

The fact that made  
the situation worse as



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The Vietnam War was one of the longest fought military battles in the Southeast Asian history. Although the war was primarily between north and South Vietnam, the United States and other Guerrilla armies gave a divided support to the two worrying factions, a fact that intensified the war leading to numerous losses of lives, properties hence, deteriorating diplomatic relationships between America and other countries. The war lasted for more than 16 years, leaving behind a trail of destruction, which included more than two million dead Vietnamese soldiers and civilians, sixty thousand United States dead soldiers, and millions of wounded soldiers and civilians.

In addition, due to fear of death, the war made many Vietnamese civilians to flee their homes, causing many economic, social, and political problems to the surrounding communities. To the U. S. the war was a loss, because the reunion of South and North Vietnamese citizens marked the end of the war, hence U. S.'s undivided support for the southern region yielded nothing, apart from numerous losses (Pike, 2010, p. 1). Prior to the Vietnamese war of 1954-1975, in its endeavor to flee itself from colonization, Vietnam fought

against the French colonizers leading to the division of the country into two republics; the northern and southern.

## **Causes of the Vietnamese War**

The end of the Geneva conference, which saw the division of Vietnam into two republics, marked the onset of the rivalry between these two Vietnamese regions. To unite the two regions, the northern region (that was under the communist rule) attacked the democratic south, a fact that triggered mixed reactions from both Asian and western countries. Because of fear that the communism ruling orientation was spreading fast than expected; the United States intervened in the war between this two regions by supporting the democratic Southern republic. It is important to note that, it is not only the defeating of the Democratic South Vietnamese republic that instilled fear in western powers for example America, but also the fear of communism spreading backdated to World War II, when Vietnam defeated Japan from Indochina.

In addition, the initial success of Chinese communists enabled the Vietnamese communist society to gain more power, a fact that made the situation worse as communist nations sought to rule the Southern Asian region. Therefore, power struggles between the communists' communities and the democratic communities was the primary cause of the Vietnamese war, as the Domino theory became common in the southern Asia region (Rotter, 1999, p. 1). Due to fears of the communism ruling orientation spreading, America under the rule of President John F. Kennedy in 1961, secretly gave the French; who had reoccupied the southern region, military assistance, through training armies aligned to Southern Vietnam.

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Subsequent U. S. presidents adopted the same war tactics as President Kennedy, with little considerations on the havoc caused by the war on the entire American community.

The main aim of these wars was to defeat the communist armies of Northern Vietnam, which then received a lot of support from other communists nationalities, for example, The then Soviet Union. Such biased support from western powers made the Northern Vietnamese army to attack American and French soldiers, making America to involve itself fully in the war, although most of its efforts were fruitless, with the two regions rejoining later (Rotter, 1999, p. 1) On the other hand, because of the increased poverty levels of the Vietnamese citizens; caused by the oppressive nature of the French and Japanese rule that favored South Vietnam, northern Vietnam organized revolts against their western rulers, in an endeavor to free the country from colonization.

This was even evident prior to the onset of the war, as the leader of freedom fighters Ho Chi Minh led the Vietnamese in conquering the French who had reoccupied southern Vietnam, after their early defeat in 1946 (Schulzinger, 1997, pp. 2-3).

## **Effects of the War on Neighboring Countries**

Although the war primarily involved America and Vietnam, the war also affected other surrounding nations, which held different opinions about the war. The effects of the war were very adverse on neighboring countries for example, Cambodia, because as the war intensified, combined military efforts from the U. S. and South Vietnam forces entered Cambodia. Although

invasion of Cambodia gave these two military groups a chance of capturing some sections of North Vietnam and destroying its weapons, the effects on Cambodia were adverse, because of the undivided support Cambodians gave the war. Such undivided support made individuals who opposed the attacks to join underground opposition armies, a fact that caused major rifts in Cambodia's government.

It is important to note that, by 1970; U. S. troops had occupied a better part of Cambodia hence, controlling its government's activities. Although early attacks had no many adverse effects on Cambodia, later due to failure by the then Cambodian leader Khmer Rouge in 1975 to win elections marked the onset of the harshest and dictatorial regime in Cambodia. The regime caused extreme suffering to the Cambodians, numerous deaths of innocent civilians, and loss of property; effects that prevalent even presently in Cambodia (Milne, 2006, Para.

9). Apart from Cambodia, the war had adverse effects to other surrounding nations, because the war resulted in an influx of runaway Vietnamese refugees, who sought refuge in neighboring nations. Because most of the extreme poverty levels of most of those refugees, countries in which they settled had to bear the economic burden of sustaining them all throughout the years of the war. In addition to the economic strain imposed on many surrounding nations, because of the chemicals used by American soldiers to clear vegetation, such chemicals caused great environmental pollution, which led to many health catastrophes that are evident even today, not only in Cambodia, but also in its neighboring countries. A good example is the chemical used by America was Agent Orange, a chemical that is very

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carcinogenic. Such a chemical affected most surrounding nations, refugees affected with the chemical spread it to the neighboring countries in which they sought asylum (Enzler, 2006, Para. 46-49).

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, effects of the Vietnam War are still evident even today as both Vietnam and America face the reality of the war.

This is because many controversies surround the war, a fact that many individuals attribute to poor leadership orientations embraced by former American Presidents, who “ dragged” America into a war that caused massive deaths and property destruction.

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