

Advanced Study Guide—Part II

1. Why did the United States decide to give its support to the Diem government in South Vietnam after the Geneva Conference?
2. Why did the United States and Diem ignore the provisions in the Geneva Accords that called for national elections in 1956? Do you think that such elections could have been fair?
3. Explain why the United States became disillusioned with the Diem government in the early 1960s.
4. Many historians have second-guessed the actions of the Kennedy Administration in the fall of 1963. Discuss these actions in the context of the adage “don’t change horses in mid-stream.”

Extra Challenge: While no one can say what President Kennedy might have done had he lived, his advisers continued to plan and direct U.S. involvement in Vietnam under President Johnson. Does this shed any light on the long-standing debate among historians as to whether great figures shape events or whether the actions of people are determined by events beyond their control?