B7: CONFLICT IN VIETNAM, c.1963-75

SOURCES (A) TO (F) FOR QUESTION 7

SOURCE A: Sergeant James Weeks, a US soldier fighting in Vietnam, describes orders he was given in May 1967.

It was explained to us that anything alive in that area was supposed to be dead. We were told that if we saw a 'gook' (slang for Vietnamese) or thought we saw one, no matter how big or small, shoot first. No need for permission to fire. It was just an 'open turkey shoot'... men, women, and children, no matter what their ages, all went into the body count. This operation went on for a few weeks. This was a regular 'search and destroy' mission in which we destroyed everything we found.

SOURCE B: A photograph showing a South Vietnamese woman, suspected of being a member of the Vietcong, held by a US soldier, 1969.
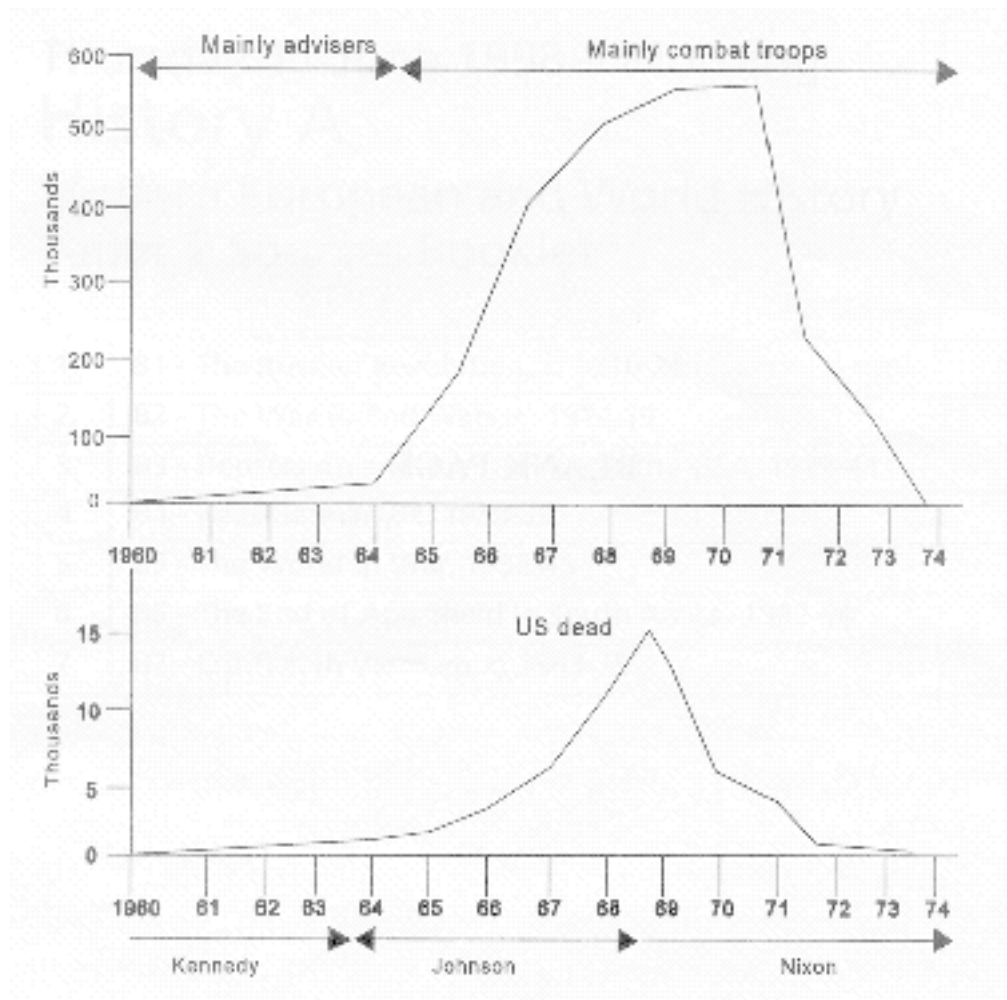

SOURCE C: From an interview with a US intelligence officer working in South Vietnam in the 1960s.

How can you put young men into this kind of war? You can't. You need a lot of experience. What happens is they start shooting at everything that moves because they don't know. They're scared.

SOURCE D: US journalist, Richard Hammer, describes the feelings of US soldiers, 1967.

There are Vietnamese in every ricefield bent over working. None of them looks up when you pass. Then all of a sudden a mortar shell lands right in the middle of the patrol and a couple of guys you've been buddies with are dead and a couple of others are screaming in agony. The Vietnamese are still working in the field, as though nothing had happened. Did one of them lob the mortar? If so, which one? Should you shoot all of them or some of them?

SOURCE E: A graph showing numbers of US troops and US casualties during the Vietnam War.

SOURCE F: Vo Nguyen Giap, a North Vietnamese army General, speaking in 1967.

In sending US troops to South Vietnam, the US invaders and imperialists have met a people's war. The people's war has succeeded in gathering all the people to fight their attackers in all ways and with all kinds of weapons.

END