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ASSIGNMENT THREE: Turning Points and The End.

PART I

Though the antiwar activists were getting the headlines, many Americans were still patriotic and were for the war. So when did that change for those people? What made them really question the war? Well in Clark Dougan's story, it took the war hitting home to change the minds of "Middle America". Clark speaks of the article about Greg Fischer. A local boy from his town that was killed in Vietnam. It was a very antiwar article from the Cleveland Press which was part of the Scripps- Howard chain, "a conservative syndicate that had strongly supported the war". Why did this article represent a turning point for Clark, and as he says to many Middle Americans as well? I believe it was because people were starting to realize that this war was killing sons, brothers, nephews, and "the high school kid who works in the pharmacy", for reasons that no one was sure about. "I think that was the moment when many 'Middle Americans' turned against the war", Clark states. No one saw an end to the war anywhere in the near future and they were no longer sure they wanted to risk anymore lives for an unsure cause. This was a strong turning point because once you change your views on something as significant as your views on a war, everything you've once stood for and your beliefs on many things change with it. And with less American support for the war, the harder it is for the government to continue through with it.

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PART II

Daniel Ellsbergs release of the Pentagon Papers, I believe started the beginning of the end to the war. These classified documents revealed many issues of the war. It revealed that even American policy makers were quite pessimistic about the war. That even though many of the people in charge of the war saw it as somewhat of a lost cause, they were still unable to call it quits simply because they didn't want to loose. As Ellsberg states; "For all of them, generals as well as policy makers, quitting or

withdrawing posed questions about their masculinity and courage. I believe this was a real slap in the face to many Americans because even though they might not have seen the war as being winnable, they trusted the government knew what they were talking about, and trusted in the fact that the government believed we could win. So when these Papers came out Americans realized they could no longer trust their government.



Though the war didn't officially end for another four years I believe this was the beginning of the ending to the war for two main reasons. The huge distrust of the government after the papers were released and end of the Nixon reign in office. Nixon was strong on the idea of not giving up on the war. So with him out of the way, so to speak, there was a chance of a new president to come in with ending the war as a first priority. Daniel Ellsberg says, "I think Watergate shortened the war by at least a couple of years and possibly much longer." So to him this was the beginning of the end of the war and I agree.



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