

# GCSE History



## Revision Guide

### Paper 1 - Part B

### Conflict in Asia 1950 - 1975

# Revision Check list

## Paper 1, Part B – Conflict in Asia 1950 - 1975

	What you need to revise	Revised? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Part 1 – The Korean War 1950 - 1954	Background – Where is Korea? Why is it important?	
	The Cold War and the start of the Korean War	
	The United Nations campaign and the Inchon landings.	
	Why did China enter the Korean War and how did they fight back?	
	The sacking of General MacArthur and arguments within the United Nations Command (UNC)	
	Source work skills – Propaganda in the Korean War	
	Stalemate on the 38th parallel	
	Peace talks and the ending of the War	
	The outcome of the Korean War	
Part 2 – The Escalation of the Vietnam War 1954 - 1970	The ending of the French Empire in Indo-China and the Battle of Dien Bien Phu	
	The Geneva Agreement of 1954 and the creation of North and South Vietnam	
	Civil War in South Vietnam and opposition to Diem	
	The Viet Cong, their aims, support and the leadership of Ho Chi Minh	
	Why was guerrilla warfare so effective?	
	USA involvement; the Truman Doctrine and the Domino Theory	
	President John F Kennedy and the Strategic Hamlets program.	
	President Lyndon B Johnson and the Gulf of Tonkin incident	
	The US response to guerrilla warfare – mass bombing and chemical warfare / Agent Orange	
	'Search and Destroy' tactics and the My Lai massacre	
	The Tet Offensive and its impact on American public opinion	
Part 3 – The ending of the Vietnam War 1970 - 1975	The first televised war – the importance of the media on public opinion	
	Student protests and the demands for peace	
	The Kent State University Protests	
	President Richard Nixon and the bombing of Laos and Cambodia	
	The significance of the Watergate affair.	
	The Paris peace talks and the ending of the war.	
	US withdrawal from Vietnam and the Fall of Saigon	
	The price and consequences of the Vietnam War	

# AQA Specification

## BD Conflict and tension in Asia, 1950–1975

**Updated** The entry code for this depth study is now BD

This wider world depth study enables students to understand the complex and diverse interests of different states and individuals and the ideologies they represented. It considers the role of nationalist movements in causing and sustaining conflict. It focuses on the causes and events of the Cold War in Asia and seeks to show how and why conflict occurred and why it proved difficult to resolve the tensions which arose. This study also considers the role of key individuals and groups in shaping change, as well as how they were affected by and influenced international relations.

### Part one: Conflict in Korea

- The causes of the Korean War: nationalism in Korea; US relations with China; the division of Korea; Kim Il Sung and Syngman Rhee; reasons why the North invaded the South in June 1950; US and the UN responses; USSR's absence from the UN.
- The development of the Korean War: the UN campaign in South and North Korea; Inchon landings and recapture of South Korea; UN forces advance into North Korea; reaction of China and intervention of Chinese troops October 1950; the sacking of MacArthur.
- The end of the Korean War: military stalemate around the 38th Parallel; peace talks and the armistice; impact of the Korean War for Korea, the UN and Sino-American relations.

### Part two: Escalation of conflict in Vietnam

- The end of French colonial rule: Dien Bien Phu and its consequences; Geneva Agreement, 1954; civil war in South Vietnam; opposition to Diem; the Vietcong – aims, support, leadership and guerrilla tactics and Ho Chi Minh.
- The US involvement: the Domino Theory; intervention under Eisenhower and Kennedy; Strategic Hamlets programme.
- Johnson's War: the Gulf of Tonkin; the US response to Vietcong tactics; the mass bombing campaign; demands for peace and growing student protests in the USA; My Lai and its public impact; Search and Destroy tactics and impact; the Tet Offensive and its consequences for the war.

### Part three: The ending of conflict in Vietnam

- Nixon's War: Vietnamisation; chemical warfare; bombing campaign of 1970–1972; relations with China; widening of the war into Laos and Cambodia.
- Opposition to war: Kent State University; the importance of the media and TV in influencing public opinion; the context of the Watergate affair.
- The end of the war: the Paris Peace talks; the role of Kissinger; the US withdrawal; fall of Saigon; the price of conflict; problems of Vietnam in 1975.

# How to tackle the exam – the three golden rules

## Rule 1 – ‘1 mark = 1 ½ minutes’

Paper one is 2 hours long and is split into Section A (USA 1920 – 1973) and Section B (Korean and Vietnam Wars 1950 – 1975).

So the examiner’s advice is straightforward - you should spend 1 hour on each section.

So, if a question is worth 4 marks you should spend 6 minutes answering it etc. and then move on.



Number of marks	Minutes to spend on the question	Minimum number of paragraphs
4	6	1
8	12	2
12	18	3
16	24	4

A common student mistake is to write too much for the shorter questions, and then run out of time at the end of the paper. It is better to answer all the questions to a reasonable standard, than to answer the shorter questions in great detail, but then rush the longer questions (or worse still, not answer some questions at all because you run out of time).

In the exam you will be answering in a booklet and the final questions are usually worth most marks. Some students prefer to answer these first and work backwards through the answer booklet. This will ensure that you don’t miss out on lots of marks, should you run out of time.

## Rule 2 – Don’t panic

You need to answer 6 questions on paper 1A (the USA 1920 – 1973) and a further 4 questions on paper 1B (Korea and Vietnam). These will be of various different types; ‘describe’, ‘explain’, ‘write an account’, ‘how far do you agree’ and source work.

You are very unlikely to get an exam where all 10 questions are straightforward and you can answer them all easily. There are always a couple of tricky ones.

If you get a tricky question DO NOT PANIC. Quickly write down what know then move on. By writing just a couple of relevant points you will get a few marks, but if you skip a question completely you will get nothing. If you have a few spare minutes at the end of the exam you can always come back to the tricky question and add a few more points.



## Rule 3 – ‘PEEL’

For non-source questions many students find it useful to use PEEL:

**Point** – make a point using the stem of the question.

**Evidence** – Include at least one fact to prove the point.

**Explain** – Explain why this is important.

**Link** – link it to other points.



# What sort of questions will be on Part B of Paper One?

There will be four questions about the conflicts in Asia 1950 – 1975 in the second part of GCSE Paper 1. The first two will test your skills of source analysis, the second two will test your knowledge of the topics studied. There are more marks available for each question than on the first part of paper 1, but again if you follow the 4 marks = 6 minutes, 8 marks = 12 minutes etc. rule you will write the correct amount.

## Source based questions

### Question 1 – Source A supports... How do you know? (4 marks)

This question is designed to settle you down and is relatively straightforward. It will probably be a visual source which is one sided and it might well be a piece of propaganda.

To answer this question, write about the content of the source (what it actually shows), then what it suggests e.g. *'In source A I can see ... which seems to suggest that... which means that it probably supports...'* This question will ask you to add your own knowledge, so to get full marks make sure you add *'from my own knowledge I know that...'*

### Question 2 – How useful are source B and C to an historian studying...? (12 marks)

The correct technique is to write a paragraph on the first source, including its content (what's in it), its provenance/caption (who made it, why they said it, who it was aimed at, when it was made, etc), and finally some of your own knowledge. Try to focus on ways the source is useful to an historian e.g. *'Source A is useful to an historian studying... because it shows... The audience of the source is also interesting, it seems to be aimed at... it was also published... which an historian would find useful because...'* *'This supports my own knowledge because...'* etc.

You then need to repeat this with a second paragraph on Source B.

Finally, a third short paragraph which answers the question, is needed. It is often a good technique to explain that both sources are useful in different ways, but when combined they will give an historian a full picture.

## Knowledge based questions

### Question 3 – Write an account of... (8 marks)

This question is asking you why something happened. E.g. *'Write an account of ways that the USA entered the War in Vietnam in 1964'*.

The best technique here is to write two paragraphs, with a key point in each. If you are unsure of what to include, just write all you know. The more you write, in as much detail as you can, the more marks you will get. One technique that might pick you up an extra mark or two, is to prioritise (explain in order of importance) your evidence. So you could begin your first paragraph with, *'The most important reason that... was because...'* *'another significant reason was...'* etc. It's also a good idea to link your two paragraphs together.

## Interpretation questions

### Question 4 - 'The main reason for X was Y'. How far do you agree with this statement? (16 marks plus 4 SPaG)

This is the final question you will answer on Paper 1 and is worth the most marks, so it's worth spending as much time on it as you can. It will provide you with a quotation and ask how far you agree with it. e.g.

*'The main reason the USA was forced to withdraw from Vietnam in 1973 was the failure of its bombing campaigns.'*

*How far do you agree with this statement?*

An answer to this question needs balance. So the best way to answer it is to write a paragraph about ways you agree with the statement. In this case a paragraph about ways that America's bombing campaigns failed to defeat the Viet Cong. Then a paragraph (or ideally two if you have time) about other reasons the USA lost the war e.g. guerrilla warfare, student protests, the role of the media etc. This needs to be Followed by a final conclusion answering the question.

The best conclusions make detailed **links** and **comparisons** between the different factors.

### Types of sources

Don't forget that a source could be any piece of evidence that helps explain the past. Past exams have included; cartoons, posters, speeches, diary entries, and book extracts. You will need to practice analysing these when revising for the final exam. Use past papers to find as many examples as you can.

## Sample Answers:

### Question 1



A United Nations propaganda poster from the Korean War.

Source A supports the actions of the UN in the Korean War. How do you know? Explain your answer using Source A and your contextual knowledge. [4 marks]

The source supports the actions of the UN in Korea because it shows North Korea as a large vicious-looking person attacking a smaller weak South Korea. North Korea is called a criminal which shows the UN was doing the right thing by sending the UNC to stop North Korea. It also shows lots of countries working together to stop North Korea and the poster says they will bring peace. This supports the UNC's main aim of pushing the communists back from the Pusan Perimeter and removing them from South Korea.

*This would score 4/4. It identifies two features of the source which show support for the UN and, importantly, links in a little bit of precise own knowledge.*

### Question 2

#### **Source B**

Adapted from a report by a US army expert in 1967 about how the Vietcong fought.

The mountains and jungles make Vietnam an ideal place for Ho Chi Minh's use of guerrilla warfare. The Vietcong often encircle troops forcing them to call for reinforcements who would then be attacked. They only fight when they are confident of winning, and retreat when in doubt. Overall they like to attack when not expected and withdraw quickly. They also sneak behind their enemy. The Vietcong fight a people's war to wear down the enemy. They don't worry about capturing and holding towns.

Source C

Two North Vietnamese stamps from 1969. The stamps say 'Cu-chi, land of steel' and 'We attack the West at any time'.



How useful are sources B and C to an historian studying how the Vietcong fought the Americans? Explain your answer using Sources B and C and your contextual knowledge. [12 marks]

Source B is useful as it tells us that the VC used guerrilla warfare tactics like attacking quickly and withdrawing. This supports my knowledge of how the VC used tunnels like at Cu Chi to launch surprise hit and run tactics on the US. The source is useful as it says the VC try to 'wear down the enemy'. This suggests that the US was struggling to deal with the VC's tactics. This backs up my own knowledge of the morale of US soldiers falling, with many turning to drink, drugs, and war crimes, because of how the VC fought. The source's provenance is also useful as it's by a US army expert who would be able to access accurate information. This is also a report so would only be seen by a few people. It would have less reason to either exaggerate or cover up the truth, so gives an accurate view of how the Americans were feeling about VC tactics in 1967. This makes the source useful.

Source C is useful because it shows a range of tactics used by the Vietcong. The top picture shows the VC making punji traps, which was a type of booby trap made from sharpened bamboo canes. The bottom picture shows the VC launching an ambush. The fact that these pictures were made suggests that the VC were proud of these tactics, showing that they worked. This is true as 10% of American casualties were caused by booby traps, and the VC's guerrilla warfare tactics caused low morale amongst the American soldiers, such as those who committed the My Lai Massacre. The provenance is also useful as it is a North Vietnamese stamp. Stamps contain images of things a country is proud of, suggesting that ordinary people in North Vietnam were proud of the VC tactics. It was also made in 1969, which tells that even after the Tet Offensive the communists were still very confident.

Overall these sources are very useful. They both tell us that the VC tactics were having a big impact on the Americans. As one source is American and the other communist, it tells us that both sides in the war felt the same about the VC's tactics, suggesting that they were being successful and wearing down the Americans. They also show that both before and after the Tet Offensive VC tactics were proving successful.

*This is a Level 4 answer and would score 11 or 12 out of 12. Both paragraphs are detailed, with good points about both the contents and the provenance of the sources. There is also a good range of precise own knowledge. There is then a clear overall conclusion which gives a good reason why the two sources are useful when put together.*

### **Question 3**

Write an account of how the Cold War led to an international conflict in Korea. [8 marks]

The Cold War led to a war between North Korea and South Korea. Korea was split in two after World War II. The North was communist and led by Kim Il Sung. South Korea was capitalist and led by Syngman Rhee. The two leaders had opposing views but wanted a united Korea. When Syngman Rhee boasted about attacking North Korea, Kim Il Sung launched an invasion and started the war and managed to capture all of South Korea apart from the area surrounded by the Pusan Perimeter.

The wider Cold War then caused other countries to get involved. China and USSR wanted to see communism spread so they helped North Korea by sending supplies and weapons. USA was worried about this. Their Domino Theory meant they believed if one country became communist, others would follow. USA then helped South Korea using the Truman Doctrine. They also persuaded the UN to send an army to help South Korea. The UNC had soldiers from 17 countries, meaning the Cold War caused a war between two small countries to turn into a larger international conflict. Later on, when the UNC pushed the communists out of South Korea, they invaded North Korea. When they came close to the Yalu River and the border with China, the Chinese joined to war to prevent a communist country falling to capitalism. This, again, was a result of wider Cold War tensions.

*This is a Level 4 answer. Both paragraphs have development and very accurate information. There are also good links between the paragraphs and the account is presented in a logical and well-ordered way. This would score 7/8. For 8/8, there just needs to be a little bit more detail in Paragraph 1.*

### **Question 4**

'The main reason for American withdrawal from Vietnam was the failure of America's tactics.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

[16 marks + 4 SPaG]

America's tactics helped lead to them withdrawing from Vietnam. This is because each tactic the US used either didn't work or backfired and led to more people supporting the communists. US tactics, such as dropping napalm, often killed civilians. Search and destroy raids led to events such as the My Lai Massacre which, after a cover up, was reported in the US media. This shocked many people and led to pressure for America to withdraw. Tactics like Hearts and Minds also failed as the Americans did not understand Vietnamese culture, whilst bombing attacks like Operation Rolling Thunder failed to cut the Ho Chi Minh Trail. This meant the VC kept receiving supplies, allowing them to launch attacks like the Tet Offensive. This in turn led to more bad media coverage for the US and more pressure to withdraw.

Another reason for withdrawal is the tactics used by the Vietcong. For example, the VC were experts in guerrilla warfare and built punji traps from bamboo. They also used tunnels, such as the Cu Chi network, to launch surprise attacks on the Americans. The US struggled with these tactics and 10% of all American casualties in Vietnam were caused by booby traps. As a result, the morale of American soldiers fell, leading to a rise in drink and drug problems. Low morale also helped lead to events like the My Lai Massacre where US soldiers killed 500 innocent civilians. This in turn led to a media outcry and more pressure for the USA to withdraw from Vietnam.

A third reason for withdrawal are the protest movements which took place in America. Media reports of events in Vietnam, such as Walter Cronkite's report on the Tet Offensive, caused more people in the USA to turn against the Vietnam War. This led to a wave of protests. Songs such as 'Feel Like I'm Fixin to Die' by Country Joe and the Fish performed well in the charts. Draft dodgers like Muhammed Ali refused to fight in the war and groups like Veterans Against the War organised protests where war veterans returned their medals. Students also protested, such as at Kent State University where 4 students were shot dead. These protests were reported by the media, which

then led to even more people turning against the war. This put growing pressure on presidents Johnson and Nixon to withdraw from Vietnam.

Overall, the main reason for the USA withdrawing was the tactics of the Vietcong. These tactics were very difficult for the US to fight back against and the tactics the US did use just led to bad media coverage and more protests such as when napalm was used. Furthermore, the VC's tactics also led to lower US morale which then contributed towards war crimes such as My Lai, more negative media coverage, more protests, and more pressure on the president to end the war. Therefore, it is clear that the VC's tactics affected all of the other reasons for why the US withdrew, making it the most important reason.

*This is a strong Level 4 answer and would score 15/16. There are three developed paragraphs. Each paragraph is focused on the question and includes a wide range of precise information. What takes this into Level 4 is the conclusion. This is detailed but also makes links between the reasons and shows how one thing affected another. This is more complex thinking so gets a higher mark.*

*This would also score 4/4 for SPaG. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are high and clear paragraphs have been used. To get 4/4, there also needs to be a good range of appropriate subject-specific language (basically words you would only ever use in a History exam). This is present in the essay so it gets top SPaG marks.*

## Topic 1 – The Korean War 1950 - 1953

### The background to the Korean War

- During WW2 (1939 – 1945) the Korean peninsula had been occupied by Japan. However, following its defeat at the end of WW2 in 1945, Japan was forced to withdraw leaving Korea as a free country.
- In the years after WW2 the Cold War began as the world split between the communist East (lead by Russia) and the Capitalist West lead by the USA.
- Both sides wanted to control Korea and the decision was made to split it in two along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. North Korea would be communist led by Kim Il Sung. South Korea accepted capitalist ideas and was led by Syngman Rhee.
- This arrangement did not last long. In 1949 communists led by Mao Zedong took control of China to the north. At the same time, the USA came up with the 'Truman Doctrine' which committed it to fight communism wherever in the world it emerged.
- Communist China began to support North Korea, and capitalist USA supported the South. The stage was set for war.



### 1950 The start of the Korean War

- Arguments along the border on the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel had been building since 1945.
- In 1950 the leader of North Korea, Kim Il Sung, persuaded communist Russia and China to supply him with weapons to defend himself.
- At the same time Syngman Rhee the leader of South Korea boasted that he was capable of attacking the north if he needed to. South Korea had also failed to develop its army as it had relied on US soldiers for protection. However, these had left in 1949.
- In June 1950, North Korea struck first and launched a full-scale invasion of the south with 75,000 soldiers.
- The North quickly forced the South into a full-scale retreat towards the Pusan peninsula, where they became surrounded.
- The United Nations (UN) was a new organisation set up after WW2 to prevent any future wars. The UN had many countries as members, and they would commit to send soldiers as part of a UN army to stop wars breaking out.
- In 1950 South Korea asked the UN for help. The UN replied by saying that the invasion by the North was illegal and that the UN would respond.
- The communist countries would normally have blocked the UN from taking action. However, this didn't happen as USSR was refusing to take part in the UN. This is because the USA blocked Communist China from joining the UN. The UN believed the capitalist leader of Taiwan, Chiang Kai-Shek, was actually the rightful leader of China and supported him instead. This led to tension between the USA and China.



### The UN campaign in Korea

- A UN army known as the United Nations Command (UNC) was assembled to defend South Korea.
- The UNC consisted mainly of soldiers from South Korea and the USA. However, many other countries including the UK, France, Australia and Canada also took part.

- An American general Douglas MacArthur was put in control of the UNC.
- MacArthur came up with a bold plan to save South Korea. He decided to make a risky amphibious landing at Inchon which would cut the North Korean army in half and catch them off guard.
- The Inchon landings were a great success; 150,000 North Korean soldiers were killed and 125,000 captured.
- The North was pushed out of South Korea and the war was back where it had begun.



### China fights back

- However, the UNC continued to push north and by November 1950 was getting close to the border with China.
- At this point China felt threatened and joined the war.
- China was not well equipped to fight a modern war, but did get supplies and help from Russia to the north.
- However, China did have an enormous supply of men who were prepared to join its army to defend communism.
- In November 1950 the UNC reached the Yalu River on the border with China. MacArthur and the UNC believed they were close to victory. Some say this made them become complacent.
- At that moment China counter-attacked with a vast army of 300,000 men.
- At this point the UNC generals panicked and MacArthur even argued that nuclear weapons should be used against North Korea.
- By February 1951 both sides were once again on the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel where the War had begun.



### A war of containment and the sacking of General MacArthur

- The US president by this time was Harry S Truman. Truman was cautious and did not want the Korean War to escalate into WW3.
- Matthew Ridgeway was an American general within the UNC who came up with tactics known as containment and war of attrition. He would make limited attacks on North Korean/Chinese forces to keep them on the defensive, whilst avoiding major battle and major loss of life.
- President Truman supported these tactics, however General MacArthur argued against them and argued in favour of full scale war against China. MacArthur then publically disagreed with Truman over how the war should go forwards.
- In April 1951 Truman made the controversial decision to sack MacArthur.

### 1953 – The end of the Korean War

- Various attempts at a ceasefire followed but both sides continued to fight.
- A period followed between 1951 and 1953 where 'See-Saw' battles would take place, eg. at Sniper Ridge. One side would advance and capture enemy territory, only for the other side to fight back and recapture it again.
- In November 1952, a new American president took over, Dwight Eisenhower. He was a vastly experienced ex-military commander and wanted to find a way to end the war.
- Another factor continuing the war was the Russian leader Joseph Stalin. He did not want communism to back down so was prepared to keep fighting at all costs. However, things changed when Stalin died in March 1953.
- Things changed again in May 1953 when the USA successfully tested the world first hydrogen bomb (800x more powerful than the first atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945).
- The threat of the atom bomb proved to be the last factor needed to get both sides to agree to end the Korean War.
- On 25<sup>th</sup> May 1953 a ceasefire was announced after peace talks at Panmunjom and the Korean War was over – back where it began on the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel.



## The Impact of the Korean War

You could be asked about the impact of the Korean War – winners and losers. Here's a table you will have completed in class. Who won and who lost? Were there any winners? It's all a matter of opinion.

The Korean War 1950 – 1953 – Winners and losers		
	Gains	Losses
United Nations	Gained respect by taking prompt action. More effective than the old League of Nations.	About 170,000 UNC soldiers died. Only able to act due to the USSR's absence from the Security Council.
USA	Saved South Korea from Communism. Policy of containing Communism had worked. This gave USA the confidence to get involved in other countries facing the threat of communism such as South Vietnam.	33,000 soldiers died. North Korea remained under Communist rule. Defence spending rose from \$12 billion to \$60 billion. Entered into an arms race with the USSR.
USSR	Achieved a close short-term friendship with China. Conflict between China and the USA was to the USSR's advantage.	The spread of Communism in Asia had been halted. Forced into expensive arms and space races with the USA.
China	Proved they were no longer a backwards country. Gained respect from Communist supporters. Saved North Korea from US control. Received financial and military help from the USSR. North Korea acted as a buffer zone.	About 400,000 soldiers died. Failed to win South Korea for Communism. War came with a high economic cost. War led to the USA giving greater support to Chinese Nationalists on Taiwan.
North Korea	Remained a strong military power. Had closer ties with the USSR and China. Had not lost any land.	Around 350,000 soldiers and 1.5 million civilians had died. Massive damage to industry and farming. Failed to get a united Communist Korea. Kim had to execute rivals to keep power. Money was spent on the military and not the economy. As a result, North Korea is currently very poor. Possibly millions died in a famine in the 1990s.
South Korea	Their army had grown much stronger and they could hold their own against North Korea. They received much US economic and military help. As a result, South Korea is now a very wealthy capitalist country.	Rhee failed to get a united capitalist Korea. 70,000 soldiers and around 1,000,000 civilians had died. Rhee started to behave more like a dictator. Money was spent on the military and not the economy.

Another important consequence is that South Korea is still capitalist, North Korea is still communist, and there is a lot of tension between the countries. The border between the two (the Demilitarised Zone) is one of the most heavily-defended places on the planet. Over the years there have been several clashes and incidents between the two countries.

### US-Sino (Chinese) relations:

- USA and China fought each other in the Korean War so there was a lot of suspicion and tension between the two countries after the war ended.
- USA put travel restrictions on China and limited trade.
- It set up **SEATO**. This was an alliance of capitalist countries like USA, Australia, Thailand, Philippines etc. designed to help stop communism spreading in Asia.
- USA gave help to Taiwan (and still does) which is an independent capitalist country but which China claimed should be part of China. This really angered China.

## Topic 2 - The escalation of the War in Vietnam

### French Indo-China and the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954

- 100 years ago, Vietnam didn't even exist as a separate country.
- It was part of the Indo-Chinese peninsula and controlled by France as part of their empire. The area was useful for its valuable rubber supplies.
- During WW2 (1939 – 1945) France were forced to leave Indo-China and Japan took control.
- After WW2 the Indo-Chinese War (1946 – 1954) broke out as France returned to reclaim its territory and the locals, led by a communist called Ho Chi Minh, fought back.
- In this period Ho Chi Minh developed guerrilla warfare techniques to fight back against France.
- The Indo-Chinese War came to a conclusion with the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954. A French base in North Vietnam was surrounded and attacked by a peasant army (the Viet Minh) inspired by Ho Chi Minh. 2000 French soldiers died and 11,000 were captured. France suffered an unexpected and humiliating defeat and left the country and never returned.

### Vietnam is divided and Diem becomes unpopular in the South

- When the French left, a peace conference was held in Geneva (the **Geneva Agreement**) in 1954 and the country was divided in two; North Vietnam was controlled by Ho Chi Minh who ran the country along communist lines, South Vietnam was controlled by Diem with the help of French funding and equipment. This now put Vietnam on the Cold War front line as there was a greater risk of a clash between the communist and capitalist countries.
- However, Diem began to make mistakes which made him really unpopular with his own people. He cancelled elections that were due in 1956 because he feared he might lose. He also arrested and imprisoned anyone opposed to him. He was corrupt and gave top government jobs to members of his family.
- Diem was a catholic and persecuted Buddhists in South Vietnam. During the **Buddhist Crisis**, protest marches took place and Diem arrested and even killed some of the protestors. In the city of Hue, the police tipped chemicals over a group of praying Buddhists.
- In one well known protest a Buddhist monk Thich Quang Duc, publicly burned himself to death in protest against Diem's government.
- Diem was so unpopular that a group called the National Liberation Front (nicknamed the Viet Cong) was set up in 1960. They fought against Diem and tried to make South Vietnam communist.
- Diem was eventually assassinated in 1963, but by then the way South Vietnam was run had become really unpopular.



### Why did the USA get involved in Vietnam?

- During the 1950s the Cold War was underway as Communist Russia and Capitalist USA tried to spread their own ideas and stop their opponents. The USA's '**Truman Doctrine**' pledged to stop the spread of communism wherever it appeared.
- The USA also came up with the '**domino theory**' which said that even small countries must be stopped from turning communist – this would prevent communism from spreading across a whole region.
- In the early 1960s the USA started to send weapons and funding to South Vietnam to protect it from the North. The US President Eisenhower also sent in small numbers of military 'advisors' to help the South stop the spread of communism.
- At the same time Ho Chi Minh was receiving arms, supplies and troops from China and Russia.
- In 1961 John F Kennedy (JFK) became American president, and started to increase the number of special advisers sent over to help. By 1964 there were 23,000 US advisors in South Vietnam.
- In 1962 JFK introduced his '**Strategic Hamlets**' program. The USA attempted to stop the spread of communist ideas into the villages of South Vietnam by moving the villagers into new safe compounds, surrounded by guards and barbed wire, to protect them. However, this backfired on JFK when the locals felt that they were being rounded up and sent into prison camps, rather than being protected. The US also offended Vietnamese people who believed that they should live in the same villages of their ancestors, and not in a Strategic Hamlet.
- In 1964 an American ship, the USS Maddox, allegedly came under attack in the '**Gulf of Tonkin Incident**'. There is controversy here since it was later found that the second attack may not have



actually happened and President Johnson manipulated events to persuade Congress to pass the 'Gulf of Tonkin Resolution'.

- The **Gulf of Tonkin Resolution** allowed the President to act as he wished in Vietnam. The media had supported this action – persuading Congress & the US population that he was doing the right thing. However, Johnson did not use this new law immediately as it was an election year in America.
- In 1965, the VC attacked an American base at Pleiku in South Vietnam, killing 9 US soldiers and destroying 10 aircraft. This caused Johnson to trigger the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.
- The USA responded by bombing North Vietnam (Operation Rolling Thunder) and by sending troops into South Vietnam. The Vietnam War had begun.

### How effective were guerrilla warfare tactics?

- When the USA first entered Vietnam they mistakenly thought that the National Liberation Front (NLF) usually better known as the **Viet Cong** – were a primitive peasant army. In fact, they had been fighting since WW2 and had steadily become more effective.
- The VC did not wear uniforms – this made them difficult to identify and allowed them to blend into the background. VC fighters could be men or women, young or old, also making them difficult to identify. They relied on support (eg. food and shelter) from local villages, and followed a Code of Conduct (eg. don't flirt with the women) to ensure that they stayed popular.
- Supplies such as weapons were transported from North Vietnam to the VC in South Vietnam using the **Ho Chi Minh Trail**. This was a network of paths which ran through the jungles of Laos and Cambodia and into South Vietnam. The US regularly bombed it but teams of communists would repair the damage.
- A significant aspect was that they were politically driven and often volunteered to fight for their beliefs – this made them even more determined to resist the Americans.
- They were experts at fighting in jungle conditions and had great knowledge of their own terrain.
- The VC were experts at making **improvised weapons** (booby traps – e.g. Punji traps) – these were quickly made out of local materials. Within minutes deadly weapons could be made from a few bamboo sticks and rusty nails.
- These weapons proved to be more effective in jungle conditions than the USAs' \$multi-million equipment.
- The VC had built a sophisticated tunnel system (eg. the Cu Chi tunnels which ran from Saigon to the border with Cambodia), which allowed them to appear and disappear at will. It also protected them during air raids. The Americans didn't discover these tunnels until after a year of fighting.
- The VC also used unconventional tactics – they would disappear into the background when attacked, and then attack back when the US was least expecting it. They also used ambushes very effectively.
- In addition the VC were respectful of the local Vietnamese population, following the Viet Cong code of conduct and would help farmers in the fields – this meant that the local population always protected them.
- Finally, the rural countryside – ¾ of the population – were farmers and were more sympathetic to the communist ideas of land redistribution rather than democracy.
- It is estimated that 10% of all American casualties in Vietnam were caused by booby traps.
- These tactics were hard for the US to combat and led to the morale of US soldiers falling. Many American soldiers turned to drink, drugs and prostitutes. Some committed war crimes.



### The USA's uniform, tactics and equipment.

- The USA initially entered Vietnam expecting a conventional war; however they had trained and equipped for the wrong type of war.
- Their uniforms and helmets were heavy and cumbersome in the hot and humid climate.
- They took high technology equipment such as tanks or M16 rifles that often jammed in the wet, that were unsuited to the surroundings.
- The USA's initial tactics were to simply attack their enemy head on, but they were soon suffering heavy defeats – they were forced to change their approach.

### 'Hearts and Minds'

- The USA's first change in approach was operation 'Hearts and Minds'.
- This aimed to reward the South Vietnamese population who were loyal to the USA – effectively bribery.
- US money was spent on building schools and medical centres in the villages.

- Local democracy was encouraged to show the locals that the American political system was best – villagers could vote on how money was spent.
- 'Hearts and minds' had some success in South Vietnamese towns and cities, but was less successful in the smaller villages where the locals were more impressed by the idea of gaining their own land under communism. The US also showed that they failed to understand Vietnamese culture which affected their popularity.

### Operation 'Rolling Thunder'

- This began in 1965 and was an attempt to bomb North Vietnam into defeat – US General Curtis Lemay promised to '*Bomb North Vietnam into the stone age*'. 3 times the amount of bombs in WW2 were dropped at a cost of \$900 million.
- It was supposed to be a 3 week campaign but lasted 3 ½ years.
- The US used its mighty B52 bombers, each capable of carrying a massive 27,000 kg bomb load.
- They bombed North Vietnam from high altitude, in an attempt to destroy airfields, bridges, docks and supply routes such as the Ho Chi Minh Trail.
- It was also supposed to weaken the morale of the North Vietnamese.
- However much of the bombing was inaccurate.
- Any damage that caused was quickly repaired by the North Vietnamese where 400,000 part-time workers volunteered to repair the damage. Often, the Ho Chi Minh trail was missed as there were dummy routes and much was covered by the dense jungle.
- The VC also started to shoot down US aircraft with anti-aircraft guns and surface to air missiles – 367 US planes shot down in 1967.
- In 1968 Operation Rolling Thunder was judged to have failed in its original objectives and was called off. \$300million of damage was caused against a cost to the US of \$900million.



### New American Tactics

- The USA realised that it had to fight from a safe distance and avoid hand-to-hand fighting wherever possible.
- Saturation bombing as part of Operation Rolling Thunder had failed so they turned to new tactics.
- '**Search and Destroy**' (also known as Zippo Raids)- The US built safe bases from which to launch sudden helicopter attacks. They would wait for intelligence and quickly attack VC strongholds (which would then be burnt down), before returning to base...
- ...however these missions often targeted the wrong villages resulting in civilian casualties. American soldiers also lost self-control because of the short intensive nature of the attacks and sought revenge e.g. My Lai.
- **Napalm** – This was a new weapon, an explosive gel dropped in canisters from the air. They were intended to burn the jungle and destroy VC hiding places and food supplies...
- ...however napalm caused terrible injuries to anyone that got in its way, this often included innocent civilians e.g. Kim Phuc who was badly burnt in a napalm attack.
- **Agent Orange** – This was a defoliant (weed killer) sprayed by plane to destroy the jungle and VC hiding places and food supplies...
- ...however it poisoned water, soil and food supplies. Many locals were poisoned. 500,000 children were later born with birth defects.
- These new weapons and tactics had a common failing – they were indiscriminate in nature. They could not distinguish between guilty and innocent, old or young, men or women.



### The Tet Offensive 1968

- In January 1968, the Viet Cong made a sudden and unexpected change of tactic.
- On 31<sup>st</sup> January when American soldiers were expecting the VC to be celebrating their New Year, 70,000 made a co-ordinated attack on South Vietnamese towns and cities – the most high profile of these was when the VC attacked the American embassy in Saigon.
- The VC hoped that the local South Vietnamese population would rise up and support them in forcing the USA out of Vietnam.

- This was a move away from guerrilla warfare and towards conventional warfare – the VC were now fighting the USA on mass and in the open.
- The Tet Offensive initially caught America off guard and gave the VC some success.
- However the US soldiers quickly recovered and fought back killing 30,000 Viet Cong and regaining control.
- American military leaders such as General Westmoreland claimed (with some justification) that they were now winning the war and asked for more men to be sent out to 'finish the job'.
- However the Tet Offensive was a shock to the American public who believed media reports by **Walter Cronkite** suggesting that the VC were close to a final breakthrough, and that the war was unwinnable. Politicians refused to send over extra troops and the American advantage was lost.
- The Tet Offensive was a turning point in the Vietnam War – a military success but a media failure for the US army. This led to President Johnson's withdrawal from the 1968 election as he felt he had lost the public's support – *"If I've lost Cronkite, then I've lost middle America"*.

### **The My Lai Massacre**

- This was an important example of a Search and Destroy mission which went wrong.
- On 16<sup>th</sup> March 1968 the village of My Lai was incorrectly identified as a VC stronghold and attacked.
- US Soldiers of Charlie ('C') Company led by Lieut. William Calley attacked the village and lost self-control.
- Over 500 innocent villagers were killed, maimed or raped. Many of the men were out of their village working that day, so many of the victims were women and children. The youngest was a one year old baby, the oldest was an 80 year old woman.
- Atrocities such as My Lai had happened before in other wars, but this time it was caught on film.
- Once the event was publicised in the press by Seymour Hersh in 1971 and on TV, it became a key event in turning public opinion against the war.
- William Calley was put on trial, found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment. However many felt that he was a scapegoat (since 33 had been involved in the massacre) and he was later released from prison in 1974.

## Topic 3 – Ending the War in Vietnam

### The role of the media

- The Vietnam War has been called 'the first televised war'.
- In previous wars (such as WW2 just 20 years earlier) media technology made it difficult to capture events for newspapers, magazines or newsreel. In any case strict censorship was in place and government were able to control what was printed or broadcast.
- By the 1960s television had become an item in most homes. Cameras were smaller and more lightweight. This meant that battlefield images could be quickly captured and broadcast uncensored.
- Initially the media had supported the war, but as it dragged on and casualties increased, they became more sceptical.
- Images of the Vietnam War began to appear on the nightly TV news in the USA, and respected reporters such as TV news anchor-man Walter Cronkite, began to question whether the War was justified.
- Cronkite was believed to be the 'most trusted man in America' and his opinion could significantly influence the US population. His report following the Tet Offensive suggested that America, at best, could only achieve a stalemate.
- Many of the images made ordinary people question whether or not the USA should be involved in the war. Images such as napalm attacks on children (eg. the photo of Kim Phuc) made people question the morality of the war.
- Magazine images were important as well, public opinion around the world began to turn against the USA.
- A well-known quote that is good to use in any answer on this topic is that '*The Vietnam War was lost in the living rooms of America and not on the battlefields of Vietnam*'.



### The rise of protest groups

- The role of the media meant that the harsh realities of war were broadcast at home and around the world for the first time – people began to protest against it.
- The first to protest were 'Draft Dodgers' – the 'draft' was the compulsory call up to fight in the war (conscription).
- In 1965 the numbers conscripted were increased from 17,000 to 35,000 per month, and many started to refuse to go because they disagreed with the war. Open 'draft card burning' took place.
- Many high profile draft dodgers, such as the boxer Mohammed Ali, refused to fight.
- University protests became commonplace as young people refused to fight and openly argued against the war – the most famous example came at Kent State University (see below).
- Protest songs became popular by artists such as Bob Dylan, John Lennon and Country Joe MacDonald (who performed 'Fell Like I'm Fixin to Die').
- Returning soldiers (veterans) began to openly protest – in 1967 'Veterans against the War' was founded. In 1967, 100,000 in Washington; 1968, 35,000 in New York, 1969, 500,000 at Woodstock and in 1971 300,000 veterans openly marched on Washington to protest. Veterans also returned their medals.
- Veterans Against the War launched the Winter Soldier Investigation which proved that war crimes like My Lai had not been a one off. This led to even more people in the USA turning against the Vietnam War.
- By the 1970s open protests against the war were commonplace.



## Nixon's last gambles to end the Vietnam War 1968 – 1971

- Richard Nixon replaced Lyndon B Johnson and became US president in January 1969. He won the election by promising to end the really unpopular Vietnam War and bring American soldiers home. However Nixon did not want to become the first American president to lose a major war. So he tried a number of last gambles to force communist North Vietnam to surrender. They all failed, but why?

	What was Nixon's plan?	Why did it fail?
<b>1968 Paris peace talks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peace talks between the USA, South Vietnam and North Vietnam had already started in 1968 in Paris.</li> <li>When Nixon became president he continued with the peace talks to try to end the War.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North Vietnam wanted to take over the South to form a united Communist Vietnam.</li> <li>The USA would never agree to this.</li> <li>The talks dragged on and went nowhere.</li> <li>No agreement was reached.</li> </ul>
<b>Vietnamisation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vietnamisation was an attempt by President Nixon to deliver on his promises and return American soldiers home.</li> <li>He would gradually withdraw US soldiers from Vietnam and replace them with local soldiers from the South Vietnamese army (ARVN).</li> <li>The US would provide training, money and equipment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>400,000 US soldiers did return home.</li> <li>Money was spent on training and equipping South Vietnamese soldiers to replace them</li> <li>However the local ARVN soldiers (South Vietnamese Army) did not have the expertise needed to fight the North Vietnamese.</li> <li>Many deserted when faced by attacks from the VC.</li> </ul>
<b>1970 – 1971 The bombing/invasion of Laos and Cambodia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An attempt by President Nixon to bomb North Vietnamese bases and supply routes (eg. the Ho Chi Minh Trail) in the neighbouring countries of Laos and Cambodia.</li> <li>He hoped this would force the communists to negotiate an end to the War.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The campaign had some initial success in Cambodia - 8,000 B52 missions forced many VC to leave.</li> <li>It was less successful in Laos.</li> <li>However many back home in the USA felt Nixon was expanding the War and began to protest.</li> <li>The Kent State University shootings and Veterans marches on Washington were a result.</li> <li>Congress passed a law after the invasion of Cambodia which banned Nixon from sending more soldiers into the war.</li> <li>As a result, the invasion of Laos in 1971 was done by ARVN soldiers, with the US only offering air support. This was unsuccessful due to the poor quality of the ARVN.</li> <li>Extra pressure mounted on Nixon to end the war.</li> </ul>
<b>1972 – 1973 Operation Linebaker</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A last ditch attempt by President Nixon to bomb North Vietnam into surrender</li> <li>By the 1972 he saw this as his last chance to win the war.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This was another large scale indiscriminate bombing campaign like Operation Rolling Thunder before it.</li> <li>Again the bombing killed many innocent people and hit the wrong targets.</li> <li>It largely failed.</li> <li>However it did force the North Vietnamese to resume peace talks in Paris.</li> </ul>
<b>The Mad Man theory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In one last desperate attempt to make the North Vietnamese surrender, Nixon pretended he was mad and was prepared to drop a nuclear bomb on North Vietnam.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nixon was bluffing and the North Vietnamese didn't fall for it.</li> </ul>

## Kent State University

- In May 1970 students at Kent State University in Ohio staged a protest about the bombing of Cambodia and at one point burned down an old building used by the local military training corps.
- In response, the Governor of Ohio ordered 800 National Guardsmen to enter the University to restore order.
- At one point the Guardsmen panicked and opened fire killing 4 students.
- The event had a great impact – it went against the US traditional right of free speech and it also seemed as though US soldiers were now also killing their own young people on American soil.
- Much negative media coverage followed sparking further waves of University strikes and protest marches across the USA of up to four million students.
- Protest songs such as 'Ohio' by Neil Young proved to be popular with protestors.



## The Watergate Affair

- Richard Nixon had become US president in 1969 and another election was due to take place in 1972.
- Nixon was under pressure to end the war in Vietnam as it was becoming really unpopular in the early 1970s. He had delivered on some of his promises such as bringing US soldiers home in his policy of Vietnamisation – but many wanted him to end the war as quickly as possible.
- Yet Nixon had also just authorised the bombing of Laos and Cambodia was being accused of widening the scope of the war.
- During the 1972 presidential election campaign a burglary took place at the Watergate Hotel in Washington which was being used as a base by the Democrat opponents of Nixon. Supporters of Nixon were involved in the burglary but Nixon claimed to know nothing about it and the resulting cover-up.
- Despite denials when Nixon publicly said 'I am not a crook', he was implicated in the Watergate Affair and forced to resign (because he had lied) in August 1974. He remains the only ever US president to have been forced to resign.
- This weakened the USA's position in Vietnam as, one of the few remaining supporters of the war and South Vietnam (Nixon) was removed from power.

## The Paris Peace Conference and the Fall of Saigon

- In an attempt to end the war, peace talks between the USA and North Vietnam had been taking place since 1968. Nixon's heavy bombing of North Vietnam in December 1972 (operation Linebacker) and rumours of the 'madman' theory brought the North Vietnamese back to the negotiating table. In January 1973 peace talks resumed.
- Henry Kissinger represented the USA at the talks and Le Duc Tho represented North Vietnam.
- The Paris Peace Conference, agreed that all US soldiers should withdraw from Vietnam in return for the safe return of all US Prisoners of War (POWs) and by April 1973 they had all returned home, leaving a small number of military advisors in South Vietnam.
- However, once the vast majority of American soldiers had left South Vietnam in 1973, it left the country vulnerable to attack from the North.
- In December 1974 the North Vietnamese Army (VC), broke their promise from the peace conference and then fully invaded the South and made fast progress.
- Refugees fled towards Saigon (the Convoy of Tears) to try and escape from the communists. Other people left Vietnam by boat (The Boat People).
- In April 1975 the VC entered Saigon the capital of South Vietnam, and remaining US officials were airlifted out by helicopter and the war was over. North and South Vietnam were reunited to form one communist country.



## Consequences of the War

Impact on people in Vietnam	Impact on the USA	Impact on the environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Around one million Vietnamese soldiers (from both sides) died.</li><li>• 2 million civilians died.</li><li>• 11 million people became refugees due to the war.</li><li>• Many refugees moved to near US bases seeking protection – but poverty, drug abuse and prostitution were common.</li><li>• Around 100,000 children were born due to relationships between Vietnamese and Americans. They were seen as 'different' by some and faced abuse.</li><li>• Agent Orange led to birth defects over many years.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The war cost over \$170 billion.</li><li>• Johnson had to divert money away from the Great Society to pay for the war, limiting its impact.</li><li>• 58,000 Americans died and over 300,000 were wounded.</li><li>• Many soldiers suffered psychologically and experienced drug dependency.</li><li>• American society was split between those who supported and opposed the war.</li><li>• USA's reputation as an invincible superpower and as a leader of freedom and democracy was damaged.</li><li>• USA had failed to stop the spread of communism – Laos and Cambodia also became communist.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Huge areas of jungle and farmland were destroyed by chemicals such as Agent Orange.</li><li>• Over seven million tonnes of bombs were dropped, destroying irrigation systems.</li><li>• Even today, large numbers of unexploded bombs cause deaths and injuries when dug up by farmers.</li></ul>