

Lesson 3

Wars in Korea and Vietnam



Setting the Stage

- 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, Japanese troops surrendered to Soviet forces. South of this line, the Japanese surrendered to American troops. As in Germany, two nations developed. One was the Communist industrial north, whose government had been set up by the Soviets. The other was the non-Communist rural south, supported by the Western powers.

War in Korea

- Korea was an independent kingdom until Japan conquered it in the early 20th century.
- After Japan's defeat in WWII, Soviet and American forces agreed to divide Korea temporarily along the **38th parallel** of latitude.
- North Korea was ruled by **Kim Il Sung**, a communist dictator and ally of the Soviet Union.
- South Korea was ruled by **Syngman Rhee**, a non-communist dictator, who was backed by the United States. Both leaders wanted to rule the entire country.
- In early 1950, Kim Il Sung called for a “heroic struggle” to reunite Korea.
- By 1949, both the United States and the Soviet Union had withdrawn most of their troops from Korea. The Soviets gambled that the United States would not defend South Korea.
- So they supplied North Korea with tanks, airplanes, and money in an attempt to take over the peninsula

Korea and 38th Parallel



Standoff at the 38th Parallel

- In June of 1950, North Korean troops attacked and soon, overran most of the south. The United Nations Security Council condemned the invasion.
- The U.S. organized a United Nations force to help South Korea under the command of **General Douglas MacArthur**
- U.N. forces were finally able to stop the North Koreans in August along a line known as the **Pusan Perimeter**.
- This perimeter was centered on the port city of Pusan, in the southeastern corner of the Korean peninsula.
- In September 1950, U.N. troops landed on the beaches around the port of **Inch'on**, behind enemy lines.
- The U.S.-led troops quickly captured Korea's north-south rail lines and cut off North Korean troops from their supply of food and ammunition.
- By November, the U.N. forces had advanced north to the **Yalu River**, along the border of China.

The Fighting Continues

- The success of the U.S.-led forces alarmed China, as Mao Zedong sent hundreds of thousands of Chinese troops to help the North Koreans.
- During the rough winter the Chinese and North Koreans forced United Nations troops back to the south of the **38th parallel**.
- The Korean War turned into a stalemate.
- In 1953, both sides signed an armistice, or end to fighting.
- Nearly two million North Korean and South Korean troops remained dug in on either side of the **demilitarized zone (DMZ)**, an area with no military forces near the 38th parallel.
- The armistice lasted for the rest of the Cold War, but no peace treaty was ever negotiated.
- Over 4 million soldiers and civilians died as a result of this war.

ZHONG GUO

Yalu River

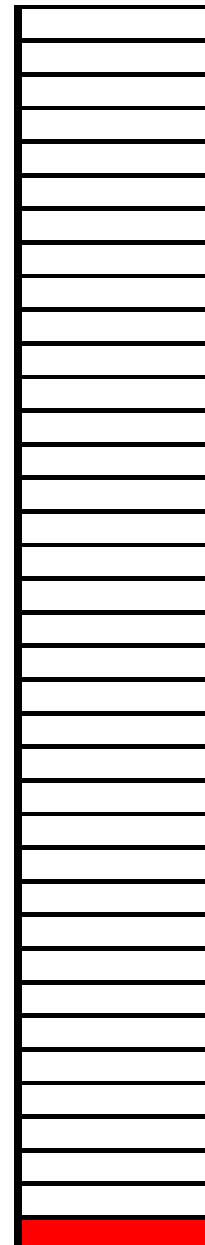
Pyongyang

38°

Inchon Seoul



Pusan



1953

1952

1951

1950

Aftermath of the War

- After the war, in North Korea, the Communist dictator Kim Il Sung established collective farms, developed heavy industry, and built up the military. At Kim's death in 1994, his son Kim Jong Il took power.
- Under his rule, Communist North Korea developed nuclear weapons but had serious economic problems. On the other hand, South Korea prospered, thanks partly to massive aid from the United States and other countries.
- In the 1960s, South Korea concentrated on developing its industry and expanding foreign trade.
- With the 1987 adoption of a democratic constitution, however, South Korea established free elections. During the 1980s and 1990s, South Korea had one of the highest economic growth rates in the world.
- Political differences have kept the two Koreas. North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons is a major obstacle.
- The United States still keeps troops in South Korea.

North Korea's Three Leaders

Kim Il-Sung



Kim Jong-Il



Kim Jong-Un



The Vietnam War



Indochina After WWII

- The Eastern part of mainland Southeast Asia, or Indochina, was conquered by the French during the 1800s.
- The Japanese overran Indochina during WWII, but face fierce resistance in Vietnam, from local **guerillas**, small groups of loosely organized soldiers were determined to be free from all foreign rule.
- After the Japanese were defeated, the French set out in 1946 to re-establish their authority in Indochina.
- In Vietnam, they faced guerilla forces led by **Ho Chi Minh**, a nationalist and communist who had fought the Japanese.
- Ho Chi Minh fought the French in the **First Indochina War**, winning a surprising victory at the bloody battle of **Dienbienphu** in 1954. This battle convinced the French to leave Vietnam.
- Meanwhile, **Cambodia and Laos** gained their independence.

War Breaks Out in Vietnam

- In the early 1900s, France controlled most of resource-rich Southeast Asia. (**French Indochina** included what are now Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.) But nationalist independence movements had begun to develop.
- American foreign policy planners saw the situation in Vietnam as part of the global Cold War.
- **President Eisenhower** developed the **domino theory** – the view that a communist victory in South Vietnam would cause noncommunist governments in Southeast Asia to fall to communism, like a row of dominoes, such as Laos and Cambodia.
- **Ho Chi Minh** remained determined to unite Vietnam under communist rule.
- He continued to aid the **National Liberation Front**, or **Viet Cong**, the communist rebels trying to overthrow South Vietnam's government.
- At first, the United States sent only supplies and military advisors to South Vietnam. Later it sent thousands of troops, turning a local conflict into a major Cold War conflict.

Southeast Asia, formerly French Indochina



U.S. Troops Enter the Fight

- In August 1964, U.S. President Lyndon Johnson told Congress that North Vietnamese patrol boats had attacked two U.S. destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin (not true).
- As a result, Congress authorized the president to send U.S. troops to fight in Vietnam.
- By late 1965, more than 185,000 U.S. soldiers were in combat on Vietnamese soil. U.S. planes had also begun to bomb North Vietnam. By 1968, more than half a million U.S. soldiers were in combat there.
- The United States had the best equipped, most advanced army in the world. Yet it faced two major difficulties.
- First, U.S. soldiers were fighting a guerrilla war in unfamiliar jungle terrain.
- Second, the South Vietnamese government that they were defending was becoming more unpopular. At the same time, support for the Vietcong grew, with help and supplies from Ho Chi Minh, the Soviet Union, and China. Unable to win a decisive victory on the ground, the United States turned to air power.

North Vietnam supply routes through Cambodia and Laos to support the Vietcong resistance against the U.S.

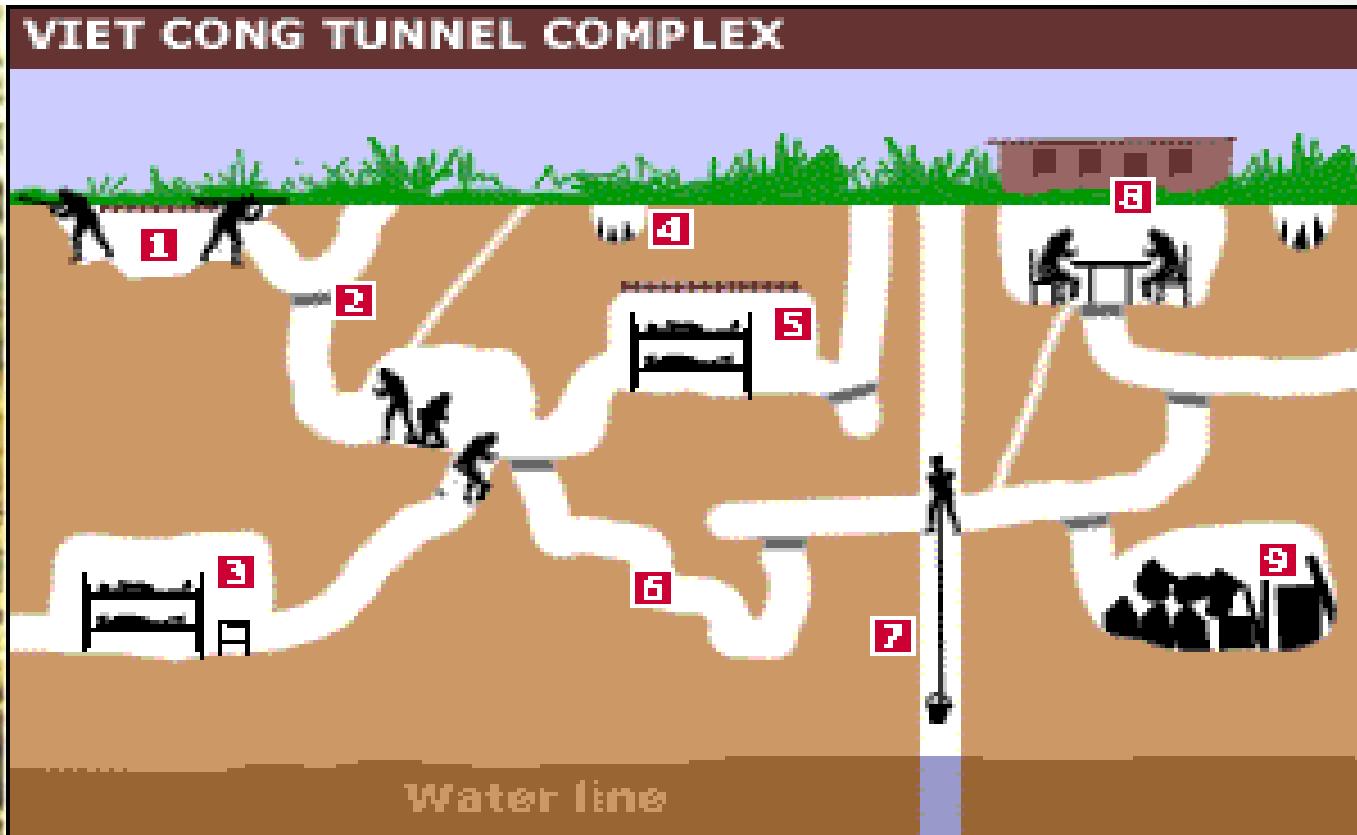
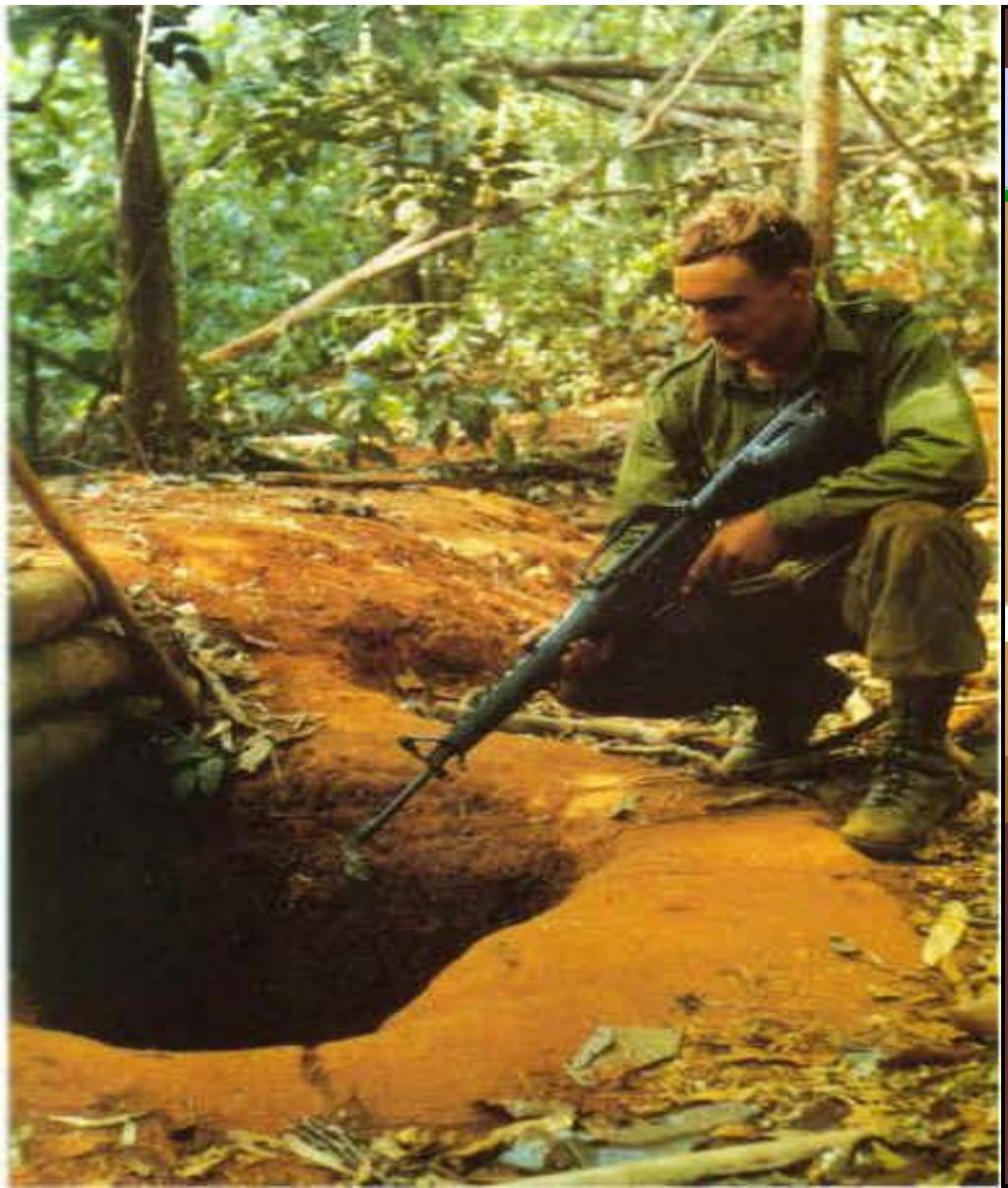
Red line
Indicates
Ho Chi Minh
Trail through
Laos &
Cambodia



U.S. Response to Guerilla War

- Some of the tactics the Americans used to battle the Viet Cong also harmed much of the rural population.
- The United States began widespread “**carpet bombing**” of millions of acres of farmland and forests in an attempt to destroy enemy hideouts and deter guerrilla attacks.
- In an attempt to expose Vietcong tunnels and hideouts in South Vietnam, U.S. planes dropped **napalm**, a gasoline-based bomb that set fire to the jungle.
- American planes also sprayed **Agent Orange**, a leaf-killing toxic chemical that devastated the landscape.
- Attempts to control villages caused U.S. soldiers to conduct **search-and-destroy missions**, uprooting villagers with suspected ties to the Viet Cong, killing their livestock, and burning their villages.
- Most villagers fled into cities and refugee camps creating more than 3 million refugees in South Vietnam.

Vietcong Tunnels



- ① Firing post
- ② Airtight trapdoor
- ③ First aid post
- ④ Punji stake trap
- ⑤ Reinforced sleeping chamber

- ⑥ Blast deflection wall
- ⑦ Well
- ⑧ Meeting room
- ⑨ Storage cache for weapons and food

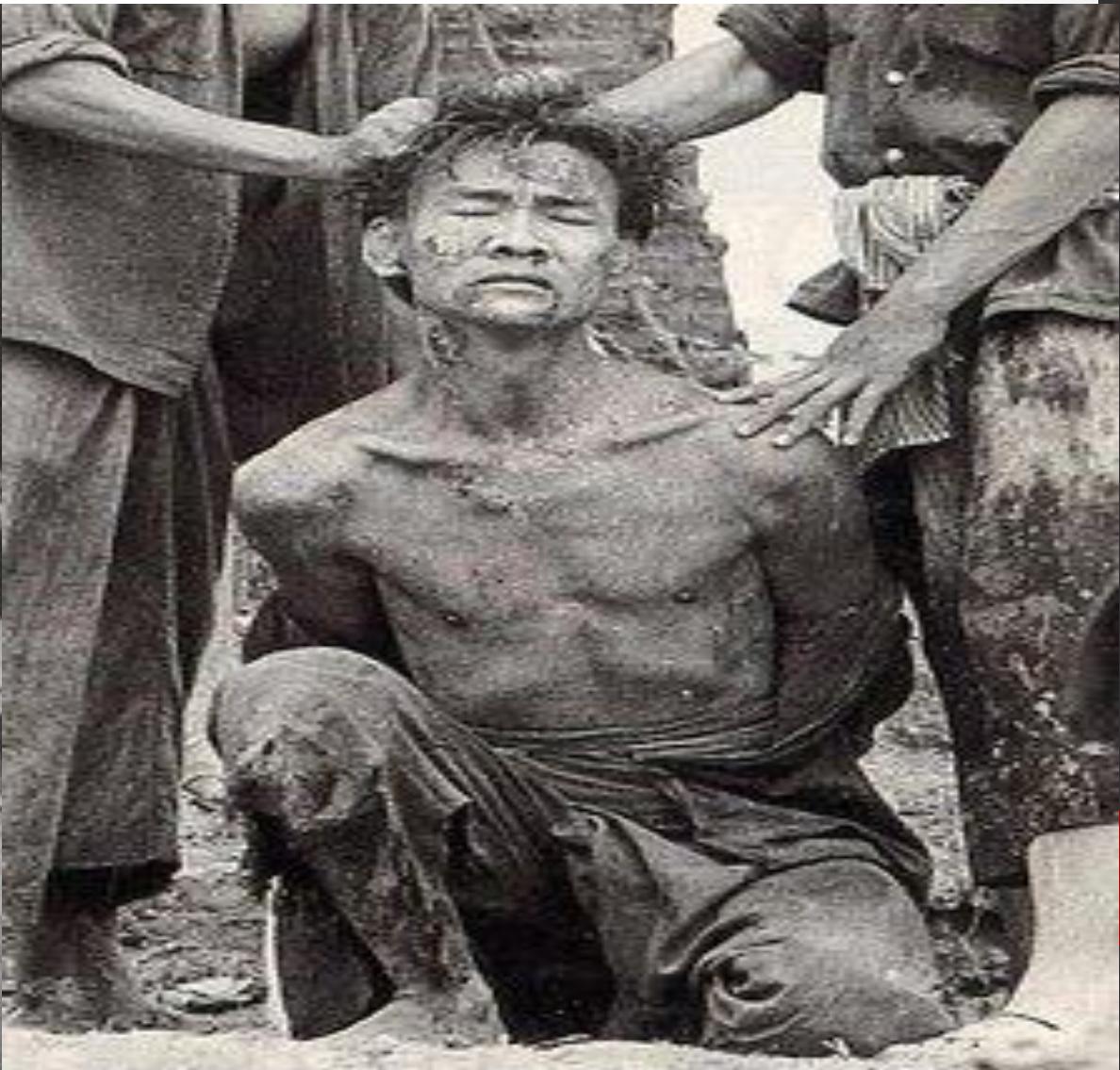
The United States Withdraws

- During the late 1960s, the war grew increasingly unpopular in the United States. Dissatisfied young people began to protest the war. Bowing to intense public pressure, **President Richard Nixon** began withdrawing U.S. troops from Vietnam in 1969.
- Nixon had a plan called **Vietnamization**. It allowed for U.S. troops to gradually pull out, while the South Vietnamese increased their combat role.
- To pursue Vietnamization while preserving the South Vietnamese government, Nixon authorized a massive bombing campaign against North Vietnamese bases and supply routes. He also authorized bombings in neighboring Laos and Cambodia to destroy Vietcong hiding places.
- In response to protests and political pressure, Nixon kept withdrawing U.S. troops.
- The last left in 1973. Two years later, the North Vietnamese overran South Vietnam. The war ended, but more than 1.5 million Vietnamese and 58,000 Americans lost their lives.

Postwar Southeast Asia

- After American withdrawal from Vietnam, some “**dominoes**” did fall to communism: Cambodia and Laos.
- In 1970, the U.S. bombed supply routes in **Cambodia** and briefly invaded the country.
- Afterwards, the **Khmer Rouge**, a force of Cambodian communist guerillas, gained control of Cambodia and overthrew the government.
- Led by the brutal dictator, **Pol Pot**, the Khmer Rouge unleashed a reign of terror, forcing people from the cities to farming in fields.
- They slaughtered, starved, or worked to death more than one **million** Cambodians (about 33% of the population).
- In the end, a Vietnamese invasion drove out Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge and ended the genocide.

Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge



Vietnam After the War

- After 1975, the victorious North Vietnamese imposed tight controls over the South. Officials sent thousands of people to “[reeducation camps](#)” for training in Communist thought.
- They nationalized industries and strictly controlled businesses. They also renamed [Saigon](#), the South’s former capital, [Ho Chi Minh City](#). Communist oppression caused 1.5 million people to flee Vietnam.
- Most escaped in dangerously overcrowded ships. More than [200,000 “boat people” died at sea](#).
- The survivors often spent months in refugee camps in Southeast Asia. About 70,000 eventually settled in the United States or Canada.
- Although Communists still govern Vietnam, the country now welcomes foreign investment. The United States normalized relations with Vietnam in 1995.

#4a As you read, fill out the chart below about the causes and consequences of wars in Asia. Pgs. 578-580

War in Korea

Causes	Outcomes
1. When and Where was Korea divided into North and South?	1. What separates the two countries today?
2. Why did the U.N. send an international force to Korea?	2. What kind of different economies did North Korea and South Korea develop after the war?

#4b As you read, fill out the chart below about the causes and consequences of wars in Asia. Pgs. 581

French War in Vietnam

Causes	Outcomes
1. Why did War break out between the Vietnamese nationalists and the French?	1. What was the outcome of the war for France and for Vietnam?

#4c As you read, fill out the chart below about the causes and consequences of wars in Asia. Pgs. 583-585

U.S. War in Vietnam

Causes	Outcomes
1. Why did the United States get involved in Vietnam?	1. Why did the United States withdraw its troops from Vietnam?
2. How might U.S. imperialism be one of the causes of the Vietnam War?	2. What was the outcome of the “domino theory”? 3. How many southeast countries fell to communism after the war?