



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

to strengthen teaching in public schools®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2022 Volume II: American Global Power from Empire to Superpower

Imperial Dilemma - Great Society versus Vietnam in the 1960s

Guide for Curriculum Unit 22.02.03, published September 2022

by Mark A. Hartung

The major foreign policy strategy of the post-World War II era was the policy of containment. Vietnam was the prime focus of that strategy during the presidency of Lyndon Johnson. Concurrent with the escalation of conflict in Vietnam from 1965 on, President Johnson was attempting to reform American society with the War on Poverty and the Great Society social programs. How did these two goals interact and affect each other? Both cost money, and though the United States was enjoying an unprecedented economic boom, that prosperity would not last. Would the efforts to contain communism in Southeast Asia limit the ability of the United States to assist those less fortunate and to roll back years of prejudice and racism? Would the choices made by Johnson about how he fought for these programs and communicated with the nation about Vietnam lead to success or failure? These questions and more are the ideas that students experiencing this unit will investigate.

This unit is written for an 10th grade World History class as an alternative look at ideas about imperialism, though with modification and scaffolding could easily be adapted for 11th and 8th grade U.S. History and used in High School Government classes.

(Developed for World History, grade 10; recommended for World History, grade 10, and U. S. History, grade 11)

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

©2023 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University, All Rights Reserved. Yale National Initiative®, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute®, On Common Ground®, and League of Teachers Institutes® are registered trademarks of Yale University.

For terms of use visit https://teachers.yale.edu/terms_of_use