

Due date: Saturday, 20 November 2010, 09:05 PM

Last edited: Saturday, 20 November 2010, 07:46 PM (998 words)

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Part 1

I feel that Barry Zorthian's recollection "Then-Boom!-Tet comes along," was a great example of a turning point in the Vietnam war. Appy describes Zorthian as "the official voice of America in Vietnam," between 1964 and 1968. Zorthian was the director of the Joint United States Public Affairs Office and as such was in charge of all media relations and was the principal public relations adviser to the U.S. ambassador and the commander of the U.S. forces.

Zorthian is an interesting person to take into account as a turning point in the war. His job gives him access to what the military is telling the media and everything that is actually happening in the military. It's nice to see that he appears to be level headed in the decisions he talks about in his account. Zorthian was the voice of reason in the aftermath of the Tet assaults, he urged

Westmoreland to talk to the media and put the whole attack into context. However the media instead ran stories from many of the journalists that lived in the area around Saigon, journalists that did not receive reports from the field that told how other attacks were being and had been repelled.

Zorthian speaks frankly and ~~and~~ quotes General Westmoreland as saying, "Hell, we never lost a battle." But goes on to remind us that locations "that were not secure in 1965 were not secure in 1967."

Zorthian goes on to speak about the popular pictures and footage of General Loan shooting a Viet Cong prisoner in the head, describing how the media was unable to give the full picture of what was really happening in that instant. Zorthian says Walter Cronkite was briefed that General Westmoreland had indeed anticipated something happening during the Tet assaults and as such had halted the traditional "all-hands-on-holiday during Tet to fifty percent. And the American troops were on full service." Zorthian goes on talking about how Cronkite chose not to run that story and instead spoke about how the war was at a standstill and that the U.S. was not going to win.

What Zorthian goes on to say now is that the U.S. lost the war on the ground and that any idea that the United States lost the war because of the press is ridiculous. But he says that the U.S. did not understand how dedicated the North was to continuing the war. It's at this point that he says "I think maybe with the right involvement

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and investment we might have won it on the ground, but what did that mean? A million American soldiers? Another billion dollars of aid? I don't know. I don't know if we had the commitment to stick with it." Zorthian then goes on to tell Washington that his recommendations on the war are to talk to the Vietnamese on our side and say that the south needs to get it together or else the U.S. will have to pull out completely. Here we have this public servant whose job it is to keep apprised of the situation of the war constantly and to meet and talk with the media who has decided that the "winning" outcome of the war is seemingly not worth the sacrifices that it would cost the citizens of the United States. I cannot find a better example of something that absolutely screams turning point.



Part 2

Daniel Ellsberg's recollection "We're eating our young." Is a perfect ending point for the war. Here we have a story of a Harvard graduate who joins the marines, eventually joins Rand, the California think tank, is hired by the Department of Defense, and eventually leaks a copy of the Pentagon Papers to the New York Times.

Ellsberg talks about the politics of war and how the presidents during the Vietnam era were more willing to send wave after wave of Americans to Vietnam than to pull out and be called a "loser". Ellsberg goes on to address when he met a young draft dodger named Randy Kehler, who would rather go to prison than cooperate with the draft. This was labeled as the first time that Ellsberg had been face-to-face with an American who would go to prison before taking part in the Vietnam war. Daniel went to the bathroom after that meeting and cried. This meeting pried open his eyes and made him question whether the position he had dreamed of and attained was worth forfeiting and and/or going to prison.

Ellsberg was "willing to do anything that was nonviolent and truthful." He realized that the one thing that he could do was copy the seven thousand pages of secret documents he had. President Nixon wasn't worried about the actual release of the Pentagon Papers, however his growing paranoia made him fear that Ellsberg was going to release information, information that Ellsberg did not have, about Nixon's plans to escalate the war.

Ellsberg first brought the papers to Congress, but no one in Congress was willing to hold hearings or subpoena witnesses that would reveal Nixon's strategy, so instead he brought the Pentagon Papers to the newspapers.

The events following this, for me were a major ending to the war. Ellsberg leaked the Papers to The New York Times. Nobody paid major attention to the papers until the White House ordered an injunction against The Times. Ellsberg would leak the Pentagon

Papers to a different paper after each one was injunctioned against. For me this flying defiance from the newspapers was a major ending point for the war. The people, the media, everyone was fed up with the lies and secrecy and the war. Nixon went after Ellsberg and that effort was the key that tied him to Watergate. ~~If that hadn't happened the Vietnam War could have gone on for a much longer time.~~



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