Mr. Jesse Hodges  
HIS 219 (The Vietnam War)

**KEY TERMS & NAMES FROM THE FRENCH-INDOCHINA WAR 1946-54**


**Vo Nguyen Giap** (1911- ): Senior general of the Viet Minh forces during the French –Indochina War as well as during the American-Indochinese War. Responsible for the Viet Minh victory over the French in the Battle of Dien Bien Phu. Formerly a history teacher, Giap was eventually succeeded during the later stages of the American Indochinese War by General Van Tien Dung.


**Pham Van Dong** (1906 - ): influential leader of the Indo-Chinese Communist Party. Trained in guerilla warfare in China with Ho Chi Minh. Became Premier of the People’s Republic of Vietnam after the fall of the South Vietnamese government. He was influential in determining the course of the negotiations during the Paris Peace Talks between Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho. He also headed the Viet Minh delegation to the Geneva Peace Conference after the defeat of the French at Dien Bien Phu.

**Dien Bien Phu**: village in Tonkin near the Laotian border and scene of the decisive battle of the French-Indochinese War (March- May 1954). The French commander General de Castries surrendered his forces the evening of 7 May 1954. This battle marked the end of French colonialism in SE Asia.


**Dau Tranh** (struggle): strategy employed and devised by Nguyen Vo Giap. It is comprised of two elements: political struggle (social motivation, indoctrination, and mobilization) and military struggle (military actions and bloodshed).

**de Lattre de Tassigny, Jean** (1889-1952): French commander during the French-Indochinese War (1950-51). He was militarily successful and instilled in the French forces confidence and helped create Vietnamese military units to fight against the Viet Minh. He died of cancer in 1952.

**Navarre, Henri Eugene** (1898-1983): French commander after de Lattre and General Salan (1953-54). He devised the plan to entice the Viet Minh into a “set-piece” battle at Dien Bien Phu.
Bao Dai (1913-1997): Last Nguyen emperor of Vietnam. French educated he was used by the French to form a “puppet” government that would counter the influence of the communist Viet Minh. He was encouraged to abdicate after the defeat of Japan during 1945. He briefly ruled Vietnam after the Geneva Accords (1954-55) until defeated in a rigged election by Ngo Dinh Diem. He spent the rest of his life in France.

Viet Bac: area of Tonkin, north of Hanoi. This mountainous jungle terrain was used by the Viet Minh during the first phase of the war with the French. Close to China it was a safe haven, training ground and headquarters area during the early stages of French Indochinese War.


Cogny, Rene (1904-1968): General and commander of French forces in Northern Vietnam (Tonkin) during the final phases of the French-Indochinese War. He disagreed with his senior commander’s (Navarre) strategy, but was in charge of the operation that established the French position at Dien Bien Phu. His aggressive campaigns against the Viet Minh after the fall of Dien Bien Phu helped France remain in control of the Haiphong-Hanoi areas.

Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang (VNQDD): during the 1920s was the major nationalistic movement that attempted to overthrow French colonial rule (noncommunist). Their uprising (1930) was quickly crushed by the French and the organization was destroyed.

Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh (Vietnamese League for Independence): better known as the Viet Minh, established in 1941, this was a coalition of nationalistic groups of Vietnamese created to fight the French and Japanese and establish Vietnamese independence. Controlled by a Central Committee presided over by Ho Chi Minh. Comprised of villagers, peasants, landlords, students, and intellectuals, the VNDLDM eventually became communist in ideology and was the political/military force that defeated the French during the French-Indochinese War (1946-54).

The Geneva Accords (1954): Convened on 26 April 1954. The US was an observer, not a participant. The representatives of China and Russia pressured the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (Viet Minh) to accept the partition of Vietnam along the 17th parallel, creating two sovereign states (North Vietnam and South Vietnam) with the promise of free elections (for the purpose of reunification) for all Vietnam in 2 years. It also permitted 300 days for a regroupment (migration) of those people who wished to leave the north for the south and the south for the north. Cambodia and Laos were essentially free of French rule and forbidden to make any military alliances. The United States government was not pleased with the results and although abiding by the pledge not to interfere with force or the threat of force, encouraged the blocking of the country-wide election that would have undoubtedly been won by Ho Chi Minh and the communist government of the north.