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Time: 3 hours

200 marks

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SOURCE MATERIAL BOOKLET

Source A

Tet proved to be Johnson's political death knell, not because it turned most Americans against the war (public opinion polls showed the contrary), but because it confirmed two key groups in their convictions. The anti-war movement had always seen the war as unjustified, immoral, and / or not in the US interest. But others felt that Johnson was not waging the war effectively and that American troops were being asked to fight with one hand behind their backs. Tet verified this belief and turned this group against continued U.S. involvement.

On 27 February, Westmoreland made public a request for 206,000 more troops. The shock to the nation was even deeper than the trauma of Tet. After years of duplicity in its portrayal of the situation in Vietnam, the Johnson administration seemed ethically bankrupt. Even worse, Americans began to realise that, despite what they had been promised, a victorious end to the war was nowhere in sight. CBS news anchor-man Walter Cronkite observed that the war was likely to end in a stalemate, and a few days later he broadcast a secret CIA estimate that, at present levels, the war could last a century.

Edward H. Judge, John W. Langdon, 1996, *A Hard and Bitter Peace: Global History – the Cold War*, Prentice Hall Publications

Source B

An anti-war demonstration in front of the Pentagon in October 1967. The large placard shows a picture of President Johnson over the words 'war criminal'. Growing opposition to the war helped to convince Johnson that he would not be re-elected as president in 1968.



www.gettyimages.com

Waugh S, Wright J, 2008, *Superpower Relations and Vietnam 1945-1990*, p127; Hodder Murray

Source C

A still from a television broadcast on CBS news, depicting Walter Cronkite, the legendary news anchor-man, who was the 'most trusted man in America' according to his obituary which accompanies this image.

<http://jalopnik.com/5317541/walter-cronkite-news-anchor-and-volvo-racer-dead-at-92>

Millions who watched his relaxed, reassuring delivery... Seeing him sign off with his customary "And that's the way it is", viewers were left with a sense that here was a man you could indeed trust to tell it like it was... After a trip to the war zone in 1968, Cronkite concluded a special report: "It is increasingly clear to this reporter that the only way out will be to negotiate, not as victors, but as honourable people who lived up to their pledge to defend democracy, and did the best they could." Watching this, Johnson remarked to an aide: "If I've lost Cronkite I've lost Middle America."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/culture-obituaries/tv-radio-obituaries/5865419/Walter-Cronkite.html>

Source D

Extract from a Newsweek survey on opinions of the Vietnam War, 1967.

Television seems to have encouraged a majority of viewers to support the war. 64 percent said television had made them 'feel like backing up the boys in Vietnam'. 26 percent felt moved to oppose the war.

Waugh S, Wright J, 2008, *Superpower Relations and Vietnam 1945-1990*, p129; Hodder Murray

Source E

A modern historian on why the United States lost the war (adapted from *America and the Vietnam War*, G J DeGroot, 2000).

Defeat was inevitable not because the Americans used the wrong strategy, but because America backed an ally which had no future in Vietnam. The government of South Vietnam was corrupt and cruel. The US was not only weighed down by a weak ally, it also faced a strong enemy. The VC were not a bunch of barefoot guerrillas but a highly trained, fiercely determined and well-armed fighting force which was at its best in small unit actions.

Taken from: De Marco, N 2004: *Vietnam 1939-75*, *Hodder History*; Hodder Murray.

SOURCE F**A description of the weapons available to the Viet Cong (VC) and North Vietnamese Army (NVA).**

The VC/NVA used a wide variety of grenades from explosives inserted into discarded American C-ration cans, to modern Chicom types. Booby traps were the province of guerrilla level forces more than the VC/NVA regulars. The infamous punji sticks soaked in excrement and urine received much press, but they were of negligible effect compared to the massive quantity of anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines deployed by main communist units. These quantities increased vastly as the North stepped up infiltration into the South. Mines and booby traps applied significant psychological pressure on US/ARVN forces and slowed and disrupted both military operations and civilian life.

Overall, the supplies and equipment of communist units while not as lavish or sophisticated as that of their American counterparts were adequate, and their infantry small-arms were more than a match for those of their opponents. Contrary to some popular impressions of simple peasant farmers armed with pitchfork and machetes, the VC/NVA main units were well equipped with excellent modern arms either from Soviet bloc or Chinese sources.

http://www.statemaster.com/encyclopedia/Viet-Cong-and-NVA-strategy-and-tactics#VC.2FNVA_Tactics_in_battle

SOURCE G

Colonel Robert Heinl, an officer in the United States Marines, investigated morale in the US forces in South Vietnam in the early 1970's and found that large numbers of soldiers were no longer willing to fight.

The morale, discipline and battle worthiness of the U.S. Armed Forces are, with a few salient exceptions, lower and worse than at any time in this century and possibly in the history of the United States... In 1970, the Army had 65,643 deserters, or roughly the equivalent of four infantry divisions. This desertion rate (52.3 soldiers per thousand) is well over twice the peak-rate for Korea (22.5 per thousand).

"Frag incidents" or just "fragging" is current soldier slang in Vietnam for the murder or attempted murder of strict, unpopular, or just aggressive officers and NCOs... the Pentagon has now disclosed that fragging's in 1970 (209) have more than doubled those of the previous year (96)... Bounties, raised by common subscription in amounts running anywhere from \$50 to \$1,000, have been widely reported put on the heads of leaders whom the privates... want to rub out.

In 1966, the Navy discharged 170 drug offenders. Three years later (1969), 3,800 were discharged. Last year in 1970, the total jumped to over 5,000... In April, for example, members of a Congressional investigating subcommittee reported that 10 to 15 per cent of our troops in Vietnam are now using high-grade heroin, and that drug addiction there is "of epidemic proportions."

www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/Vietnamwar.htm

SOURCE H

An image carried widely on US televisions depicted the Mai Lai massacre
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:My_Lai_massacre.jpg

SOURCE I

An extract from a website on the Vietnam War that focuses specifically on the negative effects of the television coverage of the war in American homes.

Growing up as the daughter of a Vietnam veteran, I've always been proud to say that my father is a war hero. When I was younger, I enjoyed bragging to classmates and teachers about my father's honors because I believed that all Americans respect Vietnam veterans as much as I do. As I grew older, however, I noticed in movies and on television that the Vietnam veteran is not portrayed as a brave soldier; rather, he is a violent psychopath who continuously experiences flashbacks of the war. What was coverage of the war like, and did it affect the image of the Vietnam veteran? Many Vietnam veterans feel that uncensored and overly negative television coverage helped turn the American public against the war and against the veterans themselves. The horrors of war entered the living rooms of Americans for the first time during the Vietnam War. For almost a decade in between school, work, and dinners, the American public could watch villages being destroyed, Vietnamese children burning to death, and American body bags being sent home. Though initial coverage generally supported U.S involvement in the war, television news dramatically changed its frame of the war after the Tet Offensive. Images of the U.S led massacre at My Lai dominated the television, yet the daily atrocities committed by North Vietnam and the Viet Cong rarely made the evening news.

Cited in <http://www.warbirdforum.com/media.htm>, Eric McLaughlin, 'Television Coverage of the Vietnam War and the Vietnam Veteran.'