

MODERN HISTORY

Part 4: Indochina

Indochina after the French

- **Consequences of Vietnamese victory against the French**
 - Dien Bien Phu won by communists in May 1954
 - Brought bargaining power to Geneva Conference later that month opening up stronger diplomatic relations with the US
 - French forced out of Indochina, creating power vacuum which was gradually assumed by the US in cooperation with South Vietnam
 - North Vietnam existed as communist state
- **Consequences of the Geneva Conference for the Vietnamese people to 1964**
 - Took place April 1954
 - Vietnam split upon the 17th Parallel
 - Bao Dai appointed Diem as Prime Minister in 1955, alienating French influence, whilst seeking greater US aid
 - Catholics in fear of persecution fled North
 - Diem refused to hold free elections as he 'distrusted' North in providing fair ballot by July 1956
- **Political, social, economic and military developments within North and South Vietnam**
 - Extreme political oppression occurred in the South, suppressing Hoa Hao and Cao Dai
 - Nepotism – no party opposition established
 - Diem ruled through familial oligarchy
 - American aid largely held up Southern economy, increasing from \$322 million aid package in 1955 to \$1 billion by January 1961
 - Land reform initiated 1955-60, however 2/3 land was maintained by wealthy landlords
 - Military was viewed by US as crucial to the sustainability of the free Southern state
 - 15 000 military advisers by 1963
 - Proxy war necessitated to stop communist expansion on South East Asia

- Socialist revolution instigated in North through Worker's Party Manifesto (1960)
- Land reform under Chinh occurred in North, which brought violence and aggression towards landlords, to which Ho was forced to apologise for later
- NLF created in 1960 uniting several nationalist political identities within a coalition
- Large food shortages due to restricted access to fertile Mekong Delta
- Following 1956 report by Le Duan revealing that 90% of communist party members in South Vietnam had been killed, military development became central to government plans for unification
- Construction of the Ho Chi Minh Trail enabled cadres to avoid demilitarised zone, harnessing broader disaffection with Diem's regime into a single front
- Propaganda used extensively in promotion in Vietnamese unity and nationalism

The USA and Indochina

- **Political and social issues in Indochina by 1960**
 - South was heavily reliant on US support to maintain control of economy
 - Corrupt government highlighted in propaganda which depicted NVN leadership as altruistic and selfless epitomised by HCM
 - Agrovillage Policy 59 (and later Strategic Hamlet Policy) hugely unpopular amongst village populations
 - North had greater success in enforcing social policy
 - Increasing influence from Chinese, and thus, leftist ideologies led by Le Duan
 - People's Courts established 1953
 - Adopted overall policy aiming to destabilise government in the South
 - 3 Year Plan for Economic Transformation and Cultural Development (1958): plans for abolition of private ownership, replacement with collective or public control
 - Cambodia and Laos experienced similar political instability
- **US policy towards Indochina generally, particularly Vietnam**
 - Eisenhower – Containment, saw Vietnam as domino in expansion of communism
 - March 54 National Security Council Directive on Covert Operations came into effect
 - Backed Diem as Prime Minister in 1954
 - Rollback Policy initiated after failure of proposed elections in 56, designed to assist establishment of stable democratic government in south

- First American casualty July 59 as Bien Hoa base kills two advisers
- JFK – promoted flexible response; to growing threat of unstable communist political forces within the Indochinese region
- Sought to ‘nation build’ to enforce stable government
- Unconventional warfare within groups of counter insurgents understood as best way to deal with communist forces
- Coupled with Winning Hearts and Minds Program which sought to incentivise supporting the government to the villages
- Kennedy ‘tentatively escalated’ presence during term as to balance broader political spectrum; Cold War and international relations, US public opinion, and SVM government
- By mid 63, 15 000 advisers present
- Facing factionalism, Diem deposed in Nov 63 and replaced by Minh and Khan; US made no attempt to stop coupe
- Despite increasing futility of situation, US regarded SVN as crucial to the prevention of the expansion of communism, and thus failed to draw back
- LBJ – Americanisation
- Policy reflected rhetoric moral high ground
- Policy influenced by two groups; Hawks which advocated punitive bombing raids and assume greater military presence, while the Doves promoted caution and non aggressive tactics such as negotiation to solve the situation
- General Maxwell-Taylor appointed Ambassador to SVN whilst General Westmorland appointed as Com in Chief, both being Hawks
- 1st Feb 64 US begin covert operations against the NVM in the form of raids and sabotage
- 2nd August 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident provides pretext and justification for US to enact aggression towards NVN
- Through 1964 – 65 the role of the US shifted from a defensive one to an offensive one
- Due to the nature of international relations upon the backdrop of the Cold War, Westmorland supported a strategic shift towards employing a war of attrition rather than invading NVN, Laos and Cambodia to wipe out the HCM trail
- LBJ was concerned with the public image of as the president who lost the war, and so became increasingly aggressive in policy
- Growing presence throughout 60s led Johnston into an open ended commitment
- By end of 1965, 184 000 troops and by end of 1967, 486 000 troops
- Troops were used for wider expansion of regular combat

- US public opinion ultimately drove war commitment
- By 68, war budget had blown out nearly \$27 b, while the public were outraged and divided, and unwilling to further support the war effort
- Nixon – withdrawal, Vietnamisation and Triangulation
- Sought to contain communism, however, public opinion dictated he withdraw troops, but increased military machinery deployment, bombing raids and extended the war into Laos and Cambodia
- Determined to enter the bargaining table with the upper hand, thus withdrawing with honour
- Remaining US troops suffered low morale
- Madman theory became centre of foreign policy, seeking to highlight US irrationality and unpredictability
- Through process of triangulation, Nixon and Kissinger aimed at placing pressure on USSR and China to ease the conflict
- Nixon Doctrine provided US opportunity to relinquish responsibility for the defence of SVN (1969)
- Withdrawal continued into late 1972; in the face of a presidential election, Nixon sought to please public opinion, however the Treaty wasn't signed until 27th January 1973 as both sides were unwilling to accept terms of peace
- Impact of direct US military involvement in Vietnam and the consequences for Vietnam and Cambodia
 - Civilian population of Vietnam used to the foreign occupation and suffering for the cause of independence
 - Communists used cadres (mostly in South) and methods of indoctrination to increase peasant support, often threatening and forcing civilians to join armed forces – used US conflict as justification
 - Similarly, the SVM attempted to promote support through Strategic Hamlet Policy 1964
 - Villages in NVN and HCM trail particularly suffered extreme bombing raids
 - Villages often subject to taxes to both SVM and NVM
 - Changes in society largely depended on occupational force
 - Extreme bombing raids resulted in 4 million villagers moving to Danang and Saigon
 - Thus, food became more scarce (especially because of crop destruction), and sanitation was of a poor level
 - Political stability and economy varied throughout period, but in general the civilian population maintained a growing sense of disillusionment in the SVM gvt

- Political failures effected the success of ARVN
- Food production declined, 1968, farm production was 23% less than early 60s
- Green Reform of 1971 proved initially as a huge success, but the rural reform scheme collapsed due to corruption, land overuse
- Diem and successive governments failed to address the burning issues such as land reform early enough, causing widespread discontent
- Action/reaction became feature of US conflict
- E.g First NVM forces sent south following bombing raids first initiated by Gulf of Tonkin Incident 1964
- Movement of HCM trail into Laos and Cambodia due to bombing raids aimed at wiping out the trail
- Cambodia experienced similar economic, social and political issues
- Violent repression of opponents by Lon Nol alienated peasant population
- Peasants in the east suffered the presence of NLF troops
- US bombing stretched into Cambodia, destroying rice crops and placing additional pressure on an already unstable economy
- Widespread carpet bombing brought the nation under complete civil war, in which the Khmer Rouge won by 1975

The Second Indochina War

- **Nature and effectiveness of the strategy and tactics employed by the North Vietnamese Army and the National Liberation Front (NLF), and by the South Vietnamese and the USA**
 - Eisenhower 54 – 59
 - Increasing presence of advisers and aid to SVM from US
 - JFK 60 – 63
 - WHAM program adopted in early 1960s to help create popular support for democratic government
 - Michael Maclear – Kennedy's attempts to win population's support only undermined by antagonistic US strategy
 - Agrovilles established 1959 to separate the civilian population from guerilla influence
 - Strategic Hamlet Policy 1962 sought to deprive communists and cadres of peasant support for indoctrination
 - Policy failed and displayed cultural ignorance of US and SVM gvt, generating extreme unpopularity

- Late 61, helicopters introduced with defoliants and herbicides in an effort to destroy HCM trail, reflective of action/reaction warfare
- By end of 1962 communists had control of Hamlets or had them destroyed
- 500 Green Berets sent to assist advisers already established
- In balancing US public opinion with own escalation policy, announced withdrawal of 1000 advisers shortly before assassination
- Laurence Freedman: "Failed initiatives increased the need for the Kennedy administration to succeed in Vietnam"
- LBJ 63 – 68
- First bombing mission of NVN conducted 2 days after initial GoT incident
- Op Barrel Roll initiated sustained bombing raids upon the HCM trail 64 in reaction to Bien Hoa attack
- Operation Flaming Dart same day as Plieku; 'tit for tat bombing'
- 2 Mar 65 Op Rolling Thunder attempted to draw Hanoi to negotiation table, raids continued for 3 years
- In reaction to Qui Nhon attacks, Flaming Dart 2 launched on 11th
- 3500 marines arrive 8 Mar 65
- Westmorland initiates Search and Destroy Missions to destroy communist supply tunnels
- Op Cedar Falls launched as one of these SDMs in 1967
- 32 000 US and ARVN forces deployed in Binh Dong, however communist forces retreated further into Cambodia, or reoccupying villages once free of US and ARVN presence
- Op Junction City also launched 67, aimed at removing communist bases along the Cambodian border. However this eventually failed as enemy troops would initially retreat before occupying region once US forces had moved on
- Hamlet Evaluation Survey showed SVM gvt only controlled 168 of 12 537 villages, compared to over 4000 controlled by communists
- Op Niagara launched in reaction to impending attack on Khe Sanh, which bombed surrounding area. 500 US and 10 000 PLAF killed in conflict
- Op Pegasus Mar 68 used in cooperation with Niagara as overland relief expedition
- Nixon 69 – 73
- Op Apache Snow at Ap Bai Mountain in May 69 which comprised of 12 assaults with the loss of 241 US. Op abandoned after one week, drawing much public criticism
- Op Menu launched Mar 69, bombing of communist cells in Cambodia in an attempt to place further pressure on Hanoi to negotiate

- Covert invasion of Cambodia and Laos forced in April and May 1970 as the HCM trail was being consolidated
- Op Linebacker was first bombing offensive over NVN since Rolling Thunder as was generally successful pushing back communist forces, but also demonstrated the dependence of ARVN on US air support
- Op Linebacker 2 Dec 1972 used to comfort SVM gvt who were unwilling to accept the terms of negotiations which would leave the South at the mercy of communist forces
- Promised military supplies and economic aid but relinquished responsibility for defence
- NLF and NVM gvt 54 – 63, adopted methods of indoctrination and small scale engagement to gain support
- Promoted the concept of the 'People's War' in reunifying Vietnam
- Cadres were covertly sent south from 54 to exploit political discontent
- NLF formed in 1960, reformed into PAVN in 61 comprising of full time soldiers with part time revolutionist peasants
- Destruction of Oppression strategy aimed at liberating rural areas and using them to base further guerilla attacks
- Despite calls from extremist faction led by Le Duan, second phase wasn't undertaken until 64, the HCM trail continued to be main source of supply for cadres and volunteers
- Ho practiced the pragmatic voice of moderation who understood the need to keep Moscow and Beijing on side to continue support
- Battle of Ap Bac Jan 62 tactics such as tunnel system provided huge propaganda victory who demonstrated the PLAFs ability to undermine US war machine
- NLF and NVM gvt 63 – 65, anticipated greater guerilla warfare with General Offensive as second stage of battle
- Recruitment for PLAF increased though propaganda, expanded age brackets, women recruited
- By 67, 2/3 of troops had been forced rather than volunteered
- With bases strong in rural villages, PLAF sought to gain greater control of cities in order to progress to third stage of popular revolt/urban uprising
- Politburo forced to contain uprising as they believed US intervention would restrict chances of victory
- First Communist forces sent south in reaction to first bombing raids over NVN 64
- 2nd Nov 64 PLAF attacked Bien Hoa airbase killed 4
- 7th Feb 65, US barracks at Plieku killed 9

- Tentative move towards settlement; coalition government proposed, US withdrawal
- To deal with superior US weaponry, PLAF targeted air bases that were crucial in the supply chain. Without supplies, ARVN would be extremely under-equipped to suppress General Offensive
- During period, PLAF received 170 000 new soldiers each year
- Big Unit War adopted to create highest chance for immediate PLAF victory. Hanoi believed it held an inexhaustible source of manpower which could counter any US escalation
- Attacked US base at Chu Lai in Aug 65 but failed due to compromise of plans
- PLAF gained understanding that fighting close to enemy lines restricted enemy use of superior artillery or air support. Used successfully at Plei Mei on 17 Nov 65 (US 60% casualty rate)
- New tactic underpinned by 'one slow, four quick' theory, and Giap's 'Grabbing the belt'
- PLAF increasingly conducted operations at night where US superiority was again compromised
- Terror tactics increased upon those not sympathetic to NVM cause
- Land mines used extensively, utilizing features of natural landscape
- NLF and NVM gvt 67 – 75 sought implementing a popular revolt
- Decided to launch major offensive upon during Tet in 68, combining military attacks over a wide range of cities and rural areas to harness peasant support
- Khe Sanh employed as decoy to main offensive
- Attack launched Jan 30 1968 across 36 provincial capitals of SVN. However both Khe Sanh and Tet caused major damages to their own forces, it provided a psychological victory, crucial to US public opinion
- Launched 3 pronged Spring Offensive on 30th March 1972 causing the disintegration of ARVN forces who were by now gradually losing support from US personnel
- Signed agreement in Jan 72 to prevent further carpet bombing
- PLAF launched last offensive which involved the movement of 22 infantry divisions across the DMZ
- Without US air support, the PLAF gained momentum against capitulating SVM gvt
- Took Saigon 29th April 1975
- **Impact of the 1968 Tet Offensive**
 - US lost 1100, PLAF up to 45 000, although the nature of the attack proved a huge surprise for US gvt

- Exposed the flaws and restrictions of a limited war and limitations of US power
- Also exposed failure of US and ARVN intelligence
- Despite colossal victory in terms of body count, US presence was met with growing skepticism
- Johnston stuck between open ended commitment to the war and satisfying public opinion with an upcoming election
- LBJ faced growing internal factionalism and inter party discontent. Forced him not to stand for reelection in late 1968
- Increased widespread social upheaval – assassination of MLK and Bobby Kennedy in 1968
- Peace negotiations began in Paris May 1968, however talks stalled as both sides failed to accept the others' terms eg termination of bombing raids and return of US POW
- Election of Nixon in 68 demonstrated public opinion shift from preventing communist expansion to futile and callous waste of life
- **Impact of the war on civilians in Indochina**
 - SVM government never achieved popular appeal, rather, widespread disillusionment encouraged the infiltration of communist insurgents
 - Government structure under Diem (and subsequent Prime Ministers) failed to overcome the continued factionalism
 - ARVN was used to intimidate voters and to suppress political opposition
 - Nepotism and corruption present throughout all levels of gvt
 - US involvement largely unpopular, due to the nation's history with foreign occupation (especially WHAM program)
 - Villages dislocated by Agrovillage 1959 and Strategic Hamlet 1962 policies, which increased discontent for SVM gvt and US presence, whilst fostering support for communists
 - Civilian population in villages and rural regions were subject to napalm and bombing between 62-72
 - Lack of land reform cause of most peasant discontent, with up to 75% farmers believing it the most significant issue (study taken 67)
 - 1965, 4 mill had moved to Danang and Saigon as they had been displaced from destroyed villages. 45% population increase between 1960-70
 - 23% decline in agriculture output
 - Indiscriminate US bombing as well as PLAF activities destroyed crucial crops and plantations, leading to severe economic deterioration of which an unstable gvt was unable to prop up

- Rice production down by 23% in 68 from early 60s
- Government attempted to artificially inflate price of rice in urban areas to increase farm income in late 66
- Led to substantial inflation, increasing the cost of living and deteriorating standards of living of cities more so than it improved those of rural villages and farming regions
- Agriculture Development Bank established to provide cheap credit to discontented farmers in an attempt to raise support for SVM gvt, in an area of society where communist ideology and influence was strongest
- Green reform 1971 farmers were better off as biggest rice crop was recorded. Material wealth increased in the short term, with a significant decline in rural debt
- However, corruption and environmental degradation saw the scheme collapse, demonstrating the incompetency of the SVM gvt to the rural villages, whose short term satisfaction was turned into a growth in support for the NLF
- Land to the Tiller March 1970 honoured land redistribution and compensation. Largely successful policy for SVM gvt as it provided SVM with greater compensation than that of the failed NVM equivalent land reform policy
- Growing black market established on presence of US soldiers, restricting effectiveness of government intervention, whilst product markets underwent structural change towards goods demanded by growing US population
- This fuelled an inflationary spiral
- Ky and Thieu launched several anti-corruption campaigns in the late 60s and early 70s, used for several functions; excuse to eliminate political opponents, sought to increase gvt credibility within civilian population
- NVM Relatively greater political stability – depended on leadership of HCM
- Internal factionalism ensured no concentrated power like in SVN, but internal dissent wasn't made public
- Laws introduced against counter revolutionary activities throughout 60s, complimented by strict censorship and widespread propaganda with the threat of terror
- 2.5m tonnes of explosives dropped on NVN but failed to break spirit of the general population who were willing to suffer if it led to unity, independence and prosperity in the long term
- 42% of population, (Hanoi) bore brunt of bombing. 50 000 people evacuated in 1965. 75% of city evacuated by 67
- Increased reliance on aid from China and the USSR as factory production and agricultural output struggled due to devastating bombing raids
- Evacuation placed significant strain on rural population who accommodated evacuees. Food shortages increased

- Cambodia shifted between US and Vietnamese relations throughout period
- US aggression during early to mid-60s swung public opinion in favour of Vietnamese. Sihanouk consequently established relations and allowed for PLAF activity to take place within Cambodian borders
- Mid to late 60s, sentiment swung towards US, as the presence of PLAF soldiers was causing villages in the east suffering from bombing raids
- Sihanouk appointed the pro US Lon Nol, who viciously suppressed leftist revolts
- Described as 'balancing act' - Brawley
- US Op Menu complimented with covert special forces insertions attempted unsuccessfully to break PLAF lines of supply and communication, only causing suffering to peasants in eastern villages
- Many eastern farmers covertly sold grain to NLF
- Policy of violent repression under Lon Nol alienated peasants, contributing to the rise in support for the Khmer Rouge and other radical political groups
- Displacement of many eastern peasant made them more responsive to political alternatives
- 1972, one third of population were refugees in Phnom Penh
- Carpet bombing of Cambodia in Op Menu (1969) destroyed agriculture and traditional rural life, further alienating peasants
- Khmer Rouge used destruction as propaganda. Took power in 1975
- **Impact of the spread of the Vietnam War to Cambodia**
 - (See above impact on civilians for majority of detail)
 - Initially held neutral stance as determined by Geneva Conference 1954
 - By 1963, support for Sihanouk and Sangkum had declined as both international and domestic pressures began to affect Cambodian neutrality
 - War was affecting state revenue as covert trade operations existed between farmers of the east and Vietnamese soldiers, mainly PLAF
 - Corruption was widespread, officers sold weapons for profit
 - 1965, Sihanouk allowed PLAF occupation in east, ultimately leading to extending bombing attacks on rural villages
 - The appointment of Lon Nol as prime minister lead to increase in violent suppression of political opponents
 - Vietnamese guerillas moved further into Cambodia during attacks on HCM trail. Movement of trail into Cambodia and Laos forced US to extend bombing plans

- Carpet bombing of Cambodia in Op Shoemaker led to collapse of agriculture and remaining traditional rural life. Resulted in widespread loss of life and destruction of livestock and property
- Khmer Rouge and Pol Pot were able to take power in 1975
- **Nature and significance of anti-war movements in the USA**
 - From early 60s, antiwar protests were confined to small pacifist groups such as the Quakers
 - During this period, Middle America was supportive of government policy because it was believed necessary to deal with the expansion of communism. Evidenced in LBJs election 64
 - Call for change came through non-violent direct action
 - TEACH-INS became popular amongst university students from 65, leading to greater national demonstration in Washington with 20 000 supporters
 - Movements gained momentum through media, and were thus enabled to influence public opinion
 - Gulf of Tonkin Resolution 1965 provided turning point. Draft was introduced, increasing student/youth support for anti-war movement. However movement was divided and lacked unity to have any significant influence
 - By end of 65, opposition was rapidly spreading and becoming more violent
 - African American opposition was not as consistent, but the introduction of the draft united the youth
 - Despite increasing scrutiny and criticism, congress still supported the war effort, evidenced by passing a \$12b injection into the war effort
 - Civil disobedience rose due to the lack of success of protest movements in 67. Draft evasion, emigration used
 - Up until 1968, protest movements had little effect on gvt policy
 - Johnston, realising the increasing opposition made attempts to reduce the impact of the movements by projecting the movements as radical and dangerous to the public
 - Anti-war protests began to gain support from middle America who had previously found it difficult to identify with the radical groups
 - Media - Images of Tet Offensive sparked greater support for futile argument
 - By 26th April 68, 1mill students had boycotted classes
 - Columbia Rebellion; Guard called in to evict protesting students
 - Chicago Firestorm (protest at Democrat rally in 68) resulted in hundreds injured, severely diminishing the moral authority of the radical anti-war movement. However protesters refused to consider non-violent action

- Nixon promised end to war in gaining office in 1969
- Radical protests were not as successful as before, but the failure of Nixon to address withdrawal immediately led to a moratorium on 15th Oct 69, the second occurring 15th Nov, ending all protests
- Oct 1970, support for war reaches low of 28%
- Kent University incident saw killing of 6 students
- Followed by peaceful demonstration held in New York praising soldiers. War was almost over
- Artists such as Bruce Springsteen were able to effectively communicate the anti-war movement through the medium of popular music
- **Defeat of the South Vietnamese forces**
 - Reelection of Nixon in 73 forced NVM to consider settling the war as quickly as possible, as Linebacker raids were having an increasingly devastating effect
 - Agreement reached in Paris Jan 1973; US agreed to withdraw remaining troops and to halt bombing raids, in exchange for US POW
 - North initially feared a US retaliation if they were to invade the South aggressively
 - Offensive planned to move slowly as to not attract the attention of the US
 - 1974, 22 infantry divisions sent across DMZ covertly as to avoid possible US air strikes
 - Only one ARVN battalion sent to Phuoc Long Thieu, demonstrating the disorganisation and incompetency of ARVN forces without US support
 - NVM increased Offensive, 9 Mar 75, encouraging victory at Ban Me Thout. US did not react
 - President Thieu evacuates Central Highlands in an effort to defend the major cities
 - Thieu resigned on the 21st, but his successor Van Minh was in no way able to prevent the North launching the HCM Campaign, in which the remains of ARVN collapsed
 - ARVN forces completely incompetent without US air support
 - Saigon surrendered on 29th April 1975

Pol Pot's Regime

- **Rise to power of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia**
 - Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) formed 1951 with immediate aim of ridding Cambodia of French Occupation. Saloth Sar (later Pol Pot) joined in Jan 53

- Following independence from the French, the CPK split in four; the legal party that contested elections, communist agents who aimed at destabilising Sihanouk's regime, writers and teachers such as Saloth Sar, and a small group who worked in Hanoi – Hanoi Khmer
- Received little support as Sihanouk was well respected by the peasants and villagers
- Upon gaining party secretary in 63, Saloth Sar travelled to jungle of Eastern Cambodia to draw support, but was unsuccessful again due to support of Sihanouk
- Promoted armed resistance against regime, but CPK didn't accept until 68
- Lon Nol coup (1970) created opportunity for CPK to garner support due to stronger opposition towards Lon Nol. Lon Nol was also pro-American, to which the CPK used for propaganda. 'CPK propaganda had always relied on nationalism rather than revolutionary appeals' Kelvin Rowley
- Lon Nol gvt benefited from US cooperation and aid
- Khmer Rouge army numbered over 30 000 by 73
- Sihanouk's alliance with the Khmer Rouge following deposition increased credibility of CPK and increased support
- Dislocation and distress caused by US bombing (advocated by Lon Nol) increased support for Khmer Rouge
- 1972, one third of population were refugees in Phnom Penh
- Khmer Rouge adopted the portrayal of creating a pure, communal yet idealistic society, emulating the nationalistic image used for propaganda in NVM
- Membership increased to 150 000 by end of 1970
- By 1975, Phnom Penh and the Cambodian gvt were isolated from the rest of the nation
- Phnom Penh captured on 17th April 75 ending conflict and political instability
- **Nature, aims and methods of Pol Pot**
 - Pol Pot gained power via popular peasant support by highlighting the economic incompetency of Lon Nol's gvt, as well as the destruction caused by US bombing raids
 - Khmer Rouge portrayed themselves as purely nationalistic, whilst playing down the revolutionary factions to garner popular support
 - Once in power, Khmer Rouge established independent, closed (apart from China) communal nation free from corruption of capitalism
 - Population of cities and towns were evacuated into rural regions to increase food production. This was viewed as a short term solution to compensate for US bombing destruction but also long term as the party understood the necessity of economic stability in maintaining power. Agrarian privitism

- All market and currency was abolished, reverting to traditional trade methods of barter
- Buddhist monks deprecated and placed in rice fields
- Communes were established throughout the nation
- Executions of all Lon Nol's leaders and supporters carried out
- Troops were sent to Vietnamese border to expel occupying Vietnamese forces and to prevent any further invasion
- Pol Pot remained behind the omniscient personality of Angkar Loeu
- Tens of thousands died from famine and disease due to restriction on Western medicine
- Idealistic goals came at huge price for population, education and any form of progressive thought was banned, whilst the standard of living severely deteriorated
- By 78, between 1-3 mill had died due to Pol Pot's policies
- Political oppression increased during period, with the educated class and members of army executed. Khmer Hanoi executed. Used as terror in controlling general population
- Nation was renamed Democratic Kampuchea with a new constitution
- Sihanouk was placed under house arrest
- 78, despite famine and disease, Pol Pot proclaimed satisfaction at the progress of the nation
- Whilst Pol Pot desired a closed nation, he was wary of the threat to the east, and thus from 1975 regularly sent troops to conduct border raids over the Vietnamese border to regain supposed Kampuchean territory (also possibly to appease the Chinese who were providing aid but suspicious of Vietnam)
- Vietnam failed to respond to raids until Oct 77 but immediately retreated
- Dec 78 120 000 Vietnamese troops crossed border and quickly defeated the much smaller Cambodian forces
- 10 Jan 79, People's Republic of Kampuchea declared under Hun Sen

Key features and issues: Conflict in Indochina 1954 - 1979

- Nature and role of nationalism
 - Nationalism and independence central to Vietnamese
 - Indochina had experienced centuries of foreign occupation who treated the population as second class citizens
 - Chinese had regularly occupied Vietnam, remaining traditional enemies
 - French colonised for own economic benefit, at peril of population

- Reform Movement dominated Vietnamese nationalism during early 20th Century, however revolutionary groups were never unified and failed to agree on armed insurrection or peaceful and gradual reform
- Stories of Truong sisters, resistance existed in folklore
- Communists in NVM were effectively able to garner support by promoting such independence
- Propaganda and terror applied under the goal of nationalism by NVM gvt to achieve a unified population front against the imperialistic SVM gvt and their US allies
- HCM elevated to represent the independence movement, who's values and ideals of selflessness, compassion, determination and group strength were encouraged throughout
- SVM gvt were ignorant to the population's dissent towards the US
- Compromised Vietnamese values for own personal financial gain from US aid
- US misunderstood HCM's motive of nationalism, rather seeing him as a communist puppet controlled by Moscow and Beijing
- Ultimately, Vietnamese determination and willingness was underestimated by the US
- **Nature and role of communism**
 - Used by HCM as vehicle for nationalist causes. After having no success promoting nationalism through the structures of (French) Indochina, Ho was attracted to communist ideology as his nationalistic motivation was well understood, whilst it simultaneously promoted communal living
 - Communism also appealed as it contained an established yet malleable revolutionary method
 - HCM and other leaders were able to effectively unite parties of nationalistic ideology through socialist ideology, as many nationalistic policies were common
 - ICP formed 1930 as first formal step towards establishment of communism in Vietnam under HCM
 - Economic and military support was also sought from superpowers China and the USSR
 - 100 000 Chinese troops used up to 1970, useful in building necessary infrastructure, training and advising leaders in methods of war, and in combat
 - Total communist aid (China and USSR) estimated between \$3.6 billion to \$8 billion over the course of French occupation and the 2nd Indochinese War
 - \$5,500 m estimated communist support between 1970-74 (\$3500m eco support, \$2000 in military aid)
 - Establishment of communism in NVN provided relative order and stability
 - Ideology emphasised key features of traditional Vietnamese village life such as communal cohesion and national unity

- Communism abandoned capitalist ideology, a feature of French occupation and US presence, linked with suppression of the poor, corruption within leadership and wide inequality and exploitation
- Due to strong connections with USSR and China, the US gvt severely misinterpreted the nature of Vietnamese communism, and undermined its nationalistic approach
- US policy towards Vietnam driven by containment foreign policy adopted upon a Cold war rhetoric - domino theory
- **Nature and consequences of US involvement**
 - Nature of involvement dependent on policy. Eisenhower provided substantial aid, whilst JFK advocated tentative escalation, LBJ, full involvement, Nixon, withdrawal
 - During years 1960-70 US involvement became increasingly aggressive in reaction to the growing power of communists in the North
 - Increased political influence in SVN, and weren't overly sympathetic to village population who were hostile to foreign occupation. WHAM programme
 - Use of guerrilla forces deemed most appropriate way to deal with communist insurgency. Otherwise, US with SVN gvt attempted to draw communist forces into conventional warfare where they could apply military superiority with artillery, air support
 - Due to nature of US political system, public opinion had a large impact on policy (evidenced in LBJ not standing for 1968 election, Nixon 'Vietnamisation' and withdrawal)
 - Cold war rhetoric required Vietnam to be recognised as expansion of communism by US foreign policy, rather than the struggle for national independence
 - As a consequence of involvement, the US were in an open ended commitment with the SVM gvt required constant financial aid and military assistance
 - \$350 billion to \$900 billion estimated final cost of the war to the U.S. (includes veteran benefits, interest, etc.)
 - Negotiations between the communists and the US regularly broke down as the NVM wanted complete removal of all US presence, while the US wanted 'peace with honour'
 - Movement of HCM trail and increased insurgent bases in Cambodia and Laos forced US bombing (Op Menu March 1969)
 - Public interest in the conflict increased the role of the media in evoking opinion for the war
 - Traditional farming and village life was severely impacted in areas prone to bombing, however all of Indochina was effected
 - Cities came under tremendous strain, either due to bombing raids such as Hanoi which forced civilian evacuation, or Saigon which experienced a huge influx in refugees who needed food and shelter
 - The conflict extended the Cold War

- US military might for the first time in an international conflict had failed to secure victory; US policy towards Vietnam undermined the true capability of communist guerrilla forces based in the North
- US casualties numbered; 58,151 dead from the war
- 303,616 wounded in Indochina
- 13,167 100% disabled
- 55,000 have died since returning home (suicide, accidents, addictions, etc.)
- 500,000 have attempted suicide since returning home
- 2,221,000 Total Indochinese Dead
- 2,284,000 Total War Dead
- **Strategies and tactics**
 - Refer to 'The Second Indochina War' – Nature and effectiveness of the strategy and tactics employed by the North Vietnamese Army and the National Liberation Front (NLF), and by the South Vietnamese and the USA (page 5)
 - Tie in with 'The USA and Indochina' – Political and social issues in Indochina by 1960; US policy towards Indochina generally, particularly Vietnam; Impact of direct US military involvement in Vietnam and the consequences for Vietnam and Cambodia (page 2)
- **Impact of the war on civilians in Indochina**
 - Refer to 'The Second Indochina War' – Impact of the war on civilians in Indochina (page 8)
- **Attempts at peacemaking**
 - Geneva Conference 1954 initial attempt at peacemaking between communist nationalist forces and US backed imperials
 - LBJ requested peace talks on 10th May 68, following the US public backlash to the devastation of the Tet Offensive. Dragged on for five years
 - Late 60s, early 70s, US sought 'peace with honour', rather than suffer international humiliation
 - Nixon and Kissinger attempted to improve relations with Moscow and Beijing in a process of triangulation, as to place pressure on Vietnamese communists to make peace
 - US gvt understood the implications of US withdrawal, severely undermining the military superiority of the world's most powerful nation within the Cold War
 - Each side attempted to grab the upper hand via action/reactionary tactics which would make the peace terms more in their favour
 - Nixon, wary of growing public disapproval, sought to force Hanoi to peace talks by increasing bombing raids (Op Menu, Linebacker I) – madman theory

- July 1969, Nixon Doctrine justified withdrawal as SVM gvt should be responsible for its own struggle for power in Vietnam
- Ho responded on behalf of the Politburo that NVN would continue fighting until the last US troops has withdrawn
- Aug 72, US election loomed, so US agreed to full withdrawal with PLAF troops allowed to occupy South Vietnam
- Nixon won 72 election, however President Thieu of SVN refused to accept terms of the peace settlement, forcing NVN out of the settlement as well
- US resumed bombing raids in Linebacker II, whilst placing pressure on Thieu to accept terms of peace. Actions were justified by the North not willing to negotiate
- Despite SVM reluctance, US signed Treaty in Paris on the 27th Jan 73, with US full withdrawal, the return of all POWs. Aid and military equipment was supplied to SVN by US but no other support
- **Reasons for communist victory**
 - US gvt misinterpreted the communist insurgency as the spread of Soviet and world communist power to South East Asia, rather than a war against imperialism and foreign occupation – national independence
 - US gvt ultimately undermined the military capabilities of Vietnamese communists forces
 - The SVM gvt were corrupt and ignorant towards the needs of its population (eg Land Reform). Prime ministers/presidents provided poor or incompetent leadership compared to that in the North under HCM, who able to inspire the nation
 - Communists forces received large quantities of economic and military assistance from the USSR and China
 - Vietnamese ground forces utilised their knowledge of the natural geography to fight in conditions and regions that would place them at the greatest advantage
 - Use of HCM trail example of this ^. Trail instrumental for the constant movement of soldiers and supplies. Despite bombing raids and ground Search and Destroy Missions, the trail was never broken
 - Communist forces used guerrilla warfare as method of fighting, limiting the effectiveness of US weaponry superiority in artillery, tanks, and the air etc.
 - Constant bombing raids never broke the will of the civilian population which understood that long term determination would result in national independence, free of foreign occupying powers
 - Cadres used widely in South to promote and indoctrinate villages to support the communist movement. Propaganda and terror to an extent was used in the north to achieve popular support
 - Communists achieved popular support in both the North and South, specifically in rural areas. Non-communist supporters were alienated and deprived of supplies from North

- ARVN leadership was poor and corrupt. ARVN forces were also incompetent without US air support, whilst troops became progressively disillusioned by the SVM gvt as the war wore on, whilst communist forces remained determined throughout the war
- US public opinion shifted. The democratic election system meant that many US gvt policies were dependent on support by US public. Thus, as support for the war waned during the late 1960s, the US gvt was forced to reconsider its role in the war or face election defeat. Communists were aware of this, and launched attacks such as Tet before elections to place pressure on government to withdraw