**Vietnam War, 1965-1975**

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| **Advantages & Disadvantages** | **Leaders** |
| **United States & South Vietnam**   * Advanced technology & financial resources but fighting a “limited war” * Unpopular government in South Vietnam * Divided public opinion and little international support   **North Vietnam & Viet Cong**   * Strong ideological commitment: fighting a war for national liberation & for communist doctrine | **United States & South Vietnam**  **Civilian –** Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford (presidents); Robert McNamara (Secretary of Defense); Ngo Dinh Diem, Nguyen van Thieu (SV)  **Military –** William Westmoreland  **North Vietnam & Viet Cong**  **Civilian –** Ho Chi Minh  **Military –** Vo Nguyen Giap |
| **Causes** | **Strategies** |
| **Long Term**   * Failed French effort to recolonize Vietnam after WWII was supported by U.S. aid * Division of Vietnam at the 17th Parallel under the 1954 Geneva Conference * American Cold War policy of containment of communism & the domino theory   **Short Term/”Spark”**   * Tonkin Gulf Incident… T.G. Resolution gave president a “blank check” | **United States & South Vietnam**   * Limited war: bombing, then escalation * “Pacification” of South Vietnamese countryside to eliminate Viet Cong * Aid to South Vietnamese army (ARVN)   **North Vietnam & Viet Cong**   * Defensive guerilla war of attrition * Supply Viet Cong using the Ho Chi Minh trail inside Laos & Cambodia |
| **Turning Points** | **Homefront** |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Battle/Event** | **Significance** | | Tet Offensive, 1968  1968 U.S. Presidential Election  Secret bombing of Laos & Cambodia | Surprise attack was beaten back but it convinced many Americans the war was unwinnable  Nixon won the election promising a “secret plan” to end the war and “peace with honor”  Targeted Ho Chi Minh trail but further escalated the war | | Youth movement   * Draft deferments, draft dodgers * Antiwar movement (SDS) * Kent State shooting   Democratic Party became divided   * LBJ declined to run for reelection in 1968; antiwar RFK was assassinated * Riots at 1968 DNC   Media coverage   * TV: “living room war” & body counts * Newspapers: My Lai Massacre; Pentagon Papers were “leaked” by Daniel Ellsberg (*NYT v. US*); Nixon created “plumbers”... Watergate |
| **End of War** | **Non-Treaty Results** |
| * “Vietnamization” – U.S. gradually withdrew troops and trained South Vietnamese forces * Paris Peace talks dragged on for years * Last U.S. troops left in 1973 * North Vietnam made rapid advances * Fall of Saigon, 1975 * Vietnam was reunified under communist control | * War Powers Act restricted president’s ability to commit troops to indefinite engagements * 26th Amendment lowered voting age to 18; draft was ended (all-volunteer army) * Voter apathy & distrust of government * Veterans issues: PTSD, POW/MIA, poor treatment of returning vets, creation of Maya Lin’s Vietnam Veterans Memorial * Lasting effects of Agent Orange * Khmer Rouge genocide in Cambodia |