

Vietnam War Analysis

Framework/Historical Context:

The Vietnam War began in the early 1960s with the U.S. sending military advisors to South Vietnam. U.S. troops remained until 1975 when North Vietnamese Communist forces took control of the entire country. This war is arguably the most controversial war having caused a massive anti-war movement and a great amount of political turmoil as it dragged on.

Documents for Analysis

Directions: The following eight documents relate to the social, political, military, and economic reasons Vietnam was able to defeat the United States during the Vietnam War. Answer the questions with each document and fill out the graphic organizer. Once that is complete, address the written response at the end.

Document 1: Political Cartoon



<http://www.npg.si.edu/exhibit/herblock/Johnson.html>

1. What problem regarding the Vietnam War effort is this cartoon addressing?

Document 2: Song Lyrics: "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-To-Die," by Country Joe and the Fish, 1965.

Well, come on Wall Street, don't move slow,
Why man, this is war au-go-go.
There's plenty good money to be made
By supplying the Army with the tools of the trade,
Just hope and pray that if they drop the bomb,
They drop it on the Viet Cong.
And it's one, two, three,
What are we fighting for?
Don't ask me, I don't give a damn,
Next stop is Vietnam.
And it's five, six, seven,
Open up the pearly gates,
Well there ain't no time to wonder why
Whoopee! we're all gonna die.
Well, come on mothers throughout the land,
Pack your boys off to Vietnam.
Come on fathers, don't hesitate,
Send 'em off before it's too late.
Be the first one on your block
To have your boy come home in a box.

2. Is the intent of this song to promote or protest the Vietnam War?
3. Who does Joe McDonald blame for having financial interests in the war effort?

Document 3: Martin Luther King, 1967

"... it became clear to me that the war was doing far more than devastating the hopes of the poor at home. It was sending their sons and their brothers and their husbands to fight and die in extraordinarily high proportions relative to the rest of the population. We were taking the black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them eight thousand miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in southwest Georgia and East Harlem."

4. What is Martin Luther King Jr.'s main concern regarding the Vietnam War?

Document 4: An interview with Hubert H Humphrey with Bill Moyer, *The Art of the Possible*

HUMPHREY: We do not want a police state, but we need a state of law and order. And neither mob violence or police brutality have any place in America. Are we to be one nation, or are we to be a nation divided - divided between black and white, between rich and poor, between north and south, between young and old. Rioting, burning, sniping, mugging, traffic in narcotics and disregard for law, are the advance guard of anarchy, and they must and they will be stopped!

1. What problem with the Vietnam War was Humphrey talking about in this part of the interview?

Document 5: Picture: U.S. soldier carries a M67 recoilless rifle past a burning Viet Cong base camp in My Tho, South Vietnam, 1968



http://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/v/Vietnam_War.htm

5. Why would activities like this make it difficult for the United States to “win the hearts and minds” of the Vietnamese?

Document 6: George McGovern, 1972

“What I propose is that we spend all that is necessary for prudent national defense, and no more. I propose that we conserve our limited resources:

-By no longer underwriting the appalling waste of money and manpower that has become such a bad habit in our military establishment;

-By rejecting the purchase of weapons which are designed to fight the last war better, with almost no relevance to today’s threat;

-By refusing to maintain extra military forces that can have no other purpose than to repeat our experience in Vietnam, a venture which nearly all of us now recognize as a monstrous national blunder;

-By repudiating the false world of old discredited myths, made up of blocs, puppets, and dominoes, facing instead the real world of today and the future with multiple ideologies and interests.”

*Repudiate= Reject

6. How did this perspective on how to fight the Vietnam War impact the outcome of the war?

Document 7: Picture of the protests at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968



7. How would protests in the United States affect the outcome in Vietnam?

Document 8: Vietnamese Declaration of Independence

All men are created equal. They are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

This immortal statement was made in the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America in 1776. In a broader sense, this means: All the peoples on the earth are equal from birth, all the peoples have a right to live, to be happy and free.

The Declaration of the French Revolution made in 1791 on the Rights of Man and the Citizen also states: "All men are born free and with equal rights, and must always remain free and have equal rights."

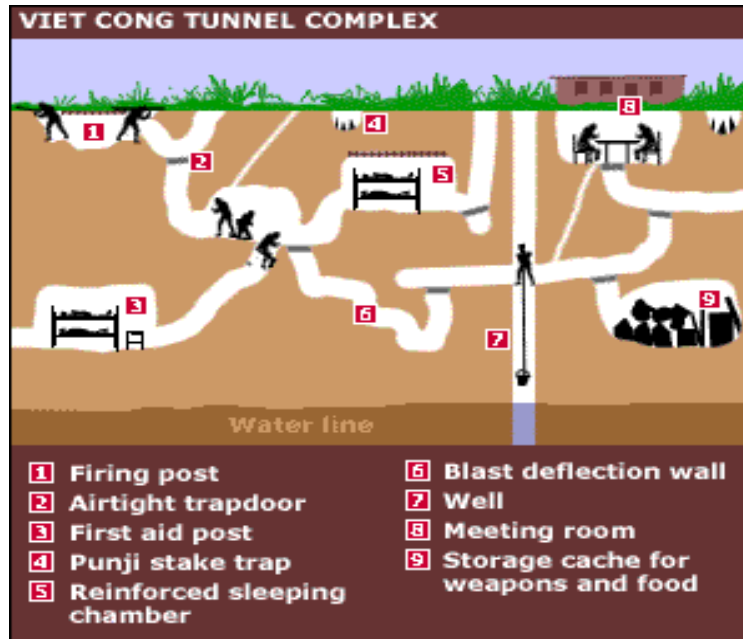
Those are undeniable truths.

Nevertheless, for more than eighty years, the French imperialists, abusing the standard of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, have violated our Fatherland and oppressed our fellow citizens. They have acted contrary to the ideals of humanity and justice.

For these reasons, we, members of the Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, solemnly declare to the world that Vietnam has the right to be a free and independent country-and in fact is so already. The entire Vietnamese people are determined to mobilize all their physical and mental strength, to sacrifice their lives and property in order to safeguard their independence and liberty. [\[1\]](#)

8. What are the basic beliefs stated in this document?
9. How would fighting against a nation that held these beliefs be difficult for the US?

Document 9: A diagram of the tunnel complex for the Viet Cong



10. Why would it be difficult to fight against an enemy that used guerrilla tactics like these tunnels?

Document 10: Photograph: 1967, Wichita, Kansas protests



11. What does this photo say about how people in the US thought about the Vietnam War?

Document	Social, Political, Economic, Military	How does this document support how Vietnam was able to defeat the United States in the Vietnam War?
1		
2		
3		
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10		

How was a small country like Vietnam able to “defeat” a superpower like the United States during the Vietnam War? Your response must be at least 6-8 sentences and include these areas: military, economic, political, and social.