

# DOWNLOAD PDF THE COMMUNIST 1968 TET OFFENSIVE : THE TURNING POINT

## Chapter 1 : Why was the Tet Offensive a turning point in the Vietnam War by Annika H.L. on Prezi

*The Tet Offensive was the real turning point in the Vietnam War. On its 40th anniversary, Alan Woods analysed the events that led to the Vietnam War and the significance of the Tet Offensive in bringing about the defeat of US imperialism, and drew some parallels with Iraq.*

By Jennifer Mueller North Vietnam altered its prior guerrilla strategy in the Tet offensive, targeting large cities and towns. The United States entered the war in Vietnam to defend the South Vietnamese government against the Communist revolutionaries in the North. However, North Vietnamese forces launched a surprise offensive attack on Tet, an important national holiday celebrating the lunar new year. The massive escalation of the war marked the beginning of American withdrawal from the conflict. Communist forces began their invasion of 13 South Vietnamese cities in the early morning hours of January 31, -- just as many families were beginning their traditional holiday rituals. The initial attacks benefited from the element of surprise to quickly capture many South Vietnamese cities and American strongholds. North Vietnam counted on the surprise attack leading to an uprising of revolutionary support among the South Vietnamese people. The Battle of Hue In Hue, the former capital of Vietnam located approximately 50 miles south of the demilitarized zone between North and South, the initially successful Communist occupation resulted in protracted fighting and heavy casualties. American journalists in Hue recorded shockingly graphic television footage that was broadcast worldwide. Early in the occupation, Communist forces went from house to house in the city, rounding up all civilians who had anything to do with the South Vietnamese government or American troops. These people were executed and buried in mass tombs not discovered until after the North Vietnamese were finally expelled from the city on February The battle ended with more than 5, Communist soldiers killed, while U. Spread Too Thin Despite initial success, the North Vietnamese attack ultimately was too ambitious to defeat superior American firepower. Part of the element of surprise had been to attack in as many locations as possible, rather than concentrating forces in a single area. As fighting continued and the hoped-for civilian uprising never materialized, the heavy casualties among North Vietnamese forces forced them to withdraw. The horrific television footage documenting the atrocities of the war led to considerable anti-war sentiment in the United States and elsewhere. The offensive was a psychological victory in Vietnam as well, where American and South Vietnamese forces lost considerable support among the people in the countryside. News coverage brought graphic depictions of the horrors of war straight into American living rooms, and even those who had previously supported U. In March, Johnson announced further U. Although peace negotiations would take another five years, the slow process of American withdrawal from the country had begun.

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## Chapter 2 : Tet Offensive - Wikipedia

*Even though the peace talks would drag on for another 5 years, the Tet Offensive marked a crucial turning point in American involvement in the Vietnam War. Likewise, although the war itself would continue for another 7 years, the Tet turned the war in the communists' favor and sowed the seeds for its eventual victory in*

The Tet Offensive was the real turning point in the Vietnam War. On its 40th anniversary, Alan Woods analysed the events that led to the Vietnam War and the significance of the Tet Offensive in bringing about the defeat of US imperialism, and drew some parallels with Iraq. But these figures pale in insignificance beside the horrific casualties suffered by the Vietnamese. Almost 1., North and South Vietnamese were killed in action. To this we must add 2., wounded. It was one of the bloodiest wars in history, and one that took a particularly high toll of civilian lives. The total number of Vietnamese people killed in this conflict will never be known but was probably not fewer than three million, and the total number of casualties not fewer than 8 million. The number of American soldiers in Vietnam rose from 23, in to , in In January the total number of U. Despite this the U. Army was unable to subdue Vietnam. This was the first time in history that the USA has been defeated in a war Korea was a draw. In August the new President, Lyndon B. Johnson, ordered the first bombing of North Vietnam, operation "Rolling Thunder". The purpose was to break the Vietnamese will to struggle through "shock and awe". The number of bombs dropped over Vietnam in this campaign alone was greater than the total dropped during the entire Second World War: But the numbers of dead and wounded do not tell the whole story. The country was devastated by years of carpet-bombing. Thousands of square miles were laid waste. Billions of dollars were wasted. Thousands of acres of forest were destroyed by the dropping of poisonous chemicals by the US air force "defoliants". This, in plain English, is known as chemical warfare. Many US soldiers developed serious illnesses through contact with these chemical agents. But for a huge number of Vietnamese it meant generations of deformed babies, miscarriages, cancers and all manner of hideous illnesses. The origins of the war The origins of the Vietnam War were rooted in the long and bitter struggle of the Vietnamese people against French colonial rule. Its main purpose was to fight against French colonial rule, and it always had a heavy nationalist element. As in China, the struggle for social emancipation was inseparably linked to the struggle for freedom from foreign rule. The Second World War threw everything into the melting pot. In September Japanese troops occupied Indochina, but allow the French to continue their colonial administration of the area. The resulting oil shortage pushed Japan to risk war against the U. This strategic aim meant that not only Japan but the old imperial powers Britain and France also had to be ejected. It is the reason for the apparent friendliness of Washington to Ho Chi Minh at that time. In fact the Americans helped to save his life. In the OSS the forerunner of the CIA parachuted a team into his jungle camp in northern Vietnam to treat Ho, who was seriously ill with malaria and other tropical diseases. In August, Japan surrendered and the French colonialists returned to reclaim their former possessions. The Vietnamese resisted and a long period of anti-colonial struggle commenced. Ho Chi Minh attempted to negotiate the end of colonial rule with the French, but without success. French imperialism had no intention of giving up Vietnam. A bitter struggle began, in which the country was divided north and south. The French army shelled Haiphong harbour, killing over 6, Vietnamese civilians, and open war between France and the Viet Minh commenced. By this time the Cold War between the U. A and Russia had begun. On the other hand, Mao, having won the civil war in , began to supply weapons to the Viet Minh. In the end, the U. But to no avail. The French imperialists were decisively defeated in the celebrated battle of Dien Bien Phu on May 7, Despite substantial American backing, the French finally lost control of their Vietnamese colony. Later Giap was to comment: It was the first time a poor feudal nation had beaten a great colonial power that had a modern industry and a massive army. The victory meant a lot, not just to us, but to people all over the world. After the humiliating defeat at Dien Bien Phu, the French were forced to leave Vietnam after a century of colonial rule. The Geneva Conference on Indochina declared a demilitarised zone at the 17th parallel with the North under the rule of the

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Vietnamese Stalinists and the South under the leadership of Ngo Dinh Diem. This division of the country into two halves was supposed to be temporary. But Stalin, fearing a direct conflict with the USA, put pressure on Ho Chi Minh to agree to a settlement by which the Stalinists would be given the northern part of the country and the French to the South pending the holding of general elections, which would decide who would rule the country. US imperialism was already intervening in Vietnam in the s. The same year Bao Dai selected Ngo Dinh Diem, the future dictator, as prime minister of his government. The North Vietnamese embarked on a policy of radical land reforms. The landlords were expropriated and imprisoned. This was unacceptable to Washington, which was embarked on a worldwide confrontation with "Communism". It was agreed that nationwide elections would be held in But America opposed the elections, so they never took place. General Andrew Goodpastor, aide to President Eisenhower, stated: I would say that was part of it. The other was a sense that even if free elections were held, they probably would be dominated by the Communists and the Communists would gain control. Elections are very good, as long as they serve to elect governments that are friendly to the United States. But if they do not, they are not to be recommended. This has been the philosophy of Washington ever since. Having deliberately split the country in half, the United States underwrote the vicious dictatorship of President Diem in South Vietnam, a fanatical anti-communist. Diem ruthlessly suppressed any opposition. But Washington nevertheless backed him as a "democrat". The decision not to hold elections made war inevitable. The Americans pumped vast economic and military resources into South Vietnam in order to build a puppet state in South Vietnam just as they are doing today in Iraq. The South Vietnamese generals became over-confident as a result of American support. They decided to attack North Vietnam. In fighting began between the North and the South. The first American combat deaths in Vietnam occurred in when Vietnamese guerrillas attacked Bien Hoa billets, killing two US servicemen. But the combat only commenced in earnest in the following decade. In , National Liberation Front known to its enemies as the "Viet Cong" was set up by Hanoi in order to fight Diem and to unite the country. This was supported by Moscow. The NLF fighters were making gains in the countryside in the South. The inhabitants were moved into fortified "strategic hamlets," built under the supervision of American advisers. This policy was carried out with brutal coercion and was extremely unpopular with the peasants, who flocked to the ranks of the guerrillas. The reasons why the USA became involved in Vietnam had nothing to do with "democracy", as its actions clearly show. It was dictated by the defence of imperialist interests and strategic questions such as the need to contain Russia and China and halt the advance of "Communism" in Asia. News and World Report". This is what lies behind the growing U. The loss of Vietnam would trigger the loss of Southeast Asia, and conceivably even the loss of India, and would strengthen the Chinese and the Soviet position across the world. As a Democrat, some supposed that he would favour a more peaceful foreign policy. Nowadays, it has become fashionable to paint Kennedy as a progressive and a man of peace. But this is in flagrant contradiction to the facts. Within a year of his election, he backed the invasion of Cuba, which ended in the Bay of Pigs fiasco in Cuba. Smarting from the effects of this humiliation, Kennedy set out to show the strength of US imperialism in Asia. The first stages of US military involvement in Vietnam were extremely limited and cautious. These advisers were initially sent to train the South Vietnamese army in counterinsurgency. However, President Kennedy declared that they would respond if fired upon. Indeed, violence was the normal weapon used to prop up a brutal and unpopular regime against its own people. All this was justified by Washington with its customary cynicism. Speaking on May 23, , Robert McNamara said: There was a growing opposition.

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## Chapter 3 : Events - HISTORY

*The Tet Offensive was a coordinated series of North Vietnamese attacks on more than cities and outposts in South Vietnam. The offensive was an attempt to foment rebellion among the South.*

The Tet Offensive , which surprised U. Visit Website February State Department announced the highest U. McCarthy had announced his candidacy in November as the antiwar alternative to Johnson, who was at the time expected to win the Democratic nomination handily. Kennedy announced he would enter the presidential race. On the same day though it would not be revealed until the following year , U. In a televised address to the nation, an increasingly embattled Johnson announced: While in Memphis to support striking sanitation workers in that city, the civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land. Ray was convicted, and died in prison in University officials then called in officers from the New York City Police Department, who broke up the demonstration, beating and arresting hundreds of protesters. The protests at Columbia exemplified the wave of student activism that swept the globe in , including mass demonstrations in Poland, West Germany, Mexico City, Paris, Italy and elsewhere. As the protests continued , millions of French workers began striking in sympathy with the students, eventually leading President Charles de Gaulle to dissolve the National Assembly, call for immediate elections and threaten military intervention. On the night of the California primary which he won, putting him in reach of securing the Democratic presidential nomination , Robert F. When the Democratic National Convention opened in August, thousands of students, antiwar activists and other demonstratorsâ€”including groups like the Yippies, Students for a Democratic Society SDS and the Black Panthers â€”poured into Chicago , where they were met with a violent police response called out by Mayor Richard Daley. After being awarded gold and bronze medals, respectively, in the meter sprint event in the Summer Olympics in Mexico City, U. Olympic team, but were seen as heroes in the black community, and their silent protest against racial discrimination lives on as one of the most iconic images in sports history. The race tightened in the last weeks after Johnson halted air attacks on North Vietnam, which benefited Humphrey. But Nixon triumphed on Election Day with a comfortable electoral college lead despite a razor-thin margin of victory in the popular vote. The third-party candidate George Wallace , a former Alabama governor, captured The tumultuous year ended on a positive note, at least, as three astronauts aboard Apollo 8 â€” Jim Lovell , Bill Anders and Frank Bormanâ€”became the first humans to orbit the moon. Upon emerging from the shadowy dark side of the moon, Lovell famously announced:

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## Chapter 4 : Why was Vietnam a significant turning point in the Cold War

*In previous years, South and North Vietnam had observed an informal truce during the Tet holiday. Communist forces began their invasion of 13 South Vietnamese cities in the early morning hours of January 31, -- just as many families were beginning their traditional holiday rituals.*

Occurring at the beginning of , the Tet Offensive is named as such due to its link to the annual cultural celebration known as Tet. The marking of a new year in Vietnam, Tet would usually bring hope for a better future; like any new year celebration and a chance to start new. The name is a fitting one therefore, the Offensive itself launched on the early hours of the morning on January 31st, marking a new beginning for the American-Vietnamese conflict. This article will explore how neither side truly won the offensive but launched a new chapter and a series of conflict in the brutal war that spanned for nearly 20 years! During a few days, vicious battles broke out across the country; led specifically by the North Vietnamese General, Vo Nguyen Giap, but with an increasing Southern insurgency known as Vietcong. The Vietnamese fought with guerrilla style warfare, ambushing US soldiers through tactical means. They often found themselves disguised within crowds, planting explosives and traps in order to disperse the Americans. It was difficult for the Americans to deal with this type of warfare, when they were so used to open fields of battle. Their methods on the other hand put countless civilians at risk, with the use of helicopters and artillery to ineffectively counter the guerrilla tactics. Despite this and the ever-growing support of the Vietcong in the South due to the forced movement of peasants to safer areas, the Americans successfully drove out the communist forces after 2 to 3 days. The military landscape had not changed drastically and of the 85, soldiers that they were attacked with, 37, lost their lives. In comparison, only 2, US military members lost their lives during these particular battles. Photo from Wikimedia Commons President Johnson thought the end of the war was in sight. It became clear that this would be a bigger struggle than they had first anticipated. It took 2 months to truly expel the Northerners, by which point all US morale had been lost. The tactic of sending out soldiers as bait, to draw out the US opposition and ambush them with support from helicopters was unfavourable to say the least in the eyes of those very soldiers. The war turned to hell, with civilians and soldiers alike praying for its eventual conclusion. The seed of doubt was planted into the American nation. It became clear to advisors and Johnson himself that the war that the US had heroically embarked on to rid Vietnam of its Communist ties, was in fact unwinnable. The doubt of victory started to turn to certainty of defeat, as the conflict continued to escalate. Within the next 7 years of Tet the war came to a decisive end, an end which no one thought would have been plausible at the start of the war.

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## Chapter 5 : Tet Offensive: a turning point for war and public opinion - stories - Stripes

*The Tet Offensive proved to be the turning point of the Vietnam War and its effects were far-reaching. It changed the entire way that the United States approached the war: before the Tet Offensive the U.S. objective in Vietnam was to win the war; after the Tet Offensive, the U.S. objective.*

Tuchman, *The March of Folly*, pp. It shed a light backward on American policy so far. The military leaders lost credibility with the American people, and so did President Johnson: Harsch told the public that Tet was at odds with what the government had led the people to expect. Domestic morale was negatively affected by the Tet Offensive. Joining the anti-war demonstrations by this time were members of Vietnam Veterans against the War, many of whom were in wheelchairs or on crutches. The sight of these men on television throwing away the medals they had won during the war did much to cause people to move over to the anti-war cause. I got a letter from L. It said this is your lucky day. I am trying everyone to please. I cussed until the captain called me down. Chorus Every night the local gentry, Sneak out past the sleeping sentry. They go to join the old VC. In their nightly little dramas, They put on their black pajamas, And come lobbing mortar shells at me. Chorus We go round in helicopters, Like a bunch of big grasshoppers, Searching for the Viet Cong in vain. They left a note that they had gone. They had to get down to Saigon, Their government positions to maintain. McCarthy and Kennedy were peace candidates; Humphrey was the establishment candidate. If you love your country and the things for which it stands Vote for Gene McCarthy and bring peace to this our land. Tom Hayden and Rennie Davis were the key Mobe organizers for the Chicago demonstrations, and would later be indicted for conspiracy and inciting a riot as members of the Chicago Seven. The Chicago demonstrations drew only 10, participants because it was widely anticipated that Mayor Daley would deploy police to prevent marches to the site of the Convention. Law enforcement strung barbed wire fencing to keep the protestors from significant locations where they were likely to gather, for example, the headquarters of the leading candidates and the hall where the convention was held. Armored personnel carriers and military jeeps roamed the streets. Demonstrators reacted to the presence of the police with verbal and physical abuse. Not unexpectedly police responded with force leaving college students a bloody mess. Some observers believed that the protesters were motivated by a desire to provoke a reaction that could be filmed for television news. The chaos in the streets spilled over to inside the convention hall.

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## Chapter 6 : 'Hue ' Revisits An American 'Turning Point' In The War In Vietnam | KCUR

*The Tet Offensive (Vietnamese: Sáp»± kiáp»±n Táºt Máº-u ThÁºn ), or officially called The General Offensive and Uprising of Tet Mau Than (Vietnamese: Táºng Tiáºn cÁºng vÁº Náºi dáºy Táºt Máº-u ThÁºn ) by North Vietnam and the Viet Cong, was one of the largest military campaigns of the Vietnam War, launched on January 30,*

Originally published on November 13, To see more, visit Fresh Air. What kind of fighting is it going to be? Had you ever expected to experience this kind of street fighting in Vietnam? The Tet Offensive soured many Americans on the war, which U. Bowden interviewed dozens of participants in the battle, as well as civilians who suffered terribly and journalists who covered the fighting. I want to begin with a reading of your book. This is a moment where we meet an American soldier who is with a unit that is pinned down by North Vietnamese soldiers. Do you want to just set this up and read us this portion? His name is Carl DiLeo, and he was an infantryman with an Army cavalry unit that had been sent out to push toward the Citadel from the north. And they got trapped in the middle of a field where they were stuck for a day or two, essentially with the North Vietnamese taking target practice at them. And it was a - they lost half of their men. So it was a harrowing and terrifying experience for him and for all of the men who were there. Reading The worst thing was the mortars, which rained straight down on them. They were being launched periodically from only a few hundred yards away. DiLeo could hear the pock and then the whoosh of its climbing. If he looked up, he could actually see the thing as it slowed to its apogee. From that point on, it was perfectly silent. There it would hang, a black spot in the gray sky, for what seemed like a very long beat, the way a punted football was captured in slow motion by NFL Films, before it plummeted straight down at them. All of these were close. You opened your mouth, and, sometimes, you screamed out of fear, and it kept your eardrums from bursting. It was hell, a death lottery where all you could do was wait your turn. If you stayed down in the hole, you were OK unless the mortar had your number and landed right on top of you. They were one hole over. They were erased from the Earth. DiLeo watched the round all the way down, and it exploded right in their hole, vaporizing them. One second, they were there, living and breathing and thinking and maybe swearing or even praying just like him. And in the next second, two hale, young men, both of them sergeants in the United States Army, pride of their hometowns - Perryville, Mo. It - or they - drifted down on DiLeo, who reached up to wipe the bloody ooze from his eyes and saw that his arms and the rest of him were coated, too. Then there would come another pock and another whoosh. And that is Mark Bowden reading from his new book about a pivotal battle in the Vietnam War, "Hue But that particular incident also, I think, highlights some of the things that you see in the war and particularly the ignorance and self-deception of a lot of military commanders. But I want to start here by talking about a young woman, an year-old young woman who was a Viet Cong fighter in the Hue area. Her name was Che Thi Mung. Tell us about her, why she was so committed to the Viet Cong. Well, she was an year-old village girl. Her family had fought for independence against the Viet Minh years earlier. Her grandfather had been arrested. Her father had spent time in jail. The Viet Minh were those who fought against the French when they occupied And so here we were, you know, 14 years later. A new generation was fighting against - this time it was the Americans, who were perceived as foreigners, invaders who were trying to rule the Vietnamese people. Her older sister had joined the Viet Cong and had gotten killed. And after her sister was killed, the South Vietnamese came to the village and rounded up everyone related to her, including Che. And Che was taken and interrogated. She was waterboarded, basically, and was extremely proud of the fact that she had not told them anything. In the fall of , the commanders came to her and said, something big is happening. We have a role for you. And they recruited her and 10 other girls from local villages. And the idea was for them to move into the city of Hue and spy on the Americans and the South Vietnamese. And so she moved in with a family and lived in the center of the city, selling conical hats on the streets and basically observed the comings and goings of American troops from the compound, the MACV Compound in the southern part of the city and other Right - and other, you know, military locations. So she

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knew that something big was coming. But her job was just to observe and report back every evening. There would eventually be an invasion, and she would have a role in guiding these troops through these streets which she knew so well. And so by - actually, by , there were half a million American troops there, an enormous American presence. I mean, Vietnam had become, for all intents and purposes, a Vietnam colony. And, you know, what had happened as a result of this tremendous investment was really not much. And the war was really kind of at a stalemate, even though the general in charge, General William Westmoreland, had made a trip to the United States in late and assured everybody that victory was really just around the corner. He had the trust and confidence of Lyndon Johnson. The president really believed what Westmoreland was telling him. One of the things that you saw in that area - that stage of the war - was that American airpower was used with great ferocity and impact. What was the impact of this incredible level of explosives that were dropped on the country? Well, we were killing a lot of people. And it was definitely hurting the North Vietnamese. They had very few targets. And so one of the things that our pilots would complain about is they were sent out to do these bombing missions. And they would bomb a little bridge, and three days later, it would be rebuilt and back up and running. And it was dangerous because they were getting shot down at a fairly alarming rate. So, you know, I think the - other than the top generals, I think there was a great deal of frustration felt by the troops themselves. So you have this situation where you have South Vietnam, which is the country that is the anti-communist government that we are supporting. They are filtering down, fighting the Americans all the time. And the war is at kind of a stalemate. The North Vietnamese had a plan for a big offensive, a game-changer. Well, they decided to launch attacks on just about every city in South Vietnam. So the North Vietnamese strategy was to infiltrate large numbers of troops throughout the South and launch on the eve of Tet, their big holiday, attacks in all of these cities. The largest of the offensive was planned for Hue. Tell us about it. It had, you know, the citadel, which was a giant fortress which contained the imperial palace, which is where the emperors used to live and reign. The city itself was home to the major universities. In Vietnam, it was a big Buddhist center and also fairly large Catholic Center. It was the home to a lot of intellectuals. And so it had a deep cultural meaning in Vietnam that, I think, frankly escaped the American command. And it had largely been unmarred by the war, right? Out of - partly out of respect for the institutions in Hue, for the historical treasures, the Buddhist pagodas, the imperial palace. Hue had been kind of an oasis. And troops who were stationed there, American troops, you know, saw it as a rear position. He is the - a national correspondent for The Atlantic and a contributing editor at Vanity Fair, also the author of the book "Black Hawk Down. Describe it a little bit. And as you said, it was densely populated. There were only nine entrances in and out of the citadel. The walls are 30, 40 feet high and 30 or 40 feet thick. It looks like something medieval, although it was actually built very early in the 19th century. You know, it was a relic from another era. And if you go to Hue, it gives the city this kind of ancient feel. The North Vietnamese army units and the Viet Cong wanted to surprise the Americans and South Vietnamese, which meant they had to get a lot of arms and troops in position secretly. Explain how they did that. They recruited local people. And they smuggled arms into the city on duck boats, you know, laying weapons and ammunition underneath the decks of these boats and bringing them in that way.

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## Chapter 7 : Tet Offensive Significance: A Virtual Stalemate in Vietnam | Store

*The Tet Offensive was a turning point in the Vietnam War, but one that irreparably poisoned American public opinion on U.S. involvement and ushered in the steady drawdown of American combat troops.*

It had been jungle warfare, with small U. When the enemy did initiate attack, it quickly faded back into the bush when faced with superior U. That dynamic changed overnight Jan. Marines carry a wounded man to a helicopter pad on Khe Sanh base to be evacuated on Jan. The base was hit by North Vietnamese mortar and artillery fire. The surprise assaults included parts of Saigon, the southern capital, as well as U. Shaking off the surprise of such a coordinated and widespread offensive, U. Within weeks, most of the Communist fighters had been decimated or driven into the countryside, although a bloody fight would continue for a month in the dynastic city of Hue. Military leaders saw the rout as a turning point in the conflict, with the chance to strike a fatal blow to a weakened enemy to achieve victory. The Tet Offensive was a turning point in the Vietnam War, but one that irreparably poisoned American public opinion on U. Five years later, American troops had completely withdrawn, and in North Vietnamese forces stormed into Saigon and reunited north and south. Marshall Chair of Military History at U. Defense and military officials painted a picture of a weakened enemy nearing collapse. William Westmoreland, commander of U. The campaign was perhaps too convincing, given what the North Vietnamese unleashed in January , a fulsome attack that underscored how far the North was from defeat. Communist fighters chose six strategic targets in downtown Saigon, among them the U. Embassy, the presidential palace and the national radio station. While the number of insurgents were too few to hold their targets for very long, the media images gave Americans a glimpse of an atrocious new breed of violence. In Saigon on Feb. American counterattacks in the Chinese district of Cholon in Saigon are believed to have killed hundreds of civilians. Scenes of terrified refugees pouring from the district were beamed around the world. The enemy had dug into a massive complex called the Citadel, which was surrounded by a moat and stone ramparts, some as thick as 40 feet. More than American troops died in the day battle, with 1, wounded; South Vietnamese soldiers were killed. After hearing reports of unprecedented destruction in South Vietnamese villages, Arnett joined a press trip Feb. There he saw the ruins of shacks, homes, businesses and restaurants badly damaged by U. Hundreds of civilians had been killed. Arnett interviewed a dozen military advisers in the town, who explained how the U. Strategic success The North Vietnamese were demoralized in the wake of their failure. Local firefighters battle the fire at the Saigon radio station. The Viet Cong suffered particularly heavy losses. Willbanks, who was deployed to South Vietnam in , never saw any Viet Cong during his tour. But the Tet Offensive did set into motion developments in the U.

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## Chapter 8 : Why Was the Tet Offensive the Turning Point of the Vietnam War? | Synonym

*Three and a half minutes later, the president hung up. The rest of the year wouldn't get any easier. TET. Johnson was speaking of a massive Communist offensive, which began with the onset of Tet—the Vietnamese new year celebration—during the early morning hours of January*

The lull of the Tet lunar New Year holiday had settled across South Vietnam—and the United States was within minutes of the pivotal point from which it eventually lost the Vietnam War. Daniel stood guard at the U. Before it was over, Daniel and Sau were dead. So were more than 81, other Americans and Vietnamese. On that night 20 years ago today, about 80, Communist troops struck at 36 of 44 provincial capitals plus 64 district towns across the length and breadth of South Vietnam. On the Asian calendar Tet marked the start of the Year of the Monkey—a creature, according to superstition, full of mischief and therefore portending a year in which a lot of things can go wrong. Fate was not so kind to year-old Daniel, of Durham, N. Sebast, 20, of Albany, N. Sau and his fellow guerrillas poured from the taxi and blasted into the compound. Daniel and Sebast radioed a "Signal," a code for "enemy attack," then opened fire on the invaders. He and Sebast and three other U. When North Vietnamese soldiers swarmed toward them, missionary Robert Ziemer raised his hands—and was cut down by bullets in his head and chest. Fellow missionary Ed Thompson screamed, "Mercy, mercy," and died in a hail of bullets, trying without success to shield his wife, Ruth, as he fell. In the ancient imperial capital of Hue, about miles north of Saigon, American Marines were pinned down in two tiny enclaves on either side of the Perfume River. It would take 25 days before they could claw out the Viet Cong and rip down their yellow-starred flag. The Tet offensive raged from the mud of the Mekong Delta in the south to the leech-infested, booby-trapped hills of the north in South Vietnam. Before it was over, more than 81, people died—nearly 4, Americans, 4, South Vietnamese, South Koreans, an estimated 58, North Vietnamese and Viet Cong and 14, civilians. But it was the audacious assault on the U. Embassy and the grim, door-to-door battle by American Marines through the streets of Hue that captured and focused the attention of Americans at home on the horror—and eventually the futility—of Vietnam. That, and one other vignette that touched off worldwide revulsion: Ignoring the cameramen, Loan—many of whose men had been killed that day—raised a pistol to the head of the terrified suspect and pulled the trigger. Psychological Turning Point Two decades later, arguments still rage whether Tet was a brilliant coup or a resounding military defeat for the Communists. But most observers, both hawks and doves, agree it was the psychological turning point of the war. Before Tet, the U. Tet viciously demonstrated that was not true.

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## Chapter 9 : Tet Offensive - HISTORY

*The Tet Offensive: The Turning Point of the Vietnam War* Jennifer Walton The History Teaching Institute offers summer sessions for Advanced Placement teachers and a year-round Teaching American History program, History WORKS, for Columbus, Ohio, public school teachers.

It was January 30, 1968, three years after President Lyndon B. Johnson had ordered American troops to Vietnam to ward off a communist takeover of the south, and the rest of Southeast Asia. Dai and his comrades saw things differently: With nationalistic pride, they were on a mission to reunify Vietnam, launching the surprise assault on South Vietnamese and American troops now known as the Tet Offensive. His father was a regional governor attempting to maintain a semblance of normalcy in South Vietnam as the war raged. A ceasefire was in place for Tet, with much of the South Vietnamese military on leave. It was meant to be a joyous week providing a reprieve from the war. The soldiers assigned to protect the family had vanished, with men speaking in the distinctive northern Vietnamese accent closing in. He saw his father taken away and presumed him killed, while the rest of the family huddled in a basement for several days until they were rescued by U.S. Marines. You can unsubscribe at any time. On the occasion of its 50th anniversary, the battles of the Tet Offensive, in Hue and elsewhere, have been discussed and dissected in news outlets, books, symposiums, TV segments and exhibits across America, where the attacks are remembered as the moment that turned the tide. But in Vietnam, the anniversary of this moment in history, leading up to the Tet holiday on February 16, is being observed very differently—if at all. Accounts of a series of communist purges in the city of Hue—among the bloodiest battles in the war—have been all but stamped out by the regime, which considers the subject of Vietnamese killing their own among the most sensitive of all topics. When the 50th anniversary of start of the Tet Offensive arrived in Vietnam, there were few signs of any widespread commemoration. The main commemoration of took the form of a lavish banquet for senior party officials in Ho Chi Minh City, complete with acrobatic performances and traditional dance. Among Vietnamese citizens, memories of the Tet Offensive are brought up publicly only in vague terms that portray the party in a celebratory light, says Nguyen Quang A, 72, a retired businessman and former communist party member turned dissident activist in Hanoi. Duc, whose father, the civil servant, was sent to a prison camp for 12 years without trial, says the lack of wider recognition of old suffering is personally painful. But in recent weeks, I tracked down a handful of aging witnesses of what happened in Hue who agreed to speak frankly on record. With one exception, they have never before spoken out about their memories of the bloodshed in Hue. The battle at Hue, which raged from January 30 until early March, was at the heart of the Tet Offensive. While other attacked cities were cleared of communist forces within a few days, Hue was seized almost entirely, leaving only small pockets of U.S. Marines and South Vietnamese soldiers to ultimately ward off the communists in a vicious monthlong battle. Throughout the battle for Hue, American troops, mostly Marines, were killed as they fought house to house. The North Vietnamese army listed 2,000 killed, while South Vietnam recorded 1,000 soldiers dead. Duc recalls that while many in Hue were unhappy with the American presence in Vietnam, the residents largely welcomed the American intervention in the battle, which drove off the communists from the city until their ultimate return in Hue. Claims of mass civilian killings by the communists in Hue have been shoved under the rug in Vietnam. The first reports of such killings originated from U.S. Mass graves were discovered around the city—many for victims of the crossfire and bombings that flattened Hue, while other people were found bound and executed, in some cases evidently buried alive. The official South Vietnamese estimate for extrajudicial killings carried out by the communists was 4,000, while Douglas Pike, a U.S. Mark Bowden, author of the book *Hue* Quy was a young journalist for South Vietnamese state media during the Tet Offensive; when news of the attack reached him in Saigon, where he was based, he headed home to Hue to see the carnage firsthand. While his family, who worked for the Americans, had safely fled, many of his neighbors were less lucky. The North Vietnamese soldier Dai, who is now a composer and among the relatively few Vietnamese citizens who openly calls for an

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end to single-party rule, remembers seeing people being taken away in vehicles. Man says the people of Hue have achieved *hoa binh*—the Vietnamese word for the absence of war. They have not, however, reached *thai binh*, or harmony. Attempts at reconciliation are virtually nonexistent in Vietnam. Half a century after the Tet Offensive, the communist party still maintains that there was no civil war. This article tagged under: