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Sample assessment 2020

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Stimulus book

# Modern History

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## Source 1

### Excerpt from ‘Australia and Indo-China: A case study in the evolution of Australian foreign policy’

[There were several justifications for Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War.] First, as [Prime Minister, Robert] Menzies had told Parliament, it was to stop the advance of expansionist Chinese communism before it reached Australia. In its essentials this justification was a combination of the domino theory and the strategy of forward defence. If South Vietnam, the first domino, fell, it would only be a matter of time before the other dominoes in South East Asia collapsed, thereby precipitating the fall of the ultimate domino — Australia. Australia could not afford to wait until it was directly threatened. Its security interests demanded that the battle against communism be fought several dominoes away, and preferably as far away as possible from the Australian mainland.

Against the background of the Korean War [during the 1950s] [and] Chinese support for various insurgency groups in South East Asia ... concern about the intentions of China had a certain surface plausibility when measured against the fears of the time. This was a period when many feared that communism was on the march in South East Asia ... It should [also] be recalled that the US [United States] and Australian involvement in Vietnam had the support ... of most of the South East Asian governments of the day.

**Source:** Evans, G 1989, ‘Australia and Indo-China: A case study in the evolution of Australian foreign policy’ (transcript), 24 August, pp. 5–6, [www.gevans.org/speeches/old/1989/240889\\_fm\\_australiaandindochine.pdf](http://www.gevans.org/speeches/old/1989/240889_fm_australiaandindochine.pdf).

## Context statement

The excerpt above is from a speech delivered at the Footscray Institute of Technology, Melbourne, in August 1989 by then Senator Gareth Evans, Minister for Foreign Affairs. Evans was a member of the Australian Labor Party.

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## Source 2

### Excerpt from ‘Why Australian troops are going to Vietnam: Denis Warner answers some questions’

*But why on earth does this [conflict in Vietnam] all involve us [Australia]?*

Alliances and self-interest. When it was first set out, SEATO<sup>1</sup> [created] ... ‘a mantle of protection’ over Indo-China, including South Vietnam.

[The SEATO] obligation remains, especially if we accept — as we do — the interpretation that we have individual as well as collective responsibilities under the treaty.

Then there is ANZUS<sup>2</sup> which is the key to our defence.

Under Article 5 [of ANZUS] we recognise that an armed attack in the Pacific area on the United States or New Zealand would be dangerous to peace and we are committed to meet it. Since ‘armed attack’ is defined to include assault on any of the treaty members, armed forces, public vessels or aircraft in the Pacific we do have a very real commitment. And since we also have American assurances that ANZUS will apply if we run into serious trouble in Malaysia and New Guinea, this is not an obligation we can afford to quarrel about.

**Source:** Warner, D 1965, ‘Why Australian troops are going to Vietnam: Denis Warner answers some questions’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 May, p. 2.

## Context statement

Denis Warner, a journalist for *The Sydney Morning Herald* newspaper, wrote these comments in 1965, soon after Australia had escalated its commitment to the Vietnam War. The news article sought to provide additional information about the reasons for Australia sending military forces to the Vietnam War.

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<sup>1</sup> Southeast Asia Treaty Organization

<sup>2</sup> Australia, New Zealand, and United States Security Treaty

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## Source 3

### Excerpt from ‘The American role in Australian involvement in the Vietnam War’

[Australian involvement in the Vietnam War was not based on] an independent desire on the part of Australia to assist in the defence of Vietnam against Chinese or North Vietnamese aggression. Rather the commitment had been made because the United States, for reasons of its own national interests, applied critical pressure upon Australia for such armed contingents ...

Under the ANZUS treaty, signed 1 September 1951, the two nations agreed to support each other in defending their respective lands. For an extremely vulnerable nation such as Australia ... the treaty represented security. With that security, though, came the ... realization that American support in some possible future conflict directly affecting Australia might be relied upon only if [Australia] supported the United States in defending its interests in the Pacific area.

Thus in the 1960s, when the United States applied pressure upon Australia for combat forces, it felt compelled to contribute them in most instances ... Australia realized that, if it did expect to receive American support should some future difficulty arise, it would have to align itself with American views regarding the justifications for involvement [in the Vietnam War] (‘halt the spread of Asian communism’, ‘an obligation under SEATO’).

**Source:** Cuddy, DL 1982, ‘The American role in Australian involvement in the Vietnam War’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 28, no. 3, p. 340.

## Context statement

The author of this journal article, Dennis L Cuddy, is a historian and political analyst. The article was published in the early 1980s, when political historians began questioning the role and significance of treaties in Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War.



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## Source 4

Excerpt from *The Bulletin*



Source: Lindsay, N 1950, 'Nearer, clearer, deadlier....', *The Bulletin*, 7 June, vol. 71, no. 3669, p. 5.

## Context statement

The cartoon above is by Norman Lindsay, who was a political cartoonist. This cartoon was published in *The Bulletin*, a widely read journal that described itself as focusing on 'Australia for the White Man'. The date of publication, 7 June 1950, coincided with news that communist China had become involved in a conflict between North Korean and South Korean forces.

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## Source 5

### Excerpt from ‘Introduction: Australia’s Vietnam War’

While fear of communist expansion was of concern [for Australia], it was not only or mainly its manifestation in Indochina that occasioned consternation in Canberra. Rather, the growth and influence of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and its influence on an ailing President Sukarno in Jakarta [during the 1950s and 1960s] were the goads to an Australian [foreign] policy that looked for a reemphasized American capacity to intervene on our behalf against Indonesian attack, together with the willingness to do so. The Vietnam commitment was the price Australia paid to secure that countercommitment from Washington, or so it thought.

**Source:** Doyle, J, Grey, J & Pierce, P (eds) 2002, ‘Introduction: Australia’s Vietnam War’ in *Australia’s Vietnam War*, Texas A&M University Press, Austin, Texas, p. xvi. Reprinted from *Australia’s Vietnam War* by Doyle, Grey & Pierce by permission of Texas A&M University Press.

## Context statement

The authors of this excerpt — Jeff Doyle, Jeffrey Grey and Peter Pierce — are academics from various Australian universities. They wrote the above remarks as part of an introductory chapter that aims to explain the ‘history of the Australian–American relationship’ (p. xiii).

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## Source 6

### Excerpt from ‘Australia’s involvement in Vietnam and the Gulf conflicts: A comparative analysis of strategic foreign policy formulation’

Australia’s involvement in Vietnam is an exemplary case of the all pervading fear by Australians that they are living in an unstable region. The international context within which the Vietnam decision was made was one flavoured heavily with Cold War ideology; an era of superpower expansionism and a blind drive for global hegemony<sup>1</sup> ... Basic to this perception was the concern about the southward ambitions of the People’s Republic of China and the possible fall of South East Asian ‘dominoes’ as a great danger to Australian interests. The Australian assumption that Hanoi was an important ‘village’ in China’s ‘countryside of the world’ and so open to Chinese communist direction legitimised (in their eyes at least) intervention in South Vietnam. As such, intervention then was to be a purely Australian solution to a purely Australian problem. Yet it was not a problem which Australia sought to overcome by itself.

...

In sum, Australia’s drive to get the United States involved in South Vietnam and its efforts to ensure that it was itself part of that involvement, was politically motivated and a response to what it saw as the necessary defence of South East Asia under threat of advancing communist aggression. The rigidities of Cold War international relations meant that Australia failed to appreciate that they were confronting quite a different phenomenon — that of anti-colonial nationalism. It is thus important [to] be aware that the principles on which the decisions to send troops are [based are] in many respects ambiguous.

**Source:** Oakey, NP 1994, ‘Australia’s involvement in Vietnam and the Gulf conflicts: A comparative analysis of strategic foreign policy formulation,’ *Australian Defence Force Journal*, no. 107, pp. 29–30.

## Context statement

This excerpt is from an article written by Private NP Oakey and published in the *Australian Defence Force Journal*, which was the official journal of the Australian Defence Force.

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<sup>1</sup> leadership; predominance



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