued to mount, the war grew more costly. As a result, the national economy began to suffer as did Johnson's Great Society Programs. By 1969, the rate of inflation which had been at 2% in the early 1960s had almost tripled. Although President Johnson was determined to pay for both his Great Society Programs and the war, the cost of financing the war became too great. In August of 1967, the President asked Congress for a tax increase to help finance the war. Conservatives in Congress agreed to the tax increase but only after insisting that \$6 billion would come from money earmarked for Johnson's domestic reforms.

As Vietnam was the first widely televised war, it was the television coverage that played a major role in heightening the nation's growing concern about the war. Often referred to as America's first "living-room war," vivid images of combat and casualties brought the war in Southeast Asia into American homes and greatly contradicted the optimistic war scenario that the Johnson administration was projecting.

As US citizens watched the nightly news, they were also confronted with official government statistics, which often contradicted the brutal images of battle. Body Count (the number of Americans killed, compared to the number of Viet Cong killed)

statistics seemed to show that the American military was making progress against the Vietcong and lined up with what General Westmoreland and Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara were proclaiming. However as the war continued to drag on, so did the constant images of Americans dying in battle arriving home in body bags. A **credibility gap** developed between what the government reported and what was really happening in Vietnam. This discrepancy in information continued to cause some Americans to question America's role in Vietnam.

Listen to the clip below of Don Hewitt, a producer at CBS talk about the extent to which tv coverage of the war impacted Americans views on U.S. involvement.

By 1967, a small percentage of people outside of mainstream America had begun actively protesting the war. As the war raged on, those voices would continue to grow louder ultimately capturing the attention of the nation.

Interactive 12.6 The Impact of War



A Divided Nation

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE INQUIRY

1. Under what circumstances were the French ousted from Vietnam post-WWII?
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TERMS, PLACES, PEOPLE

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Selective Service | Students for a Democratic Society |
| Pardon | Free Speech Movement |
| Draft dodgers | Doves |
| New Left | Hawks |

The Economics of the Draft

Established in 1940 during WWII, the **Selective Service** System was the system that drafted men into combat for Vietnam as well. Under this system, all males had to register with their local draft board once they turned 18. In the event of a war, local draft boards called men between the ages of 18-26 as they were needed. Naturally, as America’s doubts continued to grow about U.S. involvement in Vietnam, many young men tried to avoid military service for fear of being sent to fight and perhaps be killed in Vietnam.

Many young men were successful in what many referred to as “dodging the draft”; others were not. One type of deferment involved medical excuses so some men sought out doctors known to be sympathetic in order to obtain medical deferments. Because draft boards were local, qualifications varied. This prompted some men to change residences in order to stand before draft boards that were more lenient than others. Still, others joined the Coast Guard or National Guard to secure deferment from active military service in Vietnam.

One of the most common ways to avoid the draft involved a college deferment which allowed a young man the opportunity to put off military service until after he could earn a college degree. Many young men from the middle and upper classes (a huge majority of which were white), who could afford to go to college, did so to

avoid military service. Because of this, many of the young men being drafted and sent to Vietnam who were less privileged economically, included lower economic classes of whites and minorities. Vietnam could definitely be considered a working class war.

Fortunate Son” by Creedence Clearwater Revival, 1969

Some folks are born made to wave the flag

Ooh, they're red, white and blue

And when the band plays "Hail to the chief"

Ooh, they point the cannon at you, Lord

It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no senator's son, son

It ain't me, it ain't me; I ain't no fortunate one, no

As the draft continued, some Americans met the government's call to serve in Vietnam with outright resistance. Some Americans tried to evade the draft by leaving the country and moving to Canada. Others openly defied draft conscription through burning their draft cards in protest. Still others tried to physically harm themselves, so they would not pass the draft physical. Other **draft dodgers** went to jail instead of honoring their draft notice. Although draft resistance occurred, in 1977 president Jimmy Carter offered a full and complete **pardon** to Vietnam draft dodgers.

African Americans in Vietnam

The number of African Americans that served in Vietnam was disproportionate to the percentage that made up the African American population in the U.S. In the first few years of the war, black soldiers accounted for more than 20 percent of U.S. combat deaths even though only about 10 percent of the U.S. population at the time was black. In an attempt to try and correct the imbalance, in 1969, the Department of Defense instituted a lottery system within the draft. Even though black soldiers had fought in every U.S. war, the Vietnam War was the first major conflict in which they were fully integrated. Like changes back in the States, integration on paper was one thing; complete equality and substantive integration in the armed forces in Vietnam was another. Eventually, the racial tension that had been occurring at home erupted in Vietnam in the summer of 1967 in the form of a race riot at a U.S. Army stockade at Long Binh. While the main cause of the riot was due to the inability of military leaders to address legitimate complaints of racial discrimination, domestic tensions back home also played a role. Many black soldiers responded in proactive ways by forming organizations such as the Minority Servicemen's Association, the Concerned Veteran Association, Black Brothers United, the Zulu 1200s, De Mau Mau and the Black Liberation Front of the Armed Forces in part to protect themselves and in part to represent their collective interests.

Women in Vietnam

In the 1960s, the United States Military did not allow women to serve in combat situations. Even so, although very little official data exists, estimates from the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation approximate that 11,000 military women were stationed in Vietnam during the war. Serving as nurses, physicians, air traffic controllers, intelligence officers, clerks, and other positions, women served in the U.S. Women's Army Corps, the U.S. Navy, Air Force, Marines, and the Army Medical Specialist Corps. Along with women serving in the armed forces, an unknown number of civilian women volunteered through the Red Cross, the United Service Organizations (USO), Catholic Relief Services, and other humanitarian organizations. Some worked as foreign correspondents for various news organizations.

An Era of Youthful Opposition

Prior to U.S. involvement in Vietnam, an atmosphere of protest was growing across the country on many college campuses.

Some were surprised that the youth of the 1960s had become more socially and politically active and would question government policies and actions. Others were not surprised because they were quick to realize that the personal experiences of the youth coming of age in the 1950s and the experiences of the youth coming of age in the 1960s differed greatly due to the extremely different dynamics of the economic and political events that occurred in each group's frame of reference. The general

contentment and conformity of 1950s youth gave way to a decade of social, political, economic, and cultural extremes, transformational change, and bizarre contrasts. By the end of the 1960s, many young people believed that the nation was in need of fundamental change.

The New Left

Many different activist groups and organizations became known as the **New Left**, a youth-dominated political movement of the 1960s that demanded sweeping changes in American society. According to historians Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, in their book, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s*, "The Left blazed through the Sixties like a meteor, reshaping the cultural landscape, particularly in the areas of gender and race."

In March of 1965, the Johnson administration dispatched the first combat troops to Vietnam. 3,500 Marines landed at Da Nang airbase in Vietnam. Earlier that same month, the US had begun Operation Rolling Thunder, a sustained bombing campaign against North Vietnam. In the midst of these actions, students and professors at the University of Michigan staged the first teach-in. The teach-in held in March of 1965, was originally started by 10 educators and eventually garnered over 3,000 participants. Students and teachers delivered speeches and led discussions as a form of protest against the war in Vietnam. Soon teach-ins spread to other college campuses across the nation.

The **Students for a Democratic Society** (SDS) was part of the driving force behind the teach-ins and other forms of anti-war protests on college campuses. A leftist-student organization, the SDS was founded in the early 1960s by Tom Hayden and Al Haber. Its first convention was held in Port Huron, Michigan, where the group adopted “The Port Huron Statement,” a political manifesto, calling for citizens to take an active role in government to affect change. The SDS and other student groups, such as the **Free Speech Movement** founded at UC Berkeley in 1964, launched a youth movement that became better known as “The New Left.”

Interactive 12.7 The Port Huron Statement



In 1964, another New Left group was gaining momentum. The Free Speech Movement (FSM) at the University of California at Berkeley, first grew out of a clash between administrators of the school and students over students’ First Amendment rights such as free speech, academic freedom, and political gatherings on

campus. Later fueled by opposition to the Vietnam War, the FSM was the first revolt of the decade to bring to a college campus the mass civil disobedience tactics first pioneered during the Civil Rights Movement. The strategies and tactics used by the FSM along with the SDS, quickly spread to colleges across the country. Visit the site below to see pictures of this historic, two-month protest along with a timeline of events:

Interactive 12.8 The Free Speech Movement



From Protest to Resistance, Doves and Hawks Remain Divided

Throughout the spring of 1965, some colleges began hosting “teach-ins” to protest the war. As the war continued, the number of protests grew and continued to divide the nation. In April of 1965, SDS orchestrated a protest march in Washington, D.C. Nearly 25,000 people participated in the demonstration that started at the US Capitol and ended at the Washington Monument. Anti-war protests would continue to increase, as

opposition to the war continued. Students became involved in the movement for many reasons. Many objected on moral grounds, believing it was wrong for the United States to become entangled in what was seen as a civil war between North and South Vietnam. As the draft intensified, students objected to serving in a war in which they could not find purpose.

Beyond college campuses the antiwar movement grew throughout other groups of American society. In addition to the hundreds of protests taking place across the nation, many musicians across multiple genres openly opposed the war through their music. Folk singers such as Peter, Paul and Mary and Joan Baez blazed the trail with their lyrical protests later followed by pop singers such as Barry McGuire, Phil Ochs, and Bob Dylan. Take a listen to one of Dylan's most famous anti-Vietnam War songs:

Interactive 12.9 Blowin' in the Wind



In the two years between 1965 and 1967, the antiwar movement intensified. By 1967, the US government had committed close to 500,000 troops to the conflict in Vietnam. While casualties mounted, as many as 40,000 men were drafted per month. As sentiment against the draft intensified, so did the protest. In October of 1967, over 100,000 including former veterans gathered at the Lincoln Memorial to protest continued American involvement in the country of Vietnam. Approximately 1,500 demonstrators were injured and at least 700 were arrested as protesters broke past military police.

By 1967, the divide between the doves--those who strongly opposed the war, and the hawks--those who felt that American military force was necessary to end the war, was a chasm.

However, despite the dramatic images portrayed at antiwar protests, polls indicated that approximately two-thirds of Americans still felt that the war was justified. Those less certain about America's role in Vietnam still struggled to understand how protesters could be so publicly critical about a war where fellow Americans were fighting and dying.

Johnson is Still Committed to the Fight

Despite the division that encompassed the entire nation and the turmoil that it caused, President Johnson was committed to the continuation of his policy of slow escalation in Vietnam.

Section 4

A Major Turning Point

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE INQUIRY

1. Under what circumstances were the French ousted from Vietnam post-WWII?
2. In what ways was the government of President Diem responsible for the intensifying unrest within Vietnam?
3. How did the U.S. misinterpret Vietnam's civil war as a component in the global struggle between communism and democracy that defined the Cold War?
4. How were conflicting ideas between communism and democracy during the Cold War responsible for U.S. involvement in Vietnam?
5. How is the Vietnam War reflective of the issue of presidential vs. congressional authority during wartime?
6. Why was the TET Offensive in 1968 considered the turning point of the war?
7. If the U.S. was fighting for freedom and democracy in Vietnam, why did some actions by American soldiers constitute war crimes?
8. Did President Nixon genuinely fulfill his promise to the American people to end the war in Vietnam through "peace with honor?"
9. What ramifications of the Vietnam War are still evident in American society today?

TERMS, PLACES, PEOPLE

The Tet Offensive

The TET Offensive

The Tet Offensive, a surprise attack, occurred on January 30th, 1968, when the Vietcong and North Vietnamese forces launched a massive attack in many locations in South Vietnam. The name **Tet Offensive** is given to the event because it occurred on the Vietnamese New Year called Tet. There were signs that the North Vietnamese strategy was shifting before the Tet Offensive, but the massive scale of the attacks on cities and bases, even though it was not a military success, seemed to demonstrate that the Johnson administration's portrayal of the war to the American public was different than what seemed to be happening in Vietnam. As battles waged on following Tet, the negative impact on the public's opinion was enormous. The result was that more and more Americans began to question America's role in the war.



One of the key people involved in U.S. military action in Vietnam was General William Westmoreland. A distinguished veteran of both WWII and the Korean War, Westmoreland was chosen by President Johnson to command the U.S. Military Assistance Command in Vietnam (MACV) from June, 1964 until June, 1968.

When the general arrived in Vietnam in 1964, there were approximately 16,000 U.S. troops in the region. General Westmoreland immediately pushed for an increased military presence in South Vietnam to help keep the unstable government in Saigon from collapsing under the Communist North Vietnamese (NVA) and the National Liberation Front (NLF) also known as the Viet Cong. After the Gulf of Tonkin incident in 1964, Westmoreland's request seemed to be legitimate and additional troops were sent to Vietnam.

Westmoreland's strategy in Vietnam was dependent upon superior U.S. firepower both on the ground and from intensive aerial bombardments. The goal was not to seize any territory but instead to inflict more losses than the Communists could sustain, thus forcing surrender by the Viet Cong and the NLF.

"Militarily, we succeeded in Vietnam. We won every engagement we were involved in out there." --General William Westmoreland

The general's "war of attrition" strategy was what many believed was Westmoreland's leadership downfall in Vietnam. From a purely military standpoint, he was right--Viet Cong losses were substantial. But from a psychological and political perspective,

the general could not have been more incorrect. The aftershock of the Tet Offensive significantly changed America's opinion about its involvement in Vietnam.

One such Westmoreland critic was historian Lewis Sorley, a West Point graduate and Vietnam veteran who worked for Westmoreland. In his latest book, *Westmoreland: The General Who Lost Vietnam*, Sorley writes with regard to Westmoreland's leadership that, "the most important, and also the saddest, is that in Vietnam and thereafter Westmoreland was willing to shade or misremember or deny or invent the record when his perceived interests were at stake. This was true in matters both great and small."

Interactive 12.10 The General Who Lost Vietnam



Tet is Responsible for Significant Changes

The aftershock of the Tet Offensive caused a substantial shift in public opinion about the war. As coverage of the fighting in Vietnam continued by mainstream media across millions of television sets throughout the nation, what once had been described as balanced coverage of the war had now shifted and the media openly criticized the war. One of the nation's most respected journalists at the time, Walter Cronkite, began using the word, "stalemate" in his reporting on the war. View a sample of what America's first televised war coverage looked like:

Interactive 12.11 First Televised War Coverage



Minds were also changing at the White House too. Clark Clifford, the recently appointed Secretary of Defense after the departure of Robert McNamara, quickly concluded that the war in Vietnam was unwinnable. Clifford commented, "we seem to have a sinkhole. We put in more--they match it. I see more and more

fighting with more and more casualties on the U.S. side and no end in sight to the action."

Clifford wasn't the only member of Johnson's cabinet affected by the seismic shift in public opinion. Secretary of State, Dean Rusk reluctantly acknowledged that America's mood had changed after the Tet Offensive. Once President Johnson realized he had lost the support of Walter Cronkite, he lamented, "If I've lost Walter Cronkite, then it's over. I've lost Mr. Average Citizen." On March 31, 1968, President Johnson finally responded to the growing division within the Democratic Party. In an address widely televised, Johnson announced that the U.S. would negotiate the ending of the war in Vietnam thus ending the policy of U.S. escalation. The President then went on to declare that because he didn't want the presidency to become involved in divisions within the party, he would not seek reelection.

The 1968 Presidential Election is Brutal

The year 1968 was a tumultuous year for many reasons, so it wasn't a surprise that the presidential election was one of many events that involved violence. With President Johnson not seeking reelection, two well-known candidates vied for the Democratic nomination. While Eugene McCarthy was supported by the antiwar populace, Hubert Humphrey was a loyal party man who had the support of the President.

As delegates arrived in Chicago for the Democratic National Convention, they met with 10,000 protesters with a multitude of goals. Some were hoping to persuade the DNC to adopt an antiwar platform while others were hoping to provoke violence to discredit the party. The mayor of Chicago, Richard Daley, was insistent that law and order would prevail in his city. He mobilized 12,000 Chicago police officers and 5,000 National Guardsmen to keep control of the city.

Inside the convention hall, disorder continued as delegates debated bitterly over whether or not the party would adopt an antiwar platform. As delegates received word of the rioting occurring outside the convention hall, they shouted angrily at the mayor who in turn returned hostile shouting at the delegates. The entire scene, both inside and out of the convention hall was captured on tv with millions of Americans witnessing the disorder in Chicago.

Meanwhile, the Republican candidate, Richard Nixon benefited greatly from the disorder in the Democratic party. With a political career that had been all but dead, Nixon campaigned for, and helped Republicans win back 47 House seats and 3 Senate seats from Democrats in the 1966 Congressional election. Tapping into the many Republican alliances he had formed, he won the Republican party's nomination.

Additionally, the entry of George Wallace, the former governor of Alabama, as a third-party candidate, helped Nixon's candidacy.

Wallace, a former Democrat was a longtime champion of states' rights and school segregation. Running as an independent candidate, Wallace won in 5 Southern states and attracted many Northern white working-class voters who were disgusted with riots that were occurring in the inner cities and antiwar protests.

While Nixon only captured 43% of the popular vote, he ended up defeating Humphrey by more than 100 electoral votes. America's involvement in Vietnam was now Nixon's albatross.

Section 5

The Legacy of the War

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE INQUIRY

1. Under what circumstances were the French ousted from Vietnam post-WWII?
2. In what ways was the government of President Diem responsible for the intensifying unrest within Vietnam?
3. How did the U.S. misinterpret Vietnam's civil war as a component in the global struggle between communism and democracy that defined the Cold War?
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8. Did President Nixon genuinely fulfill his promise to the American people to end the war in Vietnam through "peace with honor?"
9. What ramifications of the Vietnam War are still evident in American society today?

TERMS, PLACES, PEOPLE

Peace with honor

Silent majority

Pentagon Papers

Post-traumatic stress disorder

detente

Nixon and Vietnamization

As President Nixon moved into the White House in January of 1969, negotiations that began during the Johnson presidency had quickly stalled. On one side, the United States and South Vietnam had demanded that all North Vietnamese forces would withdraw from South Vietnam and that the government of Nguyen Van Thieu would remain in power. The North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong demanded that the United States would withdraw its troops and that the Thieu government would step aside in order for a coalition government to be instated that would include the Viet Cong.

In the middle of the stalemate, President Nixon announced his strategy of Vietnamization which called for a gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops in order for the South Vietnamese to take on a more active combat role in the war.

In the summer of 1969, President Nixon announced the first troop withdrawals from Vietnam. Referring to Vietnam, Nixon said, "One of the nightmares is war without end." But as troops were being pulled out of Vietnam, the U.S. began to secretly extend the war into the countries of Cambodia and Laos, bombing Vietnamese sanctuaries, including the Ho Chi Minh Trail--the route that was used by the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong to siphon troops, weapons, and supplies into South Vietnam. Nixon continued the war in Vietnam, attempting to achieve

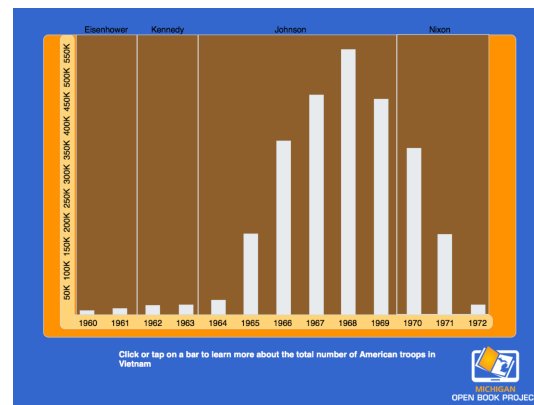
what he called, “**peace with honor.**” Nixon’s goal was to maintain U.S. dignity as troops continued to return home while still preserving clout at the negotiation table in Vietnam. It was important to Nixon that the South Vietnamese government remain in place in South Vietnam.

Through the bombing of neighboring countries, Nixon wanted the North Vietnamese that even though U.S. troops were being withdrawn, he was capable of anything. It was this policy that critics would argue prolonged the war for several additional years, many of which were bloody.

Perspective From the Home Front

Even though Nixon had been in office for less than a year, he felt it was important to seek support for his policies in Vietnam. He appealed to what he called the

Interactive 12.12 Troop Timeline



If needed, review this interactive timeline from earlier in the chapter.



silent majority--moderate, mainstream Americans who quietly supported his strategies.

Nixon’s “Silent Majority” Speech

November 3, 1969

Good evening, my fellow Americans:

Tonight I want to talk to you on a subject of deep concern to all Americans and to many people in all parts of the world -- the war in Vietnam.

I believe that one of the reasons for the deep division about Vietnam is that many Americans have lost confidence in what their Government has told them about our policy. The American people cannot and should not be asked to support a policy which involves the overriding issues of war and peace unless they know the truth about that policy.

Tonight, therefore, I would like to answer some of the questions that I know are on the minds of many of you listening to me.

Let us all understand that the question before us is not whether some Americans are for peace and some Americans are against peace. The question at issue is not whether Johnson’s war becomes Nixon’s war.

The great question is: How can we win America’s peace?

At the time we launched our search for peace I recognized we might not succeed in bringing an end to the war through negotiation. I, therefore, put into effect another plan to bring peace -- a plan which will bring the war to an end regardless of what happens on the negotiating front.

It is in line with a major shift in U.S. foreign policy which I described in my press conference at Guam on July 25. I laid down in Guam three principles as guidelines for future American policy toward Asia:

-- First, the United States will keep all of its treaty commitments.

-- Second, we shall provide a shield if a nuclear power threatens the freedom of a nation allied with us or of a nation whose survival we consider vital to our security.

-- Third, in cases involving other types of aggression, we shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with our treaty commitments. But we shall look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense.

After I announced this policy, I found that the leaders of the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, South Korea, and other nations which might be threatened by Communist aggression, welcomed this new direction in American foreign policy.

The Vietnamization plan was launched following Secretary [Melvin] Laird's visit to Vietnam in March. Under the plan, I ordered first a substantial increase in the training and equipment of South Vietnamese forces.

In July, on my visit to Vietnam, I changed General [Creighton] Abrams' orders so that they were consistent with the objectives of our new policies. Under the new orders, the primary mission of our troops is to enable the South Vietnamese forces to assume the full responsibility for the security of South Vietnam.

Our air operations have been reduced by over 20 percent.

And now we have begun to see the results of this long overdue change in American policy in Vietnam.

Let me now turn to our program for the future.

We have adopted a plan which we have worked out in cooperation with the South Vietnamese for the complete withdrawal of all U.S. combat ground forces, and their replacement by South Vietnamese forces on an orderly scheduled timetable. This withdrawal will be made from strength and not from weakness. As South Vietnamese forces become stronger, the rate of American withdrawal can become greater.

And so tonight -- to you, the great silent majority of my fellow Americans -- I ask for your support.

I pledged in my campaign for the Presidency to end the war in a way that we could win the peace. I have initiated a plan of action which will enable me to keep that pledge.

The more support I can have from the American people, the sooner that pledge can be redeemed; for the more divided we are at home, the less likely the enemy is to negotiate at Paris.

Let us be united for peace. Let us also be united against defeat. Because let us understand: North Vietnam cannot defeat or humiliate the United States. Only Americans can do that.

Fifty years ago, in this room and at this very desk, President Woodrow Wilson spoke words which caught the imagination of a war-weary world. He said: "This is the war to end war." His dream for peace after World War I was shattered on the hard realities of great power politics and Woodrow Wilson died a broken man.

Tonight I do not tell you that the war in Vietnam is the war to end wars. But I do say this: I have initiated a plan which will end this war in a way that will bring us closer to that great goal to which Woodrow Wilson and every American President in our history has been dedicated -- the goal of a just and lasting peace.

[Source: Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Richard Nixon, 1969. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971.]

The speech was extremely successful--as a result, tens of thousands of letters and telegrams of support were sent to the President at the White House. Not only did the speech affect the war and Nixon presidency but also it promoted a political opportunity in the Republican Party to amass a New Majority and promote conservative policies. Others disagreed with the president, and voiced their opposition in letters and further demonstrations including another Moratorium later in November 1969.

The My Lai Massacre

Labelled by many as one of the most horrific incidents of violence committed against unarmed civilians during the Vietnam War, was the My Lai Massacre. Although the event occurred on March 16, 1968, the American public did not become aware of the atrocity until journalist Seymour Hersh broke the story in November of 1969. On March 16, 1968 a company of American soldiers brutally killed most of the inhabitants of the village (women, children, and elderly men) of My Lai after the company determined that there were no enemy inhabitants in the village. The brutal slaughter of more than 500 civilians sparked

Interactive 12.13 The My Lai Massacre



To understand multiple perspectives of those who were at the massacre, click on this brief, video

international outrage. The brutality of the massacre along with what was deemed as a cover up by the U.S. military further divided the United States over the Vietnam War.

The My Lai Massacre could have ended with many more civilian murders if it hadn't been for the actions of an American helicopter pilot, Hugh Thompson and his crew. Learn about his heroic actions in this clip.

Interactive 12.14 The Hugh Thompson Story



Cambodia is Invaded

Even though news of the My Lai Massacre shocked the nation, by 1970, the mood of the nation appeared to be lessening in its explosivity as troops were returning home and the war was winding down. Across many college campuses student attention was shifting from the antiwar movement to the environment. But when on April 30th, 1970, President Nixon announced that U.S. troops had invaded Cambodia to clear the supply centers of the

Viet Cong, college students across the country erupted in protest. Known as the first general student strike in U.S. history, more than 1.5 million college students closed down approximately 1,200 campuses.

Kent State

As massive student protests were occurring on campuses across the nation, disaster struck

hardest at Kent State University in Ohio on May 4th when soldiers of the National Guard fired into a crowd of campus protesters, killing four and wounding nine.

For a complete but brief explanation of how the event escalated to the extremity it did, view the following clip.

Interactive 12.15 The Kent State Massacre



Ten days after the Kent State incident, violence erupted at Jackson State College in Mississippi. Twelve students were wounded and two were killed.

The Pentagon Papers

Nixon's policy of the invasion of Cambodia was extremely costly in terms of political support, especially in Congress. His failure to notify Congress about the invasion of Cambodia angered many in Congress. Their response was the repeal of the Tonkin Gulf

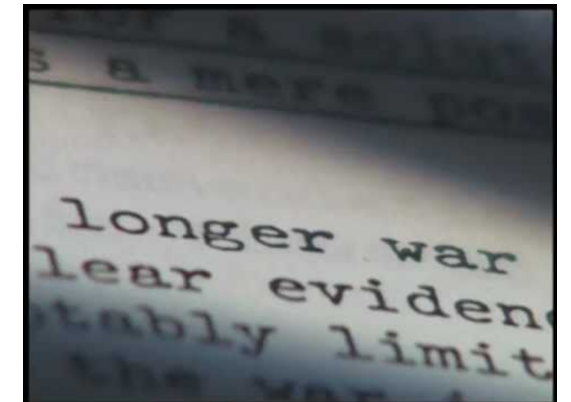
Resolution on December 31, 1970. Up until that point, the president had experienced almost complete independence in forming U.S. policy in Vietnam.

The President's support took another substantial hit when in June of 1971 Daniel Ellsberg leaked the Pentagon Papers. A top-secret Department of Defense study of U.S. military and political involvement in Vietnam from 1945 to 1967, the Pentagon Papers contained damning secrets about U.S. actions in Vietnam. The information in the papers indicated that the Kennedy administration had actively helped overthrow and assassinate Diem in 1963. Additionally, the report contradicted official U.S. government pronouncements about the intensive bombing of North Vietnam which the report determined that there had been no impact on the enemy's will to fight.

Ellsberg had served as an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1954 to 1957 and in 1959 joined the RAND Corporation as a strategic analyst. In 1964, working for the Department of Defense, he worked on the escalation of the war in Vietnam. In 1965, Ellsberg transferred to the State Department serving two years at the U.S. Embassy in Saigon, evaluating pacification in the field. Upon his return to the RAND Corporation in 1967, he worked on Robert McNamara's top secret study regarding U.S. Decision-making in Vietnam from 1945-1968, which were later referred to as the Pentagon Papers.

As the war dragged on, knowing what Ellsberg knew, his opinion on U.S. involvement in Vietnam had changed. Ellsberg secretly copied the report in 1969 and in 1971, gave the 7,000 page study to the New York Times, the Washington Post, and 17 other newspapers. Ellsberg was charged by the U.S. government with 12 felony counts. By 1973, the charges against him were dismissed due to misconduct by the government, eventually leading to the convictions of several White House aides.

Interactive 12.16 Pentagon Papers



The War Finally Ends

By the middle of 1972, as a grueling stalemate continued, the growing social division throughout the nation combined with the upcoming presidential election, convinced the Nixon administration to change its negotiation policy in Paris. Nixon sent Henry Kissinger, his adviser for national security affairs to Vietnam to serve as his top negotiator. Kissinger had been privately meeting with North Vietnam's chief negotiator, Le Duc Tho since 1969 and eventually dropped the administration's insistence that all North Vietnamese troops be removed from South Vietnam. One week before the presidential election, Kissinger announced, "Peace is at hand."

Nixon won reelection but the peace that Kissinger had promised was not to occur right away. The Thieu regime, frightened at the thought of North Vietnamese troops stationed in South Vietnam, rejected Kissinger's plan. As talks broke off, in December, the president unleashed a series of intense bombings against the two largest cities in North Vietnam--Hanoi and Haiphong. At the beginning of the new year of 1973, negotiations resumed. On January 27, 1973, the U.S. signed an agreement ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam. North Vietnamese troops would remain in South Vietnam but the U.S. would become involved if the peace agreement were violated. For the United States, the war was over.

Despite the peace agreement, the war continued. After just a few months after the departure of U.S. troops, the cease-fire agreement collapsed. The North Vietnamese, after several years of fighting, launched a full-scale invasion against South Vietnamese forces in March, 1975. Thieu asked for help from the U.S. The U.S. provided aid economically but refused to send any troops. In April of 1975, North Vietnamese tanks rolled into Saigon and captured the city. Soon after, the South Vietnamese surrendered to the North Vietnamese. The war had ended.

The War's Legacy is a Painful One

By the time America's participation in Vietnam had ended, 58,000 Americans had been killed and some 365,000 had been wounded. Politically, the war had left Southeast Asia highly

unstable, which led to further war in Cambodia. In the U.S., the Vietnam conflict left many extremely cautious when it came to foreign affairs and when it came to domestic issues, many were quite cynical.

Many veterans who returned to the United States, came home to an ungrateful nation. In contrast to veterans who served in earlier American wars such as World War II, veterans of the Vietnam conflict were not welcomed home by parades and fanfare. The Vietnam conflict was an unpopular war and many Americans desired to put it behind them.

For some American families, however, the war lingered. Some Americans were unaccounted for and listed by the US government as prisoners of war (POWs) or missing in action (MIA). Other veterans who returned home faced various issues related to their experiences in Vietnam. Many suffered from and continue to suffer from

post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

PTSD is caused by a person experiencing traumatic, stressful situations that can lead to

psychological effects including memory lapses, nightmares and



flashbacks among other effects. In addition to psychological effects, many veterans suffered from a myriad of other health related issues.

Although the war had ended, it did impact many changes to U.S. policy. The first major change was the abolishment of the draft. Secondly, Congress took steps to curb the president's power to make war with the passage of the War Powers Act in 1973. Its major provision was that a president must inform Congress within 48 hours if U.S. forces were sent into hostile areas without a declaration of war. Additionally, troops could only remain in the area for a maximum of 90 days unless Congress approves the president's actions or declares war.

With regard to the larger picture, the war in Vietnam significantly changed the nation's views about foreign policy. The nation had become quite cynical about its government and suspicious of a democracy that had consistently provided so much misleading information and concealed so many activities that many felt had cost millions of dollars and thousands of young lives.

