

CHAPTER 22 Section 1 (pages 730–735)

Moving Toward Conflict

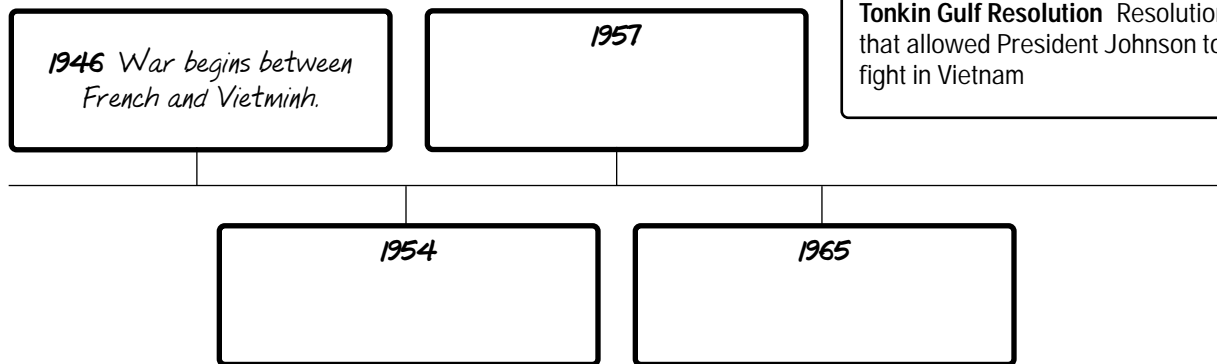
BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you read about the legacy of the civil rights movement.

In this section, you will read how the United States became involved in Vietnam.

AS YOU READ

Use the diagram below to take notes on the important Vietnam-related events during the following years.



TERMS AND NAMES

Ho Chi Minh Leader of North Vietnam

Vietminh Communist group led by Ho Chi Minh

domino theory Eisenhower's explanation for stopping communism

Dien Bien Phu Major French outpost captured by the Vietminh

Geneva Accords Peace agreement that split Vietnam in two

Ngo Dinh Diem Leader of South Vietnam

Vietcong Communist rebel group in South Vietnam

Ho Chi Minh Trail Network of paths running between North and South Vietnam

Tonkin Gulf Resolution Resolution that allowed President Johnson to fight in Vietnam

America Supports France in Vietnam (pages 730–732)

Why did the U.S. get involved?

Vietnam is a long, thin country on a *peninsula* in southeast Asia. From the late 1800s until World War II, France ruled Vietnam. The French treated the Vietnamese badly. As a result, the Vietnamese often rebelled. The Communist Party in Vietnam organized many of the rebellions. The group's leader was **Ho Chi Minh**.

In 1941, Japan conquered Vietnam. That year, the Vietnamese Communists combined with other groups to form an organization called the **Vietminh**. The Vietminh's goal was to achieve independence for Vietnam. In 1945, Japan was defeated in World War II. As a result, the Japanese left Vietnam. The Vietminh claimed independence for Vietnam.

However, France wanted to retake control of Vietnam. French troops moved back into the country in 1946. They conquered the southern half of Vietnam. The Vietminh took control of the North. For the next eight years, the two sides fought for control of the entire country.

The United States supported France during the war. America considered the Vietminh to be Communists. The United States, like other western nations, was determined to stop the spread of communism. President Eisenhower explained his country's policy with what became known as the **domino theory**. Eisenhower compared many of the world's smaller nations to dominoes. If one nation fell to communism, the rest also would fall.

The Vietminh defeated the French. The final blow came in 1954. That year, the Vietminh conquered the large French outpost at **Dien Bien Phu**.

Several countries met with the French and the Vietminh to negotiate a peace agreement. The agreement was known as the **Geneva Accords**. It temporarily split Vietnam in half. The Vietminh controlled North Vietnam. The anti-Communist nationalists controlled South Vietnam. The peace agreement called for an election to unify the country in 1956.

1. For what reason did the United States support France in the war?

The United States Steps In

(pages 732–734)

Who were the Vietcong?

Ho Chi Minh ruled North Vietnam. **Ngo Dinh Diem** led South Vietnam. When it came time for the all-country elections, Diem refused to take part. He feared that Ho would win. And then all of Vietnam would become Communist.

The United States supported Diem's decision. The U.S. government provided aid to Diem. America hoped that Diem could turn South Vietnam into a strong, independent nation. Diem, however, turned out to be a terrible ruler. His administration was *corrupt*. He also refused to allow opposing views.

By 1957, a rebel group had formed in the South. The group was known as the **Vietcong**. It fought against Diem's rule. Ho Chi Minh supported the Vietcong from the North. He supplied arms to the group along a network of paths that ran between North and South Vietnam. Together, these paths became known as the **Ho Chi Minh Trail**.

John Kennedy became president after Eisenhower. Kennedy continued America's policy of supporting South Vietnam. He, like Eisenhower, did not want to see the Communists take over Vietnam.

Meanwhile, Diem's government grew more *unstable*. The Vietcong rebels were gaining greater support among the peasants. The Kennedy administration decided that Diem had to step down. In

1963, military leaders overthrew Diem. Against Kennedy's wishes, they executed Diem.

Two months later, Kennedy himself was assassinated. Lyndon Johnson became president. The growing crisis in Vietnam was now his.

2. Who were the Vietcong fighting?

President Johnson Expands the Conflict

(pages 734–735)

What was the Tonkin Gulf Resolution?

South Vietnam did not improve after Diem's death. A string of military leaders tried to rule the country. Each one failed to bring stability. Johnson, however, continued to support South Vietnam. The president was determined to not "lose" Vietnam to the Communists.

In August 1964, Johnson received reports of an incident in the Gulf of Tonkin off North Vietnam. A North Vietnamese patrol boat allegedly had fired torpedoes at a U.S. destroyer. President Johnson responded by bombing North Vietnam.

He also asked Congress for special military powers to stop any future North Vietnamese attacks on U.S. forces. As a result, Congress passed the **Tonkin Gulf Resolution**. The resolution granted Johnson broad military powers in Vietnam. In February 1965, President Johnson used his new power. He launched a major bombing attack on North Vietnam's cities.

3. What did the Tonkin Gulf Resolution grant President Johnson?