

CHAPTER 22 Section 5 (pages 754–761)

The End of the War and Its Legacy

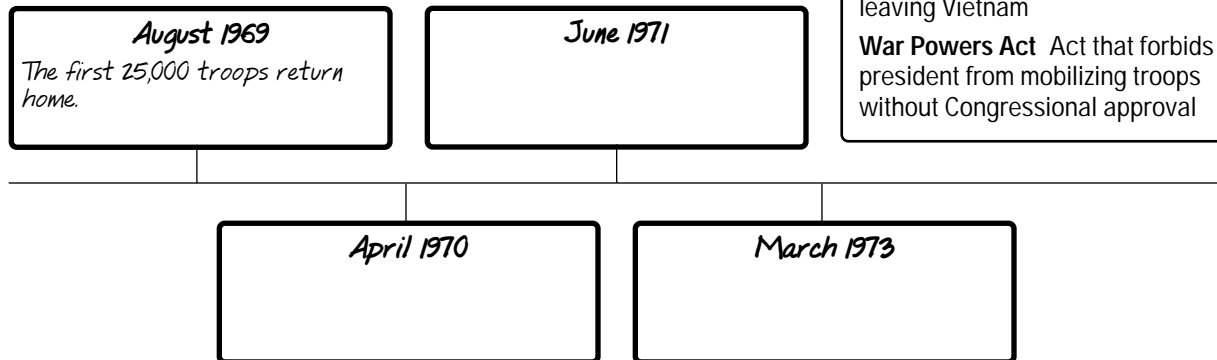
BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you read about the explosive events that occurred in 1968.

In this section, you will read how the Vietnam War ended and what effect the war had on America.

AS YOU READ

Use this diagram to take notes on the important dates and events relating to the end of the Vietnam War.



TERMS AND NAMES

Richard Nixon President of the United States, elected 1968

Henry Kissinger Nixon adviser who helped negotiate an end to the war

Vietnamization President Nixon's plan for ending America's involvement in the war

silent majority Those mainstream Americans who supported Nixon's policies

My Lai Site of massacre of Vietnamese civilians by American soldiers

Kent State University Site of protest where National Guard killed four students

Pentagon Papers Government documents that showed the government had no real plan for leaving Vietnam

War Powers Act Act that forbids the president from mobilizing troops without Congressional approval

President Nixon and Vietnamization (pages 754–755)

How did Vietnamization work?

Richard Nixon pledged to end American involvement in the Vietnam War. With National Security Adviser **Henry Kissinger**, he came up with a plan to end the war. Their plan was known as **Vietnamization**. It called for the gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops and for the South Vietnamese to do more of the fighting. By August of 1969, the first 25,000 U.S. troops had returned home. Over the next three years, the number of American troops in Vietnam dropped from more than 500,000 to less than 25,000.

Nixon, however, did not want to lose the war. So as he pulled American troops out, he ordered a massive bombing attack against North Vietnam.

Nixon also ordered that bombs be dropped on the neighboring countries of Laos and Cambodia. These countries held a number of Vietcong bases.

1. Name both aspects of the Vietnamization plan.

Trouble Continues on the Home Front (pages 756–757)

Which events weakened support for the war?

To win support for his war policies, Nixon appealed to what he called the **silent majority**. These were *mainstream* Americans who quietly supported the president's strategy. Many Americans did support

the president. However, the war continued to divide the country.

In November of 1969, Americans learned of a shocking event. U.S. troops had massacred more than 100 unarmed Vietnamese in the village of **My Lai**. In April 1970, the country heard more upsetting news. President Nixon announced that U.S. troops had invaded Cambodia. They had tried to destroy Vietcong supply lines there. Upon hearing of the invasion, colleges exploded in protest.

A protest at **Kent State University** in Ohio turned tragic. To restore order on the campus, the local mayor called in the National Guard. Some students began throwing rocks at the guards. The guards fired into a crowd of protesters. Four students were killed.

Nixon's invasion of Cambodia cost him public support. It also cost him political support. Members of Congress were angry that he had invaded Cambodia without telling them. As a result, Congress repealed the Tonkin Gulf Resolution. This had given the president the freedom to conduct war policy in Vietnam on his own.

Support for the war declined even further in June of 1971. That month, a former Defense Department worker *leaked* what became known as the **Pentagon Papers**. These documents showed that the past U.S. presidents had never drawn up any plans to withdraw from Vietnam.

2. Name two incidents that weakened support for the war.

America's Longest War Ends

(pages 758–759)

Who won the war?

1972 was a presidential election year. To win reelection, Nixon believed he had to end the Vietnam War. Nixon called on Henry Kissinger, his adviser for national security affairs. Kissinger negotiated a peace settlement with the North Vietnamese. In October 1972, Kissinger announced that peace was close at hand. A month later, Nixon was reelected president.

However, the promised peace in Vietnam did not come. South Vietnam objected to the proposed

peace settlement. As a result, the peace talks broke down. Nixon responded by ordering more bombings against North Vietnam.

Eventually, the peace talks resumed. In January 1973, the warring parties signed a peace agreement. By the end of March, the last U.S. combat troops had left. For America, the Vietnam War was over.

Shortly after America left, the peace agreement collapsed. North and South Vietnam resumed fighting. In April 1975, North Vietnamese troops captured the South's capital, Saigon. Soon after, South Vietnam surrendered to North Vietnam.

3. What happened to South Vietnam after America left?

The War's Painful Legacy

(pages 759–761)

How did the war affect America?

The Vietnam War cost both sides many lives. In all, about 58,000 Americans died in Vietnam. Another 303,000 were wounded. Vietnamese deaths topped 2 million.

After the war, Southeast Asia continued to experience violence and unrest. The Communists imprisoned hundreds of thousands of South Vietnamese. In Cambodia, a communist group known as the Khmer Rouge took power in 1975. They attempted to transform the country into a peasant society. In doing so, they killed many government officials and intellectuals. The group is believed to have killed as many as 1 million Cambodians.

In the United States, the war resulted in several policy changes. In November 1973, Congress passed the **War Powers Act**. This law prevented the president from committing troops in a foreign conflict without approval from Congress. In a larger sense, the war made Americans less willing to become involved in foreign wars. The war also left many Americans with a feeling of mistrust toward their government.

4. Name two ways in which the war affected Americans.