

# The vietnam war was a defining point in history assignment

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During 1968 the Vietnam War was a defining moment in American history, in that due to the Tet Offensive, American morale concerning the war and President Johnson decreased, mistrust in the government increased, and the end of the Vietnam War seemed nearer. This year was truly a turning point in American history; the three listed examples are only a few reasons why. The Vietnam War in general changed the history of America, but the year, 1968, especially affected the American society. During this time, fear and suspicion were prevalent due to the decisions of the government, and battles occurring in Vietnam.

On January 31, 1968, the Tet Offensive officially began (Feldmeth). The Offensive began on the first day of Tet, which was the Vietnamese festival of the lunar New Year. The North Vietnamese armies surprised the American and Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) armies as they attacked almost every major city in South Vietnam (Battle of Khe Sanh). Although, many of these attacks were resisted, Americans at home saw the Offensive as an American defeat. For the first time in history, the whole war was broadcasted on television, allowing the American public to watch all that occurred in Vietnam.

When they saw the Tet Offensive, they realized the power that North Vietnam possessed was greater than they expected. While this brought public opinion of the war down, it also affected their belief in the government. Before this had occurred, military leaders such as General Westmorland were telling Americans that the United States army had everything under control and other sanguine views of the war (What Was the Tonkin Resolution? ). This occurrence proved to be contradictory to previous <https://assignbuster.com/the-vietnam-war-was-a-defining-point-in-history-assignment/>

statements made about the war. This Offensive affected President Johnson as well.

After the Tet Offensive, he lost popularity as Americans began to question Johnson and his presidency. His loss of popularity increased so much that in the end he decided to drop out of the next presidential elections all together. Knowing that many Americans blamed him for what happened in Vietnam. The Tet Offensive consisted of many battles, some of which became infamous for their brutality. These battles also contributed to the loss of public opinion. The most notorious of these battles was the Battle of Khe Sanh. This was a strategic village, which both North and South Vietnam wanted.

The Village suffered an attacked during the Tet Offensive. The North Vietnamese Peoples' Army of Vietnam (PAVN) held a siege of the American forces there for 77 days (Battle of Khe Sanh). American leaders were afraid this siege would turn out to be akin to the battle at Dienbienphu in which the French were driven from Vietnam. Many Americans who were watching the proceedings of this battle at home also believe this might occur. They saw how readily willing the North Vietnamese were to give up their lives in order to protect their country.

The American public believed this enthusiasm would be difficult to quench, unlike the statements of previous information given to them. Similar to the Tet Offensive as a whole, this battle contradicted what the government had been telling the American people. In this battle alone, 205 American soldiers died. This in itself did not boost public opinion of the war. The American

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public wanted an end to the war. On May 10, 1968, the United States and North Vietnam began finally talking about a peace treaty (Feldmeth).

During this time the North Vietnamese foreign minister Nguyen Duy Trinh stated that there was a possibility that North Vietnam would consider beginning to talk about peace if the United States ceased the continuous bombing of North Vietnam. ( What Was the Tonkin Resolution? ) This of course led to a great amount of stress from the American public to end the bombing. They were tired of the war and wanted the soldiers back. The government was hesitant fearing that North Vietnam would not keep to their proposal and that they would use the time to re-fortify their defenses in preparation for another attack.

In the end, after all that happened during the Tet offensive Johnson ordered a bombing halt for the 20th parallel which contained the majority of the North Vietnamese population (1968: Vietnam). Thirty-Four days later, the countries decided that the peace conference would take place in Paris (1968: Vietnam). The conference went on for many months and it was not until early December that the South Vietnamese agreed to send delegates to join the conference (1968: Vietnam). Although this conference was slow and almost unproductive, it began the end of the war. The year of 1968 was a turning point for both the Vietnam War and the

American Society. The Tet Offensive was the climax of the Vietnam War; it showed the American public the truth concerning the status of the war.

Additionally, the Tet Offensive brought about the President's decision to begin the peace treaty. The battle at Khe Sanh also brought awareness to

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the public of the conditions that were going on. The decision to start the peace negotiations helped to please the Americans. During this year, Americans learned that the government could easily stretch the truth, which led to mistrust of government officials and the president. It also marked the beginning of the end to the war.

The whole Vietnam era brought about a new awareness about the necessity and reality of war. This year represents the climax of this awareness; it was a changing point in the history of the United States for both the views and lives of the American Public. Works Cited " 1968: Vietnam. " 2007. Encarta. 26 April 2008 . " Battle of Khe Sanh. " 25 April 2008. Wikipedia. 26 April 2008 . Feldmeth, Greg. 1 March 1998. . What Was the Tonkin Resolution? (reading)