He lives in New York City. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. In Vietnam, 1968 had a quiet start. Pope Paul VI had declared January 1 a day of peace. For his day of peace, the pope had persuaded the South Vietnamese and their American allies to give a twelve-hour extension to their twenty-four-hour truce. A New York Times editorial said that although the resumption of fighting had shattered hopes for peace, another chance would come with a cease-fire in February for Tet, the Vietnamese New Year.

"L'année 1968, je la salue avec sérénité," pronounced Charles de Gaulle, the tall and regal seventy-eight-year-old president of France, on New Year's Eve.