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The Cold War Section 4

War in Southeast Asia

Indochina After World War II

- Local guerrillas led by Ho Chi Minh opposed European colonialists.
- French tried to regain power, but were defeated at Dienbienphu in 1954.
- Vietnam divided between North and South.
- Ho became leader of North Vietnam and the South was led by Ngo Dinh Diem.
- Communists controlled North Vietnam.
- Some South Vietnamese preferred Ho (a national hero).
- Some in the North feared the communist threat and fled to the South.

Vietnam War

- Domino theory
- Viet Cong, with North Vietnamese support, tried to overthrow South Vietnam.
- At first, the United States only sent supplies and military advisors to South Vietnam.
- South Vietnam commandos raided North Vietnam islands in Gulf of Tonkin; North Vietnam retaliated with attack on U.S. naval destroyer.
- Congress passed Gulf of Tonkin Resolution approving war effort.
- Eventually more than 500,000 American troops were committed to the war; the local struggle became a major conflict of the Cold War.
- Guerrilla warfare an important strategy for communists
- In the United States, some young men tried to avoid the draft and fled the country.
- The Tet Offensive marked a turning point in U.S. public opinion—more people opposed the war.
- President Nixon negotiated the Paris Peace Accord in January 1973 as a ceasefire.
- Two years later North Vietnam conquered South Vietnam.

Aftereffects of War

- Cambodia and Laos were dominated by communists.
- The Khmer Rouge, a force of communist guerrillas, came to power in Cambodia.
- Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge leader, unleashed reign of terror on Cambodians.
- About one-third of population died as a result of Pol Pot's policies.
- Vietnamese "Boat People" fled to neighboring countries; some eventually settled in the United States.
- American-led embargo slowed economic recovery.