

Vietnam was a small country located in the periphery of the two Cold War superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. The state was small, and unpowerful as a former colony of France. That made it difficult to understand why it would attract so much international attention for the mid-20th century, in particular the attention of the US. However, Vietnam was very important to the development of the Cold War, and tensions between the US and the Communist World. The split of the state at the end of the First Indochina War, creating the Democratic Republic of Vietnam or North Vietnam, and the State of Vietnam, or South Vietnam as a communist and nationalist state respectively, was the first event that brought Vietnam to relevancy in the Cold War. This was the beginning of established Communism in Vietnam. The Second Indochina War, more commonly known as the Vietnam War in Western settings, was significant in bringing Vietnam into the Cold War. With the end of the Vietnam War, and the subsequent implementation of a Communist regime, the spread of Communism was ensured. This was a devastating blow for the Americans. All three of these events weakened the US and the Western ideology and brought strength to the Soviets, the Chinese, and Communism. This in turn increased tensions between the two worlds, contributing to the climate of the Cold War.

The First Indochina War was a destructive war that brought American attention to Vietnam. The war was a colossal failure for the French who had maintained control over the region for almost 30 years. The war was seen by historians to be a colonial war of sorts with the Vietnamese fighting for their independence from French and later, Japanese rule. At the end of the Second World War, the Big Three Powers divided the state in half with an arbitrary line. The north was controlled by the Communist Party and

the south was controlled by the Nationalist Party. As the war unfolded, territory was never controlled by the same power for very long. The French, Japanese, and Vietnamese all had control over the country at different points throughout the war. However, by the 1950s, the war had shifted from the colonial war to a Cold War conflict with the introduction of American intervention. The US was providing aid to France to support the ongoing war. By the end of the war, there was a lot of international involvement, as well as destruction. The treaty proceedings had the input of several states including the US, the UK, the USSR, and the PRC. The French were humiliated on the international stage for their failures, particularly at Dien Bien Phu. However, the development of more and more international attention brought Vietnam further into the Cold War.

The US involvement in Vietnam only grew by the 1960s. In 1964, the US began committing peace keeping troops to Vietnam as a part of its “containment” strategy in the hopes of blocking the spread of Communism. This progressed into the development of the Second Indochina War, more commonly known as the Vietnam War in Western settings. It was an influential factor that drew even more international attention to the state, compared to the First Indochina War, during the Cold War. The Vietnam War was a bloody and destructive war that resulted in the death of thousands of Vietnamese civilians. The warfare in Vietnam involved more bombings than most, if not all, modern wars to that point. The crimes against humanity, including the use of chemical weapons like napalm, committed against the Vietnamese were devastating and cruel. This, in turn, radicalized many Vietnamese civilians. The Communist Party in Vietnam was

strengthened during this time as a result of the American Vietnam War. This only increased the significance of Vietnam to the Cold War.

In the end, the United States did not achieve its goals for getting involved in Vietnam. Its goals had been to prevent the spread of Communism along with establishing an avenue to control Japan, which was highly unrealistic. Instead of stopping the spread of Communism, Vietnam was firmly established as a Communist state. The US did not secure an avenue to influence Japan either. And despite the US's intentions, the war weakened the United States' reputation internationally and domestically. This was due to the US's terrible acts of violence and warfare against the Vietnamese, including civilians. The US's legitimacy was destabilized in the eyes of its allies and adversaries alike. This consequence of the Vietnam War had later effects on the development of the Cold War.

In conclusion, Vietnam proved to be an important part of the Cold War. The state that was seemingly insignificant demonstrated the capability to manipulate the foreign policy of a major superpower along with other states in the Western world. The First Indochina War was a colonial war that ended with a split state. With half of the country under Communist rule, and half of the country under nationalist rule, it was clear that that was a temporary solution that would later lead to more warfare. The introduction of US intervention during The First Indochina War with France was a clear example of Western intervention and its failings. It led to Communism getting a strong holding in Vietnam. The Second War was simply the furthering of this phenomenon. The Second Indochina War had even more catastrophic consequences than the First War. The Second War brought Vietnam further into the Cold War as a result of American and

Chinese? Intervention. In the end, the consequences of the Second Indochina War also dramatically weakened the US's reputation. The US suffered a humiliating defeat in Vietnam. These two wars pushed Western influence out of Vietnam and introduced Communism to the state on a new level.