



Name: _____ Date: _____ Due Date: _____

THE WAR IN VIETNAM

INDOCHINA. Indochina was a French colony. It was ruled by the Japanese in World War II. After the war, the French wanted to control the area again. They divided Indochina into three new nations: Cambodia (now called Kampuchea), Laos, and Vietnam. The French gave these new nations self-rule.

There were many communists in Vietnam. They fought against the French. The French could not win. The French could not control Vietnam again. In 1954, French soldiers left Vietnam. The people of Vietnam started to rule themselves. After the French left, Vietnam was divided into two nations. Most communists lived in the north. North Vietnam became a communist nation. South Vietnam wanted to be a free nation.

In the 1960's, the United States believed the communists in North Vietnam were very dangerous. From Vietnam, the communists might take control of many nations in Southeast Asia. The U.S. worried that other countries would fall to communism like a row of falling dominoes. This is called the **Domino Theory**. So the United States tried to help South Vietnam.

War broke out in South Vietnam. Some communists lived on South Vietnam. They were called the **Viet Cong**. The Viet Cong fought against the government of South Vietnam. The Viet Cong wanted South Vietnam to become a communist nation like North Vietnam. North Vietnam helped the Viet Cong.

The U.S. Wanted to help South Vietnam. The U.S. did not want communism in South Vietnam. The U.S. was afraid that, from Vietnam the communists might go into other countries in Southeast Asia. So the U.S. gave money, weapons, and training to South Vietnam.

In 1965, the U.S. sent more than 200,000 American soldiers to help South Vietnam. American war planes dropped bombs on North Vietnam. Americans wanted to stop people from the North fighting in the South. But the fighting went on and on. Many South Vietnamese, North Vietnamese, and American soldiers died. The United Nations was afraid that the Vietnam War might become a world war.

In 1968, there were about 550,000 American soldiers in South Vietnam. American soldiers fought more and more. Some Americans at home began to get angry. Many American said that the Vietnamese should fight by themselves. Other people said the war cost too much money. Americans wanted their soldiers to come home.

After 1969, President Nixon started to bring American soldiers home. Leaders held peace talks. During 1972, almost all the American soldiers were out of South Vietnam. In 1973, a peace settlement was reached. A cease-fire agreement was signed. North and South Vietnam promised to stop fighting. But soon they began to fight again. Without help from the United States, the army of South Vietnam was weak. It could not stop the North Vietnamese communists. The North defeated the South. In 1975, the South surrendered. North and South Vietnam became one communist country. Then the communists took over two of Vietnam's neighbors – Cambodia and Laos.

QUESTIONS: Answer the following questions based on your reading

1. What was the Domino Theory? _____

2. Who were the Viet Cong? _____

3. How did the United States increase its involvement in Vietnam in 1965? _____

4. How did the withdrawal of American troops affect South Vietnam? _____

5. What happened in Southeast Asia in 1975? _____

During the Vietnam War (1955-1975)



Vietnam Since 1976

