**Analysis Essay on John F. Kennedy and Vietnam War**

John F. Kennedy's involvement in the Vietnam War was a significant part of his presidency and shaped the course of the conflict in the 1960s. This essay will examine Kennedy's actions in Vietnam, including his foreign policy, strategies, and decisions. It will explore how Kennedy's policies affected the course of the war and how his decisions impacted Southeast Asia's political and military situation. Furthermore, the essay will discuss how Kennedy's Vietnam War policies impacted the United States' foreign policy in the region and beyond. Finally, it will examine the legacy of Kennedy's involvement in the Vietnam War and how his actions impacted the future of the United States' involvement in the region. While John F. Kennedy's involvement in the Vietnam War was significant, his policies, strategies, and decisions ultimately had limited impact on the war's course and outcome.

**Kennedy's Commitment to South Vietnam**

Kennedy's policies of increased American presence in Vietnam were met with fierce resistance from the North Vietnamese government, who saw the increased presence as a violation of their national sovereignty. In response to the perceived American aggression, the North Vietnamese began to launch military operations against American and South Vietnamese forces, leading to an escalation of the conflict (Halberstam, 2008). To counteract the North Vietnamese forces, Kennedy authorized the deployment of additional American military advisors and authorized air strikes against North Vietnamese targets. The result was an increase in American involvement in the Vietnam War.

The conflict between North and South Vietnam began as a political dispute over the future of Vietnam but eventually escalated to the point where military action was necessary. In response, President John F. Kennedy attempted to end the conflict by negotiating a peace treaty with the North Vietnamese but was unsuccessful. To end the fighting, Kennedy then implemented a blockade of North Vietnam to stop the flow of weapons and supplies. Despite these efforts, the North Vietnamese continued their military operations, forcing Kennedy to deploy tens of thousands of American troops to South Vietnam to contain the conflict (Freedman, 2000). Unfortunately, Kennedy's efforts to bring a peaceful resolution to the conflict proved to be fruitless, and the war continued for several more years, claiming the lives of thousands of people.

Kennedy's legacy in the Vietnam War was failed diplomacy and increased military involvement. He could not resolve the conflict; the war escalated and worsened under his watch. Many saw his policies as a failure, and his involvement in the war significantly affected his re-election defeat in 1964 (Freedman, 2000). His successor, Lyndon Johnson, greatly expanded American involvement in the Vietnam War and continued to be a significant source.

**Kennedy's Failed Diplomatic Efforts in the Vietnam War**

Kennedy also began shifting the war's focus from a military-led effort to a more diplomatic one. He sent his brother, Robert Kennedy, to meet with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev to resolve the conflict (Ripert, 2021). He also appointed an ambassador to South Vietnam, Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., tasked with engaging in peace negotiations with the North Vietnamese. Kennedy also proposed the Geneva Accords, which provided a ceasefire and the withdrawal of foreign troops from Vietnam. While these efforts failed to bring about lasting peace, they did serve to reduce the level of violence in Vietnam.

Kennedy also increased economic and military aid to South Vietnam in an attempt to bolster their forces. He also assisted other countries in the region, such as Laos and Cambodia, to contain the spread of Communism. Kennedy also authorized covert operations in Vietnam, such as paramilitary forces and the deployment of U.S. advisors to assist the South Vietnamese military (Hess, 2015). While these actions may have helped to contain Communism in Southeast Asia, the war in Vietnam continued to drag on.

In addition, Kennedy increased the U.S. presence in Vietnam, sending an additional 16,000 troops to the region in 1963. This was the first significant increase in U.S. forces since the start of the conflict, and it marked a shift from a limited advisory role to a more active combat role. Kennedy also expanded the use of air power in the region and authorized the bombing of North Vietnam to pressure the North Vietnamese government into negotiations. While this strategy may have helped to slow the progress of the North Vietnamese forces, it did not bring the war to an end (Ripert, 2021). Ultimately, the Vietnam War was not resolved until the Paris Peace Accords were signed in 1973.

**Conclusion**

John F. Kennedy's influence on the Vietnam War was considerable, though his attempts to resolve it peacefully were unsuccessful in the end. Kennedy's foreign policy initiatives included expanding economic and military aid to South Vietnam, providing more advisors to assist the South Vietnamese government, and increasing air strikes against North Vietnam. Despite these efforts, Kennedy could not bring a diplomatic solution to the conflict, and his increased air power only prolonged the war. Ultimately, it was not until after Kennedy's assassination that President Johnson took a more aggressive approach to end the conflict, leading to a war resolution.

**References**

Freedman, L. (2000). *Kennedy's wars: Berlin, Cuba, Laos, and Vietnam*. Oxford University Press.

Halberstam, D. (2008). *The making of a quagmire: America and Vietnam during the Kennedy era*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Hess, G. R. (2015). *Vietnam: Explaining America's lost war*. John Wiley & Sons.

Ripert, Y. C. (2021). Decolonizing diplomacy: Senghor, Kennedy, and the practice of ideological resistance. *African Studies Review*, *64*(2), 292–314.