**Chapter 30, Section 4: The War Winds Down**

**I. Nixon Moves to End the War** *(pages 910–911)*

**A.** President Nixon chose Harvard professor **Henry Kissinger** to be special assistant for national security affairs, giving him authority to find a way to end the war in Vietnam.

**B.** Kissinger used a policy he called **linkage** to improve relations with the Soviet Union and China—the suppliers of aid to North Vietnam. He started up peace talks again with North Vietnam. At the same time, Nixon began **Vietnamization**—the gradual withdrawal of American troops in Vietnam, allowing South Vietnam to assume more of the fighting.

**C.** As peace negotiations were underway, Nixon increased air strikes against North Vietnam to maintain American strength.

**Discussion Question**

What was Vietnamization? *(This was Nixon’s plan to gradually withdraw American troops**and for South Vietnam to assume more of the fighting.)*

**II. Turmoil at Home Continues** *(pages 911–912)*

**A.** The Vietnam War continued to stir up protests and violence in the United States.

**B.** In 1969 Americans learned of a 1968 event that further increased their feelings that this was a senseless war. An American platoon under the command of Lieutenant William Calley had massacred more than 200 unarmed South Vietnamese civilians in the hamlet of **My Lai.** Most of the victims were old men, women, and children.

**C.** In April 1970, Nixon announced that American troops had invaded Cambodia to destroy Vietcong military bases. Americans viewed this as an expansion of the war, and a wave of protests followed.

**D.** In 1970 Congress repealed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution that had given the president near complete power in directing the war.

**E.** In 1971 a former Defense Department worker, Daniel Ellsberg, leaked what became known as the **Pentagon Papers** to the press. The secret document showed that many government officials had privately questioned the war while publicly defending it. The document also showed how the various administrations deceived the public about Vietnam.

**Discussion Question**

What happened at Kent State on May 4, 1970? *(Ohio National Guard soldiers fired on demonstrators without orders to do so. The event left four students dead and nine others wounded.)*

**III. The United States Pulls Out of Vietnam** *(pages 912–913)*

**A.** By 1971 nearly two-thirds of Americans wanted the Vietnam War to end.

**B.** President Nixon dropped the insistence that North Vietnam had to withdraw from South Vietnam before a peace treaty could be signed. A month before the presidential election, Henry Kissinger announced that peace was at hand. Nixon won re-election in a landslide.

**C.** Peace negotiations broke down when South Vietnam’s president, **Nguyen Van Thieu,** refused any plan that left North Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam.

**D.** The United States began a bombing campaign that eventually led to the resumption of peace talks. On January 27, 1973, the sides agreed to end the war and restore peace in Vietnam. After eight years at war, the longest in American history, the United States ended its direct involvement in Vietnam.

**E.** In March 1975, the North Vietnamese army launched a full-scale invasion of the South. Thieu asked for United States assistance. Nixon had resigned after the Watergate scandal, and the new president, Gerald Ford, asked Congress to supply aid. Congress refused.

**F.** On April 30, the North Vietnamese captured Saigon, united Vietnam under Communist rule, and renamed Saigon, Ho Chi Minh City.

**Discussion Question**

What was not resolved as the peace agreement was signed? *(The parties did not resolve the major issue, which was what the future of South Vietnam would be.)*

**IV. The Legacy of Vietnam** *(pages 913–914)*

**A.** The Vietnam War had a lasting impact on the United States. The war had cost over $170 billion in direct costs and had resulted in 58,000 deaths. Many soldiers who did return home faced psychological problems, and some families were left uncertain about POWs and MIAs.

**B.** In 1973 Congress passed the **War Powers Act** to reestablish limits on executive power. The act required the president to inform Congress of any commitment of troops abroad within 48 hours and to withdraw them in 60 to 90 days unless Congress approved the troop commitment.

**C.** The Vietnam War increased Americans’ cynicism about their government and made them question their leaders.