

Chapter 6 - The Tet Offensive

I. Prelude

1. What did Westmoreland and the Joint Chiefs of Staff ask LBJ for to help expand the US war effort?
2. Why did Defense Secretary McNamara urge the US revise its war aim and seek negotiations on a compromise settlement?
3. Why did LBJ reject both extremes suggested to him by his advisors and cling to the middle ground for the continued course of the war?
4. How were North Vietnamese leaders divided on which international communist country to side with and who gained more support and why?
5. What were the goals of the Tet Offensive and purge of moderates in the government and what did communists call it?

II. Attack and Counterattack

1. Why did communist troops attack remote areas, did they achieve their goal, and why was everyone so concerned with Khe Sanh?
2. The communist forces struck how many cities, provincial and district capitals and what other 4 significant places did they strike during the early morning of the Tet Offensive?
3. Militarily, the Tet Offensive was a disaster for the North, what was the disproportionate number of losses between the North and US-ARVN forces between January 29 and March 31?
4. Why did the Tet Offensive fail to produce any popular uprising and what appeared to be the larger problem that had been revolutionary's weak spot for almost a half a century?
5. In what way was the Tet Offensive successful for the North and what did it do to the US pacification programs?

III. New Deliberations

1. What 3 points did new secretary of Defense Clifford come up with concerning US policy in Vietnam?
2. What 3 developments during March underscored LBJ's urgency of de-escalation and threatened his campaign for reelection?
3. What were the 3 things LBJ described towards US de-escalation?

IV. Stalemate Renewed

1. LBJ said he would stop bombing, if North Vietnam did what and what did the militant leaders in the North Vietnamese regime see negotiations as?
2. LBJ and the military pinned their hopes on what 2 major changes in the conduct of the ground war and explain the changes?

3. How did the Phoenix Program damage the political network in the North and Southern peasantry?
4. Where was the only dramatic change due to the Tet Offensive and what 5 events caused a sense of national crisis?
5. Why did North Vietnamese leaders grudgingly accept LBJ's term of negotiations and what did American politics have to do with this shift too?
6. How did LBJ try to split the difference to save his party in the upcoming election, what did Thieu do 3 days before the election and what was the outcome of the 1968 election?