

The history of vietnam history essay

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Duc NguyenMr. LewisAPUSH: Period 1The Tet OffensiveThe history of Vietnam is one of struggles against foreign oppressors, the most prominent of which are undoubtedly the Chinese. For approximately a thousand years the Vietnamese attempted to oust their Chinese conquerors and later French imperialists as well as Japanese militarists. It became a constant struggle for liberation and independence. An ardent nationalist arose named Nguyen Ai Quoc, who organized guerrilla warfare against the French and Japanese, became the leader of the Vietnamese Communist Party in 1930, and established the Vietnamese Independent League in 1941. As a result of the Geneva conference of 1954, North and South Vietnam was divided along the 17th parallel, governed by communist Ho Chi Minh, who was actually none other than the patriot Nguyen Ai Quoc, and Catholic Ngo Dinh Diem respectively. The United States, fearing the domino effect in which any country that fell to communism would trigger a chain reaction, supported the Diem regime of South Vietnam, despite its unpopularity if not lack of support by the Vietnamese countryside peasants (Worth). Ho Chi Minh, however, had won the hearts of many Vietnamese in his participation in the emancipation of Vietnam from French rule in the First Indochina War and was seen as first and foremost a nationalist and secondly a communist. The Geneva Accords also called for a " general election" to be held in two years time; however, Diem refused this agreement, provoking the Vietnamese communists who had yearned to unite the two Vietnams under their rule (Hoyt). The Vietminh or Vietcong (VC), a Communist guerrilla force that operated in the South, soon proved immensely troublesome for the Diem government. Although they lacked technological superiority such as U. S. tanks, artillery, and planes, the Vietcong guerrilla tactics of attacking with mortars and guns and <https://assignbuster.com/the-history-of-vietnam-history-essay/>

concealing themselves in jungles and tunnels proved effective against U. S. troops that were confused and unaccustomed to this unconventional form of warfare (Englar). Fully utilizing the Ho Chi Minh Trail, a series of jungle roads that wended along neighboring Laos and Cambodia, the North Vietnamese supplied the Vietminh with supplies of food and ammunition in an attempt to weaken the South and achieve what they believed was a completely justified reunification of North and South Vietnam that the majority of Vietnamese people desired (Worth). In general, American involvement in the Vietnam War can be summarized as a democratic crusade that turned into a foreign challenge and eventually in the eyes of many Americans a financial and political burden (Hoyt). Pham Van Dong, an aide and successor to Ho Chi Minh, noted that " Americans do not like long, inconclusive wars" and thus North Vietnam was bound to win (Oberdorfer). By 1967, although more than 400, 000 American troops were committed to the war, it seemed to reach a stalemate; consequently, North Vietnamese leaders met in Hanoi in July of 1967 and planned a bold offensive that would tip the scales in their favor. The subsequent Tet Offensive, a massive VC and North Vietnamese military campaign that targeted more than a hundred southern Vietnamese cities and villages, achieved that goal and then some as it resulted a drastic change in American foreign intervention and public sentiment as well as fear in South Vietnamese civilians (Hoyt). Weeks before the decisive series of military attacks, the VC had commenced their infiltration of cities arming themselves with the increased supplies of ammunition sent by way of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Although they tried to keep the operations covert and clandestine, the U. S. did intercept enemy tapes and orders; nevertheless, U. S. advisers refused to believe that North Vietnam had such military capability

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and discounted the information gathered. Usually during Tet, a day of celebration and festivities among the Vietnamese people that occurred at the end of January, troops would call a temporary cease-fire; nonetheless, Tet in North Vietnam was inconspicuously moved one day earlier in preparations for the deceptive Tet Offensive of 1968 (Worth). About a week before the actual offensive, Vietnam, America's first television war did more harm than good. Portraying the war's awfulness and endlessness, the media transformed into an instrumental force in shaping American views of the war.

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