

Vietnam Document Based Essay

Directions: The question is based on the accompanying document. The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise. You are advised to spend 15 minutes planning and 45 minutes writing your answer. In your response you should do the following:

- *State a relevant thesis that directly addresses all parts of the prompt.*
- *Support the thesis or a relevant argument with evidence from all or all but one, of the documents.*
- *Incorporate analysis of all, or all but one, of the documents into your argument.*
- *Focus your analysis of each document on at least one of the following: intended audience, purpose, historical context, and/or point of view.*
- *Support your argument with analysis of historical examples outside of the documents.*
- *Connect historical phenomena relevant to your argument to broader events or processes.*
- *Synthesis the elements above into a persuasive essay.*

Evaluate the extent to which the Vietnam War caused tension in the United States. Focus your answer on the period 1964 to 1975.

Document A

Whereas the United States is assisting the peoples of southeast Asia to protect their freedom and has no territorial, military or political ambitions in that area, but desires only that these people should be left in peace to work out their destinies in their own way: Now, therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Congress approves and supports the determination of the President, as Commander in Chief, to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression.

Source: Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, 1964

Document B

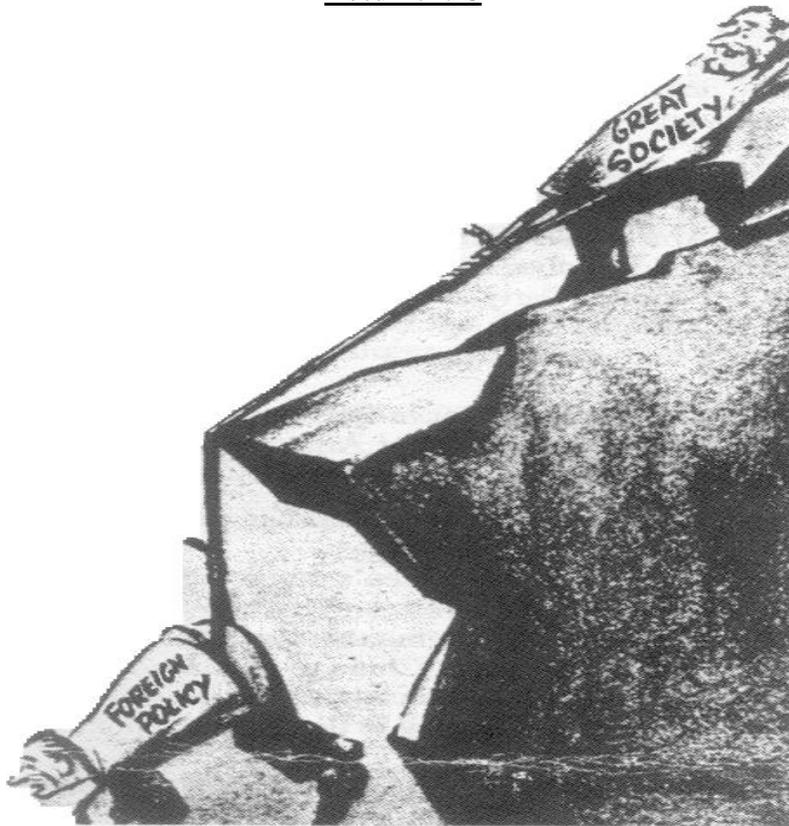
Well, come on Wall Street, don't move slow,
Why man, this is war au-go-go.
There's plenty good money to be made
By supplying the Army with the tools of the trade,
Just hope and pray that if they drop the bomb,
They drop it on the Viet Cong.

And it's one, two, three,
What are we fighting for?
Don't ask me, I don't give a damn,
Next stop is Vietnam.
And it's five, six, seven,
Open up the pearly gates,
Well there ain't no time to wonder why
Whoopee! we're all gonna die.

Well, come on mothers throughout the land,
Pack your boys off to Vietnam.
Come fathers, don't hesitate.
Send 'em off before it's too late.
Be the first one on your block
To have your boy come home in a box.

Source: Country Joe and the Fish, "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-To-Die," 1965,
words and music by Joe McDonald

Document C



"Onward and Upward" (1967)

Source: Bill Crawford©, distributed by Newspaper Enterprise Association

Document D

For years we have been told that the measure of our success and progress in Vietnam was increasing security and control for the population. Now we have seen that none of the population is secure and no areas in under such control ...

This has not happened because our men are not brave or effective, because they are. It is because we have not conceived our mission in this war. It is because we have misconceived the nature of the war. It is because we have sought to resolve by military might a conflict whose issue depends upon the will and conviction of the South Vietnamese people. It is like sending a lion to halt an epidemic of jungle rot.

Source: Robert F. Kennedy, 1968

Document E

...Even as the last of the Cambridge contingent was throwing its urine and deliberately failing its color-blindness tests, buses from the next board began to arrive. These bore the boys from Chelsea, thick, dark-haired young men, the white people [members of the working class] of Boston. Most of them were younger than us, since they had just left high school, and it had clearly never occurred to them that there might be a way around the draft. They walked through the examination lines like so many cattle off to slaughter. I tried to avoid noticing, but the results were inescapable. While perhaps four out of five of my friends from Harvard were being deferred, just the opposite was happening to the Chelsea boys.

Source: James Fallows, writing about this 1969 draft board experience

Document F

I know it may not be fashionable to speak of patriotism or national destiny these days. But I feel it is appropriate to do so on this occasion

Let historians not record that when America was the most powerful nation in the world we passed on the other side of the road and allowed the last hopes for peace and freedom of millions of people to be suffocated by the forces of totalitarianism. And so tonight to you, the great silent majority of my fellow Americans, I ask for your support

Let us be united for peace. Let us be united against defeat. Because let us understand: North Vietnam cannot defeat or humiliate the United States. Only Americans can do that.

Source: Richard Nixon, Address to the Nation, 1969

Document G

SEC. 5(b) Within sixty calendar days after a report is submitted or is required to be submitted pursuant to section 4(a)(1), whichever is earlier, the President shall terminate any use of United States Armed Forces with respect to which such report was submitted (or required to be submitted), unless the Congress (1) has declared war or has enacted a specific authorization for such use of United States Armed Forces, (2) has extended by law such sixty-day period, or (3) is physically unable to meet as a result of an armed attack upon the United States.

Source: The War Powers Act, 1973