

US History

The Vietnam War

Learning Target:

I can examine the history of French involvement in Vietnam.

Introduction:

US involvement in the war in Vietnam was the result of applying cold war policies and ideas to a war of national liberation. Involvement in the war greatly changed the mood and spirit of the people of the United States.

1. French Involvement in Vietnam

Reasons why Southeast Asia attracted imperialism –

- Fertile rice fields, mineral deposits, & a strategic location

France asserts itself in Indochina –

- Indochina includes Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia
- Established control in two spurts – in 1850's and 1860's
- French colonists seized control of government and ruled Indochina for profit

Vietnam opposed French control for two reasons –

- Opposed economic exploitation and brutal pacifying missions
- Opposed the attempt to replace old Vietnamese ways with French culture

Contributors To War:

Ho Chi Minh –

- Founder of Communism and leader of Vietminh
- Born and raised under French domination of Indochina in 1890
- By age 12 carrying revolutionary messages between villages to defeat French
- Traveled around the world – Lived in China and USSR
- Returned to Vietnam towards the end of WWII

Japan –

- Controlled Indochina during WWII
- Withdrew from Vietnam after surrendering to the Allies in 1945

France –

- Controlled Indochina from 1883 until being defeated in WWII
- Assumed they would regain control of Vietnam following the Allied victory

United States –

- Supported France in their war with Vietnam
- Paid about 80% of French war costs (\$2 Billion)
- Why help? – Containment Theory/Domino Theory