

Cold War Conflicts

Lesson 3

Wars in Korea and Vietnam

Key Terms and People

38th parallel line that separated North Korea and South Korea

Douglas MacArthur leader of United Nations forces during the Korean War

Ho Chi Minh Vietnamese nationalist who drove the French out of Vietnam and who led North Vietnam

domino theory theory that nations were like a row of dominoes: if one fell to communism, the others would fall, too

Vietcong Communist rebels in South Vietnam who were supported by North Vietnam

Ngo Dinh Diem leader of the anti-Communist government of South Vietnam

Vietnamization Nixon's plan for gradually withdrawing U.S. troops from Vietnam and replacing them with South Vietnamese troops

Khmer Rouge Communist rebels who set up a brutal government in Cambodia

Before You Read

In the last lesson, you read about the civil war in China.

In this lesson, you will read about wars in Korea and Vietnam.

As You Read

Use a diagram to list causes and effects of the Korean and Vietnam wars.

WAR IN KOREA

How was Korea divided?

When World War II ended, Korea became a divided nation. North of the **38th parallel**, a line that crosses Korea at 38 degrees north latitude, the Japanese surrendered to the Soviets. South of that line, the Japanese surrendered to the allies.

As in Germany, two nations developed. The Soviet Union supported a Communist government in North Korea. The United States supported a non-Communist government in South

Korea. On June 25, 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea, and captured almost all of South Korea. President Truman fought this aggression with help from the United Nations. The United States and other countries sent troops to assist South Korea.

This UN army made a bold counter attack. The attack was led by General **Douglas MacArthur**. In 1953, the two Koreas agreed to a cease-fire. The earlier boundary splitting North and South Korea remained the same.

Lesson 3, *continued*

North Korea had a Communist government. It had a large, strong army and tight government control, but it also had many economic problems. For more than 30 years, dictators ruled South Korea. But its economy grew, in part because it received U.S. aid. Free elections were held in South Korea after a new constitution was adopted in 1987.

1. How did the Korean War change the way Korea was divided?

**WAR BREAKS OUT IN VIETNAM;
THE UNITED STATES GETS
INVOLVED; POSTWAR SOUTHEAST
ASIA**

How did the United States get involved in Vietnam?

A nationalist named **Ho Chi Minh** drove the French out of Vietnam in 1954. This worried the United States because Ho had turned to the Communists for help. Many Americans thought if one country became Communist, others would also, like a row of dominoes. This idea is known as the **domino theory**. A peace conference split Vietnam in two, with Ho taking charge of North Vietnam. The country had a Communist government.

Communist rebels—the **Vietcong**—stayed active in the South.

The non-Communist government of the South had been set up by the United

States and France. Its leader was **Ngo Dinh Diem**. When his government was threatened by Communists, the United States began to send troops. When they could not win the war on the ground, they tried bombing. Many people in the United States came to oppose the war.

In the late 1960s, President Richard Nixon began a plan called **Vietnamization**. This plan called for a gradual pullout of U.S. troops. At the same time, the South Vietnamese increased their combat role. The last American troops left in 1973. Two years later, North Vietnam overran the South and made Vietnam one country again. Today, Vietnam remains Communist but is looking for other nations to invest in its economy.

The fighting in Vietnam eventually spilled over into Vietnam's neighbor, Cambodia. Rebels there were known as the **Khmer Rouge**. In 1975, they set up a brutal Communist government. The Khmer Rouge killed 2 million people. In 1978, the Vietnamese invaded the country. They overthrew the Khmer Rouge. Vietnam withdrew in 1989. In 1993, Cambodia held free elections for the first time.

2. What happened in Vietnam after the United States withdrew?
