

Up until 1968, North Vietnam's strategy had been largely based on insurgency tactics, aimed at slowly fomenting a revolution in the South. ~~However, this is not the case~~ However on the Tet holiday truce of 1968, they demonstrated a desire for violent revolution and ~~immediate~~ immediate uprising against the US. This involved targeting specifically visible targets with maximum psychological importance ~~in~~ in the American psyche. Although a military failure for the North, it ultimately turned the tide of warfare in their favour, as it was a shocking psychological horror for the US home-front. As a result it was significant in achieving victory in the Second Indochina War, for the North.

From 1956 to 1968, the North Vietnamese under General ~~Nguyen~~ Giap sought to slowly foment a revolution in the South against the US. This involved a ~~series of~~ ~~series of~~ insurgency

tactics. ~~is~~ Hit-and-run raids, nocturnal activity, and booby traps were the primary means of fighting. Through this, as a "ghost-like" enemy, the North was able to deprive their fire power superior enemy of detectable and destroyable targets, and frustrate their attempts at victory. These strategies and tactics were indeed the Vietnamese way of fighting, and relied on the traditional culture of resilience in Vietnam.

However by 1968, this strategy had proved unfruitful. Abandoning hope of slowly fomenting a revolution in the South, the North sought to encourage a violent uprising against the US.

~~Breaking the traditional holiday~~

Breaking the traditional Tet holiday truce, 100's of Vietcong and PAVN troops

attacked on January 30th 1968. They chose, specifically, ~~the~~ highly visible targets such as the US Embassy in Saigon, The old Imperial capital of Hue, MACV HQ, airfields, radio stations and public hot-spots. This was all to be done whilst they distracted the US at Khe Sanh, where they had set up a false front.

Tet ultimately brought the war to Saigon, the most visible and reportable area in Vietnam to the US. At the heart of US power was the Embassy. As such, at dawn a dozen VC stormed the building, forcing the American Ambassador to flee in his pyjamas. Although this was militarily insignificant, it was perceived ~~as~~ as a symbol of US failure in Indochina during the second world war.

An equally irresistible target for reporters was

The old Imperial capital of Hue. Symbolising traditional Southern Supremacy over rule of ~~the~~ Indochina, the North targeted it as a means of degrading the Southern war effort. Because of the violence and rumours of massacres, the battle, that lasted 3 weeks was reported in a particularly negative way on the home front. This ultimately caused the general public of America to question the ~~cause~~ reasons for their involvement in the Second Indochina war.

The Battle at the Sakh, was the only reportable battle remaining after Hue, as a result ~~was~~ ~~over-reported~~ ~~by~~ the US media. It was subsequently related to the Battle of Dien Bien Phu, where the French lost control over Indochina in 1954. This granted it an ultimatum status which it did not deserve. Hence when the US retreated in June, the

media hailed a great Northern battle success. In fact the location was strategically unimportant for the US, who willingly gave it up. The psychological damage, however, had already been done on the home front in the US.

Although never intended to be ~~the~~ success in the way it turned out, the Northern offensive of Tet in 1968 ultimately lost the US the war.

Despite being a military victory for the US, they lost the support of the home front.

This was ultimately the aim of the North, who wanted to convince the US that the price of war ~~was~~ was too great.

The political ramifications of such negative reporting were immediately visible in the US. Presidential popularity dropped from 76% to 44%, confidence in US troops declined from 74% to 54%, and 45%

of people believed the US was losing the war. This is also seen in the the reaction of colleges and universities, which became hotbeds of political action. However such protests probably played a part disproportionate to its numbers in bringing the war to an end.

~~The~~ The North Vietnamese timing of the offensive was also crucial. Coming in the wake of the President's "Optimism Campaign", US credibility was shattered by the media coverage of Tet. Westmoreland himself had only a week before stated: "we are winning the war... we are making great progress against the insurgency. The Communists will not last." It was thusly that Tet proved to be such a significant turning point for the North Vietnamese.

In the end it was the North's capacity to wage a psychological war against the US that

was their winning strategy. This came in the knowledge that they would hold on for victory at any cost, but ultimately the war could not be won by holding on. It was the combined violence and psychological targeting of Tet that won the North Vietnamese the Second Indo Chinese war.

Hence it is clear to see that ~~the~~ the 1968 Tet offensive was extremely significant, as a part of North Vietnam's strategy, in achieving victory in the Second Indo China war. The psychologically damaging targets, combined with the uniformly hostile and negative reporting of the incident, lost the US their crucial home front support, and forced them to engage in a phased withdrawal - under great pressure from home - from the ~~Second~~ Indochina by 1972.