**Time it Was: Sources Dueling Documents**

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| **Document A:** “President says Viet Cong attacks fail”, President says Viet Cong attacks fail. (1970, January 1). Retrieved from <https://www.upi.com/Archives/1968/02/02/President-says-Viet-Cong-attacks-fail/6741658341852/>  WASHINGTON, Feb. 2, 1968 (UPI) - President Johnson Friday termed the Viet Cong attacks on major South Vietnamese cities "a complete failure" militarily and said they would force no change in American troop levels or basic war strategy. "No great new overall moves are going to be made," he said, but cautioned: "Anything can happen on a moment's notice."  In an informal meeting with newsmen in the White House cabinet room near his office, Mr. Johnson also said that when the dust settles, it will appear that the Communists also failed to score a psychological victory.  He said the guerilla raids were the "general uprising" phase of a plan by North Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh to overthrow the Saigon government and lead the way to a Communist-dominated coalition government.  "The biggest fact is that the stated purposes of the general uprising have failed," the President said in a statement read to newsmen. "Communist leaders counted on popular support for their effort. They found little or none. On the other hand, there have been civilian casualties and disruption of public services."  The President warned of a second phase of a Communist winter-spring offensive of which the United States has had advance warning - "a massive attack across the frontiers of South Vietnam by North Vietnamese units."  "We may at this moment be on the eve of a major enemy offensive in the area of Khe Sanh and generally around the demilitarized zone," he said.  Mr. Johnson said he had conferred closely with the joint chiefs of staff and Gen. William C. Westmoreland, the U.S. commander in Vietnam, in recent weeks to make certain American forces are fully prepared for the expected onslaught.  The President declined to predict the outcome of an offensive but said "I am confident that our men and the South Vietnamese will be giving a good account of themselves."  He said the situation was "fluid" and that he would keep the public informed of developments. |

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| **Document B:** “The Corner is Turned”, Siegal and Samuel Abt. The Pentagon Papers: As Published by the New York Times. Toronto ; New York :Bantam Books, 1971.  VI. THE CORNER IS TURNED -- JANUARY-MARCH 1968 The Johnson Administration began 1968 in a mood of cautious hope about the course of the war. Within a month those hopes had been completely dashed . In late January and early February , the Viet Cong and their North Vietnamese supporters launched the massive Tet assault on the cities and towns of South Vietnam and put the Johnson Administration and the American public through a profound political catharsis on the wisdom and purpose of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam and the soundness of our policies for the conduct of the war . The crisis engendered the most soul-searching debate within the Administration about that course to take next in the whole history of the war . In the emotion laden atmosphere of those dark days , there were cries for large-scale escalation on the one side and for significant retrenchment on the other . In the end an equally difficult decision -- to stabilize the effort in the South and de-escalate in the North -- was made . One of the inescapable conclusions of the Tet experience that helped to shape that decision was that as an interdiction measure against the infiltration of men and supplies, the bombing had been a near total failure. Moreover, it had not succeeded in breaking Hanoi's will to continue the fight . The only other major justification for continuing the bombing Vias its punitive value, and that began to pale in comparison with the potential (newly perceived by many ) of its suspension for producing negotiations with the DRV , or failing that a large propaganda windfall for the U. S. negotiating position. The President's dramatic decision at the end of March capped a long month of debate . Adding force to the President's announcement of the partial bombing halt was his own personal decision not to seek reelection. |