

**KEY QUESTION: How successful was US Containment in Vietnam? Part 3, 1968 – 73 US withdraw.**

**KEY TERMS**

**Tet Offensive / Nixon Doctrine / Vietnamisation**

**Why did the USA withdraw from Vietnam?**

- **Containment was costly!** 58,000 American and 2 million Vietnamese lives. It affected 700,000 American veterans. It cost America over \$100bn (Money that could be spent on social problems and relief of poverty in the USA)
- **Soviet and Chinese support** for the North and the VC never faltered. As the world's largest communist powers, both the Soviet Union and China gave moral, logistic and military support to North Vietnam.
- **Unwinnable war** + wrong tactics – In spite of all their efforts, the Ho Chi Minh trail was impossible to destroy. Failure of the bombing campaign. Search and destroy missions were often based on poor military intelligence!
- **Failure to win 'Hearts and Minds' of the South:** Search + destroy missions and atrocities like My Lai only served to make the US appear as oppressors not liberators.
- **Increasing criticism** about the war and how it was waged came from US citizens at home. Atrocities like the My Lai massacre added to this criticism.

**Student Opposition to the War**

- 1965 student lead a mass protest in Washington of 200,000 people.
- 1970 Kent State Uni – students protest at Nixon's bombing of Cambodia. National guard shoot and kill 4.
- Draft dodging – public burning of draft cards and chants of 'we won't go'. 34,000 draft dodgers wanted by the Police.

**USSR + North Vietnam – A 'special' relationship**

- In **1965**, after Khrushchev's removal from power, the USSR signed a defence treaty that would provide North Vietnam with financial aid, military equipment and advisors.
- Moscow now became North Vietnam's main supplier.
- In November **1968**, the Soviet Union and North Vietnam signed a new set of military and economic agreements.
- The USSR agreed to supply deliveries of food, petroleum, transportation equipment, iron and steel, other metals, fertilisers, arms, munitions and other commodities, for strengthening North Vietnam's defences.



**Vietnamisation + ending the war**

- Nixon introduced a policy of Vietnamisation, also known as the Nixon Doctrine, in a speech on 25th July 1969. This meant building up the capacity of the armed forces of America's allies in Vietnam until they could take responsibility for their own defence.
- In effect it meant the USA was beginning the process of withdrawing troops from Vietnam, while strengthening the South Vietnamese army with the aim of getting it to take over the war against communism.
- At the same time, Nixon escalated the bombing campaign in North Vietnam to force the North Vietnamese to negotiate after initial peace talks (from early 1969 on) broke down.
- Eventually, after Nixon went to China, Peace talks resumed and accords signed in January 1973.
- Once American forces were out of Vietnam, the way was open for a communist takeover of the South. In April 1975, the forces of North Vietnam entered the southern city of Saigon and the country was unified under communist leadership.



**How many stars would you award the US for containing communism to '68?**



**Discussion Point: Was containment a success**  
**A) militarily? B) politically? C) ideologically?**

*Did you know: President Nixon said he would achieve 'Peace with Honour' - Do you think he did?*