

## US History The Vietnam War

### Learning Target:

*I can examine the Tet Offensive and analyze how this incident changed Americans' perception of the war.*

### 7. The Tet Offensive & The United States Media

#### *Location & Time –*

- The Tet Holiday, The first day of the Vietnamese New Year
- January 31, 1968
- An apparent cease-fire had been agreed on

#### *A Surprise Attack –*

- 84,000 NVA and Vietcong troops attack the United States
- They simultaneously attack every major South Vietnamese city
- They caught American and ARVN troops off guard

#### *The Attack on Saigon –*

- Vietcong forces attack the capital of South Vietnam
- Guerilla fighting throughout the streets of Saigon

#### The United States Embassy –

- Vietcong soldiers attempted to capture the US embassy
- They blasted a hole in the wall of the embassy and engage US military police for 6 hours
- All Vietcong soldiers were killed or captured

#### A Popular Uprising?

- The NVA and VC hope to start a popular revolt against ARVN and US
- They believe South Vietnamese citizens will rise up and fight
- Attempted to assassinate important ARVN generals and their families
- The uprising never materialized

#### Ignored Warning Signs –

- The US had received numerous reports and information about Tet
- All were dismissed because the plans seemed too grand and ambitious

#### *The Attack on Hue –*

- US were attacked by mostly NVA soldiers not Vietcong

#### The Fight–

- More traditional WWII style of fighting
- NVA soldiers were well equipped and outnumbered the US soldiers
- Not as much guerilla warfare since we were fighting a regular army
- Took around 1 month of bloody fighting to retake the city

### A Popular Uprising?

- Once again the NVA had hoped for a popular uprising
- Once again in never materialized
- Evidence came out after the war of mass murders of known supporters of the South Vietnamese gov't in Hue

### **The US Media's Reporting of the Tet Offensive –**

- The US media impacted the opinion of many Americans back home after Tet
- US reporting led many Americans to believe the US was losing the war

### Saigon Reporting –

- Reporters had lived in neighborhoods surrounding the embassy
- Awoke to a battle zone and reported on it
- Images coming out of Saigon, such as the attack on the embassy were shocking to the US public

#### *Image –*

- America was losing in Vietnam and being overrun in Saigon

#### *Reality –*

- American controlled all of Saigon and its embassy within one day

### Hue Reporting –

#### *Image –*

- The lasting image of Hue was the assassination of a Vietcong prisoner
- General Loan, the chief of police, was pictured shooting a prisoner in the head
- The picture won the Pulitzer Prize for photographer Eddie Adams
- The American public was shocked of the brutality of a US ally

#### *Reality –*

- The Vietcong prisoner had just shot Loan's best friend and family
- Loan was not justified but these details were never released