

Effects of the vietnam war

[Countries](#), [Vietnam](#)



Abstract

While it takes societies to start wars, war changes societies. Whether it be the loss of life, wealth or influence, war determines what a society becomes. This paper will look at some of the effects on U. S. society following the war in Viet Nam. The Effects of the Vietnam War on American Society The Conflict in Southeast Asia had lasting effects on the United States society. It was sold to the American people as necessary to stop the spread of Communism and quickly become one of the longest and costliest wars in U. S. history.

Looking at the war strictly from the point-of-view of society, the after effects of the war were staggering. There was weakened public faith in the government and a change in the public image of the American soldier. The loss of national pride was deep. America had effectively lost a war to what Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had called " a fourth-rate power. " The U. S. was no longer looked at as an invincible giant. Because President Johnson wanted to fund the war without raising taxes, the government deficit skyrocketed. Additionally, troops returning home could not find jobs in the private sector.

These factors together caused double digit inflation and unemployment rates. The people felt that the government was not taking care of them like it used to. These factors led to a change in the country's role around the world. Congress was worried that the world was viewing the U. S. as the planet's policeman, ready to jump in anytime another country seemed ready to fall victim to Communism. In 1973, the mostly Democratic Congress enacted the War Powers Resolution, which limited the president's powers. The

Commander-in-Chief could only send U. S. troops into combat for less than ninety days without congressional approval.

Besides the lack of jobs, returning soldiers were not given parades and hailed by the people as conquering heroes as they were following previous conflicts. Instead, they were viewed with disdain, both for losing the war and for the vicious actions taken by a few soldiers. The hero gave way to the villain, the soldier became the baby-killer. The American sensibilities had changed as well. While soldiers were fighting and dying in Viet Nam, the United States had a few other conflicts within its own borders. Race riots and anti-war protests were shown side by side with battlefield reports on the nightly news.

National Guard intervention and the shooting of students at Kent State and Jackson State universities did little to gain support for the government. According to Sen. Frank Church, Viet Nam " has already stretched the generation gap so wide that it threatens to pull the country apart. " (" Vietnam War Quotations", para. 13) Whether the outcome of the war was beneficial or detrimental depends entirely on your point of view. On one hand, the more liberal attitude of government towards foreign intervention, the redefining of the right to protest and the skepticism toward the government can be looked at as positive effects of an unpopular war.

On the other hand, the image of the country in the eyes of the world, the loss of traditional values and the blow to the economy can be viewed as negative. No matter what personal stance one has on the Viet Nam Conflict, there is one truth; The War in Southeast Asia definitely changed the United States as a world power, as a country and as a people.

References

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