Spring Semester 2020:

Distance Learning Assignments: US

Each week, there will be a reading assignment from your textbook. For each assignment, you will need to read the assigned pages AND:

1. Write a 5+ sentence summary in your own words of the material covered in the reading.

2. Include 2 vocabulary definitions from the reading. The definitions should be in your own words.

3. You will need to email me at dalmasc@luhsd.net your summary and vocabulary. (both should be in the same email.) BE SURE TO INCLUDE IN YOUR EMAIL YOUR FULL NAME (First and last) AND Period AND THE TITLE OF THE READING ASSIGNMENT. (for example, US Reading Assigment Week One)

You can email throughout each week day (Monday through Friday) 8:15 a.m. - 3:00p.m. if you have any questions.
Email: dalmasc@luhsd.net

1. U.S. Troops Face Difficult Conditions

Much of the initial pressure was placed on LBJ by hawks in Congress and the military, both calling for more troops in Vietnam. At this time, LBJ wanted to fight a limited war in Vietnam with a restricted number of soldiers. The American public, he believed, would turn against him if troop and casualty levels rose too high.

In 1968, most of the U.S. ground troops in Vietnam were not professional soldiers, like the marines who first landed at Da Nang. As the war progressed, more of the fighting was done by drafted soldiers, many of whom were critical of the war. In a letter home, one draftee summarized the attitude of many soldiers when he wrote, "We are the unwilling working for the unqualified to do the unnecessary for the ungrateful." U.S. soldiers' cynical outlook toward the war reflected the difficult conditions they faced in Vietnam.

U.S. soldiers spent much of their time on patrol in search of the enemy. They trudged through dense vegetation, swamps, and other difficult terrain, carrying rifles, ammunition, and packs weighing 90 pounds or more. Vietnam's geography and climate proved enormous challenges for American GIs.

Fighting in Unfamiliar Territory One set of difficulties concerned the geography and climate of South Vietnam. Few American GIs had previously experienced such hot and humid conditions. In some areas, temperatures hovered above 90°F for much of the year, and heavy monsoon rains fell consistently from May to October. One GI recalled his reaction when the plane door first opened upon landing in Vietnam: "The air rushed in like poison, hot and choking . . . I was not prepared for the heat." The uncomfortable tropical climate also harbored a host of insects and other pests, as well as diseases like malaria.

Perhaps the greatest geographic challenge U.S. soldiers faced was Vietnam's rugged topography. Troops had to march across soggy rice paddies and swamps, through dense jungles, and over steep mountains. The heavily forested terrain often made it difficult to locate enemies. Unlike U.S. soldiers, the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) were familiar with the land, and thus were skilled at concealing themselves in the dense tropical vegetation.

The U.S. military attempted to eliminate the enemy's forest cover by spraying chemical herbicides from the air. These herbicides stripped the foliage from plants and killed many trees. The preferred herbicide was Agent Orange, named for the color of the barrels in which it was stored. The military sprayed Agent Orange in many areas, including along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and used these herbicides to kill crops that might feed the enemy. However, these herbicides had little effect on enemy operations since Vietnam's forest cover was so extensive. Herbicides contaminated soil and water, destroyed civilian food sources, and exposed civilians and soldiers to toxins with long-term health risks.

To avoid detection, the Viet Cong created an elaborate system of underground tunnels to hide from U.S. troops. This is an entrance to one of these tunnels. The Viet Cong frustrated U.S. commanders, whose soldiers had to traverse the landscape in search of their enemy.

Engaging an Elusive Enemy When the United States escalated its involvement in South Vietnam in 1965, the Viet Cong and NVA realized that they could not match superior U.S. firepower. To succeed, these armies had to engage in guerrilla warfare, relying on the element of surprise and their skill at disappearing into the terrain.

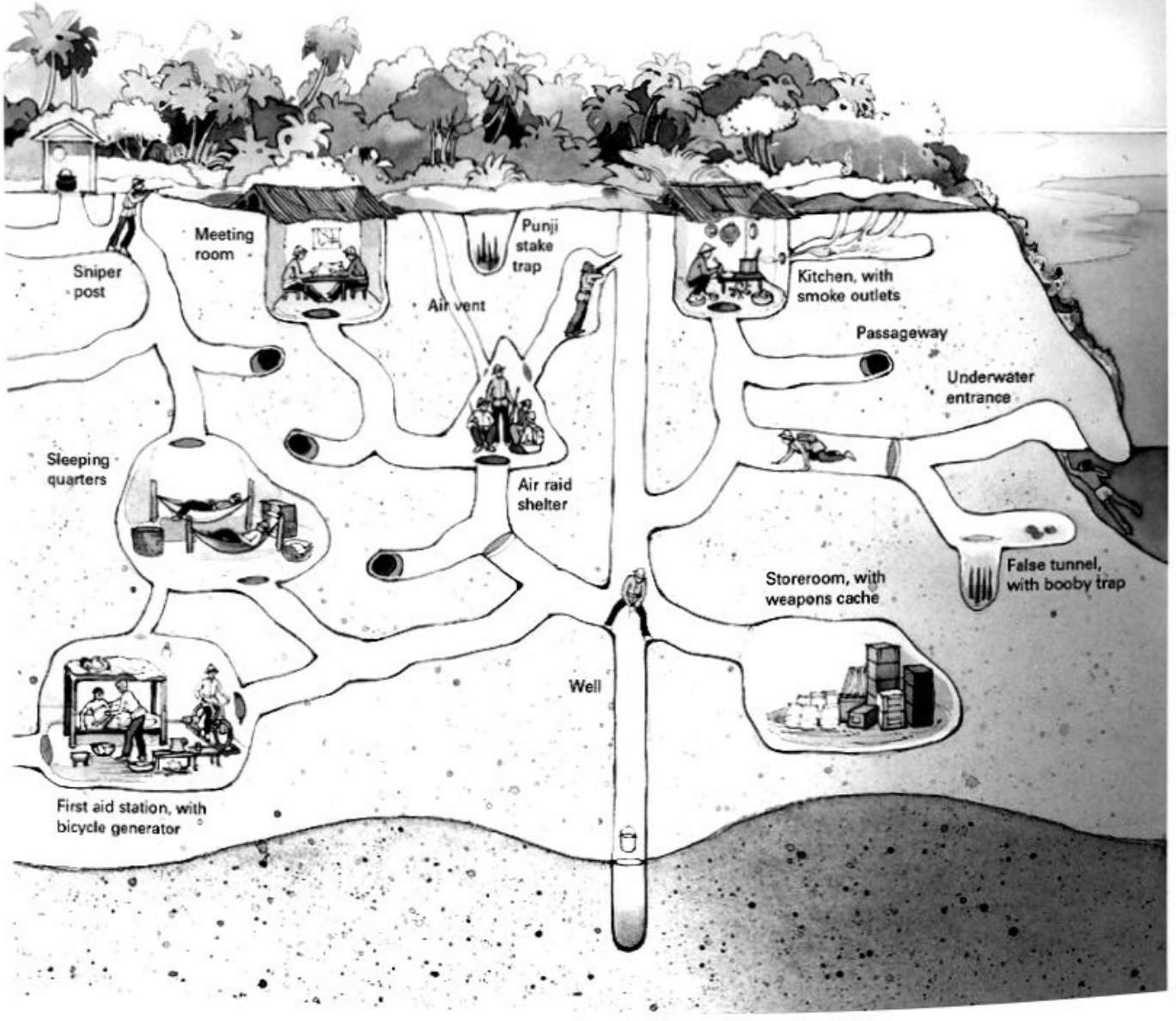
The insurgents' ability to avoid detection frustrated U.S. commanders. In addition to concealing themselves in the jungle, Viet Cong and NVA soldiers often hid from their American pursuers in underground tunnels. Some of these tunnels had several exits, facilitating escape. Others were elaborate, containing living areas, storage spaces, and even kitchens.

The Viet Cong also had the ability to "hide in plain sight." American GIs passing through a small village could not tell friend from foe, as a seemingly innocuous South Vietnamese peasant might also be a Viet Cong guerrilla. GIs could trust no one, including women and children.

To counter the Viet Cong's guerrilla war tactics, the commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam, General William Westmoreland, decided to fight a **war of attrition**, or a military campaign designed to wear down the enemy's strength. The United States hoped to eliminate enough enemy troops that the Viet Cong and NVA could not continue the war.

How Did the Viet Cong Survive Underground?

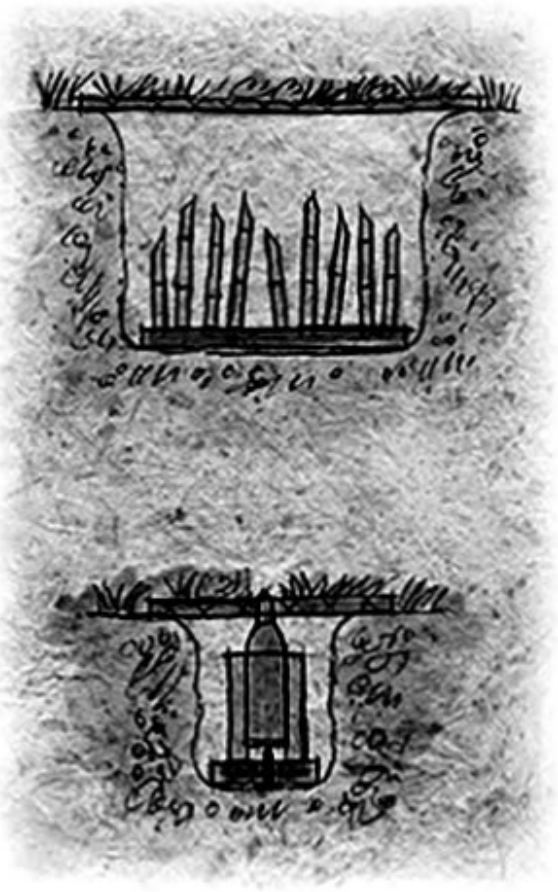
The Viet Cong built underground tunnels to hide from U.S. troops and to serve as base camps for their forces. These tunnel networks were sometimes quite extensive, with many rooms and passageways in all directions.



The chief tactic of this strategy was the search-and-destroy mission, whereby small units of soldiers, called platoons, would seek out insurgents and draw them into a fight. To destroy the enemy, the platoons would call in an air strike, either by helicopter gunships or jet fighter-bombers. Search-and-destroy tactics seemed effective when measured by the number of soldiers killed, or body count, as communist deaths far exceeded American losses. For Westmoreland, the body count became the key measure of U.S. progress in the war.

Search-and-destroy missions made U.S. combat soldiers clear targets for enemy attack, and insurgents frequently ambushed platoons as they marched through the jungle. Snipers, or sharpshooters, sometimes picked off U.S. soldiers from concealed locations. Soldiers fell prey to **land mines**, or explosive devices that were buried just below ground, exploding when stepped on. Men on patrol also had to be mindful of booby traps, such as explosive tripwires and sharpened stakes coated with poison.

Many U.S. soldiers managed to overcome these challenging circumstances, serving with distinction and completing their requisite combat duties. Others, however, became severely demoralized. During their 12-month tour of duty in Vietnam, some soldiers focused solely on survival, avoiding combat whenever possible. Low morale led to increased drug use among soldiers.



Communist insurgents built many types of booby traps to injure or kill U.S. troops. One was the punji stake trap, made with bamboo stakes and often coated with poison. These stakes were sharp enough to pierce a soldier's boot when he stepped into a trap. Another was the cartridge trap, in which a bullet cartridge was rigged to fire into a soldier's foot when he stepped on one.

The Limited War Proves Ineffective The United States had several reasons for pursuing a limited war. First, General Westmoreland believed that a war of attrition would achieve victory as long as U.S. troops could kill more enemy soldiers than North Vietnam and the Viet Cong could replace. Per this strategy, the communist insurgents would eventually be forced to surrender. Westmoreland therefore believed that the United States could achieve its primary goal of establishing a democratic South Vietnam through limited war.

Second, U.S. leaders foresaw grave danger in pursuing an unchecked total war, which involves the complete mobilization of a nation's resources to achieve victory. Through total war, the United States would invade North Vietnam and force the insurgents to surrender, likely leading to an enormous American death toll. This action could also provoke China or the Soviet Union to intervene directly, as both countries were providing military aid to North Vietnam at the time. So the United States could face a nuclear confrontation if it waged a total war in Vietnam.

The limited war ultimately proved ineffective because the strategy of attrition failed—there were simply too many enemy forces to eliminate. Ho Chi Minh once warned the French, "You can kill ten of my men for every one I kill of yours. But even at those odds, you will lose and I will win." This statement held true a decade later. Some 200,000 North Vietnamese men reached draft age every year, a rate at which Westmoreland's annual body counts could not compete. As the conflict continued, antiwar sentiment began to increase in the United States. Most Americans would not tolerate a war, especially an undeclared war, that persisted indefinitely at a growing cost of American lives.

Ultimately, Americans underestimated their enemy. The Viet Cong and North Vietnamese viewed the United States as another colonial power that had to be expelled, and they were determined to continue fighting despite the war's length or deadliness. The U.S. commitment to the war was far less certain.

2. The War Divides the People of South Vietnam

The Vietnam War deeply divided the South Vietnamese people. Some, especially those in the countryside, joined the Viet Cong or supported their cause. Others, mostly in the cities, backed the South Vietnamese government. A third group remained neutral in the conflict, possibly representing the majority of Vietnamese sentiment. Often caught between warring factions, neutral Vietnamese implored both sides for an end to the fighting. As one impartial man stated:

GIs on search-and-destroy missions often burned or bombed South Vietnamese villages. Such actions were authorized if soldiers were fired upon or if village residents were known to support the Viet Cong. Millions of peasants became refugees as a result of these tactics.

> Our people no longer want to take sides in this war that is gradually but inexorably destroying us. We have no desire to be called an "outpost of the Free World" or to be praised for being "the vanguard people in the world socialist revolution." We simply want to be a people—the Vietnamese people.
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> —Ly Qui Chung, Saigon newspaper editor, 1970

Contending for the Loyalty of the Vietnamese People American leaders knew that gaining the trust and support of people like Ly Qui Chung was crucial to defeating the insurgency. The United States mounted a separate campaign, in addition to the "shooting war," to win over the Vietnamese people and undermine support for the Viet Cong. The key to this "other war" was **pacification**— a policy designed to promote security and stability in South Vietnam.

The two main initiatives of pacification were funded by the United States, organized by the U.S. Army and the CIA, and run by the Saigon government. The first aimed to catalyze economic development in rural South Vietnam through projects ranging from supplying villages with food and other goods to building schools and bridges. This program also spread propaganda designed to persuade the Vietnamese to support the government of South Vietnam. Using these methods, the United States hoped to "win the hearts and minds" of the Vietnamese people.

The second pacification program sought to undermine the communist insurgency by ordering the **Army of the Republic of Vietnam** (ARVN) to remove Viet Cong and their sympathizers from villages. The United States hoped to both sever the flow of enemy recruits and safeguard rural Vietnamese who supported the Saigon government. As one CIA officer recalled, "If we were going to win the war, what we had to do was get in and eliminate the ability of the VC [Viet Cong] to control or influence the people."

The pacification campaign had many flaws. The ARVN lacked the leadership, skills, and dedication to effectively protect pacification villages. Some ARVN units fought with distinction, but many lacked training or the will to fight. U.S. forces fighting the Viet Cong were too preoccupied to pay attention to "the other war" for villagers' "hearts and minds."

Insufficient security made it difficult for rural development teams to build roads, schools, and other basic infrastructure. They might make progress on a project, only for it to be destroyed by a U.S. bombing. In some areas, development workers were targeted by the Viet Cong. Some workers fled, and those who remained risked death. During a seven-month period in 1966, the number of rural development team workers killed or kidnapped totaled 3,015.

The Viet Cong Maintain Popular Support Americanization of the war also undermined efforts to lure rural Vietnamese from the Viet Cong's influence. Search-and-destroy missions often created more enemies than friends among Vietnamese peasants. One GI described a typical raid in a rural community:

> We would go through a village before dawn, rousting everybody out of bed, and kicking down doors and dragging them out if they didn't move fast enough. They all had underground bunkers inside their huts to protect themselves against bombing and shelling. But to us the bunkers were Viet Cong hiding places, and we'd blow them up with dynamite—and blow up the huts too . . . At the end of the day, the villagers would be turned loose. Their homes had been wrecked, their chickens killed, their rice confiscated—and if they weren't pro-Viet Cong before we got there, they sure as hell were by the time we left.
>
> —U.S. Marine William Ehrhart

Napalm is a sticky gasoline gel that adheres to and burns everything it touches. Few Vietnamese survived napalm bomb blasts, and those who did often suffered severe burns. About 10 percent of all bombs dropped on Vietnam contained napalm.

Several other aspects of the U.S. war of attrition hurt pacification efforts. The "destroy" of search-and-destroy often included air strikes, so a village that had been secured by pacification workers might suddenly be bombed or shelled by U.S. forces trying to raze a Viet Cong target.

U.S. planes fired missiles and bombs that leveled villages, killed thousands of civilians, and produced a steady number of refugees. The most detrimental effects, however, came from a different kind of weapon called **napalm**. Napalm is jellied gasoline that was dropped from U.S. planes in incendiary bombs designed to burn forests and destroy enemy installations. When napalm bombs hit the ground, they set fire to everything—and everyone—they touched.

The Viet Cong had significant popular support among Vietnamese nationalists, but the insurgents also employed brutal means to ensure loyalty. Through intimidating, kidnapping, and assassinating local leaders, including schoolteachers and religious figures, the Viet Cong eliminated voices of opposition. These ruthless tactics helped the Viet Cong gain control of much of South Vietnam.

3. Growing Opposition to the War

The news media broadcasted striking images of the Vietnam War into American homes. As the war progressed, television news and print media increasingly exposed the grim realities of war. Here, a wounded marine is led past his injured comrade after a firefight in 1966.

Before 1966, the majority of Vietnam War protesters were college students, pacifists, and members of a few radical groups. Most Americans deemed these critics unpatriotic until 1966, when objection to the war arose from within the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. In early February, the committee chairman, Arkansas Democrat J. William Fulbright, conducted public hearings on U.S. policy in Vietnam, seeking to answer the questions, "Why are we fighting in Vietnam, and how do we plan to win?"

Several prominent witnesses testified, including former ambassador George Kennan, whose views had inspired the containment doctrine in the late 1940s. U.S. leaders used this doctrine to justify their policies in Vietnam, which Kennan criticized at the committee hearing. He said, "If we were not already involved as we are today in Vietnam, I would know of no reason why we should wish to become so involved, and I could think of several reasons why we should wish not to."

The War Comes to America's Living Rooms Had the Fulbright hearings not been broadcasted by three major television networks, Americans might have paid little attention. As it happened, millions of people across the country watched Fulbright and other respected senators criticized the Johnson administration's policies. Encouraged by the hearings, more Americans would begin to freely oppose the Vietnam War.

Television continued to influence Americans' perception of the war, as war news was broadcast into their living rooms nightly. News reports were optimistic at first, describing U.S. successes and positive stories about the courage and skill of American soldiers. As the war continued, however, television reports began to include graphic scenes of violence, suffering, and destruction—the human cost of war.

Escalating Costs Raise Questions The soaring expense of the war, both human and economic, increasingly troubled Americans. In 1968, troop levels surpassed 500,000, while the number of GIs killed in action exceeded a rate of 1,200 per month. The government spent $30 billion on the war that same year, driving inflation and taxes ever higher.

As Americans began to closely examine the war, some questioned LBJ's policies. They criticized bombing North Vietnam and deploying combat troops without formally declaring war. A growing number began to echo Senator Fulbright's question: "Why are we fighting in Vietnam?"

Television networks now dedicated most of their news coverage to the war, broadcasting graphic images of combat and rows of body bags containing dead U.S. soldiers. In April 1968, General Westmoreland declared, "We have never been in a better relative position." But to many Americans, the administration's optimistic assessments of the war seemed overblown and even deceitful. Television newscasts emphasized the widening credibility gap—the difference between the reality of the war and the Johnson administration's portrayal of it.

Hawks and Doves Divide the Nation In 1967, public opinion polls concluded that Americans were almost evenly divided on the war. Public opinion was split by the opposing camps of hawks and doves. Hawks believed in the containment doctrine, arguing that the war was morally correct and that it could be won by allowing the military to expand fighting. Doves deemed U.S. actions in Vietnam immoral and futile. They believed that the war was a civil conflict in which the United States had no right to interfere, and wanted LBJ to seek peace.

Many Vietnam War critics participated in peace demonstrations around the country. In 1968, singer Eartha Kitt expressed her disapproval of the war to "Lady Bird" Johnson. Her career declined afterward, but protestors, such as the ones pictured above, supported Kitt's views.

Meanwhile, the peace movement, or antiwar movement, grew on college campuses. In March 1965, faculty members at the University of Michigan organized a nightlong "teach-in" to debate Vietnam and U.S. policy. Other teach-ins followed at campuses across the nation. Borrowed from the civil rights movement, sit-ins also became a popular form of protest against the war. In February 1967, students at the University of Wisconsin at Madison occupied a campus building to protest the arrival of recruiters from Dow Chemical Company, which made napalm. When the students refused to leave the building, police officers dragged them out. More sit-ins followed throughout the country, including at Columbia University in 1968.

Student protesting was not limited to college campuses. Three students in Des Moines, Iowa, aged 13 to 16, wore black armbands to school to protest the war. After they were suspended by the school for violating its rules of conduct, the students sued the school district, eventually appealing their case to the Supreme Court. In 1969, the Court ruled in *Tinker v. Des Moines* that students have the right to engage in symbolic speech—nonverbal action that expresses opinion.

Protesters also participated in civil disobedience. Some publicly burned their draft cards, while others refused being inducted into the armed forces. One such "draft dodger," world-champion boxer Muhammad Ali, echoed the sentiment of many when he said, "I ain't got no quarrel with no Viet Cong." Because the voting age was 21, men between the ages of 18 and 21 complained that they could be drafted into the war without the right to vote against it. Congress passed the **Twenty-sixth Amendment** in 1971, lowering the voting age to 18. States ratified the amendment just three months later.

Many young men fell under the college deferment law, which exempted college students from the draft. They could be drafted after graduation, however, partly contributing to the vigor of student protests. The draft disproportionately affected poor Americans and minorities who were unable to attend college, leading some critics to label Vietnam a "rich man's war and a poor man's fight." Citing the large proportion of African American soldiers in Vietnam, Martin Luther King Jr. called it "a white man's war, a black man's fight."

4. 1968: A Year of Crisis

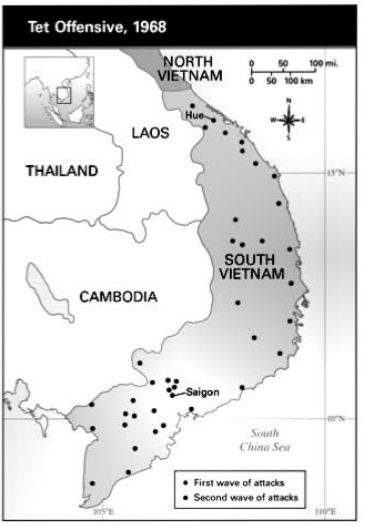
By 1967, antiwar protests targeted President Johnson specifically. Demonstrators chanted, "Hey, hey, LBJ. How many kids did you kill today?" To counter growing opposition to the war, the Johnson administration attempted to persuade Americans that there was "light at the end of the tunnel." Officials presented statistics and reports that claimed that the United States was winning the war, as well as journalists' captured enemy documents that implied the insurgency was failing. Additionally, LBJ visited military bases in order to tout U.S. achievements in Vietnam.

LBJ's campaign to restore confidence was successful, and public support for the war effort increased—for a few months. In January 1968, the Viet Cong and NVA launched a campaign of their own, that was also aimed at swaying Americans' opinions.

Tet Offensive Changes Americans' View of the War In the summer of 1967, North Vietnamese military strategists devised a risky new tactic, planning to launch attacks on cities in South Vietnam while staging an uprising in the countryside. Communist leaders hoped this strategy would both expose the failure of pacification efforts and turn Americans further against the war. They planned the attack to coincide with the Vietnamese holiday Tet, which marks the lunar New Year, when many ARVN troops would be home on leave.

On January 31, 1968, the **Tet Offensive** began. Like a shockwave rolling across South Vietnam, some 85,000 Viet Cong and NVA soldiers attacked cities, villages, military bases, and airfields. In Saigon, North Vietnamese commandos blew a hole in the wall surrounding the U.S. embassy before they were repelled by U.S. military police. The North Vietnamese successfully occupied the city of Hue for nearly a month, but that was the only significant achievement of their offensive. Battle after battle, South Vietnamese and U.S. forces drove the attackers back. As many as 45,000 North Vietnamese soldiers, most Viet Cong, were killed. No uprising occurred in the countryside; rather, the communist assault's brutality boosted rural support for the South Vietnamese government.

The Tet Offensive was a military disaster for the communists, but it succeeded in shocking the American people and became a psychological defeat for the United States. From the comfort of their televisions, Americans witnessed enemy soldiers storm the U.S. embassy and attack U.S. bases. They also listened to journalists' startled reports detailing the enemy's ability to penetrate American strongholds. The administration's attempts to spin these actions as U.S. victories were unsuccessful. Instead, many Americans believed these statements widened the credibility gap.

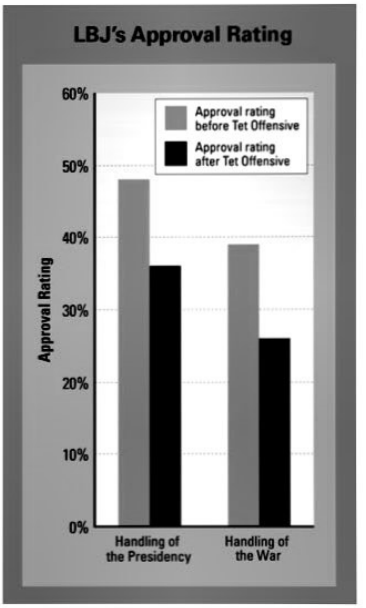


During the Tet holiday in 1968, Viet Cong and NVA soldiers launched a major offensive across South Vietnam. Key battles occurred in and around Hue and Saigon. Viet Cong guerrillas did most of the fighting and suffered most of the casualties. Some were also captured during the offensive. After Tet, the NVA became responsible for most of the insurgent combat in the war.

Johnson Decides Not to Run for Reelection As public confidence in Johnson plummeted, the president also suffered a sharp blow from the nation's most respected television news anchor, Walter Cronkite. After Cronkite traveled to Vietnam to cover the Tet Offensive, he broadcasted a news editorial claiming that Johnson had misled the American people. In a solemn voice, Cronkite said, "It seems more certain than ever that the bloody experience of Vietnam is to end in a stalemate." Hearing this editorial, LBJ remarked, "That's it. If I've lost Cronkite, I've lost America."

Polls taken after Tet revealed that only 26 percent of Americans supported LBJ's conduct of the war. Two Democratic senators, Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota and Robert Kennedy of New York, thought they could do better. A fierce critic of the war, Eugene McCarthy promptly entered the race for the Democratic presidential nomination. Robert Kennedy, a favorite of civil rights and antiwar activists, then announced he would also run against Johnson.

LBJ deemed Tet a political catastrophe, but General Westmoreland believed the offensive provided an opportunity to finally defeat the insurgents, and requested 206,000 additional troops from the president. Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford advised LBJ that even "double or triple that quantity" would not be enough to destroy enemy



The Tet Offensive greatly affected Americans' views of the Johnson presidency and the Vietnam War.

forces. LBJ decided to reject Westmoreland's request, leaving U.S. troops in Vietnam at around 500,000, and removed Westmoreland as commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam. The president also considered Clifford's advice to negotiate peace talks.

On March 31, 1968, Johnson stood before national television cameras to make a momentous announcement. The United States, he said, would attempt to "deescalate the conflict" by decreasing bombing in North Vietnam and by seeking a negotiated settlement of the war. LBJ followed this statement with another declaration, informing Americans, "I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your president."

Public opinion polls conducted after Tet revealed that many Americans had lost faith in the president and his handling of the war. Believing he had lost political influence in addition to Americans' confidence, LBJ decided not to campaign for reelection in 1968.

The Chaotic Election of 1968 Exhausted by the war, LBJ believed he had lost political influence. Had LBJ run for nomination, he might have won. Instead, he supported the bid of his vice president, Hubert H. Humphrey. Humphrey became the probable Democratic nominee in June 1968, when his most experienced rival, Robert Kennedy, was assassinated by a lone gunman while campaigning.

Before Robert Kennedy was assassinated, 1968 had already been one of the most turbulent years in recent American history. The country reeled from the combined effects of the Vietnam War, antiwar protests and other social unrest, and Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. Americans were now stunned by the assassination of one of the country's leading political figures.

This pattern of upheaval would continue in August, when delegates gathered in Chicago for the Democratic National Convention. Many delegates supported McCarthy's antiwar views, but following a bitter debate, delegates ultimately endorsed a campaign platform aligning with President Johnson's Vietnam policy. Humphrey approved this platform under pressure from LBJ, securing the Democratic nomination.

Meanwhile, thousands of antiwar protesters demonstrated in parks located near the convention center. They sometimes confronted the police and national guardsmen that had been called in by Mayor Richard Daley. On August 28, the violence escalated. A clash occurred between Chicago police and a group of rowdy protesters attempting to march into the convention center. Some protesters threw rocks and bottles at the police, while the police fired tear gas and beat protesters and onlookers with batons and rifle butts. Appalled Americans watched the spectacle from their television sets.

Violence erupted at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. The police attacked antiwar protesters, who then retaliated. During this violent clash on August 28, some 100 demonstrators were injured and 175 were arrested.

In contrast, the Republican National Convention was a tranquil affair. Delegates chose Richard M. Nixon, Eisenhower's vice president, as their presidential candidate. Accepting the nomination, Nixon's speech strongly criticized LBJ and the Democrats:

> When the strongest nation in the world can be tied up for four years in a war in Vietnam with no end in sight, when the richest nation in the world can't manage its own economy, when the nation with the greatest tradition of the rule of law is plagued by unprecedented lawlessness . . . then it's time for new leadership for the United States of America.
>
> —Richard M. Nixon, August 8, 1968

Humphrey and the Democrats were unable to fully recover from their disastrous convention. Nixon swayed voters by promising to maintain "law and order" at home and secure "peace with honor" in Vietnam. In November 1968, Americans voted for change, electing Nixon as their new president.