

# The Vietnam War

*Postwar United States*  
*(1945–1975)*



Containment

Escalation

Withdrawal

## Thematic Icons



Economics and business



Geography and environment



Historical concepts and questions



Politics, government and citizenship



Society and culture



War, diplomacy and foreign policy

**Icons:** For more detailed instructions, see the *User Guide*



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page



By the end of this section, you will learn about the withdrawal of the U.S. from Vietnam and the aftermath of the war:

- Opposition to the war
- Peace negotiations and withdrawal of troops
- The end of the war
- The cost of the war.



# Opposition to the war

Opposition to the war grew steadily throughout the 1960s and grew to enormous proportions in the early 1970s. It escalated after the Tet Offensive, with public support of the war falling from 48% in December 1967 to 35% in August 1968.

The nation was polarized over the issue. Those supporting the war and U.S. policy were called **hawks**. Those opposing the war were referred to as **doves** and included many college students.



Massive displays of opposition were held throughout the country on October 15, 1969 involving millions of protesters.



# Reasons for opposition



The Vietnam war was opposed by many American people for a variety of reasons. Read the stories of these people to find out about the four main reasons for opposition to the war.  
Press **start** to begin.

start



Why was the influence of the media so important?



# The peace process begins



In response to the Tet Offensive, President Johnson halted bombing in March 1968 in order to encourage Hanoi to enter negotiations. The first meetings were held in Paris in May.

North Vietnam insisted that the U.S. halt all bombing. Johnson resisted for five months but, in a shocking move, finally agreed in October, allowing serious negotiations to begin.

In March 1968 Johnson announced he would not seek another term in office. Frustrated by the failure of his policies and burdened by massive opposition to the war, he retired to his home in Texas, broken by a war he never wanted.

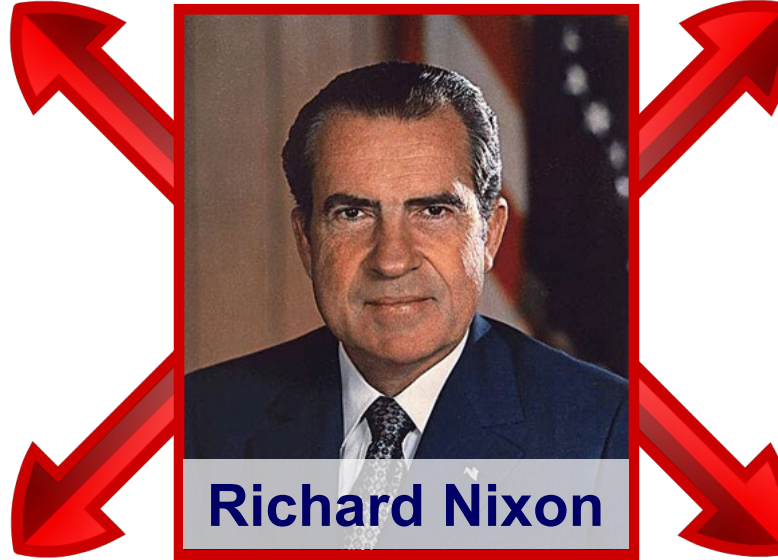




**Richard Nixon** became President in 1969 and immediately began the systematic withdrawal of American troops.

Believed that war was a right of presidential power

Thought military victory was impossible – wanted “peace with honor”



**Richard Nixon**

**Vietnamization**  
– gradual U.S. withdrawal and build-up of South Vietnamese troops

Expanded air operations to maintain stability

Should declaring war just be up to the President?



The Nixon administration continued to participate in the Paris talks but also initiated secret negotiations in 1969 between U.S. National Security Advisor **Henry Kissinger** and North Vietnamese diplomat **Le Duc Tho**.

Negotiations stalled as the North insisted that South Vietnam's President Thieu be removed from office.

In October 1972, Tho modified his position to allow Thieu to remain. An agreement was signed in January 1973. The **Paris Peace Accords** ended direct U.S. involvement in Vietnam.







Despite the Paris Accords, by the end of 1974 the North had resumed major operations in the South. Although the North was initially unsure about how much to commit, early success encouraged greater effort.



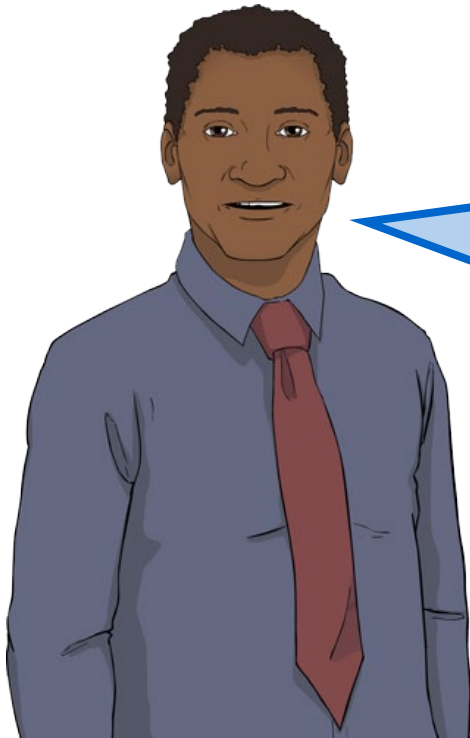
President Thieu asked the new American President, Gerald Ford for military support, but Congress refused.

Without U.S. support, the South stood no chance against the superior forces of the North. North Vietnam's final push, the **Ho Chi Minh Offensive**, culminated in the fall of Saigon in April 1975, ending the Vietnam War.





The U.S. paid a heavy price for its involvement in Vietnam. As well as a huge death toll, the war divided the American public and damaged the standing of the U.S. abroad.



Over 3 million Americans served in Vietnam. At least 150,000 U.S. soldiers were wounded and 58,193 were killed. Over 1.25 million Vietnamese soldiers were killed, along with estimates of between 800,000 and 2 million civilians.

To what extent was the Vietnam War a turning point in U.S. foreign policy?



Test your knowledge of the Vietnam War with this quiz.

Choose the correct answer to each question to see how much you can remember about the Vietnam War.

Press **start** to begin.

start





Test your understanding of the Vietnam War by recapping key terms and important people using this glossary.

Press on the tabs and then each term to see a definition.

Press **start** to begin.

**start**

