



International Relations – Asia

History – Junior Cert

Quick Notes

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The French had occupied Indo-China (made up of Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos) since the late nineteenth century. However, the Japanese occupied this area during World War 2. Local people resisted and in September 1945, Vietnam was declared as an independent republic. However, France wanted to re-establish control over Indo-China so in 1947, war broke out between a local movement Viet Minh and France. With the US on their side, the French regained control of the cities and towns, but the Viet Minh controlled the mountains and countryside. But in 1954, the French position became hopeless so at the Geneva Conference of May 1954, France agreed to withdraw from Indo-China completely. Cambodia and Laos became independent and Vietnam was divided into the Communist north and democratic south. Elections were to be held within two years to choose a government for a united Vietnam. Ho-Chi Minh formed a group with his supporters in the south and these were known as Vietcong. They wanted to use military force to create a unified Vietnam. The pro-American Ngo Dinh Diem became president but he was unpopular so by 1960, up to 20,000 rebels were fighting Diem's US-supporting troops. For the next three years, the US sent an increasing number of military advisors and military equipment to Vietnam. Yet by the end of 1963, the Vietcong controlled 40% of South Vietnam. However, in phase two of the war, the US failed to defeat the Vietcong despite 450,000 US troops being involved by 1967. In January 1968, during the Vietnamese New Year, the Vietcong launched a massive offensive against US bases in the south. Many thought that America would withdraw with anti-protest campaigns being organised and soldiers refusing to join the army. In January 1973, both the Americans and the North Koreans agreed to withdraw their troops from South Korea. In 1975, the Vietcong captured Saigon in South Korea, thereby winning the Vietnam war and thus reuniting Vietnam into a single socialist republic in 1976. Vietnam endured many other invasions from China and the Khmer Rouge led by Pol Pot but the Vietnamese pulled through on both occasions.

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