

The War in the 1960s

SECTION PREVIEW

Determined to defeat Ho Chi Minh's communist forces, Presidents Kennedy and Johnson supported dictatorships and sent thousands of American soldiers to fight and die in Vietnam.

Key Concepts

- Fearing that communist forces would take over Vietnam, the United States supported the repressive government of Ngo Dinh Diem in southern Vietnam.
- President Kennedy increased American involvement in the early 1960s by sending military advisers to South Vietnam.
- President Johnson used the Gulf of Tonkin incident as an excuse to begin bombing North Vietnam and sending thousands more American troops to the country.



The fates of three nations—Vietnam, the United States, and France—became interwoven in the struggle for control over Vietnam.

Key Terms, People, and Places

Viet Cong, Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, escalation, Tet Offensive; Ngo Dinh Diem; Saigon

By the mid-twentieth century, Vietnam had a history of nationalism that extended back nearly 2,000 years. Two Vietnamese sisters, Trung Trac and Trung Nhi, organized the first major revolt against Chinese oppressors in A.D. 39. The Vietnamese continued to resist Chinese domination for centuries afterward. In the 1800s, France established itself as a new colonial power in Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh, the leader of the Vietnamese independence movement after World War II, continued his country's tradition of nationalism in his resistance to Chinese and French control. Policy makers in the United States, however, saw Ho merely as a communist and therefore an enemy in the cold war. As the independence movement in Vietnam turned into a civil war

in the 1960s, the United States was determined to support the anticommunist government it had helped create in the south.

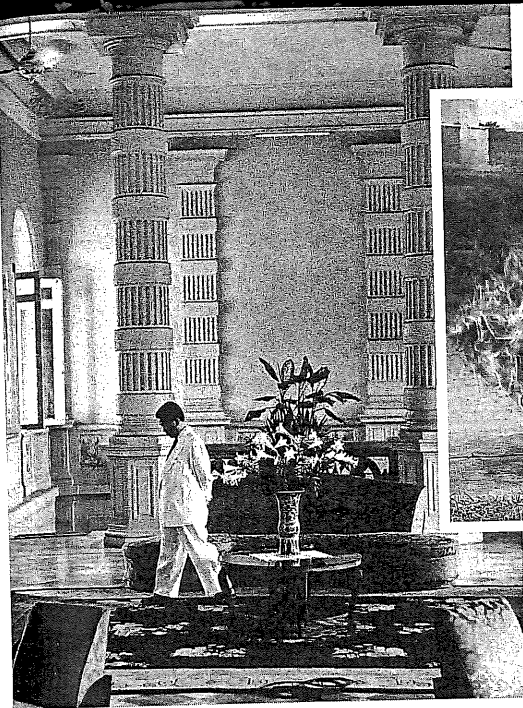
Background of the War

The United States became involved in Vietnam because of the demands of the cold war. As discussed in Chapter 26, American policy makers supported the French effort to crush Ho Chi Minh's independence movement because they needed French support to make the policy of containment work in Europe. The French attempt to reestablish control over its former colony failed in 1954. After the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu, a conference was held in Geneva, Switzerland, to discuss the situation in Indochina. The conference included representatives of Ho Chi Minh, Vietnamese emperor Bao Dai, Cambodia, Laos, France, the United States, the Soviet Union, China, and Britain.

As a result of the Geneva Conference, Vietnam was divided into two separate nations. Ho Chi Minh, a nationalist leader sympathetic to communist ideas, controlled North Vietnam. **Ngo Dinh Diem**, a former official in Bao Dai's government who had been living in exile in the United States and Europe, became the new prime minister of South Vietnam, with the support of the United States. France and North Vietnam agreed that elections would be held in 1956 to unify the country. Diem and his United States supporters, however, did not commit to the elections, which they feared would remove Diem from power. The elections never took place.

John Kennedy's Policy in Vietnam

President Eisenhower gave his firm support to Diem's South Vietnamese government, providing some 675 United States military advisers to assist in the continuing struggle against the north. When President Kennedy took office, he decided to do even more.



Kennedy was a cold warrior, like most other United States leaders after World War II. He was determined to prevent the spread of communism at all costs. Early in his term, Kennedy sent Vice President Lyndon Johnson to Vietnam to assess the situation. Referring to the great British leader of World War II, Johnson called Diem “the Winston Churchill of Southeast Asia.” He argued that if South Vietnam was to survive, it needed even more aid. In response, Kennedy increased the number of American military advisers to Vietnam. By the end of 1963, that number had grown to more than 16,000.

But military aid by itself could not ensure success. The problem was that Diem lacked support in his own country. He imprisoned people who criticized his government in “re-education centers.” He filled many powerful government positions with members of his own family. United States aid earmarked for economic reforms went instead to the military and into the pockets of corrupt officials. Diem launched an enormously unpopular program to move peasants from their ancestral lands to “strategic hamlets”—government-run farming communities that isolated the peasants from communist influences seeping into South Vietnam. On top of everything else, Diem was a Catholic in a largely Buddhist country, and he often dismissed the religious concerns of others.

When Diem insisted that Buddhists obey Catholic religious laws, serious opposition developed. In June 1963, a Buddhist monk doused himself with gasoline and burned himself to death. Photographs showing his silent, grisly protest appeared on the front pages of newspapers around the world. Other monks followed the example, but their martyrdom did not budge Diem. Kennedy finally realized that Diem would never reform and acknowledged that the struggle against communism in Vietnam could not be won under Diem’s rule.

United States officials told South Vietnamese military leaders that the United States would not object to Diem’s overthrow. With that encouragement, Vietnamese troops struck in early November 1963, assassinated Diem, and seized control of the government.

Lyndon Johnson’s War

Three weeks after Diem’s assassination, Kennedy himself was dead, and the new military government in South Vietnam was already in trouble. While the ruling generals bickered among themselves and failed to direct the South Vietnamese army effectively, communist guerrillas in the south, known as **Viet Cong**, gained control over more territory and earned the loyalty of an increasing number of South Vietnamese. Throughout the struggle, the Viet Cong received assistance from Ho Chi Minh and the North Vietnamese.

Lyndon Johnson, the new United States President, was as much of a cold warrior as Kennedy, and he was equally suspicious of the communist

Using Historical Evidence Ngo Dinh Diem (left) “always dressed in white and looked as if he were made out of ivory,” according to one journalist. While he paced the halls of his presidential palace, Buddhist monks protested his government by burning themselves to death on the streets of Saigon. How do these photographs illustrate the basic weakness of the Diem government?

sympathies of Ho Chi Minh. He commented about the continuing need for containment:

The Communists' desire to dominate the world is just like the lawyer's desire to be the ultimate judge on the Supreme Court or the politician's desire to be President. You see, the Communists want to rule the world, and if we don't stand up to them, they will do it. And we'll be slaves. Now I'm not one of those folks seeing Communists under every bed. But I do know about the principles of power, and when one side is weak, the other steps in.

Just after he assumed office, Johnson met with Henry Cabot Lodge, United States ambassador to South Vietnam. Lodge told the new President that if he wanted to save Vietnam, he faced some tough choices. Johnson was determined to do whatever necessary to win the war. "I am not going to lose Vietnam," he said. Referring to the communist takeover of China in 1949, he went on: "I am not going to be the President who saw Southeast Asia go the way China went."

In his campaign for reelection as President in 1964, Johnson posed as a man of peace. "We are not about to send American boys nine or ten thousand miles away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves," he declared. He called Barry Goldwater, his Republican opponent in the election, a

warmonger. He attacked critics who suggested using American bombs in Vietnam.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

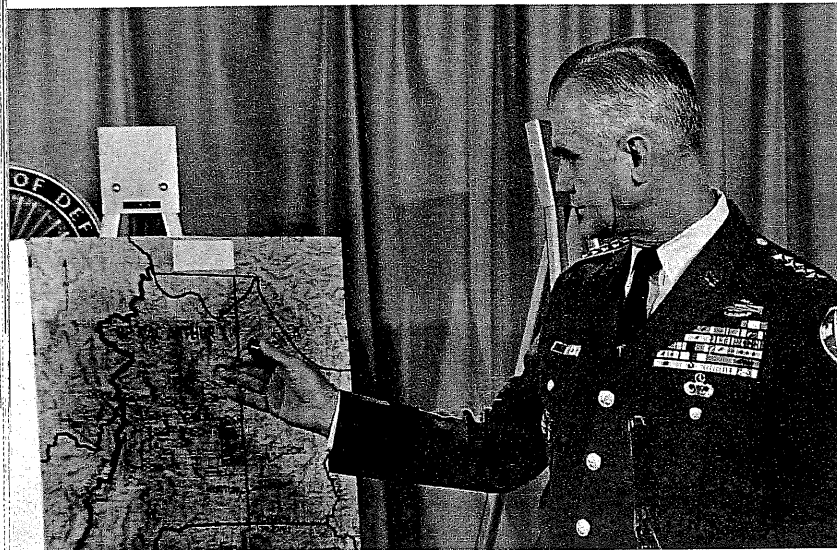
President Johnson vowed not to let Vietnam "go the way China went." What do you think Johnson believed the Truman administration should have done in 1949?

Intensifying the War Meanwhile, however, war planning was under way. During the election campaign, LBJ cleverly secured congressional authorization for deepening American involvement in Vietnam. He did so in August 1964 by announcing that North Vietnamese torpedo boats had attacked United States destroyers in the international waters of the Gulf of Tonkin, thirty miles from North Vietnam. He did not mention that the United States ships appeared to the North Vietnamese to be participating in combat raids against North Vietnam, nor that the commander of one United States ship was not sure that an attack really had taken place. Despite the confusion over these details, Johnson asked for and obtained a resolution giving him authority to "take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression."

Congress passed this **Gulf of Tonkin Resolution** by a vote of 416 to 0 in the House of Representatives and 88 to 2 in the Senate. Johnson had been waiting for some time for an opportunity to propose the resolution, which, he noted, "covered everything." The President now had nearly complete control over what the United States did in Vietnam—without Congress ever officially declaring war.

After his reelection, Johnson began a drastic military **escalation**, or expansion, of the war by devoting more and more American money and personnel to the conflict. In February 1965, after a Viet Cong attack at Pleiku in South Vietnam killed eight Americans and wounded 126, Johnson authorized retaliatory bombing of North Vietnam. Two weeks after the Pleiku attack, General William Westmoreland, the commander of United States forces in Vietnam,

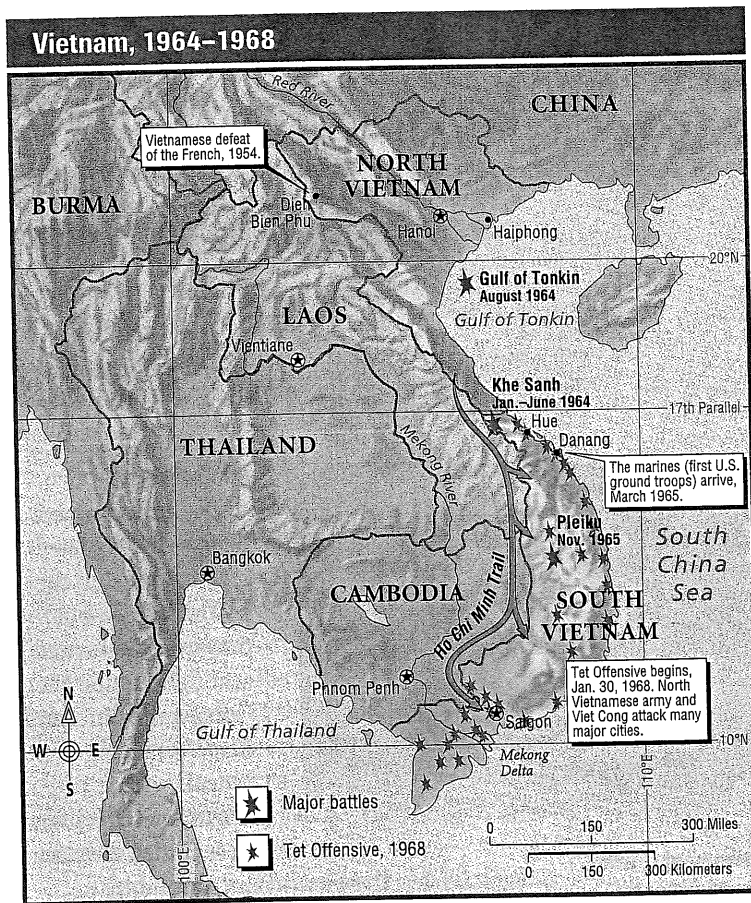
General William Westmoreland (below) believed he could win the war with enough American troop strength, but he and President Johnson vastly underestimated the determination of the communist forces operating throughout Vietnam.



asked Johnson to send two battalions of marines to protect the American airfield at Danang. Johnson heeded the request, beginning a rapid buildup of American troops. At the start of 1965, nearly 25,000 American soldiers were stationed in Vietnam; by the end of the year, the number rose to 184,000. That number had climbed to 385,000 by 1966, to 485,000 by 1967, and to 543,000 by 1968.

Initially, United States soldiers had gone to Vietnam to advise the South Vietnamese. Now they took responsibility for trying to prop up the South Vietnamese government. Led by military men Nguyen Van Thieu and Nguyen Cao Ky, the new government was more effective than Diem's but remained dictatorial. Despite the large United States presence in Vietnam, the communist forces only intensified their efforts.

The Tet Offensive On January 30, 1968, the North Vietnamese mounted a major offensive during Tet, the Vietnamese new year. The **Tet Offensive**, shown in the map at right, included strikes on numerous provincial and district capitals and other towns in South Vietnam. In **Saigon**, the South Vietnamese capital, the Viet Cong attacked the American embassy, Tan Son Nhut air base, and the presidential palace. Even though they were turned back, the Viet Cong won a psychological victory. In contrast to official reports that claimed the North Vietnamese were on the verge of surrender, the Tet Offensive dramatically demonstrated that the Viet Cong could launch a massive attack on targets throughout South Vietnam. Furthermore, as images of



Geography and History: Interpreting Maps
The Ho Chi Minh Trail, shown in the map above, was a supply route from North Vietnam through Laos and Cambodia into South Vietnam. How might the Ho Chi Minh Trail have contributed to the execution of the Tet Offensive?

the fighting flooded American television, many people at home began to express reservations about United States involvement in Vietnam.

SECTION 1 REVIEW

Key Terms, People, and Places

1. Define (a) Viet Cong, (b) Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, (c) escalation, (d) Tet Offensive.
2. Identify Ngo Dinh Diem.
3. Identify Saigon.

Key Concepts

4. Why did the United States support the government of Ngo Dinh Diem in South Vietnam?
5. How did President Kennedy increase United States involvement in Vietnam's civil war in the early 1960s?

6. How did President Johnson use the Gulf of Tonkin incident to further his goals in the Vietnam conflict?

Critical Thinking

7. **Checking Consistency** Based on what you have read about Ngo Dinh Diem's government in South Vietnam, do you think that supporting this government was consistent with the stated aim of United States foreign policy: to defend freedom around the world? Explain why or why not.

The Brutality of the War

SECTION PREVIEW

Vietnam was the first war that Americans witnessed on their television screens. They were not prepared for the awful violence they saw, but neither were those who experienced the war firsthand.



Images of brutality and bloodshed, such as this one of a Vietnamese child wounded in the war, made American television viewers question United States involvement in Vietnam.

Key Concepts

- Many American soldiers went to Vietnam eager to do their patriotic duty, but they quickly learned that fighting the Viet Cong was a cruel and nerve-racking ordeal.
- Vietnamese civilians were under constant

attack from the air and the ground by United States troops, who could not distinguish them from Viet Cong or North Vietnamese soldiers.

- The massacre at My Lai brought the horrifying reality of the war home to many Americans.

Key Terms, People, and Places

My Lai massacre

The Vietnam War was a long, brutal struggle. American soldiers were fighting a guerrilla war against a hidden enemy, and so they were often unable to tell friendly South Vietnamese peasants from Viet Cong soldiers waiting for an opportunity to attack them. As buddies fell before sniper bullets, land mines, and booby traps, GIs grew increasingly frustrated by the demands of a war that seemed to be accomplishing few clear objectives. Meanwhile, Vietnamese civilians in both the north and the south suffered heavy casualties in the ferocious destruction of their land and way of life.

The American Soldiers' War

Many American soldiers went to war enthusiastic about the job they were being asked to do. Many, like Ron Kovic of Long Island, had dreamed of being heroes when they grew up. Television characters such as the Lone Ranger and the Cisco Kid—rugged heroes of the American West—shaped their ideas about what it meant to be an American. They learned patriotism by watching actor John Wayne perform daring deeds in his movie roles.

Kovic, like many Americans, worried about the communist threat and was afraid that communists “were infiltrating our schools, trying to take over our classes and control our minds.” After high school, he joined the marines to do his part to defend his country. He proudly served a tour in Vietnam and signed up for a second tour. This second tour of duty would take a terrible toll on Kovic’s body and mind.

He and other soldiers were finding the war confusing and disturbing. They were trying to defend the freedom of the South Vietnamese, but the population, reared in an altogether different political tradition, seemed indifferent to their effort. “We are the unwilling working for the unqualified to do the unnecessary for the ungrateful,” Kit Bowen of the First Infantry Division wrote to his father in Oregon.

Fighting conditions were also different from those they had seen in films. Carrying sixty-pound packs, they had to walk through jungles of ten-foot-tall elephant grass and across flooded rice paddies. Much of the time they fought leeches, fever, and jungle rot—a tropical fungus that infected the skin. Racial tensions within the American ranks destroyed morale. Death always lurked around the corner. American troops never knew what to expect next, and they never could be sure who was a friend and who was an enemy. The Vietnamese woman selling soft drinks by the roadside might be a Viet Cong ally, counting enemy soldiers as they

passed. A child peddling candy might be concealing a live grenade.

The Viet Cong lacked the sophisticated equipment of the United States troops, so they avoided head-on clashes. Instead they used guerrilla warfare tactics, working in small groups to launch sneak attacks and practice sabotage. They were skilled in setting clever traps. For example, they might bury a land mine in a path that they expected a platoon of marines to take. When a soldier stepped on the mine, platoon leaders and others would gather around the wounded man, and Viet Cong snipers would have their guns aimed at the spot, ready to kill them.

Angel Quintana, an American soldier, described life in Vietnam:

An infantryman almost never sleeps. Even if you have time to sleep, you can't because you have all these memories in your head. If you're near a fire-support base, then you sleep even less with the noise of the cannons—the 155s, the 105s, the 4.2s, all firing at the same time. It's like an earthquake. And when you're in the jungle, you're afraid. As macho as you may be, you feel it. You know that death is behind you. You don't know whose turn it is. There are times when you lose the fear because something happens, like they kill a friend of yours. For five or six days it goes away because you're so shook up from losing your friend that life means nothing to you. Then it passes, and you start to be interested in life again.

Ron Kovic confronted his fears by making an aggressive effort to be a good soldier. But the horrors of war came to haunt him after he accidentally killed a United States corporal. Later, he shot at shadowy figures in a village hut, only to learn that his unit had killed and wounded innocent children. The final blow came when a sniper's bullet entered his spine. As his spinal column was severed and he lost all sensation in his legs, all he could feel was "the worthlessness of dying right here in this place at this moment for nothing." He was paralyzed from the chest down, after which he felt, in his words, "like a big clumsy puppet with all his strings cut."

MAKING CONNECTIONS

In what ways were the experiences of American soldiers who served in Vietnam and in the Pacific theater during World War II similar? How were they different?

Vietnamese Civilians and the War

The war was even more devastating for Vietnamese civilians in both the north and the south. Because American soldiers were never sure who might be sympathetic to the Viet Cong, civilians suffered as much as soldiers. As the struggle intensified, the destruction worsened. Saturation bombing—air raids that dropped thousands of tons of explosives over large areas—tore North Vietnam apart. The fragmentation bombs used in these raids, which threw pieces of their thick metal casings in all directions when they exploded, were not confined to the north alone; they were also used in the south, where they killed and maimed countless civilians.

United States forces also used chemical weapons against the Vietnamese. In order to expose Viet Cong hiding places, an herbicide known as Agent Orange was dropped on jungle landscapes, causing the leaves to fall off trees. Agent Orange also killed crops, and later it was discovered to cause health problems in humans and livestock. (See "History Might Not Have Happened This Way," pages 928–929.) Another destructive chemical used in Vietnam was called napalm. This jellylike substance, dropped from planes, burned uncontrollably as it stuck to people's bodies and seared off their flesh.

The war touched everyone in Vietnam. As Le Thanh, a North Vietnamese child in the 1960s, recalled,

Nobody could get away from the war. It didn't matter if you were in the countryside or the city. While I was living in the country I saw terrible things. . . . I saw children who had been killed, pagodas and churches that had been destroyed, monks and priests dead in the ruins, schoolboys who were killed when schools were bombed.



Although death was a constant presence in the war, few could harden their hearts against it. From the medic trying in vain to save a dying comrade, to the marine finally giving in to anguished tears in a lonely barracks, the war left few untouched.



The situation was similar in the south. Near the village of My Thuy Phuong, one peasant remembered this incident:

One day I was walking back home from the ricefield, carrying tools on my shoulder. Then behind me I heard a large, loud noise. A very bad noise. I looked back and saw an American helicopter following me, shooting down the path toward me. I was very scared, so [I] jumped into the water by the side. Just one moment later, the bullets went right by. So scary.



AMERICAN PROFILES

Le Ly Hayslip

Born in a tiny village in the northern part of South Vietnam, Le Ly Hayslip now lives in the United States and is an American citizen. Like other Vietnamese, as a child she learned “to love God, my family, our traditions, and the people

we could not see: our ancestors.” Then, when she was twelve years old, American helicopters came to Ky La, and the war intruded on her life.

For the next three years Le Ly fought for the Viet Cong. She and others were taught to follow Uncle Ho—Ho Chi Minh—in the struggle against the South Vietnamese government. For them, “‘Western culture’ meant bars, brothels, black markets, and *xa hoi van minh*—bewildering machines—most of them destructive.”

Life for Le Ly was never safe. Because she had ties to the Viet Cong, she always had to be alert to the moves of South Vietnamese soldiers. They often “took out their frustration on us: arresting nearby farmers and beating or shooting them on the spot, or carting anyone who looked suspicious off to jail.” Captured by the South Vietnamese, she was questioned and then released. Later she was detained again, and this time tortured. Though she was fortunate enough to be freed once again, she now found herself suspected by the Viet Cong, since they could not understand why she had been released twice. She was caught in the middle. “If the [South



Le Ly Hayslip endured both physical and emotional pain during the Vietnam War.

Vietnamese] were like elephants trampling our village,” she observed, “the Viet Cong were like snakes who came at us in the night.”

After the Viet Cong sentenced her to death, Le Ly’s life was filled with the terror of being discovered. She realized she could not stay in Ky La. She also realized that her life had changed forever: “From now on, I promised myself, I would only flow with the strongest current and drift with the steadiest wind—and not resist.”

Determined to leave Vietnam, Le Ly began to spend time with American soldiers and civilians. Eventually she met Ed Hayslip, a civilian contractor, who wanted to marry her and take her and her son back to the United States.

Le Ly accepted his proposal and became an immigrant to the United States. Still a young woman, she had seen more than most people see in a lifetime. For her, the war would never go away, and she devoted her life to trying to break down the barriers between the old world

where she had been raised and the new world where she now lived.

The My Lai Massacre

In March 1968, the brutality of the war came into sharp focus in a massacre at My Lai, a small village in South Vietnam. In response to word that the community was sheltering 250 members of the Viet Cong, a United States infantry company moved in to clear out the village. Rather than enemy soldiers, the company found women, children, and old men. The American troops already had suffered heavy combat losses. They were worn down by the uncertainties and terrors of fighting a guerrilla war. Some lost control.

Lieutenant William L. Calley, Jr., was in charge. He first ordered, “Round everybody up,” and then gave the order for the prisoners to be killed. One soldier, Private Paul Meadlo, later described what happened:

*W*e huddled them up. We made them squat down. . . . I poured about four clips [about 68 shots] into the group. . . . The mothers kept hugging their children. . . . Well, we kept right on firing. . . . I still dream about it. About the women and children in my sleep. . . . Some nights, I can’t even sleep. I just lay there thinking about it.

Stories of the horrible **My Lai massacre**, in which more than a hundred Vietnamese were slaughtered, shocked Americans at home. This was more than the nation had bargained for when it went to war.

SECTION 2 REVIEW

Key Terms, People, and Places

1. Define My Lai massacre.

Key Concepts

2. Why was the war so hard on American troops?
3. How did the war affect Vietnamese civilians?
4. What happened at My Lai, and how did it affect Americans’ perception of the war?

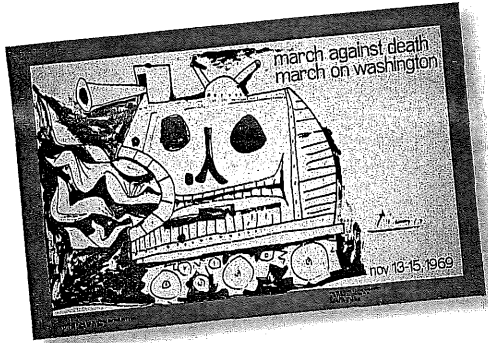
Critical Thinking

5. **Making Comparisons** Le Ly Hayslip and her fellow Viet Cong were willing to fight and die to keep “Western culture” out of Vietnam. How did their perception of American values differ from that of the GIs who grew up watching the Lone Ranger on television?

Student Protest

SECTION PREVIEW

“The times they are a-changin’,” folksinger Bob Dylan sang in the 1960s. Student activists demanded many changes during this period, but the Vietnam War took center stage in the protest movement.



This 1969 poster advertised one of many antiwar demonstrations that shook the nation during the Vietnam War era.

Key Concepts

- The United States was ripe for change in the early 1960s, and students began to challenge the foundations of American life.
- The Vietnam War became the focus of the protest movement in the 1960s.
- Student protesters used peaceful demonstrations, teach-ins, educational campaigns, and sometimes violence to voice their opinions.

Key Terms, People, and Places

Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), New Left, teach-in, conscientious objector

In June 1971, the *New York Times* published the first in a series of articles based on a classified government study of United States involvement in the Vietnam War. The Pentagon Papers, as the study came to be called, revealed that government officials, including President Johnson, had lied to Congress and the American public about the war. Although many were shocked by these revelations, others had long suspected that there were ugly truths hiding behind the optimistic statements of politicians and military leaders. In fact, opposition to the war had been growing steadily since the early 1960s.

Students were in the forefront of the antiwar movement, and their activism undermined support for the war in the population at large. Still, many Americans remained patriotically

devoted to their country’s involvement in Vietnam, and the issue created deep rifts within the United States.

Student Activism and Changing Times

Student activism began in the early 1960s. When members of the baby boom generation graduated from high school, college and university enrollments swelled with more students than ever before. Unlike previous generations of students, who needed to work after high school, members of this generation had time to experiment before they went out into the world.

Change was in the air. Even in the conformist years of the 1950s, popular culture—including rock-and-roll music and rebellious youths on the movie screen—had indicated that many young Americans were not satisfied with the values of their parents. The early 1960s saw a widening of this generation gap. In 1963 folksinger Bob Dylan captured the new mood in a song entitled “The Times They Are A-Changin’”:

*Come mothers and fathers
Throughout the land
And don't criticize
What you can't understand
Your sons and your daughters
Are beyond your command
There's a battle
Outside and it's ragin'
It'll soon shake your windows
And rattle your walls . . .
For the times they are a-changin'.*

The civil rights movement, discussed in Chapter 29, was a stepping-stone to other movements for change. Civil rights activists were among those who organized **Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)** in 1960. Its manifesto, the Port Huron Statement, appeared

in 1962. It was written largely by Tom Hayden, a student at the University of Michigan. The statement declared:

We are people of this generation, bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably at the world we inherit.

When we were kids the United States was the wealthiest and strongest country in the world. . . . As we grew, however, our comfort was penetrated by events too troubling to dismiss. . . . We would replace power rooted in possession, privilege, or circumstance by power and uniqueness rooted in love, reflectiveness, reason, and creativity. As a social system we seek the establishment of a democracy of individual participation.

Although it was but a tiny organization at the start, SDS was a major force in the development of a new political movement that came to be called the **New Left**. Members of the New Left believed that radical changes were the only way to solve problems such as poverty and racism in the United States.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

The Port Huron Statement rejected a system of “power rooted in possession, privilege, or circumstance.” What other social movements have you read about that criticized similar aspects of American society?

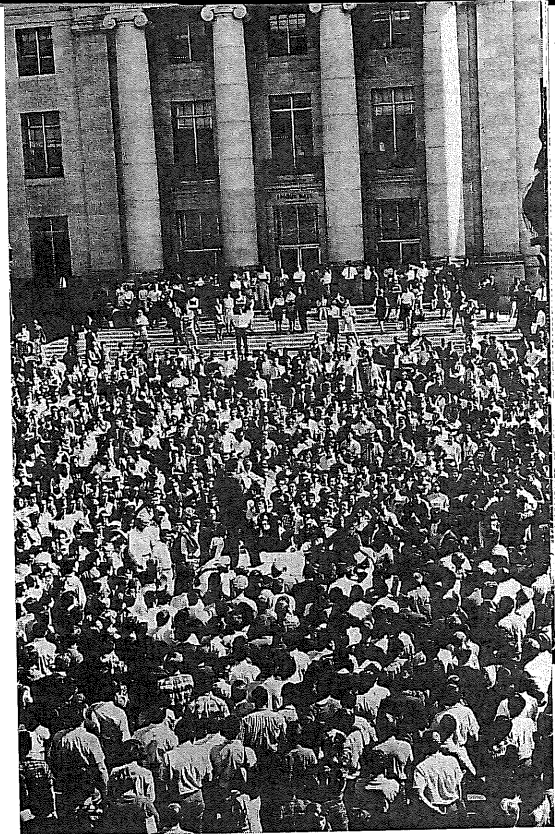
The Free Speech Movement The first blow of the student revolution came at the University of California at Berkeley in September 1964. Civil rights workers became angry when the university refused to allow them to distribute leaflets outside the main gate of the campus. The students, who had fought for equal rights in the South, argued that their right to free speech was being challenged, and they resisted the university’s effort to restrict their political activity. When police came to arrest one of their leaders, students surrounded the police car and kept it from moving. The free speech movement was under way.

Eventually the administration tried to find a compromise. Then, however, the governing board that had the final word over university policy decided to hold student leaders responsible for their actions and filed charges against some.irate students took over Sproul Hall, the main administration building. Student leader Mario Savio declared that the university was no more than a vast, impersonal bureaucracy:

There comes a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious [hateful], makes you so sick at heart, that you can’t take part, you can’t even tacitly [silently] take part. And you’ve got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you’ve got to make it stop.

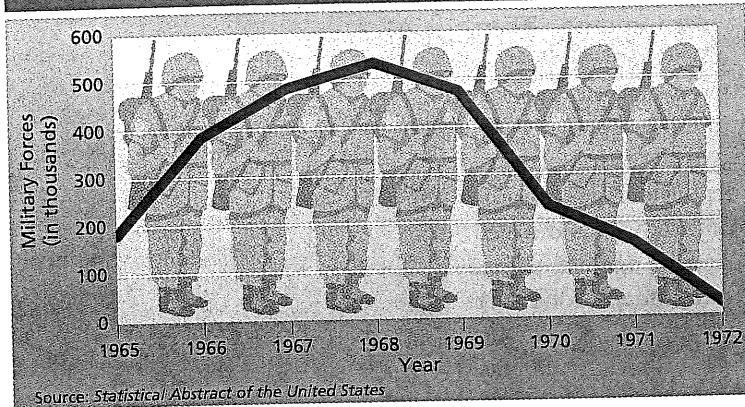
Students wore buttons echoing the instructions on their university registration cards and protesting the impersonal treatment they received from the school. “I am a U.C. Student,” the buttons read. “Do not Fold, Bend, or Mutilate.” Folksinger Joan Baez came to the school and sang “We Shall Overcome,” the marching song of the civil rights movement. When police arrested students in Sproul Hall, other students, supported by the faculty, went on strike and stopped attending classes to show their support for the free speech demonstrators.

Berkeley remained the most radical campus, but the agitation there spread to other campuses across the United States. In the spring of 1965, activists challenged regulations they felt unfairly curbed their freedom, such as restrictions on the hours when women and men could visit each others’ dorms. Students also sought greater involvement in college

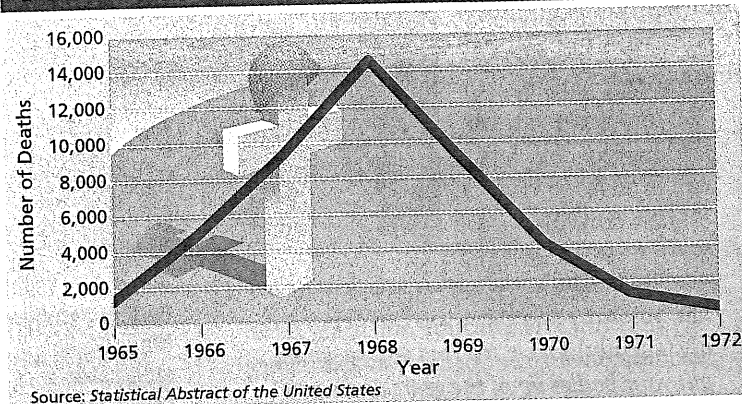


In October 1964, Berkeley student Mario Savio stood atop a police car to address a crowd of protesters demanding free speech (above). The building in the background is Sproul Hall.

United States Military Forces in Vietnam, 1965–1972



United States Battle Deaths in Vietnam, 1965–1972



Interpreting Graphs

How many United States soldiers were in Vietnam in 1965? In 1967? How do the graphs show some reasons for antiwar protest, especially among students? Explain how the top graph might relate to the Tet Offensive (January 1968) and its effect on public opinion in the United States.

affairs. SDS recruited some of these discontented students to work in campaigns to improve conditions in the cities of the United States.

The Teach-in Movement Then the Vietnam War intervened. As escalation began, students were among the first to protest American involvement in the war. Some opposed what they regarded as American imperialism. Others questioned American interests in a civil war. All called for withdrawal. The Tet Offensive in early 1968 finally turned a majority of Americans against the war, but the student protest movement had been registering many young people's disapproval for years. The graphs above give some indication of the statistics students found disturbing.

The first **teach-in** took place at the University of Michigan in March 1965. When a small group of faculty members planned a strike to protest the war, the Michigan legislature threatened to fire them. Instead, an even larger group decided to make a public statement. Fifty or sixty professors decided to teach a special night session in which issues concerning the war could be aired. To their surprise, several thousand people showed up and made the evening a monumental success. Soon other teach-ins followed at colleges around the country. Both supporters and opponents of the war appeared at the early teach-ins, but soon antiwar voices dominated the proceedings.

Resistance to War

At about the same time that the first teach-ins were taking place, resistance to the military draft was beginning to sweep the country. A selective service act allowing the government to draft men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-six had been in place since 1951. As more and more young men were being called into service and sent to fight in Vietnam, Americans began to question the morality and fairness of the draft. College students could receive deferments, which meant they did not have to go to war, but those who could not afford college did not have this avenue open to them. Many other young men tried to avoid the draft by leaving the country or by claiming that they were **conscientious objectors**—they opposed fighting in the war on moral grounds.

SDS grew by leaps and bounds as it embarked on a campaign against the draft. Leaders encouraged men to refuse to report for duty. The organization also launched attacks on campus units of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), on CIA recruiters, and on companies producing napalm and other tools of destruction. "Hey, hey, LBJ. How many kids did you kill today?" marchers chanted during demonstrations around the country. In 1967 some 300,000 opponents of the war marched in New York City, while 100,000 tried to close down the Pentagon, home of the Defense Department, near Washington, D.C. In 1969 the National Chicano Moratorium Committee staged its own antiwar

demonstrations. These protesters argued that Vietnam was a racial war, with black and brown Americans being used against their brothers and sisters in developing nations.

Protest became a way of life. In the first six months of 1968, more than 200 major demonstrations erupted at colleges and universities around the country. The most dramatic confrontation came at Columbia University in New York. There the issues of civil rights and the war were closely related. An SDS chapter sought to get the university to cut its ties with a research institute that did work for the military. At the same time, an African American students' organization tried to halt construction of a gymnasium that would encroach upon an adjacent neighborhood. Together, these two groups took over the president's office. Finally the president called the police, and hundreds of students were arrested. A student sympathy strike followed, and the university closed early that spring.

Sometimes the radical movement turned violent. Activists in one SDS faction called themselves the Weathermen, after a line in a Bob Dylan song—"You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows." They were determined to bring about a revolution immediately. In October 1969, the group converged on Chicago. Members dressed in hard hats, boots, and work gloves rampaged through the streets wielding pipes, clubs, rocks, and chains. They tangled with police (as they had planned), regrouped, and came back for still another confrontation.

Bo Burlingham, a participant from Ohio, explained why he had joined in the attack:



Why did we do it? The status quo meant to us war, poverty, inequality, ignorance, famine and disease in most of the world. To accept it was to condone and help perpetuate it. We felt like miners trapped in a terrible poisonous shaft with no light to guide us out. We resolved to destroy the tunnel even if we risked destroying ourselves in the process.

The violent measures of groups like the Weathermen represented the extreme expression of youthful discontent in the 1960s. The spirit of change led most members of the counterculture to work for reforms in peaceful ways, but that same spirit led others simply to "drop out" of the traditional culture they were rejecting.

This antiwar protest took place in San Francisco in 1967.

SECTION 3 REVIEW

Key Terms, People, and Places

1. Define (a) SDS, (b) New Left, (c) teach-in, (d) conscientious objector.

Key Concepts

2. What were the roots of student activism in the 1960s?
3. What was the role of SDS in the growing protest movement?
4. How did the Vietnam War affect the student protest movement?

5. What did activists hope to accomplish, and what methods did they use?

Critical Thinking

6. Distinguishing False from Accurate Images

Mario Savio described the university as a huge machine with gears and wheels. Explain why you think that this image does or does not accurately reflect the nature of any large institution.

The Counterculture

SECTION PREVIEW

In the 1960s, a youth culture that stressed freedom and individuality created for some people a promising new “space” in which to explore themselves. At the same time, it filled others with fear and disgust.

Key Concepts

- Rejecting the conventional lifestyles of older Americans, many young people in the 1960s became part of a counterculture that sought to promote freedom and creativity.
- The counterculture advanced new attitudes about personal relationships, drugs, and music.
- Many Americans were shocked by the new values of the counterculture.

Key Terms, People, and Places

counterculture, hippie, psychedelic drug, Woodstock

In the 1960s, many Americans began to look for alternatives to traditional patterns of living. Young people in particular were involved in what became known as the **counterculture**. Drawing on the example of the Beat Generation of the 1950s, members of the counterculture rejected conventional customs. They experimented with new forms of dress, different attitudes toward sexual relationships, and the use of drugs. Some members of the counterculture were politically involved; most were not. But their challenge to traditional norms was visible both in the political protests of the 1960s and in the changing social patterns of American life.

Reflections of the Counterculture

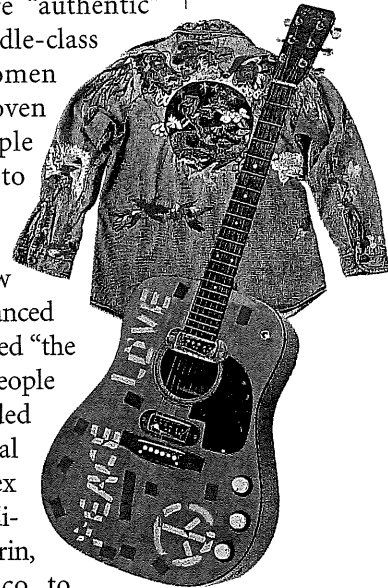
People’s appearances reflected the changes that were taking place. The **hippies** of the 1960s—men and women who self-consciously rejected conventional norms—tried to look

different. Women chose freer fashions, such as miniskirts and loose-fitting dresses. Men let their hair grow long and wore beards. Many hippies adopted the dress of working people, which seemed somehow more “authentic” than the school clothes of middle-class youth. Therefore, men and women wore jeans, muslin (plain-woven cotton) shirts, and other simple garments that were intended to look handmade.

The Sexual Revolution The new views about sexual behavior advanced by the counterculture were labeled “the sexual revolution.” The young people who led this revolution demanded more freedom to make personal choices. Some argued that sex should be separated from its traditional ties to family life. Lynn Ferrin, who moved to San Francisco to become part of the counterculture in California, remembered her feelings at the time:

I was among the women in that whole vanguard of sexual freedom who were very excited by being free women. . . . In my circles, you wouldn’t think of getting married, settling down with one person. The suburbs and the station wagon full of Cub Scouts became something you didn’t want anything to do with.

The sexual revolution in the counterculture led to more open discussion of sexual subjects. Newspapers, magazines, and books published articles that might not have been printed, even in the recent past. The 1962 book by Helen Gurley Brown, *Sex and the Single Girl*, became a best-seller. In 1966 William H. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson shocked many people when they published *Human Sexual Response*, a report on their scientific studies of sexuality.



One way in which 1960s youth expressed themselves was by turning everyday objects into works of art. Country Joe McDonald of the popular rock group Country Joe and the Fish decorated his guitar (above) with antiwar symbols. Others decorated their clothing with colorful embroidery.

This group of hippies lived together in the New Buffalo Commune. They turned out for the 1968 Fourth of July parade in El Rito, New Mexico, in their outrageously painted bus.



Novels like D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, which had been banned in the United States since 1928 for being too explicit, now became available.

Many men and women also experimented with new living patterns. Some hippies rejected traditional relationships and lived together in communal groups. More and more people simply lived together as couples, without getting married.

The Drug Scene Also part of the 1960s counterculture were **psychedelic drugs**, which are drugs that cause the brain to behave abnormally. As a result, the brain produces hallucinations and other altered perceptions of reality. The beatniks had experimented with drugs a decade before, but they had been in the minority. Now drug use became more widespread among the nation's youth.

One early proponent of psychedelic drug use was researcher Timothy Leary, who worked at Harvard University with Richard Alpert on the chemical compound lysergic acid diethyl amide, commonly known as LSD. The two men were fired from their research posts for using undergraduates in experiments with the drug. Leary then began to preach that drugs could help free

the mind. He advised listeners, "Tune in, turn on, drop out."

Soldiers who had used drugs in Vietnam brought them home when their tours of duty were completed. Marijuana became common among middle-class college students. Todd Gitlin, a radical activist who became president of SDS, explained that "the point was to open up a new space, an *inner space*, so that we could *space out*, live for the sheer exultant point of living."

On the other side of the drug issue, however, was serious danger. Overdoses and deaths from accidents that occurred while under the influence of drugs caused concern in many quarters. Three leading musicians—Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison, and Jimi Hendrix—died of complications from drug overdoses. They were not the only ones. Their deaths represented the tragic excesses to which some people were driven by their reliance on drugs as an escape.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

What might some young people in the 1960s have been trying to escape by seeking a spiritual "inner space"? In what ways do young people today seek similar escapes?

The Music World

Music likewise reflected and contributed to the cultural changes. The rock and roll of the 1950s and the folk music of the early 1960s gave way to a new kind of rock. The Beatles, a group of performers from England, heavily influenced the music of this period, taking first England and then the United States by storm. Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones was an aggressive, sometimes violent showman on stage. Janis Joplin was a hard-driving, hard-drinking singer whose powerful interpretations of classic blues songs catapulted her to superstardom before her death in 1970.

Woodstock The diverse strands of the counterculture all came together at the Woodstock Music and Art Fair in upstate New York in August 1969. About 300,000 people gathered for several days in a large pasture in Bethel, New York, to listen to the major bands of the rock world. Despite brutal heat and bursts of rain, those who attended **Woodstock** recalled

the festival with something of a sense of awe for the fellowship they experienced there. Tom Law, one participant at Woodstock, commented on the mood:

The music had very little to do with it. The music was great and it was there and kept everybody focused on that. But the event was so much bigger than the music. It was a phenomenon. It was absolutely a phenomenon. And it was also the most peaceful, civilized gathering that was probably happening on the planet at the time.

The weekend was trouble-free. Police avoided confrontations with those attending by choosing not to enforce drug laws. The crowd remained under control. After the festival, many supporters spoke about the “Woodstock Nation” as a model for the new and better world to come.

Other Americans, however, viewed both the festival and the mood it reflected with distaste. Even as older people began growing their hair

1650

1700

1750

1800

Links Across Time

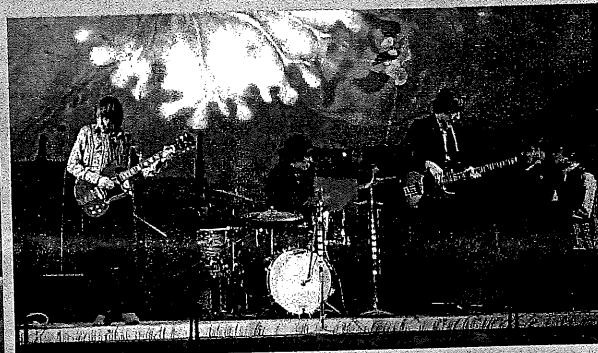
1850

1900

1950

2000

Music: The Sound of Rebellion



The 1960s were not the first time that Americans were shocked by the music their children were listening to. In the 1920s, the jazz sound of Louis Armstrong and the Hot Five (left) was too hot for many older listeners—but the young flappers and rakes loved it. The performances of rock bands in the 1960s (above) were similarly lost to the older generation. *Does any of the music you listen to today leave the older people you know baffled?*



The young people who attended the Woodstock Music and Art Fair in 1969 reflected the new fashions and social values of their times.

longer and wearing more colorful clothes, they were not interested in the more fundamental changes they saw occurring around them. Some young people also disliked these changes. In particular, opponents deplored the drugs, sex, and nudity they saw at the Woodstock festival and around the country. To them, the counterculture represented a rejection of morals and honored values and seemed a childish reaction to the problems of the era.

when the counterculture fell apart. American corporations seized on the opportunity to market items such as blue jeans and stereo equipment to members of the counterculture, who eagerly bought the products. By the 1980s, many baby boomers who had protested the capitalistic values of the 1950s and 1960s would be holding executive positions in the same corporations they had once denounced.

Altamont The fears of those who criticized Woodstock came true at another rock festival that took place at the Altamont Speedway in California in December 1969. There, 300,000 people gathered for a concert concluding an American tour by the Rolling Stones. When promoters of the concert failed to provide adequate security, the Stones hired a band of Hell's Angels, the infamous and lawless motorcycle gang, to keep order. The cyclists battered any people who annoyed them and ended up beating one man to death when he ventured on stage.

The violence at the Altamont concert was not the only sign of contradictions within the counterculture. Despite their celebration of simple lifestyles, most hippies were children of the comfortable middle class, and they melted right back into it

SECTION 4 REVIEW

Key Terms, People, and Places

1. Define (a) hippie, (b) psychedelic drug, (c) Woodstock.

Key Concepts

2. Describe the values that were rejected and those that were embraced by the counterculture of the 1960s.
3. How was the counterculture reflected in the sexual values, drug use, and music of its members?
4. How did Americans outside the counterculture view the movement?

Critical Thinking

5. **Identifying Assumptions** Lynn Ferrin recalled being part of a group of women in the 1960s "who were very excited by being free women" and "wouldn't think of getting married, settling down with one person." What assumptions about marriage are revealed in this statement? Explain why you think these assumptions are or are not valid.

The End of the War

SECTION PREVIEW

The antiwar movement finally convinced politicians in Washington that it was time to pull out of Vietnam, but American troops withdrew very slowly, and the fighting was far from over.

Key Concepts

- Growing opposition to the war convinced Lyndon Johnson not to run for reelection and helped Richard Nixon to become President in 1968.
- Nixon gradually replaced American troops with South Vietnamese, but at the same time he began a new bombing assault on Cambodia that enraged antiwar protesters.
- A cease-fire was finally signed in 1973, but by 1975 North Vietnamese leaders had taken control of the entire country.
- The war left permanent scars in the Vietnamese countryside as well as in the hearts of Vietnamese and Americans.

Key Terms, People, and Places

Vietnamization; Kent State University

The antiwar movement created serious opposition to American involvement in Vietnam. It also polarized the United States. Deep rifts in the Democratic party and in the country as a whole forced Lyndon Johnson to leave the presidency at the end of his term and paved the way for the election of Republican Richard Nixon in 1968. Nixon made good on a pledge to withdraw the United States from the Southeast Asian struggle, but only after expanding the war outside Vietnam and creating even more violent protest at home.

Mounting Opposition

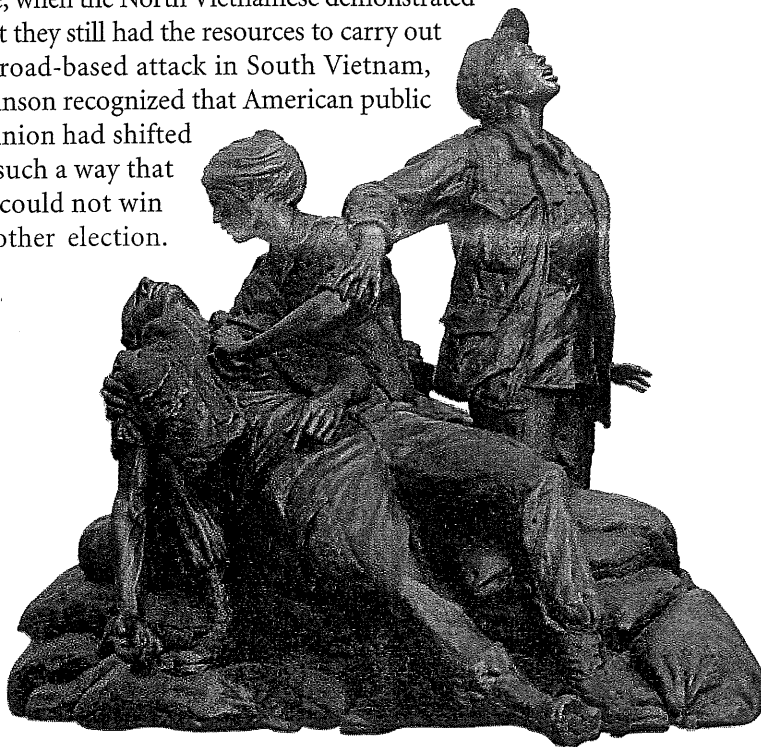
By 1968 the antiwar movement was in full swing. Political activists drew on all of their resources to mount the most extensive resistance

campaign in American history. Marchers took to the streets, while artists, authors, and musicians contributed their talents to the antiwar crusade.

Years of protest and a growing list of American casualties had steadily increased public opposition to the war. In a 1965 Gallup poll, 62 percent of those interviewed felt that the United States was handling the war in Vietnam “as well as could be expected.” In 1966 only 41 percent approved of Johnson’s Vietnam policy; that figure dropped to 35 percent in 1968. At the same time, disapproval of Johnson’s actions increased from 37 percent in 1966 to 50 percent in 1968. In 1968, 49 percent of those polled felt that the United States had made a mistake in sending troops into the war. Details on these statistics can be found in the table on page 868.

Johnson finally succumbed to the opposition. As resistance to the war mounted, his own popularity fell accordingly. After the Tet Offensive, when the North Vietnamese demonstrated that they still had the resources to carry out a broad-based attack in South Vietnam, Johnson recognized that American public opinion had shifted in such a way that he could not win another election.

The Vietnam Women’s Memorial in Washington, D.C., shows two nurses helping a wounded soldier. The memorial sculpture was erected in 1993 to honor the thousands of women who had served in the war.



Public Opinion of United States Involvement in Vietnam

"Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Johnson is handling the situation in Vietnam?"

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
December 1965	56%	26%	18%
May 1966	41%	37%	22%
April 1967	43%	42%	15%
July 1967	33%	52%	15%
December 1967	39%	49%	12%
February 1968*	35%	50%	15%

* During Tet Offensive

"In view of the developments since we entered the fighting in Vietnam, do you think the United States made a mistake sending troops to fight in Vietnam?"

	Yes, made mistake	No, did not	No opinion
May 1966	36%	49%	15%
April 1967	37%	50%	13%
July 1967	41%	48%	11%
February 1968†	49%	41%	10%

† After Tet Offensive

Source: *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1935-1971*, by George H. Gallup



Interpreting Tables

What percentage of those polled in 1965 approved of Lyndon Johnson's handling of the war? What percentage approved in 1968? Between 1966 and 1968, what happened to the percentage of people who thought the United States should never have entered the war?

Johnson rarely left the White House near the end of his presidency for fear of being assaulted by angry, shouting crowds of protesters. He felt like "a jackrabbit in a hailstorm, hunkering up and taking it."

After watching the campaign of antiwar candidate Eugene McCarthy gain momentum in the Democratic primaries, President Johnson declared dramatically in a nationally televised speech that he would not run for another term as President. He knew that he had lost his base of support. He hoped that by ordering a pause in the relentless bombing of Vietnam he could encourage peace talks to end the war and so restore unity in the United States as he left public life.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

The media—especially television—strongly influenced public opinion during the Vietnam War. What are the major issues facing the people of the United States today, and how are people's opinions on these issues affected by the media?

Richard Nixon's Approach

Eugene McCarthy's campaign faltered, and Robert Kennedy, who likewise challenged Johnson, was assassinated (see Chapter 32). Another candidate, Hubert Humphrey, eventually was nominated by the Democrats. For the Republicans, Richard Nixon ran for the presidency with the claim that he had a secret plan to end the war in Vietnam. He never divulged the details, and critics doubted that a plan really existed, but his pledge still helped secure his election over Humphrey. Once in the White House, Nixon dedicated himself to a policy of **Vietnamization**, which involved removing American forces and replacing them with South Vietnamese soldiers. Between 1968 and 1972, American troop strength dropped from 543,000 to 39,000, and opposition to the war among people in the United States declined.

Even as he moved to bring American soldiers home, Nixon himself became caught up in the war. As much as he wanted to defuse antiwar sentiment at home, he was determined not to lose the war, either. And so, as he withdrew American troops, he resumed bombing raids, keeping his actions secret from his critics. The map on page 869 shows the major targets of those bombing raids.

President Nixon also widened the war beyond the borders of Vietnam. In April 1970, he announced that United States and South Vietnamese forces were moving into neighboring Cambodia to clear out communist camps there, from which the enemy was mounting attacks on South Vietnam. The United States, he asserted, would not stand by like "a pitiful helpless giant" while the Viet Cong attacks from Cambodia went on:

We take this action not for the purpose of expanding the war into Cambodia but for the purpose of ending the war in Vietnam and winning the just peace we all desire. We have made and we will continue to make every possible effort to end this war through negotiation at the conference table rather than through more fighting on the battlefield.

His actions belied his words, however, and the move brought chaos and civil war in Cambodia and a fresh wave of protests at home.

Renewed Protests

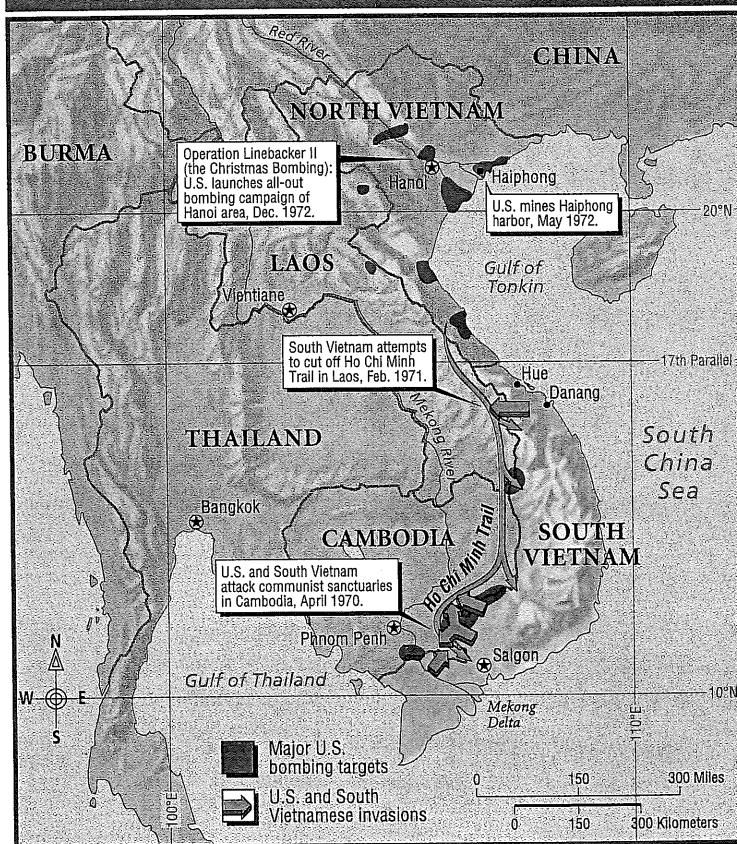
Nixon's invasion of Cambodia in 1970 reignited the protest movement on college campuses in the United States. At Kent State University in Ohio, students reacted angrily to the President's action. On the weekend following his speech, they broke windows in the business district downtown and burned the army ROTC building on campus, which had become a hated symbol of the war.

In response, the governor of Ohio ordered the National Guard to Kent State. Tension mounted. When students threw rocks and empty tear gas canisters at them, the soldiers loaded their guns and donned gas masks. They knelt down and aimed their rifles at the students, as if warning them to stop. Then the guardsmen retreated to another position. At the top of a hill, they suddenly turned and began firing on the students below.

Tom Grace was a sophomore crossing campus just before the outburst. He was more than 150 feet away and thought he was keeping a safe distance from the disturbance. He was wrong:

When the National Guardsmen got to the top of the hill, all of a sudden there was just a quick movement, a flurry of activity, and then a crack, or two cracks of rifle fire, and I thought, Oh my God! I turned and started running as fast as I could. I don't think I got more than a step or two, and all of a sudden I was on the ground. It was just like somebody had come over and given me a body blow and knocked me right down. The bullet had entered my left heel and had

Vietnam, 1969–1972



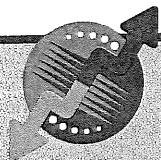
Geography and History: Interpreting Maps

According to this map, in what areas were United States bombing raids concentrated during the later years of the war? What do you think these bombing raids were supposed to accomplish?

literally knocked me off my feet. I tried to raise myself, and I heard someone yelling, "Stay down, stay down! It's buckshot!" . . . The bullet blew the shoe right off my foot, and there was a bone sticking through my green sock. It looked like somebody had put my foot through a meat grinder.

Grace was relatively lucky. After just thirteen seconds of firing, four students lay dead, with nine others wounded. Two of the dead had been demonstrators more than 250 feet away from the soldiers. The other two were bystanders, almost 400 feet away.

A similar attack occurred at Jackson State University in Mississippi. Policemen and highway patrolmen fired into a women's dormitory there without warning. Two people were killed, and more were wounded.



Viewpoints

On the Tragedy of Kent State

In May 1970, four students were killed at Kent State University when the National Guard opened fire on a crowd of antiwar protesters. **How do the following viewpoints reflect the issues that tore apart American society at that time?**

From the mother of a student

"President Nixon wants people to believe Jeff turned to violence. That is not true. What kind of sympathy is this? When four kids are dead he gave no comfort. Nixon acts as if the kids had it coming. But shooting into a crowd of students, that is violence. They say it could happen again if the Guard is threatened. They consider stones threat enough to kill children. I think the violence comes from the government."

Mother of Jeffrey Glenn Miller, one of four students killed at Kent State, quoted in *Life* magazine, May 15, 1970

From the wife of a Guardsman

"They didn't go to Kent State to kill anyone. I know he'd rather have stayed home and mowed the lawn. He told me so. He told me they didn't fire those shots to scare the students off. He told me they fired those shots because they knew the students were coming after them, coming for their guns. People are calling my husband a murderer; my husband is not a murderer. He was afraid."

Wife of a member of the National Guard, quoted in *Newsweek* magazine, May 18, 1970

Americans were horrified by these attacks. They had hoped that the rifts of the past few years between the youth of the United States and those in positions of power were starting to heal. Now the wounds were opened even wider than before.

The United States Withdraws

The war dragged on as Nixon ran for a second term as President in 1972, and South Vietnam refused to accept a proposed settlement. To reassure the South Vietnamese of continuing American concern, Nixon ordered the most intense bombing campaign of the war in the spring of 1972. The United States bombed Hanoi, the North Vietnamese capital, and mined North Vietnamese harbors. Just days before the election, National Security adviser

Henry Kissinger announced, "Peace is at hand." In January 1973, after Nixon was reelected, a cease-fire was finally signed, and United States involvement in the war came to an end.

But the civil war continued for another two years in Vietnam. After the withdrawal of United States forces, South Vietnamese soldiers steadily lost ground to their North Vietnamese enemies. In the spring of 1975, the North Vietnamese launched a campaign of strikes against strategic cities throughout South Vietnam, the final objective being the seat of government in Saigon. South Vietnamese forces crumpled in the face of this campaign. On April 29, with communist forces surrounding Saigon, the United States carried out a dramatic last-minute evacuation. More than 1,000 Americans and nearly 6,000 Vietnamese were taken from the city by helicopter to aircraft carriers waiting offshore. On April 30, the Saigon government officially surrendered to the North Vietnamese.

Legacy of the War

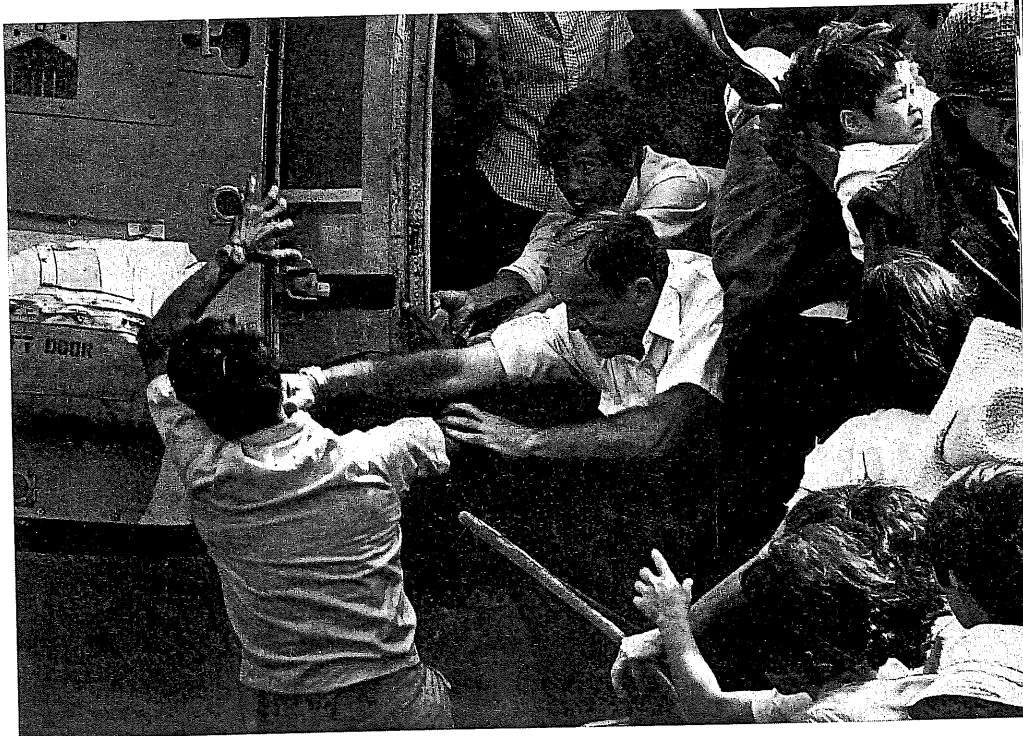
The Vietnam War was the longest and least successful war in which the United States had ever participated. It resulted in 58,000 Americans dead and about 300,000 wounded. It cost more than \$150 billion and disrupted the American economy in the process. The costs of the war were even higher in Vietnam itself. The Vietnamese were bombarded by more bombs than had fallen on all Axis powers during World War II. The number of dead and wounded Vietnamese soldiers ran into the millions, with countless civilian casualties. The landscape itself would long reveal the scars of war.

In the United States, the war also fractured the liberal consensus that had guided the nation during and after World War II. Americans had believed that they could defend the world from communism anywhere, at any time. American technology and money, they assumed, could always bring victory. That assumption was proved false in Vietnam, and the United States now had to reassess its global mission.

The legacy of the war lingered on long after the last bomb had been dropped. Soldiers came home to a different reception than their fathers and grandfathers had in World War II. The war had been so unpopular that some of the outrage felt by anti-war Americans was transferred to the GIs who had fought in Vietnam. It was often hard for returning soldiers to rationalize their participation in Vietnam, and it was harder still to integrate themselves back into American life. Ron Kovic, who was paralyzed in the war, summed up his feelings about his smashed dreams and body in a haunting poem. He had been born on the fourth of July, a date that had once underscored his patriotism. Now it seemed a bitter joke.

*I am the living death
the memorial day on wheels
I am your yankee doodle dandy
your john wayne come home
your fourth of july firecracker
exploding in the grave*

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., was created to recognize the courage of American GIs during the Vietnam ordeal and to help heal the wounds the war had caused. An open competition, announced



in 1980, specified that the memorial should be a quiet, contemplative structure that included a list of the war dead. It was won by Maya Ying Lin, a twenty-two-year-old Chinese American architecture student.

The memorial is a starkly beautiful structure, elegant in its simplicity. It consists of two long black marble slabs, intersecting in a V shape, with all the names of the known dead inscribed chronologically according to date of death. In 1993 a Vietnam Women's Memorial was unveiled near the wall to honor the more than 11,000 women who served in Vietnam.

In 1975 Nha Trang in South Vietnam was evacuated just before communist troops took over. The man above was punched by an American official as he tried to board the last plane out, which was already overcrowded with fleeing refugees.

SECTION 5 REVIEW

Key Terms, People, and Places

1. Define Vietnamization.
2. Identify Kent State University.

Key Concepts

3. What were the political effects of growing public disapproval of the war in 1968?
4. What was Richard Nixon's approach to the war in Vietnam?
5. How did the war in Vietnam finally end?

6. What was the lasting impact of the war in Vietnam and in the United States?

Critical Thinking

7. **Determining Relevance** The counterculture of the 1960s was despised by many Americans who saw it as a senseless rejection of time-honored values. Explain how such feelings might have played a part in the violence that erupted at Kent State University in 1970.