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After Tet
 by [Joe Escobar](#) - Saturday, 6 November 2010, 08:18 PM

This week's question involves one very big question to discuss.

How did the Tet Offensive and its aftermath affect American politics, society, and the military and diplomatic course of the war in Vietnam?

Entire books have been written on this single event that occurred during the war. I do not want you to attempt to replicate that level of detail in this forum, especially in a single post. But I do want you and your group members to address each of the four areas (politics, society, military, diplomacy). When addressing these four issues, don't jumble all of your ideas together in a single post. Be sure you address each in separate/individual posts. Use a descriptive subject lines, such as "Effect on Politics", "Societal Influences", "Military Policy", or "Diplomatic Results". These will make it much easier for your classmates to respond and it will keep the online discussions clearer and easier to follow.

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Re: After Tet
 by [Jennifer Wilson](#) - Tuesday, 9 November 2010, 11:32 AM

"Societal Influences"

From what I can tell is that the Tet Offensive had devastating effects on the non military parts of the cities and the villages. On Pg 232 in the herring book, it is said that, in the first two weeks of the Tet campaigns, the United States lost 1,100 killed in action in South Vietnam 2,300. An estimated 12,500 civilians were killed and Tet created as many as one million refugees. Having all of this on TV back home and no clear cut winner I am sure freaked out most of the people watching knowing soldiers over there no wonder people protested this war. The picture of hue on Pg 231 of the herring book is of this beautiful city that has been around for centuries and is also near were Ho Chi Man is stationed, it is left in rubble just think about how the people who live there feel about the war or whoever is still alive. According to the Appy book the "Hanoi's highest hope was to strike a devastating blow against south Vietnamese and American forces that would inspire a mass uprising of the urban population, toppling the Saigon government and forcing the united states to withdraw."

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Re: After Tet
 by [Jennifer Wilson](#) - Tuesday, 9 November 2010, 11:38 AM

"Diplomatic Results"

As a result of the Tet Offensive Westmoreland finally had a good reason to send in more troops to Vietnam, Pg 234," Wheeler and the joint chiefs had been pressing for mobilization of the reserves since 1965, and by February 1966 they were certain this step must be taken at once". 206,000 soldiers is the number that Washington could agree upon. Prescient Johnson decided to not run in the election, Pg 287, Appy, "He also rejected General Westmorland's request for an additional 206,000 troops and soon replaced him with General Creighton Abrams. This was an important event in the war because with all the pressure being put on the government to stop the war. The decision was finally made to deescalate the war instead of overpowering the country with troops. I think that if they would not have ended the war and kept sending in troops that there would have been nothing left to fight for and completely destroyed the country.

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Rate... **Re: After Tet**by [Jennifer Wilson](#) - Tuesday, 9 November 2010, 11:39 AM**"Effect on Politics"**

With the outcome of this huge bloody attack it can't look good for Washington and the results of the Tet Offensive. Pg 233, herring, many officials feared that Tet was only the opening phase of a larger communist Offensive. Could you imagine being there losing so many men thinking that you were about to win this was and to have this happen. The amount of coordinated attacks all over the entire country you are fighting in. After having lived through the Tet Offensive the military sent more troops and told them to fight harder. Appy 286, perhaps the most famous media image of Tet was a street- corner execution, graphic footage of South Vietnamese police Chief General Nguyen Ngoc Loan firing his pistol point blank into the temple of a Viet Cong prisoner, the blood shooting in a stream from the other side of his head". This was huge because it showed that we were fighting for the people that could be just as brutal in the ways not so different from the communist. I think that this was a major turning point for the war mainly because the effect of the media had a major part of the outcome of the politics of the war.

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I emphatically agree with your closing statement. Politics were being greatly influenced by the media at the time, especially during an election year. Johnson had this hanging over his head up until his famous March 31st speech.

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I am sure that by the time of the Tet Offensive that we the American people believed that we were going to win this war not problem. We had more man power better guns and we ruled the skies. When we were hit by the Tet Offensive the size of attacks and how we were caught off guard it must have seemed like the war as never going to end. The only other option was to send in huge amount of reinforcements, and soon because the recovery time for the Viet Cong was quick. I think that the military learned through this experience that they should never underestimate the enemy. The government believed that the increase of troops would end the war but the truths is it would just make the war last longer. More over the amount of bombings were costly and had little effect. Pg 240" The President was certain that North Vietnam had suffered heavily in the Tet offensive, and he appears to have concluded that the United States could undertake negotiations from a vastly strengthened position". So if the war was to turn to peaceful negotiations then the military would lessen its position of violence and bombings.

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I thought that they said in the book that even though they were caught off guard that they managed to fight back against the attacks? They did get more troops, to be prepared for more attacks and most of all to try and help with the destruction that had been left. On page 229 in the Herring book it talks about how the Americans and South Vietnamese fought back and used superior firepower to defeat the enemy. It is true that the war lasted longer because of increased troops, I do agree with most of your statement I am actually checking that we aren't saying the same thing, I might not be understanding your words.

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Rate... **Re: After Tet**by [Heidi Zumbur](#) - Tuesday, 9 November 2010, 03:13 PM**American Politics**

After the Tet Offensive, the Johnson administration lost any power of persuasion that they had left. They could no longer convince the American public or the media that the Communists were losing the war, although not for lack of effort. The highest loss of American soldiers was soon reported after the attack and by then Westmoreland was requesting more troops, but was specific in stating that he would only need the troops that were already scheduled for deployment.

Wheeler on the other hand seemed to be pushing his own agenda of escalation and national mobilization, in hopes of building additional reserves. By tempting Westmoreland with the idea that the White House might approve to expand operations into Laos and Cambodia, Wheeler was able to manipulate Westmoreland into a formal request for additional troops. Johnson then sent Wheeler to Saigon to judge if additional troops were warranted.

A few short days after Wheeler was shipped off, General McNamara was scheduled to step down. Both Wheeler and Westmoreland were eager to replace him with someone who was interested in widening the war instead of McNamara's deescalation approach. Wheeler gave the recommendation to increase the troop size under false pretenses to Johnson. This in turn created a major turning point for the war. In order to fulfill the additional troop request, the US would have to make a commitment to escalation and to deny the request, they would be sending the opposite message to the US troops who were already thinly stretched in Vietnam, the American public and media and more importantly, North Vietnam.

Reassessment was essential to decide how to proceed. With the concerns of the economy, budget cuts and the growing lack of support by the American people, it was a huge decision to make. A leak to the press exposed that many high ranking officials thought that the increase would not improve our position in Vietnam as the Communists would simply match our numbers and unproductively escalate the US death toll. Johnson eventually decided against the additional troops and this began the slow ending to the Vietnam War. It also demoralized Johnson to the point he decided not to run for a second term.

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Heidi:

Great post. you summarized the situation perfectly.

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The biggest social influence that the Tet Offensive had on the American public was that this event could be seen by the public. As Herring describes, "Televised accounts of the bloody fighting in Saigon and Hue made a mockery of Johnson's and Westmoreland's optimistic year end reports, widening the credibility gap...(p. 232-233)." The war was seen and because of this, the public started to question Johnson. They saw some of the men that died, "...the United States lost 1,100 killed in action and South Vietnam 2,300 (p.232). Herring also has estimated in his book that 12,500 civilians were killed (p.232). Herring also comments on, "The battles of Tet raised to a new level of public consciousness basic questions about the war that had long lurked just beneath the surface (p. 233)." It seems to me that some people didn't support the war however, after the Tet Offensive there were a lot more people who didn't agree with the war and started to question just what was going on in Vietnam.

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Rate... **Re: After Tet**by [Marla Davis](#) - Friday, 12 November 2010, 04:17 PM

i agree, the media had a huge influence on how our society and societies throughout the world viewed the war in Vietnam.

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I like that you used this quote from Herring: "The battles of Tet raised to a new level of public consciousness basic questions about the war that had long lurked just beneath the surface" (233). This suggests that Tet was not necessarily an event which caused people to think differently but more so that it caused them to feel more profoundly about previously held ideas. People were doubting the war in Vietnam and on edge about it perhaps but, when they saw real images of the fighting in the streets, it struck at deeper emotions. The images of the Tet Offensive were what "sealed the deal" in the public's mind and caused them to say "enough is enough" and protest.

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I think Tet also put the situation in Vietnam in the faces of people that only had a vague idea of what was going on in the war. It brought to the public eye some of the atrocities that were occurring and made them pay attention. Vietnam was put in a very different perspective (maybe a more personal perspective) after Tet.

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I really enjoyed your post because of the way you represent the media. The media definitely did have an impact as a social influence in the war. People could actually see what was happening in Vietnam and this made the leaders of our country think twice about lying to create of a acceptable view of the United States to a public that created their own beliefs around the media. Great job.

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Jeremy,

Thank you! I agree that the leaders of our country had to think twice about lying to the public because of the media. That being said I wonder what might have ended up being different if the media wasn't involved? How would the lack of the American public seeing what was going on have changed how the Johnson administration went about the war? I do believe that things would have turned out differently if the media wasn't so involved in the war. I have a feeling it would have ended up in a longer war and more lives lost. It is an interesting thought to me to think of how it could have been much different.

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I agree, the media played a huge part in the outcome of the Vietnam war. The media is a great way to bring attention to a situation such as this but it is tricky to get the desired outcome.

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Re: After Tet

by [Todd Lowry](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 08:25 PM

Surely, the media played a role in turning public sentiment against the war. I'm not convinced, however, that it necessarily had an influence on the outcome of the war. On page 244-245 of Appy's book, he seems to question the role of the media in the outcome of the war. Herring writes, "The Idea that a hypercritical media undercut undercut the media just at that point when the war could have been won is suspect more basic grounds" (244). That section of Herring's book outlines how, despite the media, the outcome of the war may have been no different because of the situation on the ground in Vietnam.

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Re: After Tet

by [Raina Kelley](#) - Tuesday, 9 November 2010, 09:37 PM

"Effects on Politics"

After the Tet Offensive, politics began to shift because officials were beginning to worry that such a destructive attack was only the beginning. Herring states that, "Many officials feared that Tet was only the opening phase of a larger Communist Offensive (p. 233)." The president responded by sending more troops over in order to get things stable again. Johnson's advisors began to urge him to get out of Vietnam. Things had been so ugly and just continued to get uglier; it was time to think about getting the troops home. The publics open dissatisfaction with the war was also a large part of needing to get out of Vietnam. It was time to put an end to it.

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Re: After Tet

by [Raina Kelley](#) - Tuesday, 9 November 2010, 09:38 PM

"Diplomatic Results"

The diplomatic results of the Tet Offensive were the realization that it was time to make South Vietnam do more for themselves. Herring explains, "The administration also accepted the principle that South Vietnam should do more to defend itself. Johnson's advisors agreed that from a long-range standpoint, the key to achieving American objectives was South Vietnam's ability to stand on its own, and they had concluded in late 1967 that more should be done to promote self-sufficiency (p. 239)." This was going to be the key change in diplomacy in South Vietnam. The South had depended on the United States long enough; it was time for them to stand on their own two feet.

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Re: After Tet

by [Heidi Zumbur](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 11:40 AM

I find a lot of irony in Johnson promoting an agenda of 'self-sufficiency' at this point in the war. This had been a great concern of Kennedy, who sent in insurgents and of Johnson in the beginning of his administration as well. Presidents stating out one side of their mouths that the South Vietnamese need to be more accountable for defending themselves, while out the other side of their mouths giving orders to bomb, send troops and back faulty unelected governments without consulting South Vietnam on any of it. It seems that the U.S. bullied their way into this war to promote their own agenda under the cover of liberating and protecting the South Vietnamese people. Johnson demoralized the South Vietnamese with his statements, by falsely implying that the U.S. had given the South Vietnamese the opportunity to defend themselves. And, as the war dragged on, was that truly the wish of the South

Vietnamese people, to remain independent from the North?

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Re: After Tet

by [Raina Kelley](#) - Friday, 12 November 2010, 01:17 PM

Heidi,

I agree with you. Johnson seemed very two sided and I didn't like that either. The United States have often been called a bully and I tend to agree. We think we can storm into anything and be the "hero" however, we don't always seem to be able to think things through very well. I agree that the United States seemed to go into Vietnam with their own agenda.

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Re: After Tet

by [Deanna Middlestetter](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 08:06 PM

I think that it is obvious that the arrogance of the united states played a major part in their downfall in the loss of the Vietnam war.

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Re: After Tet

by [Molly Graham](#) - Friday, 12 November 2010, 10:00 PM

Heidi- You make a lot of really good points in your reply. I liked in particular when you said: "the U.S. bullied their way into this war to promote their own agenda under the cover of liberating and protecting the South Vietnamese people". I could not agree more. I think as our reading about the war keeps progressing and we read about how the United States is defending the South, it is easy to forget what our true intentions in Vietnam really were. We were fighting the war out of fear. We got involved in order to stop the spread of communism and to send a message to Russia and China that we meant business. Thank you for bringing all of this up. These are all good things to keep in mind as we continue learning.

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Re: After Tet

by [Jennifer Wilson](#) - Thursday, 11 November 2010, 09:58 AM

I believe the reason that the government wanted South Vietnam to start defending its self and backing off the war was because of the pressure they were getting from the media and the public. All of this was from the photo of the chief of police from South Vietnam shooting a Viet Cong point blank in the head. The people could not believe that we were defending a people that could be this brutal. From this display of brute force we the people believed that the people of South Vietnam should be able to take on their own problems

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Re: After Tet

by [Raina Kelley](#) - Friday, 12 November 2010, 01:23 PM

Jennifer,

I agree with you that the public was a strong influence in wanting South Vietnam to be able to stand on their own. However, I think it was also in part to the Johnson administration realizing that the South had become too dependent on the help of the United States. If the United States was ever going to get out of Vietnam with the hope that South Vietnam wouldn't become Communist then they must be strong enough to stand alone. The South had to be able to not fall to the North and to Communism. If they weren't strong enough then the help from the U.S. was a waste of time because the South would be forced to fall to Communism.

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Rate... **Re: After Tet**by [Raina Kelley](#) - Tuesday, 9 November 2010, 09:39 PM**"Military Policy"**

Immediately after the Tet Offensive Johnson decided he would send whatever reinforcements Westmoreland needed to defend the fortress. The result was, "Johnson immediately ordered an additional 10,500 men to Vietnam (Herring, P.234)." Johnson followed this by increasing the air attacks against North Vietnam. The result for the military was to increase intensity. However, soon to follow it would be the tough decision to pull out of Vietnam. The Tet Offensive was very confusing and at time, the U.S. military questioned who was really winning the war. It became apart that weapons and bombings weren't going to be enough to win this war against Communism.

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Rate... **Re: After Tet**by [Heidi Zumbrum](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 11:51 AM

Correct, the Tet Offensive was the catalyst pushing the U.S. to make a decision to either increase war efforts and fully commit to the cause or to implement the start of de-escalation and withdraw. To me, the circumstances of the war did not really change from the beginning to the end. The argument for US involvement was still the same as when we began the US war efforts. The only thing that really changed, was the thawing of the cold war hysteria and the realization by the US government that their plan was ineffective. It's sad that an opportunity to avoid the entire war was missed. By moving forward and essentially creating the Vietnam War, the US cost thousands of lives, billions of dollars and weakened the perception of the US on a global level. All to end up back at square one, where we started.

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Rate... **Re: After Tet**by [Raina Kelley](#) - Friday, 12 November 2010, 01:30 PM

Heidi,

I strongly agree with what you are saying. The more I learn about this war the more I feel like it achieved nothing. Yes the U.S. made a stand for what they thought was a very real threat. However, it was unsuccessful and the cost was far greater in my opinion than any other benefit that there may have been. The amount of money, lives lost, pain, and suffering just seems to have been such a waste. It saddens me thinking of all that was lost and not feeling like any of it was really for a good cause. Like you I feel like the war got us nowhere.

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Rate... **Re: After Tet**by [Jesse Long](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 08:29 PM

I agree with what you are saying. I too dont see where we as a country gained much from this war, but like the saying goes "hind sight is 20/20" i do believe that there were those that felt vietnam posed a real threat for the spread of communism and felt we were doing what twas needed, but it obviously snow balled badly.

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Rate... **Re: After Tet**by [Daniel Bonner](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 12:57 PM

Heidi,

I like that you mentioned that the circumstances of the war did not really change from beginning to end because I really have not picked up many changes either. You are right that it is very unfortunate that the entire war was not avoided and I'm interested to learn what the United States involvement in the Vietnam war actually accomplished.

Thanks for the post

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Re: After Tet

by [Tikoya Wiget](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 12:39 PM

Raina,

I definitely agree with you that it was at this point that congress started to question our strategy of using a war of attrition to beat the North Vietnamese. In this war our objective of winning was to "stop the spread of communism". Because of this, it was hard to tell when we were actually winning. So during the Tet offense we tried to measure it with the number of casualties. The main problem I see with that is the fact that, the North was willing to fight no matter what the casualties were. Because of this, it was indeed hard to tell who was winning the war.

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e: After Tet

by [Marla Davis](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 12:40 PM

Politics

The Tet Offensive produced a crisis in the Johnson administration, and that made it more and more difficult to persuade the American public that it had been a major defeat for the communists. The positive spin put on the war before the offensive by the administration and the Pentagon came under heavy criticism as the "credibility gap" widened. On 28 February Robert McNamara, the Secretary of Defense who had overseen the escalation of the war in 1964–1965, but who had eventually turned against it, stepped down from office. U.S. forces eventually pushed the North Vietnamese forces back and inflicted huge casualties on them, but the impact the fighting had on U.S. public opinion was equally huge. Opposition to the war grew more heated and contributed mightily to Lyndon Johnson's decision not to run for re-election in 1968.

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Re: e: After Tet

by [Raina Kelley](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 10:18 AM

Marla,

I agree with you, the Tet Offensive produced a huge crisis in the Johnson administration. Johnson now had a much harder time convincing Americans that he was doing the "right thing" when they could clearly see what a cost it was beginning to become. Vietnam just seemed to continue to be a huge mess and after this there really was no denying it. We had gotten ourselves in too deep and now with the public's demands something had to be done.

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Re: After Tet

by [Marla Davis](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 12:40 PM

Societal

There was a major economic crisis in mid-march 1968 that the massive spending in Vietnam created. It had a huge effect on the US government and shocked the American public, which had been led to believe by its political and military

leaders that the communists were not capable of launching such a massive effort. The Tet Offensive, televised nightly in the U.S., shocked many Americans who previously had the idea the U.S. was easily taking care of the enemy. All of the television coverage shown in America about Vietnam just brought to the forefront the realities of the war. Many protests were staged on several university campuses throughout the United States. Protests were staged also at political conventions. More and more the American people came to realize that Vietnam was unwinnable and that the United States should withdraw our troops.

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Re: After Tet

by [Marla Davis](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 12:41 PM

Military

Westmoreland and Wheeler made a formal request from the JSC in 1968 for 206,000 additional soldiers. There was an October bombing halt which was considered a last ditch effort by the Johnson administration to get the peace talks started in the time immediately preceding the election. In February, 10,500 previously authorized U.S. airborne troops and marines were dispatched to South Vietnam. The Joint Chiefs then played their hand, advising President Johnson to turn down MACV's requested division-sized reinforcement unless he called up marine and army reservists

1968 went on to become the deadliest year of the war for the US forces with 16,592 soldiers killed. On February 23 the U.S. Selective Service System announced a new draft call for 48,000 men, the second highest of the war.

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Re: After Tet

by [Jason Carlstrom](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 02:51 PM

Effects on Society: the Tet Offensive in some areas was fended off quickly because the NFL had poor coordination between all the strikes, but still caused 12,500 in civilian deaths and left one million homeless (232). The city of Hue during the Tet Offensive was a three week long struggle that turned the city into rocks. NFL and North Vietnamese came in and executed 2,800 villagers that were found in mass graves and left and estimated 100,000 refugees. American and South loses are estimated at 500.

Back home the Tet Offensive was blown up by the media. "The media continued to depict events in highly unfavorable and sometimes distorted terms. Early reports of a smashing enemy victory went uncorrected." (241). After the Tet Offensive Westmorland requested 206,000 more troops. Johnson denied the request but wasn't made known. When the public heard about the request in a March 10th New York Times story they were shocked and furious. "by March, moreover, an overwhelming majority of Americans (78%) were certain the US was not making any progress in Vietnam." (243) support for the war reached an all time low of 26% during the Tet.

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Re: After Tet

by [Jason Carlstrom](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 02:52 PM

Effects on Military: The military responded to the attacks like all the others..by requesting more of everything. "the Tet Offensive raised the distinct possibility that significant reinforcements would be needed to be sent to Vietnam." (234) Westmorland saw the North's heavy loss as a key opportunity to strike now that they are weak from the Tet battles. Westmorland had a "two fisted" strategy that now is the time to bomb more and attack even harder. Westmorland requested 206,000 troops. Westmorland wanted to smother the enemy with sheer numbers and force after the Tet Offensive, but in the end was checked by the Clifford Task Force.

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Rate... **Re: After Tet**by [Jesse Long](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 04:24 PM

Societal

This war had a real devastating effect on the non military sections of the countries involved "...the United States lost 1,100 killed in action and South Vietnam 2,300 (p.232), also an estimated 12,500 civilians were killed (p.232)., and many refugees. However I believe the biggest effect that affected the United States was that the entire war was publicized. It was the first war that has a massive amount of media coverage. So by seeing the news and seeing whatever the media brought to the people such as the innocent casualties and soldiers killed right off the bat it is absolutely going to cause the American public to protest the war and resent us ever attempting anything over there.

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Jesse:

I agree that since the war was the most publicized war to date it had an incredible affect on the people of the United States and the rest of the world. By seeing in the news everyday all the atrocities of war, it more or less forced people to take a stand and many chose to publicly protest the war.

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I completely agree. Having some many men and boys over in the war and seeing people dye knowing that your loved ones were in the tragedy that we call war and seeing all the violence on TV, This is why today they don't allow us to put war on TV today but I think this might not be freedom of speech

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Political

Politics in the United States began to shift as they do today when big issues are on the table, you have to pick a side. In the Vietnam war they began to shift after the tet offensive, its caused officials to worry about what was ahead and that maybe this was just the beginning. "Many officials feared that Tet was only the opening phase of a larger Communist Offensive (p. 233)." U.S. advisors had been advising Johnson to begin withdrawing from Vietnam because it was getting out of hand and there was an obvious public disgust with the war, so maybe it was time to leave. But he instead sent more troops over in an attempt to get things under control once again.

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**Re: After Tet**by [Jennifer Wilson](#) - Thursday, 11 November 2010, 10:19 AM

In the video Tet it talks about how weeks before the Tet Offensive LBJ had already planned for the down scale of troops. JLB could feel it coming. I agree with your post nice job

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**Re: After Tet**by [Marla Davis](#) - Friday, 12 November 2010, 04:23 PM

I think at this time Johnson's head had to be spinning. With advisors on one side telling him to send more troops and increase bombing if he wanted to 'win' the war and on the other side advisors telling him to get out of Vietnam before any further losses. It had to be a very difficult time for him.

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**Re: After Tet**by [Jesse Long](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 04:44 PM

Military

No body likes to back down and fail and neither does the US military. After the attacks "the Tet Offensive raised the distinct possibility that significant reinforcements would be needed to be sent to Vietnam." (234). Westmoreland saw this as an opportunity to hit back due to the belief that they were weak after the Tet attacks. Westmoreland believed in a "two fisted" look at the situation, believing that now is the best time to bomb and send more troops right away. Due to this belief Westmoreland and Wheeler made a formal request from the JSC in 1968 for 206,000 additional soldiers in an attempt to overwhelm the enemy but was stopped by the Clifford task force.

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**Re: After Tet**by [Jeremy Carlson](#) - Thursday, 11 November 2010, 08:08 PM

To me Westmoreland was almost a little too crazy. He pretty much was a "winner" and would not lose the war. Ironically he was driven into the ground by his own ideals. I thought this was a great resonse and am glad you caught "two fisted" that is a very important way of looking at his response.

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**Re: After Tet**by [Molly Graham](#) - Friday, 12 November 2010, 11:38 PM

Jeremy- I think it is interesting that you brought up the character of General Westmoreland. He is one of the key players we have been reading about and watching in the PBS series that really stands out to me, too. He almost seems like a fictional character to me, how incredibly set he was on winning at any cost. Like you said, it is ironic that being set on winning is how he lost.

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**Re: After Tet**by [Donald Ebel](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 01:10 PM

I'll agree with you guys on the point that Westmoreland was quite eccentric. I myself, however, wouldn't quite call him crazy. From what I've read about him so far, it seems like he's just the macho kind of guy who thinks that everything can get fixed through brute force. These types of generals appear occasionally in all kinds army situations. As an example, I watched part of the documentary "The Fog of War" for a writing class last

year. It is essentially Robert McNamara's secretary-of-defense confession. Now, I saw it a while ago, but I remember that during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the entire Joint Chiefs of Staff wanted President Kennedy to full-out invade Cuba. But Kennedy was skeptical of this approach, and did whatever he did after that instead (I'm definitely not a history buff). McNamara tells the viewers that an invasion of Cuba at that point would have most certainly led to nuclear war.

So, what I'm saying is that the type of general Westmoreland is is not exactly uncommon for the profession. It may not be the smartest or most well-thought out approach (or tried-and-true, for that matter), but he went about conducting war in the best way he knew how. I think that deep down he believed in America and wanted to win the war just as much as the next guy, but plus a lot more. He took it too far, but he was doing what he thought he had to do. The position as the head of operations for the Vietnam war could have probably been better picked, but there always could have been worse generals than he was.

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Re: After Tet

by [Todd Lowry](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 08:46 PM

I disagree with most of what's been said in this thread. Westmoreland was hindered by politics for the most part and his decisions were restricted significantly during the conflict by political roadblocks. I'm not sure the outcome of the war would have been the same had Westmoreland and the rest of the military been given a clear objective and the latitude to achieve that objective. The Johnson administration's fear of public backlash, further provocation of the communist bloc, and the weak southern Vietnamese government all played a part in Westmoreland being held at bay in his efforts. He, it seems to me, was holding an impossible line while being held captive in his decisions by the political ideals of his government. Westmoreland was not the problem, based on what I've learned.

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Re: After Tet

by [Jesse Long](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 04:51 PM

Diplomacy

"The administration also accepted the principle that South Vietnam should do more to defend itself. Johnson's advisors agreed that from a long-range standpoint, the key to achieving American objectives was South Vietnam's ability to stand on its own, and they had concluded in late 1967 that more should be done to promote self-sufficiency (p. 239)." This sums up the diplomacy change after the Tet offensive. South Vietnam was looking to the United States do everything and this needed to change, it was time South Vietnam started contributing more and preparing themselves for their own future. Their dependency solely upon the U.S. was going to change because in order to help South Vietnam we needed them to help themselves with more involvement.

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Re: After Tet

by [Todd Lowry](#) - Friday, 12 November 2010, 01:52 PM

Hi Jesse,

I agree with you that policymakers wanted the southern government to do more in the war. However, I can't see how that would have been possible at that time. The U.S. had Americanized the war to such a degree that the south was completely dependent on their support. Thieu had made little progress politically and the ARVN forces, though they performed better than expected during Tet, were still short of trained officers and suffered corruption, desertion and disorganization, such that they had no hope for defeating the north without substantial U.S. economic and military assistance. The U.S. would not even consult the southern government about military or diplomatic decisions it was making at the time. So, I agree with what you said but I think the south's major weaknesses were the fault of the U.S. government's longstanding policies in Vietnam.

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**Re: After Tet**by [Samantha Mccourt](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 06:22 PM**Effects on Politics**

The Tet offensive had a massive affect on American politics. After the attacks, the already present discontent in Washington became even more pronounced. Doubts began to raise even more than before. "Congressional outcry reinforced the administrations conviction that it could not escalate the war without setting off a long and bitter debate..." (242) With the sudden attacks and upraising more troops may well have been needed right away, but the Johnson administration choose to reject this idea. Instead going with what Clifford had said. They wanted to change their own involvement in order to help ready them to leave. This meant that they decided not to escalate troops, though they still sent some and the objective would be to help South Vietnam stand on its own. They thought because of how quickly the ARVNs had recovered from the initial attacks and ensuing panic of Tet, that this could very well be possible (239).

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**Re: After Tet**by [Samantha Mccourt](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 06:26 PM**Societal Influences**

The massive amount of media coverage in Vietnam had a profound effect on American citizens as a whole because of the graphic imagery they were being subjected to on a regular basis. Especially after the Tet offensive, because of how brutal these attacks were. Walter Cronkite summed up perfectly how the much of America was feeling after Tet: "To say we are closer to victory today is to believe, in the face of the evidence, the optimists who have been wrong in the past. To say that we are mired in stalemate seems the only reasonable, yet unsatisfactory conclusion." (241-2) What people began seeing started to take away any understanding and faith that people had in the war and its cause. The major impact on society was obviously what most people associate with Vietnam, protests. With more negative information and images being seen by the public, outcries against the government and its involvement in Vietnam became frequent. People refused to be drafted to fight and were adamantly against the war, they made it clear they wanted it to end.

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**Re: After Tet**by [Raina Kelley](#) - Friday, 12 November 2010, 01:42 PM

Samantha,

You say it well, the media had a huge impact on the American public. This was the first televised war. For the first time the public was exposed to the hardships of war. They saw the fighting, the gore, the death. It was a lot to handle and it opened the eyes of Americans. I agree this is what made the public start to oppose the war and demand that we end it.

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**Re: After Tet**by [Todd Lowry](#) - Friday, 12 November 2010, 02:35 PM

Hi Raina,

I found it interesting that Johnson was partially at fault for the hypercritical media he faced. Herring writes, "The Johnson administration itself was at least partially responsible for media and public disillusionment during Tet" (244) He goes on to explain how the campaign of optimism made the shock of Tet much worse for the American people, and the administrations "halting and confused" reaction to the offensive both contributed to the media and public backlash after Tet.

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**Re: After Tet**by [Raina Kelley](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 10:29 AM

Todd,

An interesting point you make here indeed. I gather from all the subject matter in class (i.e. Herrying, Appy, PBS) that in the beginning the war was televised as a way to get more support. However, when the war started to rear its ugly head things started to change a bit. Soon the media was showing images that was not so favorable for Johnson. This is when the media started to be censured before it was released. In part two of the Appy book there is the story of Malcolm Browne a reporter for many years of the Vietnam war. On page 69 he talks about how his film started to be censored, "...The South Vietnamese authorities insisted on developing all film before it left Saigon. They developed an informal, but effective, form of censorship." I think this goes to prove that even the South was trying to make sure the "right image" was getting around the world. I have no doubt that when the Tet Offensive was shown with all its intensity that it shocked millions.

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Re: After Tet

by [Daniel Bonner](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 04:10 PM

I too have the impression that the whole point of the media exposing society to the war through television was to gain moral support. It is interesting that the exposure had the reverse effect, but in hindsight I'm not the least surprised that Americans reacted the way they did to the war in Vietnam. War is a cruel and violent act and the soldiers were merely serving their civic duty to our country. I cannot believe that the media thought that showing the war and violence would gain support. Moreover, it disappoints that the soldiers were treated so poorly by many Americans when in fact they were just being patriotic Americans by serving our country and supporting its decisions regardless of if "they knew what they were fighting for."

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Re: After Tet

by [Samantha Mccourt](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 10:47 AM

Hey Raina,

Thanks for your response. It really is the first time that people got to see fighting first hand. Vietnam has completely changed the way which we see wars in our country. Though I am not a fan of the often violent war protests that went on during Vietnam, or the negative treatment of troops on their return, I understand that seeing images like this for the first time would utterly shock most Americans.

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Re: After Tet

by [Raina Kelley](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 02:13 PM

Hey Samantha,

You are more than welcome. You bring up some interesting points in your reply here. I agree that there were some violent war protests but I feel in some ways they were necessary. It seems like they needed to be some what violent to get enough attention for anyone to listen to them. I could be a little off but I feel like if the peaceful protests were enough to be heard it wouldn't have had to get violent. Your other interesting point was the treatment of the troops. This I have a very hard time with. I just feel like so many of the public wanted us out of there and then when our troops came back they were treated terribly. I can see that some of the images the public saw showed the ugly truth of our soldiers but it is unfair to judge them unless you have been in the same situation as them. It just breaks my heart to know how much the troops went through in Vietnam and then to come back home and be treated like they are terrible people. It's not right and it makes me so sad that people did that to them.

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Re: After Tet

by [Jesse Long](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 08:33 PM

I agree, i think that once the reality of war was brought to the publics attention they then really began to oppose it. War is never a fun easy thing without sacrifice and i think the public forgets this until it is brought to there attention in a way that is was during the Vietnam war.

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Re: After Tet

by [Samantha Mccourt](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 06:28 PM

Military Policy

The Tet offensive was most affective because of the fact that the U.S and South Vietnam were taken completely off guard by the attacks. This aside they recovered quickly. "The timing of the offensive was poorly coordinates, and premature attacks in some towns sounded a warning that enabled Westmoreland to get reinforcements to vulnerable areas." (229) This meant that there were places that had higher military presences than normal and were more prepared. The ARVN forces also fought better under pressure the the Americans would have thought. This gave them the advantage of being able to use their superior mobility and fire power to their advantage. Westmoreland assured Washington that there would be no more set backs. Johnson was a lot more pessimistic, so when Westmoreland said he would appreciate additional help, Johnson ordered 10,500 more troops to Vietnam (233-4). This attitude changed when Westmoreland purposed a full scale escalation. Many debates followed and eventually Washington turned it down in favor of helping the South Vietnamese become more independent in their fighting. This decision was largely in light of the election year approaching and the want to be working towards peace and eventually pulling out completely, which was the popular opinion in America.

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Re: After Tet

by [Samantha Mccourt](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 06:39 PM

Diplomatic Results

The resulting affects were spread through all aspects of American society, from the government to the civilians. Full scale riots and sit ins became more frequent in protest to America's continued involvement in Vietnam. This had a huge effect on the government because of the fact that the presidential elections were coming up. In the end Johnson decided against running again, instead he supported the democratic candidate Hubert Humphrey who ran against republican Richard Nixon. Johnson's decisions on troop deployment were largely influenced by the clearly voiced popular opinion that Vietnam was a mistake. He started to try and move towards peace negotiations. These did occur, but were largely unsuccessful in coming to any real agreement. Instead it just caused more tension between the groups involved in fighting. The peace talks and Tet offensive also brought home to the American people that this war could not be won anytime soon, especially not at a reasonable cost (268).

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Effects of the Tet Offensive on American Society

by [Donald Ebel](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 06:42 PM

The news media exploded with footage and statistics on a nightly basis after Tet, shocking American viewers with both the brutality shown and the stark differences between what they had been told by President Johnson and General Westmoreland and what they were now seeing with their own eyes. "What the hell is going on?" the venerable newscaster Walter Cronkite is said to have snapped. "I thought we were winning the war!" (Herring, pg. 232) The contrast caused the credibility gap that had opened in 1967 to widen into a chasm. Tet created a real problem for the Johnson administration in convincing the American public that the United States still had the upper hand. When The New York Times reported that the administration was considering sending another 206,000 troops, the public unleashed a barrage of pointed questions about the war which had lingered beneath the surface for far too long. The North Vietnamese had succeeded in shaking the foundation of the United States of America.

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Re: Effects of the Tet Offensive on American Society

by [Molly Graham](#) - Friday, 12 November 2010, 09:10 AM

I think you were right in bringing up the fact that society had been consistently informed by both President Johnson and General Westmoreland that the war in Vietnam was going much better than the images in the media during Tet were showing. This is something I failed to mention in my post but I feel it is a very important factor in society's shift from believing the administration's reports on the war and finding them to lack credibility. Here they were being told stories of success by their leaders while seeing images of urban brutality and conflict.

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Effects of the Tet Offensive on American Politics

by [Donald Ebel](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 07:04 PM

After Tet, confusion and uncertainty reigned in American government. No one expected that the North Vietnamese was capable of striking with as much power as they did. "Johnson and his advisers were shocked by the suddenness and magnitude of the offensive, however, and intelligence estimates were much more pessimistic than Westmoreland was. Many officials feared that Tet was only the opening phase of a larger Communist offensive. Some felt that Khe Sanh was still the primary objective...Others feared a major offensive in the northern provinces or a second wave of attacks on the cities." (Herring, pg. 233) No one really knew what to think. After the initial shock wore off, the ensuing wave of public outcry against the war was enough to carry two democratic presidential candidates and present a strong case to pull out of Vietnam. "The congressional outcry reinforced the administration's conviction that it could not escalate the war without setting off a long and bitter debate, and persuaded some officials, Clifford included, that major steps must be taken to scale down American involvement." (Herring, pg. 242) Tet revealed that the United States had an exorbitant amount of blood in its hands, and the actions of the democratic presidential administration took most of the blame. The democrats paid the price when they gave up the presidential seat to a republican, perhaps the sharpest turn America could have made at that point.

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Re: Effects of the Tet Offensive on American Politics

by [Samantha Mccourt](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 10:54 AM

Donald,

This is an incredibly vivid post and really sums up the politics that followed the Tet offensive. It seems to me that the American government had, up until this point, not been willing to see that continuing to escalate was not helping them. After Tet though they started to see what you were saying, that they were hurting others and not helping. I think that a large amount of politics at this time was effected by the American people, and that them seeing what was going on forced the government to take another look at the war they had already been fighting for years.

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Re: Effects of the Tet Offensive on American Politics

by [Donald Ebel](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 01:41 PM

Samantha,

Hey, thanks! Going along with what you were saying, once the government took a good look at what the heck they were doing, a lot of things changed. Johnson was deeply hurt by the way events had transpired, and he became increasingly aware that there was no easy way out of Vietnam. He had lost control of the democratic party, and his Great Society ideal was being threatened. And that was that. Johnson decided against running for another term as president because of what had happened. This drastically changed the political climate for the elections in 1968.

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Effects of the Tet Offensive on the Military

by [Donald Ebel](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 07:42 PM

Directly after the offensive, President Johnson seemed to want to "get on with the war as quickly as possible." He ordered an additional 10,500 troops to Vietnam and stepped up air raids on the North (Herring, pg. 234). Immediately after that, Westmoreland seized the opportunity to revive his 1967 proposals to expand the war. "The North Vietnamese and the NLF could not afford the heavy losses sustained in the Tet Offensive, and with large numbers of additional

troops, Westmoreland was certain he could gain the upper hand...By taking the offensive at a time when the enemy was overextended, the general was confident he could shorten the war." (Herring, pg. 234) Suddenly skeptical of this approach, Johnson conferred to the new secretary of defense, Clark Clifford, who formed a task force to reevaluate Vietnam policy. After the evaluation, Clifford recommended that only a mere 22,000 troops were necessary, and that the South Vietnamese government should be prodded to take more responsibility of the war. The administration accepted his recommendations rather quickly by bluntly informing Thieu and Ky that "continued American assistance would depend on South Vietnam's ability to put its house in order and assume a greater burden of the fighting." (Herring, pg. 239), and other steps that led to the eventual cutback of the bombing in the North.

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Re: After Tet

by [Kristin Maurer](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 07:30 PM

Military course of Vietnam

In page 233 of the Herring book, it states that Wheeler said, "The military isn't prepared to accept a defeat in South Vietnam." Through the attacks of the Tet offensive, the military requested more troops (206,000) to aid in defenses. The south was under major attacks and were losing military left and right. Their thought was they could help defeat the enemy by outnumbering and swarming in. It took quite a bit of doing, but they were successful and the North retreated. With America watching and with Pentagon's suggestion, (pg. 237, Herring) urging in a shift from search and destroy to a goal of attriting the enemy to population security, (basically falling back majorly) the military opposed the defense departments recommendations. They thought if they did that, it would be a lot more civilian casualties.

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Re: After Tet

by [Kristin Maurer](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 07:32 PM

Social Influence

Most Americans weren't aware of what was really happening in Vietnam. When the news came in and started showing the attacks on the evening news, it made them aware of the ongoing issues that looks like its never going to end. It made them question what type of government we were supporting. One of the largest viewings were of the U.S embassy in S. Vietnam under attack. It was one of the biggest eye openers for them. The news made our society see first hand what was happening. It helped reflect the growing concern with the heavy casualties in the south, the damage done by the U.S. bombing of the North and the costs of the long, never ending war. The society turned and demanded answers. They wanted to know when this war was going to end.

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Military policy

by [Todd Lowry](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 07:37 PM

The effect the Tet offensive had on U.S. military policy was profound. Coming on the heels of the of the Johnson administration's campaign of optimism, and Westmoreland's insistence that real progress was being made in Vietnam, the surprise attacks caught the military unprepared. In a strictly military sense, the U.S. and ARVN forces despite heavy losses won a decisive victory. The military policy changes Tet brought about were along two major lines. First, it opened the way for Wheeler and the Joint Chiefs to mobilize the reserves and dramatically escalate American troop levels on the ground in Vietnam. This is something they had been advocating for since 1965 (Herring, 234). Secondly, the ARVN troops performed far better than American officials had thought possible during Tet. As a result, their performance opened the possibility of falling back to the plan of Vietnamizing the war.

After Tet, Johnson responded "with a stubborn determination to hold the line at any cost" (223). He informed Westmoreland that if he needed more troops he was to ask for them. Westmoreland responded to Johnson, indicating that he could use any help he could get. Johnson immediately ordered 10,500 additional troops and increased air attacks against the north.

General Wheeler was dispatched to Vietnam to assess the situation and report back to Johnson. Wheeler had been pushing for the reserves to be mobilized for years and Johnsons determined efforts after Tet seemed to make that mobilization a real possibility. He met with Westmoreland and here is where the story gets interesting and a little confusing. Herring writes that "The two men settled on the figure of 206,000 soldiers, a number large enough to meet any

contingency in Vietnam and force mobilization of the reserves" (235). This is contradicted to some degree in the PBS series wherein during an interview Westmoreland himself says that he gave the figure of 206,000 soldiers as a response to a hypothetical question and he never made a formal request for those soldiers. He went on to say that the 10,500 troops Johnson sent him were already allocated to him, he just asked for their arrival to be expedited. Nevertheless, Wheeler arrived in Washington and presented Johnson with that number as a formal request from Westmoreland. It seemed, at least then, that there was a real possibility for a massive increase in American troop levels in Vietnam. The purpose being to keep the military initiative Westmoreland had achieved during the Tet offensive. Unbeknownst to Westmoreland, Wheeler intended to keep half of those troops as a reserve force to bolster the thinly spread U.S. forces globally.

On the other hand, the ARVN forces had performed well during the offensive and that performance led some administration officials to the possibility of ARVN forces taking a larger role in fighting the north, if not taking it over completely. Unfortunately, this would require the southern government to "end its internal bickering, purge corrupt officers and officials and move to develop efficient and effective forces" (237). Something the American government had no luck with through three administrations at that point. The southern government couldn't seem to clean its own house and had become almost totally reliant on American support. Because of this, the possibility for Vietnamization of the war was remote at that point, but the hope for the eventual realization of that outcome was born.

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Re: After Tet

by [Kristin Maurer](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 07:42 PM

Diplomatic Course after Tet

On page 233 in the Herring book, The Tet Offensive left Washington in a state of "troubled confusion and uncertainty." The cables from Vietnam sent to the white house prior to Tet were basically stating that the enemies were under control and were defeated. It was just going to take some time to clean up. Through television, the newscasters were showing a different side. They were showing that this war was still very much happening. It made the two contradict each other and awakened the still ongoing issues that were supposed to be under control. It made the government start to question when this war was going to end and split the white house staff. More and more senators etc. started to change their minds, or at least question if this war should still be happening. At this point, they wanted victory or withdrawal. Even the president's wise men who always supported LBJ's actions and were prowar started to change their minds, they advised the president to not send the 206,000 men as requested and also to modify and reduce the bombing. The closest of advisors to LBJ were ready for a change. Harry McPherson and Clark Clifford paired together to try and stop the war and to change the president's mind. After making light of the drawn out war to LBJ, started to make small changes to hopefully aid in the possible retreat of the U.S. He also decided to no longer seek presidency in the upcoming election

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Re: After Tet

by [Jeremy Carlson](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 07:48 PM

Effect on Politics

The Tet Offensive greatly affected many facets of American and South Vietnamese views of the war, and politics were no exception. Because the Tet Offensive impacted the future view of the war, there were requests by Westmoreland and Wheeler for an increase of 206,000 troops (Herring 235); however, such an increase invoked a sharp reaction from congress. Congress, "demanded an explanation and insisted that [they] share in any decision to expand the war (Herring 242)." With congress involved, what kind of possible outcome can occur? Some stand staunchly for the war, while many who opposed the war, or were somewhat neutral, become severe opposition to the presidents agenda to "win the war." In fact, their involvement solidified previous beliefs that expansion of the war would only be resolved after a "long and bitter debate"(242). These events only added to the belief America was involved in a stalemate, not only politically, but militarily.

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Effects of the Tet Offensive on Diplomacy

by [Donald Ebel](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 07:51 PM

The new air of gloom that hung over the subject of Vietnam after the Tet offensive greatly affected American diplomacy. The massive public outcry against the war through sit-ins, marches, and protests caused the presidential candidates in 1968 to run largely on issues pertaining to the handling of the Vietnam war. This indicated that Vietnam had moved to the forefront of issues that Americans saw as most important. Tet had "...convinced most Americans that the war could not be won in an acceptable time and at an acceptable cost." (Herring, pg. 268) Politics and relations had become centered around what to do about the Vietnam war. Whether he meant to or not, President Johnson had started the irreversible deescalation of the war. The only question on everybody's mind was how to end it.

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Re: After Tet

by [Jeremy Carlson](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 08:22 PM

Societal Influences in America

Media molded many of the societal views of the war, as well as epitomized occasionally. Parodies, such as the cartoon by Art Buchwald, painted "Johnson's and Westmoreland's" war as one of naivete, and that they didn't know what they were in for. While these parodies were not fully responsible for the following outcome, they may have been a catalyst in public opinion. Societal influences of an uncorrected crushing defeat during the Tet Offensive, promoted an inclination to move in a new direction (Herring 241); however, what direction is there to move? It appears that withdrawal indicates defeat, mounting an effort would anger citizens, and the present effort results in a stalemate. Walter Cronkite's comments on the war seem to embody those ideas.

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Re: After Tet

by [Jennifer Wilson](#) - Friday, 12 November 2010, 10:58 AM

I think the way they left the war was by making the South help themselves and leading them to become in control of their destiny. This is what happens when you lose the war and want to make it look like you're just doing the right thing. I also think there was a lot of pressure from the public because of the violent images of the South Vietnam police chief executing a Viet Cong on the front page of the news. .

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Re: After Tet

by [Samantha McCourt](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 11:04 AM

Jennifer,

I think they said in the Herring book that they wanted to find a way to make sure that the South was helping themselves, at this point in the war though they didn't actually do that. If they had worked towards that right after Tet they possibly could have gotten out, in the end that would have been better for America, after all this should have been predominately South Vietnam's war the whole time.

It isn't really fair to say that America was losing the war, in reality the war wasn't really a win or lose situation for them, they were trying to help in a not very effective way unfortunately.

There was a lot of pressure from the American people to get out of Vietnam because of the fact that it wasn't our war and our involvement was just continuing to escalate.

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Re: After Tet

by [Kristin Maurer](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 08:25 PM

After Tet-American politics

It made the government start to question when this war was going to end and split the white house staff. The U.S senate that was pro-war started to change their minds and question if America should still be fighting in Vietnam. 1968 was also a presidential election year. Senator McCarthy was

running and made very openly that he opposed the war. Voters were favoring McCarthy's view. On page 242 in Herring, it shows that from November 1967 through March of '68, support for the war had a support of about 45 percent. It dropped to an all time low after Tet of 26 percent. In late March of '68, it showed that America had changed their views even more (78%) were certain that the U.S was not making any progress and something had to be done. Either escalation, or withdrawal.

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Re: After Tet

by [Molly Graham](#) - Friday, 12 November 2010, 11:43 PM

I like the last sentence of your post when you are talking about the time period after the Tet Offensive calling for "either escalation, or withdrawal". It states very simply the fact that this was a time of extremes; either we needed to go all out and step up our game even further in Vietnam, or we needed to abandon the idea all together and end it. Earlier policies of trying to walk a middle line when it came to involvement were over. The effects of Tet on American politics called for a firm decision between the two extremes. Good post.

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Re: After Tet

by [Molly Graham](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 08:27 PM

Effect on Politics

Even after reports of a devastating loss, Westmoreland still reported to Johnson after Tet that the United States had everything under control in Vietnam (Herring 233). However, Johnson and many others in the White House were stunned by what they were hearing and feared that more attacks by the Vietnamese communists were imminent (Herring 233). This was definitely a very bleak time in the administration as Herring quotes Taylor as having said that an "air of gloom" hung over the discussions in the White House (Herring 233). Because of the decision by Johnson to send Westmoreland additional troops following Tet, Congress became angry and called for committees and resolutions questioning the United States' involvement in Vietnam (Herring 242). It is because of the turmoil surrounding the Tet Offensive that Johnson announced to the public that he would not be running for reelection in the 1968 elections (Appy 287). It was following Tet that Johnson also replaced General Westmoreland with General Creighton Abrams (Appy 288).

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Re: After Tet

by [Molly Graham](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 08:27 PM

Societal Influences

Tet caused a huge uproar in the United States as printed news reports and televised videos showed disturbing images of the offensive to the Americans at home and caused them to find our leaders to be not at all credible (Herring 232-233). It is true that perhaps some of the reports were a bit sensationalized by the media, but the effect of disillusionment was still the same (Herring 241). The Tet Offensive caused many in the media who had somewhat questioned the United States' involvement in Vietnam as well as those that once supported the war to speak out against it (Herring 241). Perhaps it was because of this somewhat slanted and disturbing coverage, as well as the shift in the opinion of the media, that the popular opinion also changed drastically at this time with a satisfaction rating of Johnson at an all time low of 26 percent (Herring 242-243).

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Re: After Tet

by [Kristin Maurer](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 11:34 AM

Molly,

Great post. I like how you pointed out the media were sensationalizing the reports. By showing what they wanted to

show, they could show the media's opinion on the war.

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Re: After Tet

by [Jason Carlstrom](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 02:14 PM

the media did use Tet as a way to object the war. It didnt mention how most of the cities were defended quickly and taken under control. "the intense and upclose action in the cities at Tet did expose the public more directly to the war, and coverage was more critical."244 it gave Americans a big shock&awe look at how brutal the fighting can be. "the media continued to depict events in highly unfavorable and sometimes distorted terms."243

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Re: After Tet

by [Molly Graham](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 08:28 PM

Military Policy

Following Tet, Johnson became very steadfast about the United States' involvement in Vietnam (Herring 234). He did not want to see defeat like he saw in Tet again in Vietnam and vowed to "hold the line at any cost" (Herring 234). This promise was reached by further escalation (Herring 234). Johnson made the decision to honor General Westmoreland's request of an additional 10,500 American troops being sent to Vietnam (Herring 234). He also planned to escalate the United States' involvement in the war by the continuing bombing of North Vietnam (Herring 234). As the year went on, however, Johnson denied Westmoreland his additional requests to deploy more American troops to Vietnam (Appy 287). Johnson also made the decision to stop the bombing of Northern Vietnam that was currently in effect (Appy 287).

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Re: After Tet

by [Samantha Mccourt](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 11:06 AM

Do you think the reason for his decision was because of the Tet offensive or do you think it had more to do with the aftermath effect of the American people freaking out when they started to see more violent images. I personally think that the presidential elections seemed to be his most motivating factor and not stopping the war because it was bad.

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Re: After Tet

by [Molly Graham](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 08:29 PM

Diplomatic Results

The Tet Offensive greatly scared the administration and made many within the government greatly question the United States' involvement in the war in Vietnam (Herring 239). Many became solidified in the idea in the administration that the United States should start turning over the war to the South Vietnamese (Herring 239). This transition of handing the war off to the South Vietnamese government and military was known as the policy of "Vietnamization" (Herring 239). Though at first they were not at all successful, Tet also brought about negotiations between the United States and North Vietnam (Herring 240). The administration took this time after Tet to begin talks because they felt that the North may be ready for peace talks after gaining some ground militarily (Herring 240).

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Re: After Tet

by [Tony Francisco](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 08:31 PM

On Politics

As said in Herring's book, "The Tet Offensive was 'probably unique in that the side that lost completely in the tactical sense came away with an overwhelming psychological and hence political victory.'" Early reports from Vietnam during the Tet Offensive had televised accounts of the vicious fighting in Saigon and Hue making a joke out of the US's optimistic end of the year reports. Vietnamization was a key development following the Battles of Tet. The US had decided that it would be pivotal for the south to begin sharing a greater portion of the burden of war. The government in Saigon was informed bluntly that they would have to be prepared to get their side in order and handle more of the fighting in order to keep American assistance, supply, and limited troop additions. There was much confusion in the government during the decisions that lead up to Vietnamization. Congress and critics of the president were outraged at the idea of sending another 206,000 soldiers into Vietnam. Although those 206,000 troops were never actually sent, around 13,500 were. The US eventually turned to Vietnamization of the war and opened itself up to peace talks with the North even as it continued fighting them. April 3rd, 1968 the North Vietnamese agreed to meet with the US to discuss an unconditional end to its bombing and the two nations agreed to meet in Paris. The talks were unsuccessful and America pressed on with Vietnamization, although the south, it had been agreed, was far from ready to bear the full brunt of the war.

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**Re: After Tet**

by [Tony Francisco](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 08:31 PM

On Society

The Tet Offensive was enormously influential in bringing the state of the war home to America and letting everyone see the horrors of what was happening and the government that they were supporting. The war was beginning to come to a new level of understanding in the US's collective consciousness. One of my favorite quotes, "We had to destroy Ben Tre to save it," helped show the complete and total purposeless destruction that the war was bringing to Vietnam. The US public saw candid photos and televised footage of a police chief in Saigon shooting an NLF prisoner in the head and that helped symbolize for the public how dangerous and violent the government in Saigon was. The retaking of the city of Hue was one of the most deadly and destructive battles during the war. The US and South Vietnam forces lost around 500 soldiers while the North's losses are estimated at 5,000. There was an incredible number of civilian casualties, almost 5,000, and the battle left 100,000 civilians displaced as refugees. The average American's dissatisfaction with the war lead the government to branch out in new directions. The American mood had shifted to an incredibly somber and bleak outlook with the war. The media had largely left an uncorrected report that the Battles of Tet had been an immense enemy victory. The members of the media that had largely stayed neutral or supported the president's decisions chose this time to come out forcefully against the war by showing how the US and North Vietnam were in a large stale mate. The public feared for almost 206,000 more US troops being suggested to go to Vietnam, even though President Johnson had already privately decided to turn down that proposal.

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**Re: After Tet**

by [Tony Francisco](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 08:32 PM

On The Military

The battles of Tet imposed many hardships on the US and ARVN forces as they had to withdraw from the countryside in order to protect the cities. Tet created a sense of urgency in the United States. The military feared that Tet was only a part of a larger communist attack against the US and South Vietnam. This fear and sense of urgency lead to an increase in troops, around 13,500, being sent to Vietnam and a reserve call-up of unspecified numbers. One of the most important aspects of the military's actions during this time is the Vietnamization of the war. The US had decided that South Vietnam was more than adequately prepared to handle a larger portion of the war after seeing the ARVN's quick recovery during the primary assaults during Tet. The government decided that promoting the south's self-sufficiency would be key in helping win the war. The government in Saigon was told that the US would still be able to send substantial supplies but limited troops and still be able to assist with the war efforts, provided the south decided to assume a greater share of the fight. A massive increase in South Vietnamese draft calls lead to an increase in the ARVN's ranks by 135,000.

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**Re: After Tet**

by [Jason Carlstrom](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 02:02 PM

the US starting to make ARVN more self-reliant over their cities showed how it was time for a change. the US could help best by still giving supplies and resources, but having a massive army was not going to be the main focus.

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Re: After Tet

by [Tony Francisco](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 05:06 PM

Oh no, I totally agree with you. That was a poor point for me to end on. I know that the ARVN went on to still have numerous problems and on pg. 258 in the Herring book it talks about the rankings of the different divisions and how only one of them was rated at excellent. Herring says that desertions were at an all time high for that point in the war and that it continually was in need of qualified officers.

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Re: After Tet

by [Tony Francisco](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 08:35 PM

Diplomatic Results

The Tet offensive left the North considerably injured and in extrem duress. The United States decided that they could successfully undertake negotiations from a much stronger position now. President Johnson in his March 31st speech announced that the US was ready to begin peace talks at any time and that he would not be seeking another term as president in order to emphasize his sincere desire for negotiations. The administration was not willing or prepared to make concessions that the North desired and so diplomacy was able to accomplish nothing.

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Re: After Tet

by [Jeremy Carlson](#) - Wednesday, 10 November 2010, 08:34 PM

Military Policy for Vietnam

The Tet Offensive, while harsh on Northern Vietnamese forces, was a very carefully executed military action. The belief that large losses in remote areas distant from populated cities would allow guerilla warriors to position in lightly guarded city areas. It was amazing how much and little they achieved all at once. The comparison to the Battle of the Bulge does paint the imagery of how the "defeated" can restore some semblance of victory to their campaign with a single action. Unlike the outcome of the Battle of the Bulge, there were media cameras there to capture the widespread death of civilians and soldiers; however, North Vietnam made no major footholds even after their repeated attack in early February, in addition to heavy casualties (Herring 227).

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Re: After Tet

by [Samantha McCourt](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 11:18 AM

This is mostly right on the part of the North Vietnamese, but this post is supposed to be about the affect on the American military. The fact that North Vietnam was unable to gain any major foothold obviously had an effect on the American military and how they viewed the success of the this offensive. Also to say that it was carefully executed seems a bit like an overstatement, saying as in the Herring book it states "The timing of the offensive was poorly coordinated, and premature attacks in some towns sounded a warning that enabled Westmoreland to get reinforcements to vulnerable areas. In addition, the NLF was slow to capitalize on its initial success, giving the United States time to mount a strong defense." (229)

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Rate... **Re: After Tet**by [Kristin Maurer](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 11:23 AM

Hey Jeremy,

I like your post! I would like to add a little if I may to the sentence about the outcome of the North not making any footholds. Although they didn't make any "footholds" per say, they did get america's attention. In both the PBS series and I believe in Herring, it states that the North had a victory of changing America's view of the war and wanting it to stop.... They had a political win.

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The diplomacy of the war definitely began to shift greatly after the Tet Offensive. The idea of victory moved from "defeating the enemy" to "withdrawl with honor," which was a result of an election year as well as the growing influence of the public opinion on Johnson and others involved. As a result, the ARVN began to react with much more furvor increasing their draft numbers and resulting in an armed increase of 135,000 men. America began to disarm the war not through their brute strength, but by solidifying the forces of the ARVN, and allowing them to defend their own freedoms.

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After Tet many things changed in the world of politics. The main thing was the question as to whether to send many more troops or to start the deescalation of troops in the war. Some people believed that what we needed was to have a massive attack on the North. To keep up the war of attrition. Others believed that it was a lost cause and that we need to get out. In episode 6 "Tet" there was the scene where Dean Rusk was grilled on the matters of the Vietnam war. This conference showed that the bombing in the North wasn't meeting the goals it was suppose to. As the video states: Now congress wanted a change; Either victory or withdrawl. At this point we weren't much closer to an end to the war. There was alot unanswered questions. "how long would it take? They didn't know. How many more troops? They didn't know. Would 206,000 answer the demand? They didn't know." What was the plan to win the war? Ultimately the war of attrition would wear down the other side and we would win. But there was no indication that we were anywhere close to that point. I think congress started to have enough. The idea that we were in a sort of stand still caused a demand in change in the politics of this war. And Tet is what ultimately caused this change.

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Tikoya,

I agree with you, it was a big question on whether or not to send more troops. I think in some ways it was a "catch-22" if they sent more troop it would just get the U.S. deeper in, but if we sent nothing than it was only like abandoning the U.S. troops that were already there and needing help after the Tet Offensive. It was time for either a victory or a loss like you said. The Tet Offensive was a huge turning point in the war which brought a lot of change to the war.

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Rate... **Re: After Tet**by [Daniel Bonner](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 06:27 PM

I agree that the situation was very much like a "catch 22" and can I sympathize with the political predicament that Johnson was in. Honesty the U.S. was really stuck between a rock and a hard place facing the decision to send more troops to Vietnam.

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Tikoya,

In the video, it does also point out that a lot of the white house did in fact change their minds from prowar to antiwar and end it. With Dean Rusk being grilled, his answers were not acceptable to the questions. It shows in the video of people actually making a point to tell Dean Rusk they changed their minds on the war.

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there really was no clear solution that guaranteed a win. was more troops needed? more bombings? more offense attacks or more defense? the North tested every strategy the US had and people were losing faith in our abilities to win after the Tet.

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Politics

On March 31, 1968 President Johnson gave a speech announcing some major decisions in the war, among those decisions Johnson had announced " I shall not seek, and will not accept the nomination of my party for another term as your president" (*Herring*, 250). After spending the majority of his term and seemingly making no progress Johnson must have been exhausted. Additionally, prior to his announcement "Senator Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota, an out spoken dove, had audaciously challenged Johnson's renomination "(Herring, 243). Furthermore, "Senator Robert F. Kennedy of New York announced that he, too, would run against the president on a platform of opposition to the war." It appears to me that both candidates posed a threat to Johnson's presidency and that since America was speaking out against the war the political parties would soon change.

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Daniel:

Do you think that Johnson may have been pressured by other party members to not run again for president, or do you think he decided on his own, because he felt he couldn't win the election?

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Rate... **Re: After Tet**by [Daniel Bonner](#) - Friday, 12 November 2010, 08:03 PM

Marla,

Honestly I think that Johnson was pressured more by the situation of the war. I think that the stress got the better of him. It was not necessarily that he felt like he could not win the election, but more he was probably more mentally and physically drained than anything from all the negative feedback he received.

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Daniel- I agree with you on Johnson's reasons for not running for re-election. As the sources we have read in this class have indicated, Johnson took the war very personally and directly related its failing to his own. I think he felt he had failed and was ready to take a step back. His decision may have also been influenced by the reason he gave in his speech at the end of March; that he wanted to spend his last months in office doing what he felt would help our situation as opposed to running a campaign and making strategic moves in order to get votes.

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Society

No other battle during the Vietnam War had dramatized the war more than the Tet Offensive in 1968, according to the PBS video series. During this point, the war had begun to "spill into the living rooms across America" (PBS, Tet 1968). Because Americans were now more exposed to what was happening in Vietnam (from the media's point of view) it caused more controversy of the situation in Vietnam than ever before. Since "the media continued to depict events in highly unfavorable and sometimes distorted terms" (Herring, 241), Americans began to realize the devastation that was being caused to Vietnam as well as the U.S. Military. The Media had portrayed the war in such a way that it society had begun to lose faith in winning the war. "By March, [1968] moreover, an overwhelming majority of Americans (78 percent) were certain that the United States was not making any progress in Vietnam." Not only did the Tet Offensive have a major effect on American society, but it also affected the Vietnamese society too. "Now for the first time they were fighting in the cities in their biggest offensive of the war" (PBS, Tet 1968). Because the war was in the streets civilian casualties rose drastically.

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Military

The Tet Offensive in 1968 seems to be one of the most pivotal battles of the Vietnam War for both sides involved. The attacks nearly hit every region in from "demilitarized zone to the Ca Mau Peninsula on the southern tip in Vietnam. In all they struck thirty-six of forty-four provincial capitals, and fifty hamlets. In addition to the daring raid on the embassy, NFL units assaulted Saigon's Tan Son Nhut Airport, the presidential palace and the headquarters of South Vietnam's general Staff" (Herring, 228-229). Although taken off guard on the United States and South Vietnam had a quick recovery. General Westmoreland had requested reinforcements in areas that needed it most and 206,000 soldiers. At this point in the war military presence became even more questionable. Therefore military tactics were about to change.

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Rate... **Re: After Tet**by [Daniel Bonner](#) - Thursday, 11 November 2010, 01:22 AM**Diplomacy**

The speech given by President Johnson on March 31, 1968 announced the fate of the war in the years to come. The decisions involved limiting bombing to an area north of the demilitarized zone, Johnson also announced that the United States was ready to discuss peace at any time. Despite the speech given by Johnson the fighting continued through negotiations eventually "the two nations finally agreed to meet in Paris, and the administration took a hard line from the outset." (Herring, 255), but nothing was immediately accomplished and the war persisted.

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In the Herring book (pg 233), he states, "the Tet Offensive left Washington in a state of 'troubled confusion and uncertainty'", however, "the president responded with a stubborn determination to hold the line at any cost". The administration thought that South Vietnam should gain the ability to stand on its own and that more should be done to promote self-sufficiency. The US made it clear to Thieu and Ky that continued American assistance would depend on their ability to "put its house in order". (pg239) Our government thought that because of "our victory" during the Tet Offensive we were in a stronger position to take a hard-line approach in negotiating a peace that would be controlled by demands made by the United States. In a speech on March 31st, Johnson announced that he was willing to start peace talks whenever the North was ready. The US was unwilling to make any of the compromises that the North wanted.

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The effects the Tet offensive had on politics during the Vietnam War were dramatic. Its outcome led the North Vietnamese and Americans to the negotiating table, exposed the inaccurate portrayal of the war to the American people and destroyed any hope Johnson had of seeking reelection. Although Tet was a costly military defeat for North Vietnam, politically, it was a resounding victory and seemingly decisive in the eventual outcome of the war.

The political aftermath following Tet was devastating to Johnson. Johnson had been staging an extensive publicity campaign to encourage optimism about the war effort in the months before Tet. The Tet offensive made it clear that Johnson and Westmoreland both underestimated their enemy and overestimated their progress against them. For Johnson, Tet could not have come at a worst time. His advisers were already at odds about his policies and the picture Johnson and his administration had been painting for the American people was that of continual military progress, with victory on the horizon. The Tet offensive brought to light Johnson's inaccurate portrayal of the war to the American people and drove portions of his staff, some of whom had been long time supporters, away from his failed policies.

Congress, after learning of Westmoreland's request for an additional 206,000 troops, demanded an explanation from the administration and insisted they be involved in future decisions concerning the war. In addition to that "139 members of the House of Representatives sponsored a resolution calling for a full review of American policy in Vietnam" (Herring 242). Johnson's approval rating plummeted and with it went any hope for reelection.

The Tet offensive was a much bigger political victory than the North Vietnamese could have ever hoped for. Though somewhat indirectly, and at a very high cost, the Viet Minh were able to bring about the downfall of the Johnson administration through the Tet offensive.

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Rate... **Re: Political consequences after Tet**by [Tikoya Wiget](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 05:10 PM

Todd:

I think you did a great job summing it up. Indeed the North didn't sustain any hold over the places they attacked during Tet, and there casualties were quite high. But they had a great political victory. This surprising attack caused everyone to reevaluate where we thought we were in terms of winning the war.

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The societal impact of Tet on the South Vietnamese people was more misery and even less stability. Civilian casualties were estimated as high as 12,500 killed, many thousands more were injured, and as many as a million people became refugees (Herring, 232). The city of Hue was hardest hit, and the nearly month long battle to liberate the city destroyed it in the process. The fighting in that city alone created huge civilian casualties and rendered close to 100,000 citizens into refugees (232). The people of Vietnam also received a grim reminder of exactly what was at stake in the war when northern forces in Hue arrested and executed thousands of citizens for their support, or presumed support, of the southern government while they briefly occupied the city. With the real possibility of mass executions hanging on the outcome of the war, many South Vietnamese citizens simply had no choice but to support the Americans and southern government. Their very lives depended on America supporting the floundering southern government and winning the war.

The impact Tet had on American society was where I think the real victory for the NLF lies. It resulted in the media, who had up to that point was largely neutral or supported the war, shifting toward opposition of the war (244). The horrors of the ground war were broadcast into American homes and offered an overall picture of the war quite opposite to that of the one the Johnson administration had been hammering home in 1967. Between the oppositional media coverage about the war and the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, America erupted in divisive protest and violence. Herring writes, "Campus unrest mounted significantly, Some 200 demonstrations erupting at more than 100 colleges during the spring semester alone" (260-261). Protests turned from peaceful to violent and clashes between protesters, police and National Guard troops became increasingly deadly. During one protest in Washington D.C. alone, "twelve people were killed, [and] an estimated \$25 million of damage was done..." (261). In the face of growing public unrest about the war, and divisive racial tensions, American citizens "could no longer turn away from the fact that the war in Southeast Asia...was causing a kind of civil war in the United States" (261).

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As always incredibly well said. I was glad to see you bring in the civil rights movement as well as the student movement. I also am glad to see the protests being talked about in a realistic way. I feel like people often glorify the anti-war movement because of how vastly unpopular the war was, but to me it always will seem strange to fight a horribly violent war with more violence.

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Politics: after the Tet offensive secretary of defense Clark Clifford called for a full evaluation of the Vietnam War for the United States. He questioned if the 206,000 extra troops is really the solution to ending the war the fastest. "North Vietnam had already demonstrated that it could match American increase and that it could limit its losses if it chose...Expansion of the war would bring increased American casualties and require new taxes, ricking a domestic crisis

of unprecedented proportions.”(237) they wanted to change from the Search and Destroy tactic to Population Security. The US would wean out of Vietnam and negotiate while giving the South a chance to stand alone and build their country. “the goal of the new approach would be a negotiated settlement rather than military victory.”(237) It was the point where everyone just wanted to back away from intense fighting and start negotiations.

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Diplomacy After Tet

by [Todd Lowry](#) - Friday, 12 November 2010, 01:25 PM

In Johnson's famous speech given after Tet on March 31st “he named the veteran diplomat W. Averell Harriman his personal representative should peace talks materialize, and he made clear that the United States was ready to discuss peace, any place, any time” (Herring, 250). Though he opened the door for a diplomatic solution to the conflict Johnson was still steadfast in his goals and not ready to make any real concessions to the North Vietnamese necessary for peace talks to move forward. Johnson's military advisers correctly thought the negotiations would be used by the North Vietnamese to drive a wedge between the U.S. and Saigon and were therefore in no rush to talk peace seriously. They were right in that North Vietnam's goals during Tet were partly diplomatic in nature. Hanoi had moved to a strategy of fighting while negotiating and “had little interest in substantive negotiations while [their] military balance of forces were unfavorable, and it viewed the Paris talks as a means of getting the bombing stopped, exacerbating differences between the United States and South Vietnam, and intensifying antiwar pressures in the United States” (254). North Vietnam was largely successful in all three of those goals.

Johnson entered the peace talks without consulting the South Vietnamese government and that did further alienate Thieu and his government. The peace talks drove Thieu into further seclusion and created serious divisiveness within South Vietnam between the Buddhists, sects, ARVN and religious groups. The southern government felt “...railroaded into negotiations before they were ready” (260). There was also a justifiable fear among the South Vietnamese that the negotiations would leave them at the mercy of the Vietcong.

Johnson found he was hardly able to deal with the negotiations within his own administration and he was looking at a situation of national unrest. He was trying to satiate both the hawks and the doves with his position during the negotiations. In the end, this created more of a stalemate and few concessions would be made in his actual policies.

In the beginning of the Paris peace talks neither side seemed flexible enough to make any diplomatic progress toward peace, and the fighting escalated in the south. Delays in diplomatic responses, long arguments about trivial matters like table shapes and ulterior motives to peace prevailed in the early attempts at diplomacy in France. This deadlock would persist through the remainder of the Johnson administration; leaving the negotiations wholly unresolved and without real progress for the next administration.

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Re: After Tet

by [Jason Carlstrom](#) - Friday, 12 November 2010, 01:44 PM

Diplomatic: May 13th the United States and North Vietnam started to negotiate in Paris, but from the beginning it went into deadlock. The North mainly used the negotiations to stop the bombings and all other acts of war. The US wanted to lower its troops and involvement in the coming years and insisted the North to a similar action. President Johnson didn't trust the North and didn't want to back down and endanger American troops while the North could be possibly regrouping. “Our most difficult negotiations were with Washington and not Hanoi...we just couldn't convince the President that summer.”(257) overall the US escalated the pace of the operations that spring of 1968 instead of withdrawing.

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Re: After Tet

by [David Ross](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 11:56 AM

Military Policy

Tet allowed the United States to funnel more troops into the conflict in Vietnam. Prior to the Tet offensive the US government was hesitant to commit more troops and more money to the war for fear of losing even more support at home. When the communists went on the offensive and broke the cease fire for the Tet holiday they showed that they could not be dealt with at a peace table with out being given everything they wanted and not making any concessions so the only choice at the time seemed to be an escalation of military force.

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Re: After Tet

by [Tikoya Wiget](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 04:26 PM

"Societal Influences"

One thing that set this war a

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Re: After Tet

by [Tikoya Wiget](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 04:44 PM

Diplomatic Results

The immediate diplomatic result after Tet was to send in more troops to prepare for, perhaps another attack. By the time General Westmoreland requested 206,000 more troops, Johnson thought the situation was under control and instead asked Clark Clifford to reevaluate the the war. Clifford amoung other pentagon civilians urged against sending that many troops to the war. Herring states, "the Pentagon civilions went further, however. In their final report, they urged a shift from search and destroy, with its goal of "attriting" the enemy, to a strategy ot "population security". This was the true diplomatic result from Tet. And that was instead of the U.S. going in trying to fix the problem, they wanted to work on having the South take more responsibility in the war and have them start to stand on their own two feet.

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Re: After Tet

by [Tikoya Wiget](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 05:00 PM

"Military"

After Tet, Westmoreland and Wheeler wanted to attack the enemy while they were weak. They believed that what was neccessary was to hit the north, and to hit them hard. That is why they requested 206,000 additional troops. Some were weary of this because the North had a record of recovering quickly. And many believed that the North would be able to match us with any numbers. Yet and still, Westmoreland believed more troops, guns, and bombs would shorten the war. The Clifford task force shot that down however.

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Re: After Tet

by [Shellea Montgomery](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 09:20 PM

Tet Offensive and Politics

In the U. S. the Tet Offensive confirmed President Johnson's decision to wind down the war. Finding antiwar within the American people and the Democratic Party, Johnson declined a request for more U.S. troops and put a stop to most of the bombing in the north. According to the Appy book, pg 292; "Another thing that hurt our credibility was the lack of

visible military progress" With there being no real progress it stopped making since to continue fighting.

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**Re: After Tet**

by [Shellea Montgomery](#) - Saturday, 13 November 2010, 09:31 PM

Tet Offensive and Society

The information that was on nightly in the U.S., shocked and upset many Americans who were under the impression that the U.S. was easily taking out the enemy. The fact that they were giving us false information had a massive impact on the U.S. public opinion. Opposition to the war grew more heated and continued to put pressure on Johnson. Adding fuel to the dislike of the war were the images being sent home and the stories from the reporters. Appy pg 291

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