

## Module 10: Civil Unrest - The 1960s and the 1970s

### Topic 1 Content: The Vietnam War Notes

#### Introduction



The Vietnam War lasted from 1955 until 1975. This war would send more than one million United States soldiers to support the South Vietnamese as they resisted communism. Beginning in 1970, the United States withdrew from Vietnam and the South Vietnamese could not resist the North Vietnamese any longer. Communism spread throughout Vietnam. Click **Next** to learn about the Vietnam War, America's reasons for entering the war, and the effects it had at home.

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#### Reasons for War



The Vietnam War was the longest war in American history, and it occurred while the United States was in the midst of the Cold War with the Soviet Union. In the 1950s, North Vietnam was threatening to force South Vietnam into becoming a communist-led government. Under the leadership of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the American government promised to keep South Vietnam safe from communism, an idea that reflected the American Cold War policy of containment. Click **Next** to continue.

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#### Additional Support



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President Kennedy ordered an increase of American troops, economic assistance, and technical support for the South Vietnamese in 1961.

In 1961, advisors to President John F. Kennedy encouraged an increase of American troops, economic assistance, and technical support for the South Vietnamese. Without this additional support, Kennedy feared other Southeast Asian countries would fall to communism. Click **Next** to continue.

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#### Kennedy Assassinated



In 1963, President Kennedy was assassinated by a fatal gunshot while he was traveling in a presidential motorcade in Dallas, Texas. The killer, Lee Harvey Oswald, was assassinated before he could stand trial. Many Americans felt the Vietnam War would have been handled differently if Kennedy had never been assassinated. Click **Next** to continue.

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#### Johnson and the Draft



Due to the political instability in South Vietnam at the time of Kennedy's death, his successor, President Lyndon B. Johnson, sent even more American troops to fight. To keep the military strong, President Johnson enforced a draft. The draft was instituted by the Selective Service, and any selected males had to report to a local draft board for a physical examination. If they passed the examination, they were trained and sent to Vietnam. Click **Next** to continue.

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#### Fighting



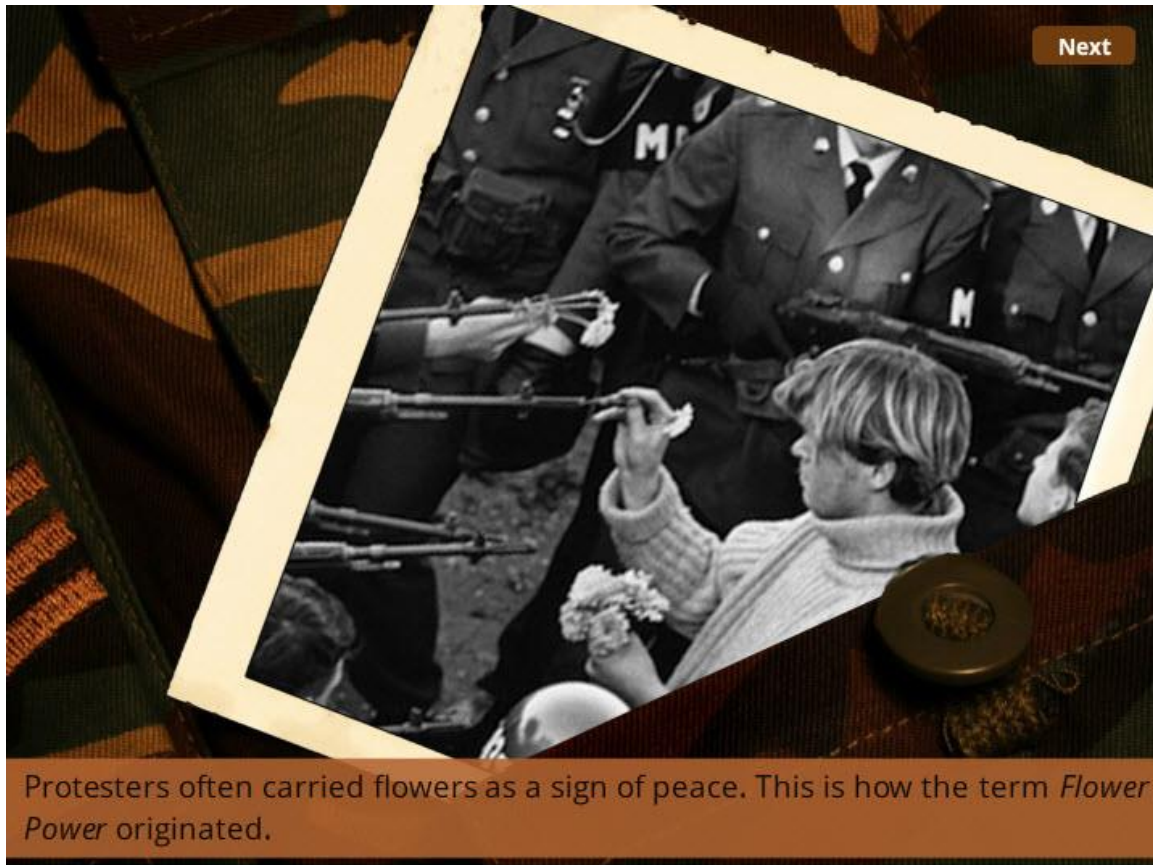
By 1967, 5,000 troops had been deployed to Vietnam and more than 15,000 troops had lost their lives.

Americans fought in Vietnam well into the 1960s. Although they continuously defeated North Vietnamese soldiers on the battlefield, an end to the war was not in sight. By 1967, 5,000 American troops were fighting in Vietnam, and more than 15,000 U.S. military members had lost their lives. Click **Next** to continue.

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#### Division

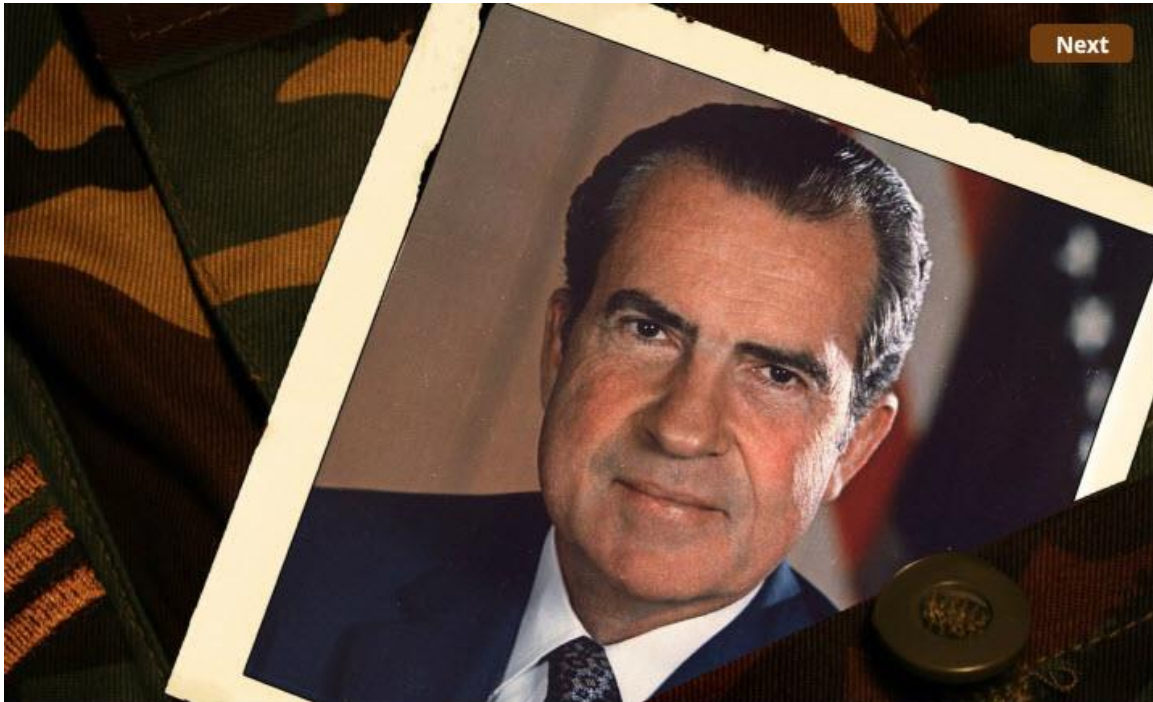


Americans became strongly divided over the Vietnam War. While many citizens supported the war effort and the troops, others openly opposed the war and began to organize anti-war demonstrations. This often took place among college students, who felt angered by the draft. Specifically, the draft allowed men as young as eighteen to fight in the Vietnam War, even if they had not signed up to join the armed forces. College students argued that since they could not vote, they should not have to fight. This eventually led to the implementation of the Twenty-Sixth Amendment to the United States Constitution, which granted eighteen-year olds the right to vote in elections. Click **Next** to continue.

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#### Vietnamization



President Nixon announced his plan of “Vietnamization” that withdrew American troops from Vietnam, replacing them with South Vietnamese soldiers.

President Johnson did not want to be re-elected, and Richard Nixon saw this as a time to run on a ticket that promised to “honorably” end the Vietnam War. Nixon said he would implement a policy called “Vietnamization,” which involved withdrawing American troops from South Vietnam and replacing them with South Vietnamese soldiers. Nixon’s plan also included giving South Vietnamese troops military aid. Click **Next** to continue.



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#### Watergate Scandal



President Nixon moments before he addressed the nation on the Watergate scandal. This image was taken on April 29, 1974.

The process of withdrawing troops was slow, and President Nixon also found himself dealing with the Watergate scandal on the home front. The scandal occurred in 1972, when five burglars broke into the Democratic National Convention center. After their arrest, news came out that these men worked for Nixon's re-election campaign committee. This scandal brought impeachment charges on Nixon. However, instead of being kicked out of office, Nixon resigned. The next President of the United States, Gerald Ford, later pardoned Nixon. Click **Next** to continue.

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#### Communist Control



Ultimately, the South Vietnamese troops could not hold back the North Vietnamese, due to supplies North Vietnam received from the Soviet Union. In 1975, North and South Vietnam were brought together under communist control and the country became the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. America's efforts in the war failed. Click **Exit** to close the interactivity.