



Geography and the 2nd Indochina War

Virginia Geolnquiry Collection

Target Audience - World History II/US History

Time required – 20-30 minutes

Activity	Investigate the general geography of the 2 nd Indochina War
Virginia Standards of Learning	WHII.12a understand the conflicts during the second half of the twentieth century by describing the events of the Cold War, including the location of the major conflicts (Vietnam War) VUS.12d understand the United States' foreign policy during the Cold War era by analyzing the changing role of the United States in Asia, including Korea, Vietnam, and China
Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify and describe the relative location and cultural geography of French IndochinaExplain how US military involvement in Vietnam changed between 1965 – 1973Identify and define French Indochina, Dien Bien Phu, N.Vietnam, S. Vietnam, and Ho Chi Minh Trail

MAP URL: <https://bit.ly/IndochinaMap>

Ask

Where is Vietnam and how is it related to French Indochina?

- Click the link above to launch the map.
- French (Fr.) Indochina is the multicolored area in on the right-hand side of the map.
- ? *Where is Fr. Indochina in relationship to the United States? (Located in Asia, Southeast Asia, a far distance from the United States; etc)*
- Click on the Bookmark icon and select the bookmark, South Asia.
? *How does the relative location of Fr. Indochina change? Describe its location now (Location: south of China, East of India, Borders Indian and Pacific Oceans)*
- Open and read the map note #1.
? *When did French Indochina exist? Why was this area important to France? (French Indochina was formed in 1880s and consisted of the areas of modern-day Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, The colony lasted until 1954. It was important because of its strategic location and it provided France with a variety of resources).*
- Open and read the map note #2 North Vietnam.
? *Where this map note located? Why is this city/battle important to the country of Vietnam? (Dien Bien Phu; this battle represents the fall of French Indochina and beginning of Vietnamese independence)*

Acquire

Why did the United States get involved militarily in Vietnam?

- Click on Bookmarks and select Fr. Indochina. Open and read map note #3,
? *Why did the US get involved the politics of North and South Vietnam? Which country will the US support? (US had supported France before the fall of Dien Bien Phu; Worried about spread of Communism; Support South Vietnam)*
- Turn on the layer Fr. Indochina – Countries.
What are some of the other countries located in Southeast Asia? (Laos, Burma, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia).

Explore

What was the vegetation and linguistic geography of Fr. Indochina

- Turn off the layer, Fr. Indochina – Countries, and turn on the layer Fr. Indochina – Vegetation.
- Using the Bookmarks, Fr. Indochina – Map Key, Fr. Indochina – South, and Fr. Indochina – North explore the vegetation of the region.
- ? *What patterns do you notice about the vegetation of Fr. Indochina? (Tropical Forest covers most of the area, cultivated areas in the south and coastal areas, marshlands in south Fr. Indochina)*
- Turn off the Fr. Indochina – Vegetation layer and turn on the Fr. Indochina Ethnolinguistic layer.
- Using the Bookmarks, Fr. Indochina – Map Key, Fr. Indochina – South, and Fr. Indochina – North explore the linguistic geography of the region.

? What patterns do you notice? (Answers will vary. Note the linguistic diversity in the northern regions of Fr. Indochina, tribal languages, and where Vietnamese is spoken).
? Why do you think the United States CIA created these maps about French Indochina? (to better understand the cultural and physical characteristics of French Indochina and Vietnam)

Analyze

What was the military situation in Vietnam in 1965?

→ Turn off all layers except Fr. Indochina countries and Fr. Indochina provinces.

→ Turn on the layer Military Bases, 1965.

? What patterns do you notice regarding distribution of military bases in 1965. (Most of North Vietnam's military bases are located in southern part of South Vietnam with a few military bases in North Vietnam. The US military bases are scattered throughout South Vietnam.

→ Turn on the layer, Ho Chi Minh Trail, Open and read map note #4

What was the Ho Chi Minh Trail? What spatial patterns do you notice about the trail? (network of roads and trails that ran from North Vietnam to South Vietnam The system provided support, in the form of manpower and materiel, to the Viet Cong and the People's Army of Vietnam; Pattern explanations will vary)

Act

How did US involvement in Vietnam shift between 1965 – 1973?

→ Turn on the layer Military Bases, 1968.

? What patterns do you notice regarding the distribution of military bases in 1968?. (The number of US military bases increase a lot. There is significant build up near Da Nang and the border with N. Vietnam. A military base opens in Laos)

→ Turn on the layer Military Bases, 1969-1971.

? What patterns do you notice regarding distribution of military bases in 1971?. (The number of US military bases increase. There is significant build up near Da Nang, the border with N. Vietnam, and near Saigon. N. Vietnam opens a military base on Cambodia)

→ Open and read Map Note # 5.

? How did US involvement in Vietnam change between 1969 – 1973?

? When did South Vietnam fall to North Vietnam? (1975; Unified Vietnam created in 1976)

? What information about French Indochina or the Vietnam War did you find surprising or interesting? Identify and explain to things. (Answers will vary)

Next Steps

DID YOU KNOW? ArcGIS Online is a mapping platform freely available to U.S. public, private, and home schools as a part of the White House ConnectedED Initiative. A school subscription provides additional security, privacy, and content features. Learn more about ArcGIS Online and how to get a school subscription at <http://connected.esri.com>.

THEN TRY THIS ...

- ▲ Use this [story map](#) created by the Library of Congress' Veteran's History Project to learn about veteran experiences during the Vietnam War.

Send feedback to: vageoinquiries@gmail.com

Additional materials at www.vageo.org

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