

CHAPTER
30

GUIDED READING *Moving Toward Conflict*

Section 1

A. As you read this section, take notes to answer questions about how the United States slowly became involved in a war in Vietnam.

1941	Vietminh is formed. →	1. What did the Vietminh declare as its main goal?	
1945	Japan is forced out of Vietnam. →	2. What did Ho Chi Minh declare after Japan was forced out?	
1946	French troops return to southern Vietnam. →	3. How did Ho Chi Minh respond to the return of the French?	
1950	U.S. begins its involvement in the Vietnam struggle. →	4. Whom did the U.S. support?	5. What aid did the U.S. provide?
		6. Why did the U.S. get involved in the struggle?	
1954	Eisenhower introduces domino theory. →	7. What did Eisenhower compare to a row of dominoes?	
	Vietminh overruns Dien Bien Phu. →	8. What did this Vietminh victory cause the French to do?	
	Geneva Accords are reached. →	9. How did the Geneva Accords change Vietnam?	
1956	Elections are canceled. →	10. Who canceled the Vietnamese elections? Why?	
1957	Vietcong begins attacks on Diem government. →		
1963	Diem is overthrown. →	11. What authority did the Tonkin Gulf Resolution grant to the U.S. president?	
1964	U. S. Congress adopts Tonkin Gulf Resolution. →		
1965	Operation Rolling Thunder is launched. →	12. What did Operation Rolling Thunder do in North Vietnam?	

B. On the back of this paper, explain the importance of the **Ho Chi Minh Trail** in the Vietnam War.

CHAPTER
30

GUIDED READING *U.S. Involvement and Escalation*

Section 2

A. As you read about the escalation of the war, take notes to answer the questions.

1. What role did each of the following play in the decision to escalate U. S. military involvement in Vietnam?
Lyndon B. Johnson
Robert McNamara
Dean Rusk
William Westmoreland
U.S. Congress
American public opinion

U.S. military strategies result in a bloody stalemate.

2. What military advantages did the Americans have over the Vietcong?	3. What military advantages did the Vietcong have over the Americans?
4. What military strategies did the Americans use against the Vietcong?	5. What military strategies did the Vietcong use against the Americans?

Public support for the war begins to waver as a “credibility gap” grows.

6. What role did each of the following play in this change of public support?
The U.S. economy
Television
The Fulbright hearings

CHAPTER
30
Section 2

PRIMARY SOURCE Letter from a Soldier in Vietnam

Marine Second Lieutenant Marion Lee "Sandy" Kempner from Galveston, Texas, arrived in Vietnam in July 1966 and was killed four months later by shrapnel from a mine explosion near Tien Phu. He wrote the following letter to his great-aunt less than three weeks before his death at the age of 24.

October 20, 1966

Dear Aunt Fannie,

This morning, my platoon and I were finishing up a three-day patrol. Struggling over steep hills covered with hedgerows, trees, and generally impenetrable jungle, one of my men turned to me and pointed a hand, filled with cuts and scratches, at a rather distinguished-looking plant with soft red flowers waving gaily in the downpour (which had been going on ever since the patrol began) and said, "That is the first plant I have seen today which didn't have thorns on it." I immediately thought of you.

The plant, and the hill upon which it grew, was also representative of Vietnam. It is a country of thorns and cuts, of guns and marauding, of little hope and of great failure. Yet in the midst of it all, a beautiful thought, gesture, and even person can arise among it waving bravely at the death that pours down upon it. Some day this hill will be burned by napalm, and the red flower will crackle up and die among the thorns. So what was the use of it living and being a beauty among the beasts, if it must, in the end, die because of them, and with them? This is a question which is answered by Gertrude Stein's "A rose is a rose is a rose." You are what you are what you are. Whether you believe in God, fate, or the crumbling cookie, elements are so mixed in a being that make him what he is; his salvation from the thorns around him lies in the fact that he existed at all, in his very own personality. There was once a time when the Jewish idea of heaven and hell was the thoughts and opinions people had of you after you died. But what if the plant was on an isolated hill and was never seen by anyone? That is like the question of whether the falling tree makes a sound in the forest primeval when no one is there to hear it. It makes a sound, and the plant was beautiful and the thought was kind, and the person was humane, and distinguished and brave, not merely because other people recognized it as such, but because it is, and it is, and it is.

The flower will always live in the memory of a tired, wet Marine, and has thus achieved a sort of immortality. But even if we had never gone on that hill, it would still be a distinguished, soft, red, thornless flower growing among the cutting, scratching plants, and that in itself is its own reward.

Love,
Sandy

from Bernard Edelman, ed., Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam (New York: Norton, 1985), 137-138.

Discussion Questions

1. In this letter, Lieutenant Kempner describes a plant. What does the plant look like?
2. What does this plant represent to Kempner?
3. Based on your reading of this letter, what qualities or traits do you think might have helped Kempner cope with the trials of war in Vietnam?

CHAPTER
30

GUIDED READING *A Nation Divided*

Section 3

As you read this section, take notes to answer the questions.

Avoiding the War

1. What were some of the ways that young American men avoided military service in Vietnam?
2. In what sense was the Vietnam War a "working class" war? How did it become one?

Opposing the War

3. What organizations and groups of Americans tended to oppose the war?
4. What were some of the reasons that "doves" opposed the war?
5. In what ways did they show their opposition to the war?

Defending the War

6. By 1967, how did most Americans feel about U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War?
7. Why did "hawks" criticize the Johnson administration's policies in Vietnam?

CHAPTER
30

Section 3

PRIMARY SOURCE **Protest Buttons**

These protest buttons from the antiwar movement in the 1960s were worn by Americans who opposed the war in Vietnam. What different views do the images and slogans on these buttons express?



Photos by Sharon Hoogstraten
Out Now Button: Archive Photos/Blank Archives

Activity Options

1. With a small group of classmates, discuss the slogans and symbols used in these buttons. Then choose two buttons that you think are most effective and explain your choices to the class.
2. Design your own protest button to express your view on the war in Vietnam, on war in general, or on a more recent controversial issue. Borrow symbols and slogans from those depicted on this page or invent your own.

CHAPTER
30

GUIDED READING *1968: A Tumultuous Year*

Section 4

A. As you read this section, note some of the causes and effects of the events of 1968.

Causes	Events of 1968	Effects
	1. Tet offensive	
	2. Johnson's poor showing in the New Hampshire primary	
	3. Assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.	
	4. Assassination of Robert Kennedy	
	5. Disorder at the Democratic National Convention	
	6. Richard M. Nixon's presidential election victory	(You may leave this box blank.)

B. On the back of this paper, note the political party of each of the following men and describe the position that each held and/or sought in 1968: **Clark Clifford**, **Eugene McCarthy**, **Hubert Humphrey**, and **George Wallace**.

CHAPTER
30
Section 5

GUIDED READING *The End of the War
and Its Legacy*

A. As you read about President Nixon’s Vietnam policy and the end of the war, note one or more reasons for each of the following developments during the war.

1. Nixon adopts a policy of Vietnamization.	2. My Lai massacre shocks Americans.
3. Nixon orders invasion of Cambodia.	4. First student strike in U.S. history occurs.
5. Congress repeals the Tonkin Gulf Resolution.	6. The “Christmas bombings” take place.
7. South Vietnam surrenders to North Vietnam.	8. Vietnam veterans receive a cold homecoming.
9. Cambodia erupts in civil war.	10. Congress passes the War Powers Act.
11. The draft is abolished.	12. Many Americans lose faith in their government.

B. On the back of this paper, explain the significance of each of the following in terms of the Vietnam War:

silent majority Pentagon Papers Henry Kissinger Khmer Rouge

CHAPTER
30

OUTLINE MAP *The Vietnam War*

Section 5

A. Review the maps “Indochina, 1959” and “Tet Offensive, Jan. 30–Feb. 24, 1968” on pages 886 and 902 of your textbook. Then, on the accompanying outline map, label the following bodies of water, countries, and cities. Finally, draw a line to mark the DMZ, the Demilitarized Zone that separated North and South Vietnam.

Bodies of Water		Countries		Cities	
Gulf of Tonkin	Red River	South Vietnam	Thailand	Hanoi	Can Tho
South China Sea	Gulf of Thailand	North Vietnam	Laos	Hue	
Mekong River		Cambodia	China	Saigon	

B. After completing the map, use it to answer the following questions.

1. Which natural feature forms much of the border between Laos and Thailand?

2. Why might the United States have been concerned early in the war about China’s attitude toward U.S. involvement on the side of South Vietnam?

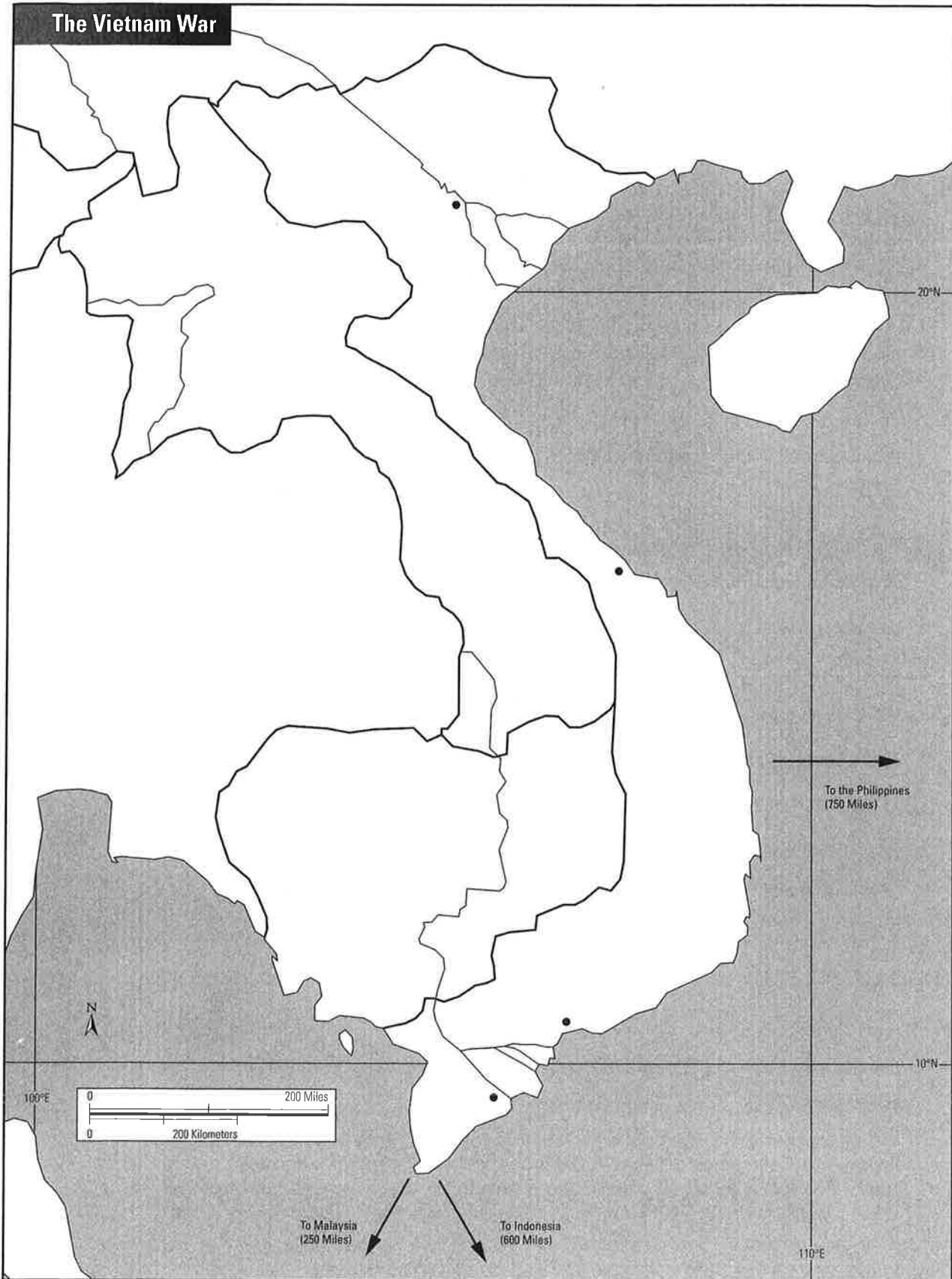
3. What city is located in the delta of the Red River?
in the Mekong Delta area?

4. About how long was the DMZ that separated North from South Vietnam?

5. What might have been the effect on the Vietnam War if the border of Laos had been closed and North Vietnam had not been able to operate in the country?

6. The Tet offensive ranged from Hue to Can Tho. Thus, over approximately how many miles did the North Vietnamese attacks stretch?

7. Part of the reason that the United States got involved in Vietnam was the domino theory—the belief in the 1950s and 1960s that the loss of even one country to communism would cause all others in the region to fall “like a row of dominoes.” What countries is it likely that the United States feared losing to communism?



The Americans © 1998 McDougal Littell Inc. All rights reserved.

A Short Summary of the Vietnam War

Imperialism and Colonialism

The Vietnam War has roots in Vietnam's centuries of domination by imperial and colonial powers—first China, which ruled ancient Vietnam, and then France, which took control of Vietnam in the late 1800s and established **French Indochina**. In the early 1900s, nationalist movements emerged in Vietnam, demanding more self-governance and less French influence. The most prominent of these was led by Communist leader **Ho Chi Minh**, who founded a militant nationalist organization called the **Viet Minh**.



The First Indochina War

During World War II, when France was occupied by Nazi Germany, it lost its foothold in Vietnam, and Japan took control of the country. The Viet Minh resisted these Japanese oppressors and extended its power base throughout Vietnam. When Japan surrendered at the end of World War II in 1945, Ho Chi Minh's forces took the capital of **Hanoi** and declared Vietnam to be an independent country, the **Democratic Republic of Vietnam**.



Ho Chi Minh

France refused to recognize Ho's declaration and returned to Vietnam, driving Ho's Communist forces into northern Vietnam. Ho appealed for aid from the United States, but because the United States was embroiled in the escalating Cold War with the Communist USSR, it distrusted Ho's Communist leanings and aided the French instead. Fighting between Ho's forces and the French continued in this First Indochina War until 1954, when a humiliating defeat at **Dien Bien Phu** prompted France to seek a peace settlement.

Divided Vietnam

The **Geneva Accords** of 1954 declared a cease-fire and divided Vietnam officially into **North Vietnam** (under Ho and his Communist forces) and **South Vietnam** (under a French-backed emperor). The dividing line was set at the 17th parallel and was surrounded by a demilitarized zone, or DMZ. The Geneva Accords stipulated that the divide was temporary and that Vietnam was to be reunified under free elections to be held in 1956.



The Cold War and the Domino Theory

At this point, the United States' Cold War foreign policy began to play a major part in Vietnam. U.S. policy at the time was dominated by the **domino theory**, which believed that the "fall" of North Vietnam to Communism might trigger all of Southeast Asia to fall, setting off a sort of Communist chain reaction. Within a year of the Geneva Accords, the United States therefore began to offer support to the anti-Communist politician **Ngo Dinh Diem**. With U.S. assistance, Diem took control of the South Vietnamese government in 1955 and declared the Republic of Vietnam. Due to the popularity of Ho Chi Minh throughout Vietnam, Diem promptly canceled the elections that had been scheduled for 1956.

The Diem Regime

Diem's regime proved corrupt, oppressive, and extremely unpopular. He was so unpopular that some Buddhist monks protested his regime using **self-immolation** – setting oneself on fire. Nonetheless, the United States continued to prop Diem up, fearful of the increasing Communist resistance activity in South Vietnam. This resistance against Diem's regime was organized by the Ho Chi Minh-backed **National Liberation Front**, which became more commonly known as the **Viet Cong**.

In 1962, U.S. president John F. Kennedy sent American “military advisors” to Vietnam to help train the South Vietnamese army, the ARVN, but quickly realized that the Diem regime was unsalvageable. Therefore, in 1963, the United States backed a coup that overthrew Diem and installed a new leader. The new U.S.-backed leaders proved just as corrupt and ineffective.



Vietnam takes its toll on President Johnson

Johnson and U.S. Escalation

Kennedy’s successor, **Lyndon B. Johnson**, pledged to honor Kennedy’s commitments but hoped to keep U.S. involvement in Vietnam to a minimum. He kept Kennedy’s Secretary of Defense, **Robert McNamara**, but replaced the previous American military commander with **William C. Westmoreland** – a U.S. general who advocated aggressive strategies against Viet Cong and NVA using large numbers of U.S. forces. After North Vietnamese forces allegedly attacked U.S. Navy ships during the **Gulf of Tonkin Incident** in 1964, Johnson was given carte blanche in the form of the **Gulf of Tonkin Resolution**. This resolution allowed Johnson “to take all necessary measure to repel any armed attack against the forces of United States and to prevent further aggression;” this greatly expanded his presidential power. With the free hand recently provided by Congress, Johnson ordered the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy to begin an intense series of air strikes called **Operation Rolling Thunder**. He hoped that the bombing campaign would demonstrate to the South Vietnamese the U.S. commitment to their cause and its resolve to halt the spread of Communism. Ironically, the air raids seemed only to increase the number of Viet Cong and NVA (North Vietnamese Army) attacks. Johnson’s “Americanization” of the war led to a presence of nearly 400,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam by the end of 1966.

Quagmire and Attrition

In 1965, Westmoreland began to implement a **search-and-destroy** strategy that sent U.S. troops out into the field to find and kill Viet Cong members. Westmoreland was confident that American technology would succeed in slowly wearing down the Viet Cong through a war of **attrition**—a strategy of extended combat meant to inflict so many casualties on the enemy that it could no longer continue. U.S. leaders agreed, believing that North Vietnam’s economy could not sustain a prolonged war effort.

In light of this new strategy of fighting a war of attrition, U.S. commanders were instructed to begin keeping body counts of enemy soldiers killed. Although body counts were indeed tallied, they were often exaggerated and proved wildly inaccurate, as the bodies of Viet Cong soldiers often were difficult to distinguish from the bodies of friendly South Vietnamese soldiers.

However, the Viet Cong’s guerrilla tactics frustrated and demoralized U.S. troops, while its dispersed, largely rural presence left American bomber planes with few targets. The United States therefore used unconventional weapons such as **napalm** – a highly flammable jellied substance -- and the herbicide defoliant **Agent Orange** but still managed to make little headway.

Self – Immolation

The Ho Chi Minh Trail



Meanwhile, U.S. forces continued to try to cut off Viet Cong supply lines through air power. These efforts expended a great deal of time and resources, but the North Vietnamese government proved extremely savvy in its ability to keep the Viet Cong supplied. Rather than attempt to send materials across the heavily guarded DMZ (the demilitarized zone surrounding the border between North and South Vietnam at the 17th parallel), they sent supplies via the **Ho Chi Minh Trail**, which ran from North Vietnam through Laos and Cambodia into South Vietnam (see map above). Troops and supplies streamed into South Vietnam via the trail and despite intense U.S. bombing throughout 1965, the trail never closed once, not even temporarily.

The “Credibility Gap”

Despite the numerous setbacks, Johnson and other U.S. officials, citing increased troop numbers and redefined objectives, again claimed to be making headway in the war. Many government officials reported that the North Vietnamese were declining in strength and were on the brink of defeat. Photos and video footage of dead American soldiers in newspapers and on evening news programs, however, indicated otherwise. Moreover, U.S. spending in support of the war had reached record levels, costing the government an estimated \$3 billion a month. As a result, many people in the United States began to speak of a “**credibility gap**” between what Johnson and the U.S. government was telling the American people and what actually was transpiring on the ground.



The Tet Offensive

In 1968, the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong launched a massive campaign called the **Tet Offensive**, attacking nearly thirty U.S. targets and dozens of other cities in South Vietnam at once. Although the United States pushed back the offensive and won a tactical victory, American media coverage characterized the conflict as a defeat, and U.S. public support for the war plummeted. Morale among U.S. troops also hit an all-time low, manifesting itself tragically in the 1968 **My Lai Massacre**, in which frustrated U.S. soldiers killed hundreds of unarmed Vietnamese civilians in a small village.

The Antiwar Movement

Meanwhile, the antiwar movement within the United States gained momentum as student protesters, countercultural hippies, and even many mainstream Americans denounced the war. Protests against the war and the **selective service system** -- military draft -- grew increasingly violent, resulting in police brutality outside the **Democratic National Convention** in 1968 and the deaths of four students at **Kent State University** in 1970 when Ohio National Guardsmen fired on a crowd. Despite the protests, Johnson’s successor elected in 1968, President Richard M. Nixon, declared that a “silent majority” of Americans still supported the war.



“General Nguyen Ngoc Loan executing a Viet Cong prisoner in Saigon”
Famous Tet Offensive Photo

Vietnamization and U.S. Withdrawal

Nonetheless, Nixon promoted a policy of **Vietnamization** of the war, promising to withdraw U.S. troops gradually and hand over management of the war effort to the South Vietnamese. Although Nixon made good on his promise, he also illegally expanded the geographic scope of the war by authorizing the bombing of Viet Cong sites in the neutral nations of **Cambodia** and **Laos**, all without the knowledge or consent of the U.S. Congress. The revelation of these illegal actions, along with the publication of the secret **Pentagon Papers** in US newspapers in 1971, caused an enormous scandal in the United States and forced Nixon to push for a peace settlement. These papers revealed that the U.S. Army, as well as presidents Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson, had authorized a number of covert actions that increased U.S. involvement in Vietnam unbeknownst to the American public. The government tried to block the publication of these papers under the guise of “national security”, but the Supreme Court ruled in *New York Times v. US* that the government must prove an immediate threat to national security to censor the papers.



Congress's Response

Outraged by the unauthorized invasion of Cambodia and by the double scandal from the My Lai Massacre and the Pentagon Papers, many in Congress took steps to exert more control over the war and to appease the equally angry public. The Senate voted to repeal the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution to reduce the military's unchecked spending power (although the House of Representatives did not follow suit). Congress also reduced the number of years drafted soldiers needed to serve in the army. Finally, the **Twenty-Sixth Amendment** was ratified in 1971 to lower the U.S. voting age from twenty-one to eighteen, on the grounds that the young men serving in Vietnam should have a say in which politicians were running the war.

The War Powers Resolution

In July 1973, Congress and the American public learned the full extent of the secret U.S. military campaigns in Cambodia. Testimony in congressional hearings revealed that Nixon and the military had been secretly bombing Cambodia heavily since 1969, even though the president and Joint Chiefs of Staff had repeatedly denied the charge. When the news broke, Nixon switched tactics and began bombing Cambodia openly despite extreme public disapproval.

Angry, Congress mustered enough votes to pass the November 1973 **War Powers Resolution** over Nixon's veto. The resolution restricted presidential powers during wartime by requiring the president to notify Congress upon launching any U.S. military action abroad. If Congress did not approve of the action, it would have to conclude within sixty to ninety days. In effect, this act made the president accountable to Congress for his actions abroad. Congress also ended the draft in 1973 and stipulated that the military henceforth consist solely of paid volunteers. Both the War Powers Resolution and the conversion to an all-volunteer army helped quiet antiwar protesters.

The Cease-fire and the Fall of Saigon

After secret negotiations between U.S. emissary **Henry A. Kissinger** and North Vietnamese representative **Le Duc Tho** in 1972, Nixon engaged in diplomatic maneuvering with China and the USSR—and stepped up bombing of North Vietnam—to pressure the North Vietnamese into a settlement. The **Paris Peace Accords** were finally signed in January 1973, and the last U.S. military personnel left Vietnam in March 1973.

Under the terms of the agreement, Nixon pledged to **withdraw** all remaining military personnel from Vietnam and allow the tens of thousands of NVA troops in South Vietnam to remain there, despite the fact that they controlled a quarter of South Vietnamese territory. However, Nixon promised to intervene if North Vietnam moved against the South. In exchange, North Vietnam promised that **elections** would be held to determine the fate of the entire country. Although Nixon insisted that the agreement brought "**peace with honor**," South Vietnamese leaders complained that the terms amounted to little more than a surrender for South Vietnam.

The U.S. government continued to fund the South Vietnamese army, but this funding quickly dwindled. Meanwhile, as President Nixon became embroiled in the **Watergate scandal** that led to his resignation in August 1974, North Vietnamese forces stepped up their attacks on the South and finally launched an all-out offensive in the spring of 1975. On April 30, 1975, the South Vietnamese capital of **Saigon** fell to the North Vietnamese, who reunited the country under Communist rule as the **Socialist Republic of Vietnam**, ending the Vietnam War.

Adapted and Edited by the North Carolina Civic Education Consortium

Source: <http://www.sparknotes.com/history/american/vietnamwar/summary.html>

Image Sources:

<http://www.vn-tours.com/images/tour/map/vietnam-asia-map.gif>
http://img.timeinc.net/time/time100/images/main_hochiminh.jpg
<http://scrapetv.com/News/News%20Pages/usa/images-3/vietnam-war-monk-self-immolation.jpg>
http://news.bbc.co.uk/nol/shared/spl/hi/asia_pac/05/vietnam_war/img/maps/2.gif
http://lefteyeonthemedia.files.wordpress.com/2008/12/lbj_regretting_vnw.jpg

<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/f/f9/Nguyen.jpg>
http://www.bristol.ac.uk/Depts/History/Sixties/Feminism/1968_files/image001.gif
<http://www.uiowa.edu/~policult/assets/VietNam/KentState.jpg>
http://news.bbc.co.uk/media/images/40336000/jpg/_40336701_nixon_and_kissinger300.jpg
<https://wikis.nyu.edu/ek6/modemamerica/uploads/Imperialism.ColdWarContainment/Evacuation.gif>

Name _____

Short Summary of the Vietnam War

Questions

1. Why was Ho Chi Minh fighting the French? What was the name of his organization?
2. What happened at Dien Bien I
3. How did the United States' foreign policy relate to an increased presence in Vietnam?
4. What group organized resistance to Diem's regime? List both names for the organization.
5. What was the Gulf of Tonkin resolution? Why was it passed? Why is it significant?
6. What was the purpose of Operation Rolling Thunder? Did it work?
7. What strategies did the United States use in Vietnam? Why did they believe they would work?
8. Why was the Ho Chi Minh Trail significant?
9. What was the Tet Offensive? How is it related to the Creditability Gap?
10. What was Vietnamization?

CHAPTER
31

GUIDED READING *Women Fight for Equality*

Section 2

A. As you read about the rise of a new women's movement, take notes to explain how each of the following helped to create or advance the movement.

1. Experiences in the workplace	2. Experiences in social activism
3. "Consciousness-raising"	4. Feminism
5. Betty Friedan and <i>The Feminine Mystique</i>	6. Civil Rights Act of 1964
7. National Organization for Women (NOW)	8. Gloria Steinem and <i>Ms.</i> magazine
9. Congress	10. Supreme Court

B. The Equal Rights Amendment would have guaranteed equal rights under the law, regardless of gender. Who opposed this amendment? Why?

1. Who?	2. Why?
---------	---------

CHAPTER
31
Section 3

GUIDED READING *Culture and Counterculture*

As you read this section, fill out the chart below by listing and describing various elements of the counterculture of the 1960s.

1. Members or participants	2. Beliefs about American society	3. Goals for society and for themselves
4. Movement centers	5. Attitudes and activities	6. Violent episodes
7. Impact on art and fashion	8. Impact on music	9. Lasting impact on society