Primary Source

Questioning the U.S. Involvement in Vietnam

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

1. Ball believed that U.S. troops would get bogged down in a long, protracted struggle against guerilla forces that were well adapted to jungle warfare. He believed that victory was thus not attainable. He further believed that as a result of the inevitable failure, U.S. global prestige would suffer.
2. Ball advised Johnson to pull out of Southeast Asia and accept that South Vietnam would fall to the Communists. Specifically, Ball suggested making unacceptable proposals to the leaders of South Vietnam so that they would ask the United States to leave.
3. Johnson was interested in Ball's opinions, but he did not agree with them. Johnson believed that the United States would lose prestige and respect if it did not commit its forces to Vietnam in keeping with the promises of three U.S. presidents.

Search-and-Destroy Mission in Vietnam

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

1. the Ho Chi Minh Trail
2. Answers will vary, and the danger of any particular mission would vary based on many different factors, but exploring a tunnel in wartime without knowing whether there were any enemy soldiers within would certainly be an assignment approached with caution.
3. Answers will vary. Hawks may have seen brave American soldiers working hand in hand during a difficult assignment, but one that had to be done as part of a necessary effort to oppose the spread of communism and keep American promises. Doves, on the other hand, may have focused on the danger of searching this tunnel and how this assignment represented the needless risks to which young Americans were exposed in fighting this unconventional war against an enemy that so effectively used its home-field advantages. It was hard to see how the Americans could ever win.

History and Geography

The Ho Chi Minh Trail

MAP ACTIVITY

1. Students should use a colored highlighter, pen, or pencil to shade North Vietnam.
2. Students should use a different color to shade South Vietnam.
3. Students should use a third color to highlight the Demarcation Line of 1954.
4. Students should indicate within the map's key what color they used for each item.

ANALYZING MAPS

1. Khe Sanh
2. Can Tho
3. southeast
4. approximately 250 miles
5. Answers will vary. By providing materiel and reinforcements to the Vietcong in South Vietnam, the Ho Chi Minh Trail was a major contributor to the defeat of American and South Vietnam forces.

Social Studies Skills

Interpreting Cartograms

PRACTICE THE SKILL

1. New York's population is significantly larger.
2. California would be smaller.

Focus on Writing

The Response to the Protests at the 1968 Democratic National Convention

Student paragraphs should be evaluated using the criteria covered in the "Evaluating and Proofreading" section of the activity.

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