

In the 1968 election, Republican Richard Nixon claimed to have a plan to end the war in Vietnam, but, in fact, it took him five years to disengage the United States from Vietnam. Indeed, Richard Nixon presided over as many years of war in Indochina as did Johnson. About a third of the Americans who died in combat were killed during the Nixon presidency.

Insofar as he did have a plan to bring "peace with honor," it mainly entailed reducing American casualties by having South Vietnamese soldiers bear more of the ground fighting--a process he called "Vietnamization"--and defusing anti-war protests by ending the military draft. Nixon provided the South Vietnamese army with new training and improved weapons and tried to frighten the North Vietnamese to the peace table by demonstrating his willingness to bomb urban areas and mine harbors. He also hoped to orchestrate Soviet and Chinese pressure on North Vietnam.

The most controversial aspect of his strategy was an effort to cut the Ho Chi Minh supply trail by secretly bombing North Vietnamese sanctuaries in Cambodia and invading that country and Laos. The U.S. and South Vietnamese incursion into Cambodia in April 1970 helped destabilize the country, provoking a bloody civil war and bringing to power the murderous Khmer Rouge, a Communist group that evacuated Cambodia's cities and threw thousands into re-education camps.

In late January 1973, the United States, South Vietnam, the Viet Cong, and North Vietnam signed a cease-fire agreement, under which the United States agreed to withdraw from South Vietnam without any comparable commitment from North Vietnam. Historians still do not agree whether President Nixon believed that the accords gave South Vietnam a real chance to survive as an independent nation, or whether he viewed the agreement as a face-saving device that gave the United States a way to withdraw from the war "with honor."

1. Explain Richard Nixon’s plan for ending the Vietnam War. Use Evidence from the text to support your answer.

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2. Using evidence from the text to support your answer explain if Richard Nixon was successful in accomplishing his goal for the United States of end the Vietnam War by having “peace with honor”.

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The United States won every battle it fought against the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong, inflicting terrible casualties on them. Yet, it ultimately lost the war because the public no longer believed that the conflict was worth the costs.

The first large-scale demonstration against the war in Vietnam took place in 1965. Small by later standards, 25,000 people marched in Washington. By 1968, strikes, sit-ins, rallies, and occupations of college buildings had become commonplace on elite campuses, such as Berkeley, Columbia, Harvard, and Wisconsin.

The Tet Offensive cut public approval of President Johnson's handling of the war from 40 to 26 percent. In March 1968, anti-war Democrat Eugene McCarthy came within 230 votes of defeating Johnson in the New Hampshire primary. Anti-war demonstrations grew bigger. At the Democratic convention in Chicago, police beat anti-war protesters in the streets while the Democrats nominated Hubert Humphrey for president. Ironically, the anti-war protesters probably helped to elect Richard Nixon as president in 1968 over Humphrey and in 1972 over George McGovern. Anti-war demonstrations peaked when 250,000 protesters marched in Washington, D.C., in November 1969.

President Nixon's decision to send American troops into Cambodia triggered a new wave of campus protests across the nation. When National Guardsmen at Kent State University shot four students to death in northeastern Ohio, 115 colleges went on strike, and California Governor Ronald Reagan shut down the entire state's university system.