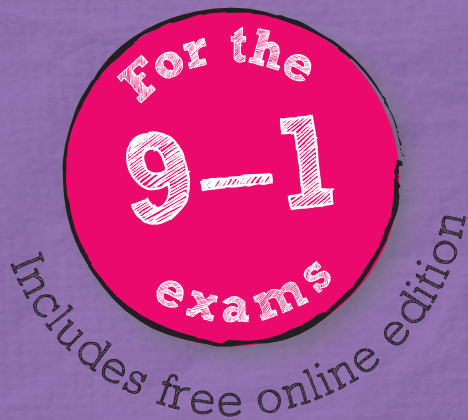


**REVISE AQA GCSE (9–1)**

# **History**

**CONFLICT AND TENSION  
IN ASIA, 1950–1975**

# **REVISION GUIDE AND WORKBOOK**



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**REVISE AQA GCSE (9–1)**

# History

**CONFLICT AND TENSION  
IN ASIA, 1950–1975**

## REVISION GUIDE AND WORKBOOK

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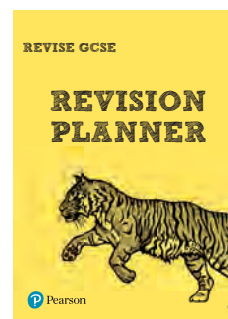
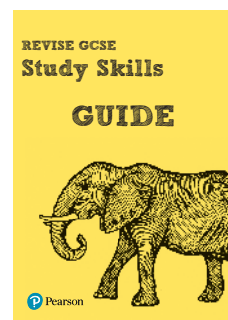
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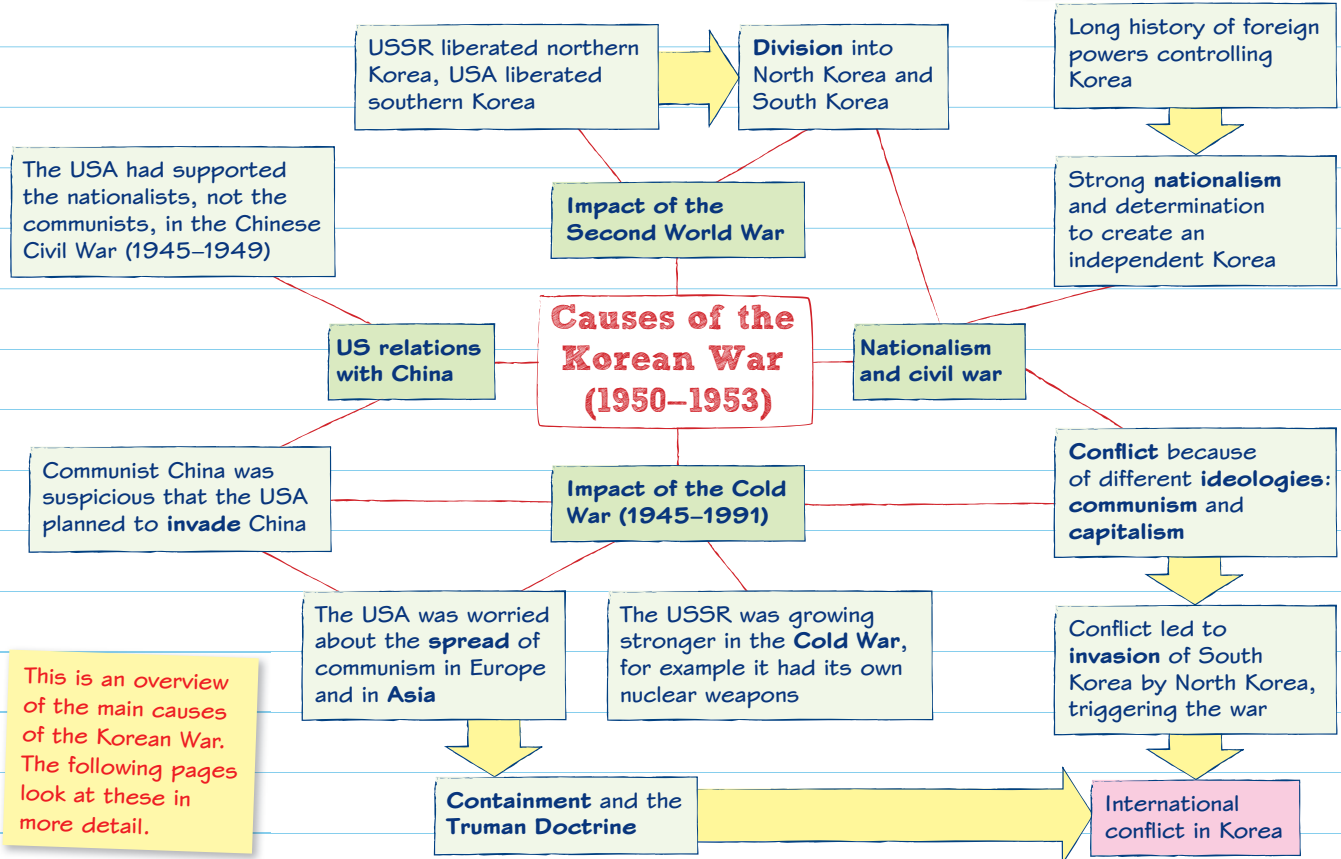
### A small bit of small print

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# Causes of the conflict

The Korean War (1950–1953) was a civil war (a war between citizens of the same country) that became an international conflict due to the developing Cold War between the USA and USSR.

See page 2 for more information on the Cold War.



## Key terms

**Asia** – the world's largest continent, including the countries between the Ural Mountains in Russia and the Pacific Ocean.

**Conflict** – violence between groups, military forces, countries.

**Containment** – keeping something under control, stopping it spreading and becoming more powerful.

**Tension** – when people or countries do not trust each other and fear that conflict could soon occur.

**USSR** – The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, also known as the Soviet Union. A communist union of 15 states, controlled by Russia.

## Key concepts

**Capitalism** – a system in which businesses are owned by private individuals (not the state), with the aim of making profit.

**Cold War** – a state of **tension** and **conflict**, stopping short of open warfare, between the USA and its allies (the West) and the USSR and its allies (the East).

**Communism** – a system in which the state controls production (for example, food, goods) and there is no private property, with the aim of equality.

**Ideology** – a system of ideas about how things should be run, how people should behave.

**Nationalism** – love for your own country, putting your country above everything else.

## Now try this

- 1 Look at the diagram on this page. Then cover it up and write down the four main causes of the Korean War.
- 2 Identify which of these four main causes led directly to the division of Korea into north and south.



# The Cold War

The USA and USSR were allies in the Second World War, but tension between them increased as the spread of Soviet control threatened the USA's interests first in Europe and then in Asia.

## The importance of the Cold War

The Cold War was a conflict between the two superpowers: capitalist USA and communist USSR. The Cold War contributed to the Korean War in two main ways:

- 1 Korea was divided into a communist North linked to the USSR and a capitalist South linked to the USA. Both sides wanted a united Korea, but neither side would accept the other's ideology.
- 2 The USA was very concerned about the spread of communism. The USA was prepared to help defend any country threatened by a communist takeover.

### The United Nations (UN)

The United Nations was set up to help countries work out tensions between them. The UN **Security Council** was made up of the USA, the USSR, China, Britain and France. The Security Council makes decisions about what the UN should do to help solve disputes between countries, which includes using military force. However, Cold War tensions between the USA, the USSR and China made this more difficult.

### The Truman Doctrine

The USSR broke its promises to allow free elections in countries that its army had freed from Nazi control in the Second World War. Instead, communist governments took over Eastern European countries with Soviet support, forming the 'Eastern bloc'.

The Truman Doctrine was the USA's policy (announced by President Truman) to try to contain communism. The USA would support free people to resist takeover by communist powers. As a capitalist country, the USA was opposed to communist ideology and wanted to encourage capitalism and free trade.

## Key events of the Cold War

### Timeline

**October 1945** United Nations set up, representing 51 nations.

**June 1947** The US Marshall Plan provides aid to rebuild Europe. The USSR prevents Eastern bloc countries from accepting this aid.

**August 1949** The USSR successfully tests its own atomic bomb.

**June 1950** Korean War begins.

**July 1953** Korean War ends.

• **August 1945** US atomic bombs dropped on Japan. Japan surrenders, the Second World War ends.

• **March 1947** President Truman promises that the USA will help any country threatened by communism – the **Truman Doctrine**.

• **April 1949** NATO forms: an organisation of the USA and allies in which each country will act to defend another member if it is attacked.

• **February 1950** Senator McCarthy stirs up an anti-communist 'Red Scare' in the USA.

• **March 1953** USSR leader Stalin dies.

• **December 1954** NATO agrees that it would have to use nuclear weapons against any Soviet attack.



Chinese communists carrying pictures of Stalin, the leader of the USSR. This photograph from 1951 was taken at celebrations for the anniversary of the communist victory in the Chinese Civil War.

## Now try this

Explain why President Truman thought communism should be contained. Give **one** reason.

# US relations with China and Korea

When China became a communist country, the USA became much more determined to prevent other Asian countries from becoming communist, too. This was important for the Korean War.

## US reactions to communist China

China was the most highly populated country in the world. It had great potential power.

- The USA gave millions of dollars in aid to the nationalists fighting the communists in China's civil war. The USA also provided most of their military equipment.
- When the nationalists lost, critics in the USA thought their government had 'lost' China to communism by not being tough enough. This made the government want to 'get tough' in the future.
- US government officials became convinced that the USSR was responsible for China becoming communist, as part of a plan to spread communism worldwide.
- Only the USSR acknowledged the new Chinese state in 1950 (Treaty of Friendship). Instead, the USA gave aid to Taiwan and called for the nationalists to represent China in the UN.
- In 1950, US senator McCarthy began a campaign against communists in the USA, whom he blamed for weakening the USA. Americans were scared that communists were working to take over the USA too.

## Nationalism in Korea

- Korea was ruled by Japan from 1910–1945. There was opposition to the hated Japanese rule and nationalism increased.
- The nationalists aimed to create an independent, free Korea. But peaceful demonstrations were crushed by Japanese troops, with thousands killed.
- Many Korean nationalists escaped to China. Some joined with Chinese communists to fight against the Japanese. One of these was Kim Il-Sung, a Korean communist who became a guerrilla leader.
- Other nationalists in China tried to set up a Korean government-in-exile, ready for when Korea was free from the Japanese.
- After the Second World War ended, the USA set up a military government in South Korea. The USA kept Japanese officials as administrators over Koreans, and banned a Korean nationalist government. Korean nationalists strongly resented this.

China, Japan's enemy, gave support to Korean nationalists. The nationalists all wanted to create an independent, strong Korea, but they did not agree about how this should be done.



Korea in 1950. For centuries, Korea had been controlled by China and Japan. Now the USA worried about a communist Korea controlled by China and the USSR. They feared its fall would encourage more Asian countries to turn to communism: the so-called 'Domino Theory'.

## Now try this

- 1 'By 1950, the USA thought it was losing the Cold War to communism.' Write **two** points that support this statement.
- 2 State **one** way in which China helped Korean nationalists.

You could refer back to page 2 to help you answer this question.



# The division of Korea

Korea was divided into two in 1945. The leaders of North and South Korea both wanted the country reunited, but the North wanted a communist Korea and the South a capitalist Korea.

## Why was Korea divided in 1945?

- The USSR had liberated North Korea from Japanese forces in August 1945. As Cold War tensions built, the USA worried about the USSR moving south into the area they had occupied, taking control of the whole of Korea for communism.
- This was why the USA suggested dividing Korea. They used the 38th parallel because it split the country roughly in half, keeping the capital city Seoul in the USA's half.
- The USSR agreed, probably because the USA had stronger forces than the USSR in Korea, as well as access to atomic bombs.
- The plan was that the UN would soon oversee elections to reunite Korea and make it independent.

The Korean people were not consulted about the division.



The 38th parallel is a line of latitude: a line across the Earth running parallel to the Equator. There were 16 million Koreans in the South and 9 million Koreans in the North.

## The leader in the North: Kim Il-Sung

Elections to reunite Korea never took place. In 1948, a communist called **Kim Il-Sung** took control of the North without elections.

- Kim Il-Sung was a Korean nationalist who had fought the Japanese.
- He was determined to lead an independent, united Korea.
- Kim had lived in the USSR and became a major in the USSR's Red Army.
- The USSR supported Kim because he would follow Stalin's orders.
- The USSR supplied North Korea's military with heavy weapons, including tanks.
- Kim's communist government took land away from rich landlords for poor peasants to use. Peasants liked this.
- In September 1948, the North became the **Democratic People's Republic of Korea**, with Kim Il-Sung as its leader.
- Kim repeatedly asked Stalin to back an invasion, launching raids into the South.



Kim Il-Sung in 1949

## The leader in the South: Syngman Rhee

Elections did go ahead in South Korea in 1948. **The Republic of Korea** was created. **Syngman Rhee** was elected as its president.

- Syngman Rhee was a Korean nationalist, who had spent time in jail for protesting for independence.
- He was determined to lead an independent, united Korea.
- Rhee had lived in the USA, where he trained to be a lawyer.
- The USA supported Rhee because he was strongly opposed to communism.
- Rhee was worried about a communist takeover. His security forces arrested suspected communists and put them in jail. People were not allowed free speech in case this increased opposition.
- Rhee called on the USA to help overthrow the North, determined to root out communism in all of Korea.
- However, the USA did not supply the South Korean military with heavy weapons like tanks, in case they were used to invade the North.



Syngman Rhee in 1949

## Now try this

Explain why the division of Korea helped cause the Korean War. Give **two** reasons in your answer.

# Invasion by the North

On 25 June 1950, troops from North Korea invaded South Korea. The reasons for the invasion were partly due to tensions within Korea, and partly to do with superpower tensions.

## Why was there no invasion before 1950?

Kim Il-Sung requested permission from the USSR to invade the South several times before 1950. But Stalin refused because the situation was too risky due to Cold War tensions:

### Pre-1950

US forces in South Korea: an invasion would pull the USA in, which the USSR did not want.

The USSR had no atomic weapons until August 1949, making the USA much stronger.

China was fighting a civil war, so could not support the invasion.

### 1950

US forces withdraw: Soviet intelligence said the USA was focused on Japan.

The USSR now had its own bombs to defend against the USA.

The communist triumph in China's civil war means China can support the invasion.

In 1950, Stalin agreed to support Kim Il-Sung's invasion plans.

## Support for the invasion from the USSR and China

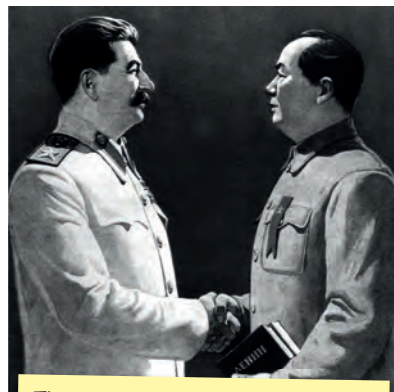
Stalin would not send Soviet troops, in case this triggered war with the USA.

Stalin said that the invasion could only go ahead if China agreed to support it.

He continued to supply North Korea with weapons, including tanks, artillery and aircraft.

Soviet generals went to North Korea to help Kim plan the invasion.

Because the USA had not used its military power to stop communism in China, Stalin thought they would not use it to defend South Korea.



This propaganda poster, called 'Long live indestructible friendship and cooperation', showing Stalin greeting Mao, is from 1950. Mao was the leader of the Chinese Communist Party, ruling China.

North Korea had sent thousands of fighters to support the communists in China's civil war.

China sent around 70 000 Korean fighters back to North Korea, along with weapons.

China promised to support North Korea's invasion with reinforcements if needed.

China moved large numbers of its own troops closer to the border with North Korea.

China was worried that the USA might still attack to return China to the nationalists.

## Events of the invasion

**25 June 1950:** troops from North Korea attacked all along the 38th parallel.

South Korean forces had nothing that could stop tanks or aircraft. They retreated.

**28 June:** North Korea captured Seoul, the capital of South Korea.

Within weeks, North Korea had control of most of the South.

## Now try this

'Kim Il-Sung was the main reason for the Korean War.' Give **two** points that support this statement, and **two** points that argue against it. For each point, explain your thinking.

You could refer back to page 4 to help you answer this question.



# Responses to invasion

North Korea's invasion of South Korea produced an immediate response from the USA and the UN. This threatened to turn the invasion into an international crisis. The USSR's response was complicated by US relations with China.

## Responses to the invasion of South Korea, 25 June 1950

### The US response

President Truman was determined to contain the spread of communism.

Truman:

- immediately ordered US Navy forces to Korea (the 7th Fleet)
- ordered **General MacArthur** to organise troops and supplies to send to South Korea
- put pressure on the United Nations to take military action against North Korea.

### The USSR's absence from the UN

The USSR could have used its **veto** to prevent the UN acting against North Korea. However:

- The USA would not allow communist China to join the UN's Security Council.
- As a result, the USSR was refusing to take part in the discussions of the UN.
- This meant the USSR was absent from the Security Council meeting to block the vote.

The USSR criticised the UN's plans, saying the UN was following US orders. The USSR had misjudged the USA's determination to defend South Korea.

### The United Nations' response

The UN Security Council met on 25 June to decide its response.

- It agreed that North Korea had broken world peace and called for a ceasefire, ordering Kim to withdraw his troops back to the border on the 38th parallel.
- On 27 June, the USA insisted that the UN must send its army to defend South Korea. The Security Council agreed.

For information on the Truman Doctrine and the UN Security Council, see page 2.

As a permanent member of the UN's Security Council, the USSR had the power to veto UN resolutions. This meant that it could block or stop a UN decision from being put into action, but only if it took part in the discussions.

### The United Nations forces

- ✓ 16 UN countries sent troops and five sent medical support.
- ✓ The USA provided 50% of the UN troops and 90% of the navy and air forces.
- ✓ The UN's forces were led by the United Nations Command (UNC). Americans were put in charge of the UNC.
- ✓ General MacArthur, an American war hero from the Second World War, was put in charge of the UN forces and the armed forces of South Korea.

In 1950, South Korea had 92 000 troops; North Korea had 135 000.

### Reasons for the USA's response

Here are three key reasons for the USA's response to the invasion of South Korea:

- 1 The South Korean forces could not stop the North Koreans on their own.
- 2 After the 'loss' of China to communism, President Truman needed to show tough commitment to containing its further spread. 'McCarthyism' was stirring up fear of communist influence within the USA itself.
- 3 The USA suspected that the USSR was using Korea as a diversion. Involving other UN countries in Korea would make sure the USA was free to act against the USSR in Europe.

For more on McCarthy, see page 3.

## Now try this

Write a paragraph to explain why the USSR was absent from the United Nations in June 1950. What consequence did this have for the UN's response to the crisis in Korea?

# The UN campaign in the South and North

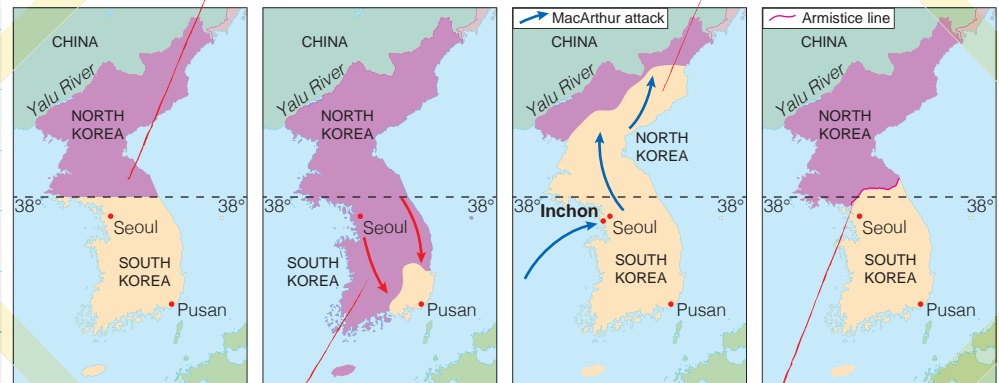
By September 1950, Northern forces had pushed the South's forces into a small area around the city of Pusan (now called Busan). By November, the UN campaign had pushed the Northern forces back towards the border with China.

## The four stages of the Korean War

The UN's campaign was so successful that the USA changed its objectives from containing communism to pushing it back. China's response to this had serious consequences for the UN campaign and for Korea.

1 North Korea invades South Korea, 25 June 1950.

3 The UN's Inchon landings on 15 September lead to the recapture of South Korea. UN forces advance into North Korea.



2 By September 1950, the North has captured most of South Korea.

4 In October 1950, China's response pushes the UN back into South Korea, leading to military stalemate along the 38th parallel.

## The UN campaign in South Korea

UN troops from the USA and Australia were the first to arrive in South Korea in September 1950. The situation was very bad.

- The South Korean army (92 000 men) had been forced back to a 100-square mile area around the southern port of Pusan. North Korea's forces (135 000 men) controlled almost everywhere else.
- At first, the UN troops were not well equipped. They had old Second World War weapons and equipment. They were new recruits, without fighting experience.
- The North Korean troops were very well equipped with modern Soviet weapons. Most had fought with the Red Army in China's civil war: they were experienced troops.
- The South had defended Pusan from three attacks in August. The UN forces were nearly defeated by a huge attack on 1 September. However, the North's forces suffered major losses in the process.

## The Inchon landings

General MacArthur had perfected **amphibious assaults** during the Second World War. He used this strategy of invading enemy territory from the sea to achieve an outstanding victory.

- The amphibious assault of 15 September 1950 attacked the port city of Inchon, near Seoul, with the North weak from fighting.
- This attack was extremely risky because of Inchon's strong natural defences, for example high cliffs and strong tides.
- The assault (300 ships, 70 000 fresh men) took North Korea by surprise and UN troops quickly captured Inchon and an important nearby airfield.
- From this base, the UN launched its attack on Seoul. Ten days later, Seoul was freed.
- At the same time, the UN led a 'breakout' from Pusan. The North Koreans were trapped between two forces. Although many escaped, perhaps 40 000 were killed or captured. South Korea was recaptured.

## Now try this

'The Inchon landings were the most important event of the Korean War.' Using the maps to help you, give **two** points that support this statement and **two** points that argue against it.



# Advance into North Korea

After the successful UN campaign to recapture South Korea, on 1 October 1950 the first UN forces advanced into the North. By 20 October, UN forces had captured the capital, Pyongyang.

## Reasons for the UN advance

The UN had successfully defended South Korea from North Korea. So why did the UN forces cross the 38th parallel on 1 October 1950? Here are three key reasons:

- 1 Around 35 000 North Korean troops had escaped back to North Korea. These troops might attack the South again in the future if they were not chased down and defeated.
- 2 Truman hoped to win an impressive victory against communism and reunite Korea under a government that was friendly to the USA.
- 3 Truman's military advisers, including MacArthur, were certain that the USSR and China would not join the war. They hadn't joined the war when North Korea had almost won: why would they join it now it was facing defeat?

## The UN advance into the North

### Timeline

- 1 October 1950 ROK (Republic of Korea) troops cross the 38th parallel into North Korea.
- 3 October China warns that it will enter the war if the USA or UN crosses the 38th parallel.
- 7 October The UN passes a resolution calling for the unification of Korea.
- 9 October The US Eighth Army also crosses the 38th parallel.
- 15 October General MacArthur assures President Truman that China will not intervene.
- 19 October US and ROK troops take North Korea's capital city, Pyongyang. North Korean troops retreat into the mountains.
- 25 October A few units of ROK troops reach the Yalu River: the border between North Korea and China.

### UN air superiority

The USA was confident that China would not join the war in October 1950 because the US could provide massive air support to the UN troops.

- ✓ US aeroplanes had total control of the skies over North Korea, because North Korea had few air defences.
- ✓ Any movement of troops over the Chinese border would therefore have to face devastating US bombing attacks.



This photograph from 1 October 1950 shows the first UN troops to cross the 38th parallel into North Korea. These were South Korean troops (ROK) with their US advisers.

## An extract from the UN Security Council's Resolution 84, 5 July 1950

The Security Council recommends that Members of the United Nations provide 'such assistance to the Republic of Korea [South Korea] as may be necessary to repel the armed attack [by forces from North Korea] and to restore international peace and security in the area'.

The UN had agreed in July 1950 to help South Korea repel the attack by North Korea. **Repel** means to push away or make something go away.

The USA said that it would only be possible to 'restore international peace and security' in the area by going into North Korea, because otherwise North Korea would attack the South again.

### Now try this

Look at the extract from the UN Security Council's Resolution 84 above. What message do you think it gives about the UN's aims in Korea in July 1950? Is it clear? Explain your answer in a short paragraph.

## China's reaction

Although US military experts were confident China would not fight to defend North Korea, they were wrong. On 25 October 1950, a massive Chinese attack pushed the UN forces back into the South, widening the conflict further.

### China's warning

After ROK troops crossed the border at the 38th parallel on 1 October 1950, China sent a warning that it would intervene if US or UN troops came into North Korea. Because China was not allowed into the UN, it had to send this message through its Indian ambassador.

### China's preparation for war

In mid-October 1950, 300 000 soldiers from China's Communist Party Volunteers Army Corps (CPV) moved secretly into the mountains of North Korea and camouflaged their positions so they were very hard to spot from the air. Then they waited for the right time to attack.



This Chinese drawing from 1951 celebrates Chinese soldiers joining North Korean forces. Note the dead US soldier, modern Soviet weapons and the difficult mountain terrain.

### Intervention of Chinese troops

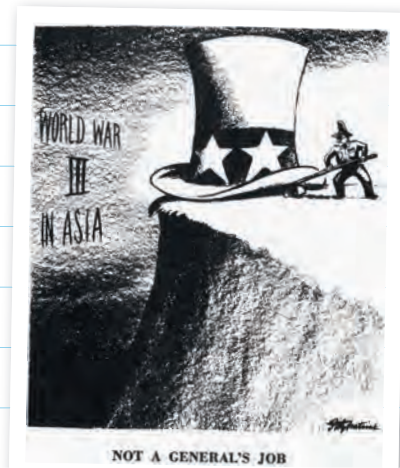
On 25 October, the Chinese forces attacked.

- UN divisions had pushed into North Korea too quickly. The Chinese forces moved behind them and cut them off.
- At first, General MacArthur refused to allow any UN troops to retreat from the North. This made the situation even worse.
- By 28 November, UN troops were fleeing from the attacking Chinese.
- The Chinese and North Korean forces swept southwards, pushing the UN forces back into South Korea. Seoul was captured.
- By spring 1951, UN forces had recaptured Seoul but were stuck in a **stalemate** along the 38th parallel.

See Map 4 on page 7 for more on the stalemate.

### Consequences of China's reaction

- 1 US troops suffered heavy casualties and were defeated in battle for the first time. This affected US public support for the war.
- 2 China succeeded in defending North Korea. Truman chose to accept containment instead of pushing communism back, saying that the war must be limited to Korea.
- 3 On 11 April 1951, General MacArthur was sacked because he refused to obey Truman's orders not to send troops back into North Korea. MacArthur had also argued for attacking China and for using atomic bombs.
- 4 Soviet MiG-15 fighters, whose pilots pretended to be Chinese or Korean, countered US air superiority over Korea.



This US political cartoon was published on 10 April 1951. It shows MacArthur attempting to lever a hat representing the USA off a cliff labelled 'World War III in Asia'.

### Now try this

- 1 Look at the image of Chinese and North Korean troops greeting each other. Identify **two** things that are useful about this source for understanding why the UN's advance was defeated.
- 2 The US political cartoon is critical of General MacArthur. Write a paragraph to explain what it is criticising MacArthur for.



# Stalemate and peace talks

By mid-1951, a stalemate had been reached. Peace talks began, but the war continued until 1953, when a new US president, Eisenhower, took office and Stalin, the USSR's leader, died.

## Key events in the Korean War

### Timeline

- 15 September 1950** Inchon landings.
- 26–30 November 1950** Chinese push UN forces out of North Korea.
- 14 March 1951** UN forces recapture Seoul.
- 11 April 1951** General MacArthur is sacked.
- August 1951** Peace talks break down.
- December 1951** Communists end air attacks.
- May–July 1953** USA intensifies air war. More than 150 MiG-15s shot down by US fighters.
- 25 June 1950** Invasion of South Korea.
- 20 October 1950** UN forces capture Pyongyang.
- 4 January 1951** UN forces lose control of Seoul.
- Spring 1951** Stalemate begins as both sides fortify their lines along the 38th parallel. Heavy Chinese losses: 85 000 casualties.
- July 1951** Peace talks begin.
- September 1951** The air war begins.
- 29 August 1952** Biggest UN air raid of the war kills 6000 North Koreans in Pyongyang.
- 27 July 1953** Armistice (end of fighting) agreement is signed to end the war.

## Peace talks

As the war reached stalemate in the spring of 1951, both sides tried to find a way to end the conflict. But there were major difficulties in:

- agreeing where the border would be between North and South Korea
- agreeing how the return of prisoners of war would be handled (16 000 Chinese prisoners did not want to go back to communist China)
- deciding what would happen to Chinese forces and UN forces (the USA wanted to keep its forces in South Korea to defend it).

## Military stalemate around the 38th parallel

- To force North Korea to accept peace terms, the USA bombed targets in the North. Up to one million North Koreans were killed. US air attacks used **napalm**.
- North Korea and China asked the USSR for support. The USSR provided MiG-15 jet fighter aeroplanes: the best in the world. An air war resulted. The USA lost 3500 aeroplanes early in the air war, challenging its air superiority for several months. North Korea and China lost 3000 aeroplanes.
- After May 1953, the UN intensified attacks. US bombers destroyed dams, causing terrible damage to North Korea's farming.

For more on napalm, see page 20.

## Reasons for the end of the war

- 1** After the death of Stalin, neither China nor North Korea could be sure if Soviet help would continue.
- 2** The intensification of the USA's bombing of North Korea in 1953 meant the country struggled to feed its people.
- 3** China was beginning its first Five-Year Plan to industrialise the country. It needed to reduce military spending to do this.

## The armistice and end of the war

On 27 July 1953, a ceasefire agreement was signed by North Korea, China and the UN. North and South Korea remained divided, at the 38th parallel. Despite the end of the conflict, tension between the two countries continued. A 3km-wide demilitarised zone (DMZ) was set up between the two countries. The aim of the DMZ was to prevent the two sides coming into contact with each other and triggering further conflict.

## Now try this

By spring 1951, the fighting in the Korean War had reached a stalemate. Write an account of the events that led to the war becoming an international crisis.

Look back at pages 4–9 to help you.

# Korean War: impact

The Korean War had a significant impact on Korea, on the UN and on Sino-American relations (China and the USA). It also had consequences for further conflict and tension in Asia.

## Impact on Korea



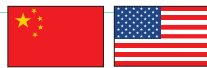
- Korea remained divided. This was distressing for Koreans, especially those whose families were split up by the North-South divide.
- Both North and South Korea were left in ruins by the war. North Korea rebuilt quickly thanks to Soviet aid. South Korea struggled to develop at first because of the corrupt and restrictive government under President Rhee, but massive US aid helped it recover.
- Deaths: estimates of 200 000 soldiers and one million civilians from the South, perhaps 400 000 soldiers and 600 000 civilians from the North. (There are no accurate records.) This was over 10% of North Korea's total population!

## Impact on the United Nations



- The Korean War showed that the UN was a powerful organisation for tackling world peace.
- The UN succeeded in defending South Korea, at a cost of nearly 40 000 UN lives.
- The UN was criticised by the USSR for doing what the USA told it to. However, the USSR did rejoin the UN.

## Impact on Sino-American relations



- Relations between the USA and China got worse. The USA had organised a ban on trade with China in 1950 that was tightened in 1952.
- The USA continued to support a rival Chinese government based in Taiwan. US military defence stopped communist China from eliminating the threat from Taiwan.
- The Korean War made the USA very cautious about China's reaction in the Vietnam War that followed (1955–1975).

For more information on the escalation of the Vietnam War, see pages 12–15 and page 23.

## Impact on the Cold War

The Korean War had important consequences for Cold War conflict and tension.

- 36 500 US troops died in Korea. This had a negative impact on public opinion and made the USA cautious about sending US troops into other foreign conflicts.
- It showed both the USA and the USSR that they could fight in a limited way (not involving nuclear weapons) through conflicts between other countries.
- The USA was convinced that the USSR was spreading communism in Asia. Eisenhower started funding France's war in **Indochina** because of the high risk of further countries falling to communism.



**Indochina** – a French colony, made up of modern-day Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

## The Korean War: key statistics

- ✓ The USA spent around \$20–30 billion on the war in Korea (about \$340 billion today).
- ✓ US planes dropped about 635 000 tons of bombs on North Korea (more than that used in the Pacific, 1941–1945). US pilots sometimes reported that there were no more targets left standing to bomb.
- ✓ Over 1000 British Commonwealth troops died in the Korean War, 710 from the UK.
- ✓ It is estimated that there were 72 000 Soviets in North Korea, including hundreds of pilots. The USSR kept this a secret in case it triggered war with the USA.

Some sources give the number of US deaths in Korea as 54 000. This figure is actually all US combat deaths between 1950 and 1953 around the world.

## Now try this

'The Korean War was a disaster for the Korean people.' Give **two** points that support this view and **two** points you could use to argue against it.

# End of French rule

Vietnam was part of a French colony known as Indochina, lost to Japan in the Second World War. After Japan's defeat in 1945, France tried to take back control of Vietnam. The **Vietminh** wanted Vietnam to be independent – and communist. So, the **First Indochina War** began.

## The end of French colonial rule

### Timeline

**September 1940** Japan occupies Vietnam.

- **June 1940** France surrenders to Nazi Germany.

- **1941 Ho Chi Minh** creates the **Vietminh**: the League for the Independence of Vietnam. They lead the fight for Vietnamese independence.

**1944–1945** Two million Vietnamese die in a famine. The Vietminh organise famine relief.

- **August 1945** Japan surrenders. The Vietminh take control of most of Vietnam.

**2 September 1945** Ho Chi Minh, leader of the Vietminh, declares Vietnam is independent.

- **September 1945** French troops fight the Vietminh as France tries to take back control.

**December 1946** First Indochina War begins.

- **1949** Communists win China's civil war. China begins supporting the Vietminh.

**1950** The USA begins supporting France in Vietnam.

- **1953** French losses in the war reach 100 000 deaths. The war is very unpopular in France.

**April 1954** US President Eisenhower describes the **Domino Theory** in a speech.

- **May 1954** The French lose the **Battle of Dien Bien Phu**: French troops surrender.

**July 1954 Geneva Conference** ends war and agrees peace accords; French Indochina is broken up and Vietnam temporarily **divided**.

For information on Dien Bien Phu and the Geneva Agreement, see page 13.

## Reasons for the end of French rule

There are three key reasons for the end of French colonial rule in Vietnam.

- 1 French colonial rule was unfair and oppressive.** For example, France took Vietnam's raw materials and sold them to make France richer. Vietnamese workers were beaten to make them work harder. As a result, people like Ho Chi Minh were determined to make Vietnam independent of foreign rule. They had struggled against French colonial rule for many years.
- 2 France lost control of Vietnam to the Japanese in the Second World War.** Japan's occupation of Vietnam included executing thousands of French officers. As a result, when Japan surrendered, French troops were too weak to stop the Vietminh taking control.
- 3 The Vietminh's communism meant support from communist China.** For example, Chinese military advisers trained Vietminh troops into a very effective army of 300 000. As a result, France could not defeat them, leading to surrender at Dien Bien Phu.

## US involvement in Vietnam

- Usually the USA supported countries that wanted independence from colonial rule. Ho Chi Minh hoped the USA would help him.
- However, China and North Korea were already communist. The USA was very worried that, if Vietnam became communist, other countries would become communist too, such as Cambodia or Laos.
- France was able to get US support for its war because France argued that it was a war against a communist dictatorship.

As a result, by 1953, the USA was paying for nearly 80% of France's war in Vietnam.

## Now try this

Write a short paragraph to explain the main reason why the USA became involved in France's war against the Vietminh.



# Dien Bien Phu

French forces were defeated by the Vietminh at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in May 1954. As a result, peace talks were held to end the First French Indochina War. These led to the Geneva Agreement in July 1954, which divided Vietnam.

## Why were the French at Dien Bien Phu?

The French built a fortified base and airstrip at Dien Bien Phu as part of a plan to trick the Vietminh into an open battle. They brought in 11000 troops. The French assumed they would beat the Vietminh because of their superior military strength.

The French believed they had superior weapons and tactics. They never imagined that they would be surrounded by artillery and anti-aircraft guns.

The French base was surrounded by jungle-covered hills. Vietminh General Giap moved 200 artillery guns into the hills. (Giap and Ho Chi Minh led the Vietminh together.) The French base became a trap with no way out.

General Giap secretly moved 50000 men and his artillery up narrow mountain tracks, and then camouflaged his forces so they could not be spotted by aeroplanes.

### Superior Vietminh tactics

The French did not think it was possible to bring artillery into such a mountainous area where there were no real roads.

### Over-confident French tactics

## Reasons for the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, May 1954

### Support from the local population

### Support from China

Dien Bien Phu was located in a remote northern region. The French assumed they would be able to fly in supplies, but supply aeroplanes were shot down by anti-aircraft guns.

240000 civilians carried everything needed for the Vietminh attack, including the disassembled big guns. They travelled on foot, up miles of narrow trails into the hills.

China provided guns and ammunition, training for Vietminh troops and military advice, and 20000 bikes to help locals move supplies.

## Consequences of Dien Bien Phu

- On 7 May 1954, the French surrendered. 8000 French troops had been killed or wounded in 55 days of constant attacks.
- As a result, the French prime minister resigned. The French parliament voted to end the war and leave Vietnam.
- The Geneva Agreement was made between France and Indochinese representatives in 1954. The USA, however, did not sign the agreement.
- The victory over the French made Ho Chi Minh and General Giap national heroes.

## Five results of the 1954 Geneva Agreement

- 1 Vietnam was temporarily divided into North Vietnam and South Vietnam.
- 2 Ho Chi Minh would lead North Vietnam. US-backed politician Ngo Dinh Diem would lead South Vietnam.
- 3 The French would leave Vietnam and the Vietminh would leave South Vietnam.
- 4 Vietnamese people could decide whether they wanted to live in the North or South.
- 5 A general election would be held by 1956 to decide who led a reunited Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh looked likely to win this election.

## Now try this

Once you've read through this page, cover it up and list:

- a) **four** reasons for the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu
- b) **four** consequences of Dien Bien Phu.

# Civil war in South Vietnam

The Geneva Agreement meant that, in 1955, Ngo Dinh Diem became the leader of South Vietnam – until an election for the whole of Vietnam could be held. When Diem refused to allow this election, his decision helped trigger a civil war in South Vietnam.

## Ngo Dinh Diem's rise to power

Diem was from a Catholic family, in a mainly Buddhist country. His father's family had suffered violent anti-Catholic persecution from Buddhists.

In 1945, Diem was captured by the Vietminh. He refused to join Ho Chi Minh's government and went into self-imposed exile.

In 1950, Diem travelled to the USA, hoping to get US backing to lead Vietnam. Political leaders were impressed by his anti-communist beliefs.



Ngo Dinh Diem and his two brothers, one of whom was a Catholic bishop.

In 1954, Diem became prime minister of South Vietnam. For a year he fought other non-communist rivals who wanted to lead the country.

In 1955, a referendum took place in South Vietnam to decide who should be leader: Diem or his rival, Bo Dai. Bo Dai was the leader of South Vietnam appointed by the French. Diem cheated in order to win the vote, claiming 98.2% chose him as President of the Republic of Vietnam.

## What caused the civil war?

Diem's actions were the main cause of the war.

- He refused to allow elections to decide who should lead a unified Vietnam – because he was likely to lose to Ho Chi Minh.
- Diem's security forces arrested people who campaigned against this decision. They also targeted anyone known to be a communist or who complained about government corruption.
- His favouritism towards Catholics alienated the mostly Buddhist population.
- Thousands of Diem's political opponents were executed and tens of thousands jailed.
- By 1957, opponents of Diem's leadership began an armed **insurgency** (rebellion) against Diem and his supporters.
- In 1959, North Vietnamese leaders agreed to support the opponents of Diem's regime.

## The civil war – NLF vs ARVN

### The National Liberation Front (NLF)

- Created by North Vietnam's leaders in 1960 to combat Diem and unify (join together) Vietnam.
- Fighters often were South Vietnamese Vietminh. Many had relocated to North Vietnam but were sent back home to fight.
- Supplied by North Vietnam through the Ho Chi Minh Trail, named after the North Vietnamese leader.

For more on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, see page 20.

### The Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN)

- Created by Diem in 1955 as part of his setting up of the new Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam).
- The ARVN was a modern army, supported by the USA with money and equipment.
- Used by Diem to defend his regime from communists (NLF) and non-communist opponents, for example Buddhist groups.

## Now try this

Write **one** sentence to describe each of the following:

- a) the ARVN; b) the NLF; c) Ho Chi Minh; d) the Republic of Vietnam (RVN); e) Ngo Dinh Diem; f) Bo Dai.

# Opposition to Diem

Diem's unpopular government was corrupt. Its treatment of peasants and Buddhists caused tension and conflict. Opposition to his rule made it difficult for the USA to keep supporting him.

## Persecution of communists

Diem's 'Denunciation of Communists' campaign (1955–1959) arrested, imprisoned and executed thousands. His 'Law 10/59' (1959) meant military courts could execute anyone found guilty of belonging to a communist organisation – for example, the Vietminh.

## Corruption

Diem and his family used their power to make money for themselves by taking over businesses and controlling trade.

## Nepotism

Diem appointed family members and supporters to important government positions (this is known as nepotism). It created a dictatorship because his government did whatever Diem told them to.

## Resettlement of peasants

Diem's 'Agroville' programme resettled peasants from their villages to areas under government control. Often the peasants were forced to move.

## Persecution of Buddhists

Catholics had important roles in government under French rule. This continued under Diem's leadership, and Diem began to persecute other religions. In May 1963, nine Buddhists were shot dead during demonstrations after Diem's government banned religious flags.

### Reasons for opposition to Diem



In June 1963, Buddhist monk **Thich Quang Duc** set himself on fire to protest Diem's persecution of Buddhists. His protest sparked international criticism of Diem.

## Why did the USA stop supporting Diem?

- For most of Diem's rule (1954–1963), the USA sent money to help redevelop South Vietnam. They knew Diem kept a lot of this money for himself and his supporters.
- The USA sent military support to help the ARVN fight communists. But the ARVN seemed unable to make progress. In 1963, the ARVN were defeated by NLF troops at the battle of Ap Bac, despite having US military advisers, US helicopters and US M113 armoured personnel carriers.
- The persecution of Buddhists in 1963 caused the USA to stop its support. Thich Quang Duc's protest was worldwide news. There was massive international criticism of Diem's brutality. Public opinion made US support impossible.

## Consequences of opposition to Diem

- 1 **Civil war** – Diem's government seemed just as unfair and exploiting as French colonial rule had been. Fighting Diem was the same as fighting for Vietnamese independence to many people.
- 2 **Negative view of the USA** – Diem's regime only survived because of US support. This meant many South Vietnamese thought that the USA was helping to oppress them.
- 3 **Tension in the USA** – Some Americans felt it was wrong to support Diem's corrupt regime, because the USA should be helping build democracy, independence and freedom, not propping up a corrupt dictatorship.
- 4 **Increased US involvement** – In November 1963, Diem was forced out and killed. This caused political chaos in South Vietnam, making it even weaker. The USA increased its involvement, fearing a communist takeover.

## Now try this

Once you have revised this page, close the book and try to recreate the spider diagram. Aim to include **five** reasons for opposition to Diem.



# The Vietcong

The Vietcong was the name given by Diem's regime to the resistance fighters who rose up against his unpopular regime after his refusal to allow elections uniting the North and South. Their aim was to overthrow Diem and unite Vietnam as an independent country.

## What were the aims of the Vietcong? Support for the Vietcong

The Vietcong was set up by Ho Chi Minh and other North Vietnamese leaders in December 1960. It brought together different groups fighting against Diem's regime in South Vietnam.

The Vietcong's aims were:

- to overthrow Diem's corrupt regime and replace it with a fair government
- to join North and South Vietnam together again as one independent country, free from foreign control
- to stop the oppression of peasants by taking land from rich landlords and giving it to the peasants, and ending Diem's increased taxes on them.

- Many Vietcong were communist supporters, but others were not. For example, the leader of the Vietcong – Hua Tho – was not a communist.
- Although many Vietcong came from the South, North Vietnam's support was crucial: for fighters, equipment and money.
- Support for the Vietcong from China and the USSR also came down from the North.
- Peasants in South Vietnam liked the land reform promised by the Vietcong, and many supported their fighters. Others were forced to support the Vietcong – for example, by giving them their food.

Vietcong fighters were forbidden from mistreating peasants by their leaders. The Vietcong relied on peasant support.

## Leadership of the Vietcong

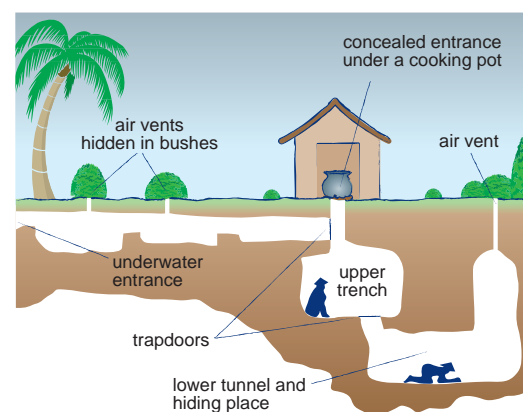
Ho Chi Minh's victories against the Japanese and the French inspired many Vietcong to fight for independence. His inspirational role was very important to the Vietcong.

## Vietcong tactics

The Vietcong used **terror tactics**, especially assassinations and bombings, to attack Diem's regime. They targeted government officials and foreigners, but innocent civilians were often hurt or killed, too.

The Vietcong used **guerrilla tactics**, including:

- **Ambushes:** Vietcong fighters used stealth skills to enter an area, hide themselves completely then wait patiently for a coordinated surprise attack.
- **Sabotage:** by destroying bridges and equipment, the Vietcong made it more difficult for the ARVN to operate.
- **Spying:** getting information about enemy targets and weaknesses.
- **Using the local population:** local people fed and sheltered Vietcong. The Vietcong dressed the same as local people, so the ARVN could never be sure who might attack them or who had attacked them.



The Vietcong used tunnel systems to launch ambushes. The ARVN searched villages for Vietcong by looking for weapons or extra food, so these were also hidden in tunnels.

Although the Vietcong usually avoided open battles, there were battles between the Vietcong and the ARVN. Ap Bac in January 1963 is a good example. 300 Vietcong defeated 1500 ARVN, killing 100 ARVN soldiers and three US advisers.

## Now try this

Describe **two** ways in which Vietcong tactics made it hard for the ARVN to defeat them.

# The Domino Theory

The USA was determined to stop communism spreading from one country to another. This was the main reason why the USA became involved in the conflict in South Vietnam.

## Containment

After the Second World War, the USSR spread communist control throughout Eastern Europe. The USA decided on a policy to contain communism.

- In 1947, President Truman said the USA would help any country resist takeover by communists: the Truman Doctrine.
- First, the USA funded European governments who were fighting civil wars against communists, for example Greece.
- Then, in 1950, the USA sent troops to Korea. This was, at first, to stop communism spreading to the South, then to push back communism in North Korea. This ended when China joined the war.

For more on containment and the Truman Doctrine, see pages 1–2.

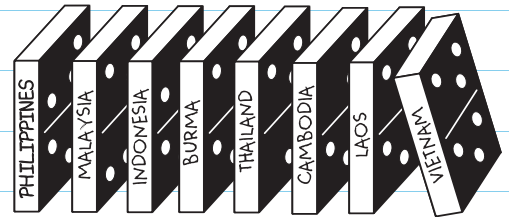


US concerns about the spread of communism included the fear that communists would take control of the USA. US politician Joseph McCarthy led a campaign to root out US communists. Fear about US communists increased the pressure to contain the spread of communism worldwide.

## The Domino Theory

In 1954, US President Eisenhower described the situation in Asia as being like a line of dominoes: if one country fell to communism, many others would quickly follow.

The **Domino Theory** was a reaction to the spread of communism to China. The USA had supported a nationalist government against communists in China's civil war, but the communists won. US politicians felt they had 'lost' China to communism.



The Domino Theory predicted that eight Asian countries were vulnerable to the spread of communism.

## Consequences of the Domino Theory

The USA only became involved in Vietnam in order to contain communism in Asia.

- The USA supported Diem's corrupt dictatorship because he was strongly anti-communist. The USA also shared Diem's reluctance for a democratic election in Vietnam, because communist Ho Chi Minh seemed certain to win.
- When the Diem regime collapsed in 1963, South Vietnam was seriously weakened. The USA increased its involvement to try to stabilise South Vietnam and keep up the pressure on the Vietcong.

## Limitations of US involvement

Although the USA increased its involvement in Vietnam in 1963, there were important limits.

- After the loss of 36 500 American lives in the Korean War, the US public did not want US troops in another conflict in Asia.
- China and North Vietnam were allies. Attacks on North Vietnam risked bringing China into the war. This had happened in Korea, with very negative consequences.
- The USA and the USSR had only just avoided nuclear war over the Soviet placement of missiles on communist Cuba in 1962. Attacks on North Vietnam risked bringing the USSR into this war as well, as an ally of China and North Vietnam.

## Now try this

Write a paragraph to explain the connection between the Domino Theory and US involvement in Vietnam.

# Eisenhower and Kennedy

US presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy both wanted to keep the USA's role in Vietnam limited to funding and military advice. But, as the Vietcong grew stronger, US involvement increased.

## US intervention under Eisenhower, 1953–1961

Eisenhower believed the Domino Theory, but limited US involvement to avoid war with China. The USA sent money to help Diem develop South Vietnam and sent around 700 military advisers to help the ARVN beat the Vietcong.

**1954:** South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) founded: eight countries working to defend Asia from communism.

**1955:** The US-run referendum is won by Diem. Diem cheats and claims 98.2% of votes.

**1956:** Diem refuses to allow elections.

**1957:** Oppression of Diem's opponents. US support continues.

**1960:** Eisenhower urges Diem to use land reform to increase his popularity. Diem ignores this advice.

By the end of 1960, less than half of South Vietnam is under government control.

US involvement in Vietnam under Eisenhower

## US intervention under Kennedy, 1961–1963

Like Eisenhower, Kennedy also wanted to avoid the USA getting directly involved in the fighting. However, it was clear that the ARVN were losing the civil war. This situation had to be tackled.

- The ARVN had been trying to get the Vietcong to fight open battles, but instead were worn down by guerrilla tactics. Kennedy sent thousands more military advisers to work alongside ARVN troops and train them in a new strategy: hunt down Vietcong cells (small groups) in the countryside and eliminate them.
- Opposition to Diem meant the Vietcong had a lot of support. Kennedy wanted a new '**hearts and minds**' strategy to win support for Diem's government. US advisers would help peasants to defend their villages from the Vietcong.

For more on opposition to Diem and the Agrovillage programme, see page 15.

## The Strategic Hamlets programme, 1962

Diem's 'Agrovilles' aimed to get peasants away from the Vietcong and into areas that the government could control. US advisers supported this idea and it developed into the **Strategic Hamlets programme**.

- Strategic hamlets were large new villages with facilities, such as schools, surrounded by defences such as spiked bamboo fences and guarded by the ARVN.
- 800 US advisers helped the ARVN to set up 5000 new strategic hamlets.
- However, many peasants had to be forced to leave their old villages, which were often burnt down. People hated leaving ancestors' graves, which were spiritually important.
- Vietcong attacks on the strategic hamlets often easily overcame the ARVN defences.
- Resentment against the programme increased opposition to Diem by 300%!

## Increased involvement: facts and figures

- ✓ **1961:** \$136 million sent in economic aid, plus \$65 million in military equipment and \$40 million to train ARVN.
- ✓ **1961:** 300 US helicopters and pilots sent to Vietnam to transport ARVN troops.
- ✓ **1963:** Number of US military advisers in Vietnam increased to 16 000.

## Kennedy and Diem's overthrow

In November 1963, a group of ARVN generals plotted to overthrow Diem. When the USA found out about this, senior officials secretly told the generals that the USA would not try to stop them. However, Kennedy was very upset when Diem and his brother were then murdered by soldiers.

## Now try this

Identify **two** pieces of evidence of how US involvement in Vietnam increased from 1953 to 1963.



# The Gulf of Tonkin incident

Under President Johnson (1963–1969), the conflict in Vietnam escalated dramatically. The Gulf of Tonkin incident in 1964 was key to increased US intervention in Vietnam.

## Events leading to the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, 1964

US and ARVN special forces carried out secret missions in the Gulf of Tonkin (east of North Vietnam), sabotaging North Vietnamese facilities and collecting information on North Vietnam.

On 31 July 1964, ARVN commandos attacked a North Vietnamese radar station. A US warship, the *USS Maddox*, was monitoring these radar stations in the Gulf of Tonkin.

On 2 August 1964, North Vietnamese torpedo boats fired on the *USS Maddox*. One torpedo hit but did not explode. The *USS Maddox* and US fighter planes sank two torpedo boats.

On 4 August 1964, a second attack was reported by the *USS Maddox*, later shown to be a mistake made by panicky sailors. No attack actually took place.

President Johnson ordered the US air force to attack North Vietnamese gunboat bases. Many were destroyed. Johnson told the US public that the USA faced open aggression from North Vietnam.

The US Congress had previously been strongly against the USA getting more involved in Vietnam. But, after the Gulf of Tonkin incident, Congress was outraged.

On 7 August 1964, Johnson took the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution to Congress. This gave the president the power to defend US forces and South Vietnam in whatever way he thought best. Congress passed the resolution almost unanimously and it was signed on 10 August.



Johnson signs the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, 10 August 1964. This gave him the power to escalate the war in Vietnam following the Gulf of Tonkin incident without consulting Congress – which meant he was able to overcome the previous lack of support for the war from Congress.

## Why did Johnson increase US involvement?

Johnson increased US involvement in Vietnam in reaction to the Gulf of Tonkin incident because:

- 1 Following Diem's removal, the Vietcong had increased from 23 000 fighters in 1963 to 60 000 in 1964.
- 2 There was a US presidential election in 1964. Johnson's opponent criticised him for not being tough enough in Vietnam. (After the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, Johnson won the election very easily.)
- 3 Johnson's military advisers were certain that, if the USA bombed North Vietnam from the air, North Vietnam would soon stop supporting the Vietcong.

## Johnson and the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution

Because the second attack on the *USS Maddox* was not real, some historians are critical of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. They suggest that Congress was tricked into giving Johnson the power to escalate the USA's involvement.

It is true that Johnson had the resolution ready for two months before August 1964. He waited for the right opportunity to bring it to Congress in order to increase US intervention. However, at the time, the sailors involved were convinced an attack was happening.

## Now try this

'The purpose of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was to allow the use of US military power to force North Vietnam to give up its aim of uniting Vietnam.' Give **one** point supporting this statement, and **one** point that argues against it.

# The mass bombing campaign

The Gulf of Tonkin incident gave the US military the opportunity to tackle the war in new ways, to try to respond to Vietcong tactics. One was to make more use of US airpower: mass bombing.

For more on Vietcong tactics, see page 16.

## The problem: North Vietnamese support

US military advisers believed that the Vietcong relied on support from the North:

- Thousands of North Vietnamese were sent south to train Vietcong groups.
- The Vietcong gained high-quality weapons from North Vietnam, including AK-47s.
- Sometimes whole North Vietnamese army units joined Vietcong divisions.
- These troops and supplies used the Ho Chi Minh Trail: a 16 000 km network of paths from North to South Vietnam.

## The problem: The Ho Chi Minh Trail

Much of the Ho Chi Minh Trail ran through neutral countries: Laos and Cambodia.



## US response: Operation Rolling Thunder

In March 1965, the USA began a mass bombing campaign called **Operation Rolling Thunder**. This aimed to:

- convince North Vietnam to stop supporting the Vietcong
- destroy the industries and transport links that were sending supplies to the south.

Expected to succeed in eight weeks, the campaign lasted three years. By November 1968, nearly 900 000 tons of bombs had been dropped, killing 90 000 people.

## US response: mass bombing

The USA used bombing to try to disrupt the flow of traffic along the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

- US aeroplanes sprayed defoliant chemicals, such as Agent Orange, which destroyed plants to reveal the paths in the forest.
- Once troop movements were spotted, **cluster bombs** and **napalm** were dropped from aeroplanes to kill large numbers. Cluster bombs broke into many different bomblets, spreading out over a wider area. Napalm was petroleum jelly set on fire. The burning napalm was effective at killing people because it stuck to skin.

## How effective was the US response?

- Operation Rolling Thunder could not target areas that might bring China into the war, like the port of Haiphong, used by Chinese ships. Most of the supplies for the Vietcong came in from China.
- The USA underestimated the North Vietnamese people. Thousands worked to repair damage, no matter how frequent.
- China and the USSR supplied North Vietnam with very sophisticated air defences. 745 US airmen were shot down.

## How effective was the US response?

- The Vietcong built hundreds of carefully hidden underground bases along the Ho Chi Minh Trail to shelter from US air strikes.
- Thousands of Vietcong constantly repaired and improved the trail. More supplies made it along the trail than before, and the route got quicker – in the end it took just six weeks to get from North to South on foot.
- Because most of the trail was through neutral countries, the USA and ARVN could not attack troop movements there.

## Now try this

List **two** reasons for the mass bombing campaign. Then give **two** examples of how effective the campaign was.