From Commitment to Withdrawal

Trace how decisions changed U.S. involvement in Vietnam

USH.C.6.3.G "Analyze the escalation of events drawing the United States into military involvement in Vietnam (e.g., Domino Theory, Vietnamization, the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, the Tet Offensive, Paris Peace Accords)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, the Tet Offensive, and Vietnamization, then number them in time order. Underline one U.S. policy change linked to each.

How U.S. Involvement Changed

1. After France lost its war in Indochina in 1954, Vietnam was divided temporarily at the 17th parallel. U.S. leaders feared that a communist victory in South Vietnam would encourage other countries in the region to become communist, a prediction called the Domino Theory. Instead of sending large combat units, Washington supplied money, equipment, and military advisers to South Vietnam. Under President Kennedy, the number of U.S. advisers rose sharply. These choices did not start a declared U.S. war, but they tied American policy to South Vietnam's survival and made later withdrawal politically difficult.

2. In August 1964, U.S. officials reported attacks on American destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin; evidence for a reported second attack was later challenged. Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, giving President Johnson broad authority to use force in Southeast Asia without a declaration of war. In 1965, Johnson began a sustained bombing campaign against North Vietnam and sent U.S. combat troops to South Vietnam. The number of troops grew into the hundreds of thousands. A dispute at sea had thus helped open the door to a much larger U.S. ground war.

3. In January 1968, communist forces launched the Tet Offensive across South Vietnam. U.S. and South Vietnamese forces beat back the attacks, but their scale contradicted claims that victory was near. Public confidence fell, and Johnson responded by limiting the bombing of North Vietnam and calling for peace talks. Nixon later pursued Vietnamization: U.S. troops gradually withdrew while South Vietnamese forces took more responsibility for fighting. This reduced American ground involvement but did not immediately end the war. The 1973 Paris Peace Accords provided for a cease-fire and the withdrawal of U.S. forces; fighting between North and South Vietnam continued.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Domino Theory help explain the U.S. decision to send aid and advisers to South Vietnam?

2. How did the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution help turn U.S. support into a larger ground war?

3. Why did the Tet Offensive change Johnson's approach, even though U.S. and South Vietnamese forces beat back the attacks?

4. How did Vietnamization and the Paris Peace Accords change U.S. military involvement in different ways?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are a newspaper editor in 1973. Write a five- or six-sentence editorial explaining how at least three developments in the passage moved U.S. involvement from commitment to escalation to withdrawal. Judge which development most changed U.S. policy, and support your choice with a detail from the passage.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.6.3.G

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, the Tet Offensive, and Vietnamization, then number them in time order. Underline one U.S. policy change linked to each. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Domino Theory help explain the U.S. decision to send aid and advisers to South Vietnam?	**U.S. leaders feared that a communist victory in South Vietnam would encourage other countries in the region to become communist, so they sent aid and advisers to support South Vietnam.**
2	How did the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution help turn U.S. support into a larger ground war?	**It gave Johnson broad authority to use force without a declaration of war. In 1965, he began sustained bombing and sent U.S. combat troops to South Vietnam.**
3	Why did the Tet Offensive change Johnson's approach, even though U.S. and South Vietnamese forces beat back the attacks?	**The attacks contradicted claims that victory was near and reduced public confidence. Johnson responded by limiting the bombing of North Vietnam and calling for peace talks.**
4	How did Vietnamization and the Paris Peace Accords change U.S. military involvement in different ways?	**Vietnamization gradually reduced U.S. ground involvement as South Vietnamese forces took more responsibility. The Paris Peace Accords provided for the withdrawal of U.S. forces.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The United States first sent aid and advisers because leaders feared a communist victory in South Vietnam could affect other countries. The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution then gave Johnson broad authority to use force. His decision to send combat troops turned that support into a large ground war. Later, Vietnamization reduced U.S. ground involvement as South Vietnamese forces took more responsibility. The Paris Peace Accords provided for U.S. withdrawal, although fighting continued in Vietnam. The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution most changed U.S. policy because it opened the way for the shift from advisers to combat troops.

Accept other well-supported judgments in Part 3 if the response traces commitment, escalation, and withdrawal. For the marking job, accept any passage statement that accurately identifies a policy change linked to each circled development.