

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen question number: Question 2 ☒

Question 3 ☒

~~The policies under Eisenhower and Kennedy in Vietnam are often compared largely due to their similarities. As J. Overall, the~~

The Tet Offensive of 1968 is often perceived as a turning in the Vietnam War due to the way it transformed Public Opinion which subsequently disabled future presidents abilities to impose military strategy. However, the consequences of the Tet Offensive were vast and its effects were felt in all areas of the war effort. This included the way it ~~was~~ damaged the U.S. Army's morale and highlighted the ~~war~~ futility of the war, it demonstrated the superiority of the Vietnamese which then altered the nature of policy and moreover its consequence was felt within the South Vietnamese state and demonstrated to the army the failure of their imposed democracy. Thus, although the public reaction did damage the war effort significantly it still remains that the military consequences



were more significant. However, the presence of the diminishing U.S support on the home front was felt throughout the military consequence.

Public support for the war altered after the Tet Offensive and it is said the North Vietnamese succeeded in what they called a "psychological" defeat. Media tycoon Walter Cronkite visited Vietnam with the battle and famously quoted on television "I thought we were winning the war". Despite the military belief that it was a U.S success the change attitude of the media and the lack of improvement the U.S war position became more prominent after the Tet offensive. Protests beginning in 64 had manifested by 68 and students were burning draft cards as well as attempting to burn down draft HQ. The Tet Offensive created a schism between what Johnson was telling the public and what was actually happening in the war. This resulted in a lack of confidence and subsequently forced Johnson to step down from the following political race. This effect of the Tet Offensive was significant as it disabled Johnson from increasing



troops, it forced a reversal of policy. Many hawks at this time including Westmoreland believed ~~lifting~~ <sup>lifting</sup> bombing restrictions would secure a U.S. triumph, but the horrific effects of the Tet offensive including 3000 U.S. casualties made this prospect unfeasible. Thus, it is evident that the public outcry following the Tet offensive despite it being a minority of the electorate stunted the war effort and shaped the future of the war. Yet, it still must be recognised this reversal in policy was in conjunction with other failures of policy that the Tet offensive served to consolidate.

'The Tet Offensive had a more ~~significant~~ effect on the military in Vietnam and it intensified the sense of defeatism already prevalent throughout the forces. The Tet Offensive resulted in more than 3000 casualties and this fuelled the already angry drafted soldiers. The army lacked cohesion due to the schisms created by Army and Marine Rivalry and ~~antagonism~~ antagonism provoked by the Green Berets. The Tet Offensive despite it being a "success" highlighted how these ~~so~~ divisions made them an inferior fighting force to that of the



North Vietnamese. Although prior to the Tet Offensive there were questions about the effectiveness of a war of attrition against the guerrillas, this did not cause any change in war policy. It was only after the Tet Offensive when the U.S. were unavoidably confronted with the ineffectiveness of high-tech warfare in the jungles of Vietnam. Thus, although the problems facing the army upon the Tet Offensive were already prevalent it served to consolidate U.S. military loss. Thus, it can be perceived that although U.S. public opinion to the Tet Offensive did dramatically effect the morale of the soldiers especially those who categorised themselves as "G.I." soldiers ~~it was not the most significant consequence for the~~ ~~war~~ consequence, but one of the significant consequences in conjunction with the realisation of imminent military defeat of the U.S. were to continue a war of attrition.

The Tet Offensive also made the ineffectiveness of the South Korean state monitored by the U.S. an unavoidable truth. When the communists ~~the~~ invaded South Korea the South Koreans did not welcome the communists yet did not try to defend ~~the~~ against them. Although Ho was expecting great support this proximity demonstrated the futility of the conflict and



consolidated the fact that South Vietnam without U.S. assistance would inevitably become communist.

Arguably, the evidence to suggest this was already clear through the ~~fact~~ infiltration of strategic hamlets by Viet Cong and the protection many peasants gave to NLF fighters. The US were confounded

both their failure to protect South Vietnam ~~as~~ by the Tet Offensive. Moreover, the failure of attempts at pacification demonstrated to the U.S that their <sup>prioritisation</sup> ~~preoccupation~~ of military solutions as opposed to economic and social reform

was beginning to have an irreparable effect. This, in conjunction with the realisation of U.S military defeat borne out of the

Tet offensive, the ~~not~~ realisation of the inability to create a South Korean democracy was also prevalent and this effectively moulded future policy and put U.S and Saigon

in a position of relative inferiority in Peace talks which began in 1968. Thus, it can be concluded that the effects the

Tet offensive had on the political and military policy of within Vietnam was more significant than only U.S public opposition.

Although, the growing political uncertainty borne out of the Tet Offensive according to



some studies is when the public began to cultivate doubts about the war effort. Thus, ~~despite~~ US public opinion ~~is~~ remains prevalent within the military and political effects of the Tet Offensive.

The Tet Offensive didn't only demonstrate the relative weakness and tactical folly of U.S. policy in Vietnam but also served to consolidate the strength of the Viet Minh. This was a fact known by Vietnam and America and had damaging effects on the future of Paris Peace Talks. The Viet Minh had utilised the geography of Vietnam to master guerrilla tactics. A style of combat which the U.S. never adapted to and caused widespread frustration evident through the ~~the~~ atrocities of the My Lai massacre - a stage where the distinctions between friend and foe were diminishing. Yet, the U.S. always reassured themselves that set piece battles would reassert U.S., South Vietnam strength. The Tet offensive highlighted ~~that~~ not only that U.S. tactics ~~to~~ were ill advised but that Vietnamese tactics were superior. The Vietnamese defeated the U.S. at Khe Sanh the ~~the~~ night before Tet - a Red Spring when Westmoreland was ensnared by. This caused 500



as casualties, this had a resonating effect on the attitudes of Tet. As mentioned before Tet was not a military loss but a psychological loss.

The PAVN lost more than 58000 men -

this was a prospect Ho had always accepted in the quest for liberation, and something the U.S. forces were unwilling to. Undoubtedly, the casualty rate which in 69 was 17000 hindered Johnson's willingness to employ more troops ~~and~~ as a result of the diminishing morale on the homefront which resulted in the diminishing legitimacy of Vietnam War plans, this effect was accentuated by the confrontation that the Vietnamese credo in which they fought made triumph an impossibility. Without a defining moment such as the Tet Offensive - U.S. may have been able to preserve the denial of U.S. failure. However, this was no longer an option for the U.S. Thus, public response to the Tet intensified the confrontation of imminent failure however this ~~seems~~ consequence was one of the significant factors not the central factor.

Arguably, the Tet offensive and its failure demonstrated the futility of the conflict in the changing cold war climate. The break down of the communist monolithic block - a





symptom of the Sino-Soviet split highlighted that Vietnam was no longer as great a threat but we merely becoming an economic and social burden. By 69 the war was costing 66 billion and by 68 the deficit had risen from 1 billion to 25 billion.

This, with no looming threat of communist takeover a threat which lured Truman to Vietnam in the first place, the Vietnam<sup>war</sup> was no longer the vital domino. This is reinforced through Nixon's campaign. Nixon changed from being pro-escalation to being vehemently opposed. He won on the basis of getting U.S. forces out.

① Undoubtedly he would have exploited the failure of the Tet Offensive suggesting the significance of ~~the~~ public support on policy. However Nixon repeatedly expressed his dislike of policy being made on the streets. The Tet Offensive highlighted the burden and futility of the Vietnam War and Nixon refused to let

"technology control foreign policy". This and ~~perhaps~~ <sup>consequently</sup> arguably the most significant ~~factor~~ of the Tet Offensive was that it highlighted the ~~the~~ futility of the conflict making it no longer essential. This was damaging for Hawks' senarios and destructive to the families who lost loved ones. This, although the influence





of public support was present in shaping policy & after Tet, however it ~~did not~~ was not the most significant factor.

In conclusion, public support ~~was~~ within the Vietnam War played a significant role. It advocated the racial, social and moral issues of the Vietnam War and this effect was accentuated and consolidated after the Tet Offense. Although public opposition would remain in the minority for many years to come it did ~~still~~ have negative effects. Yet, these effects were heightened in conjunction with the military and political realisations. The Tet Offense demonstrated the failure of US military strategy, the weakness of Democratic South Vietnam and <sup>the burden</sup> ~~the burden~~ of the conflict. This revealed the futility of the war and the failure of U.S. war aims. Undoubtedly public opinion helped legitimise such realisations. Yet it was not this factor alone ~~that~~ which was the most significant consequence of the Tet Offense.

