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Michael Sitterley

Part 1

The war in Vietnam had many significant turning points that changed the path of the war, but there was also turning point on an individual level that changed the way they viewed the war and conducted their operations. Larry Colburn, a helicopter door-gunner, who flew in a small helicopter performing scout missions looking for the enemy, marked the spot with smoke, and got out to let the gunships take over. Colburn did his job and when he had to kill people he did, but he noted that he never shot people randomly, always looking for weapons to justify the kill. Clearly they were trained to do their jobs and part of their job was to kill people if necessary. While on mission in the little observation chopper flying around the perimeter of the hamlets My Lai-4, -5, and -6, ahead of the American troops sweeping the ground, they flew past some women and children leaving the market walking down the road. The chopper flew on to another area and upon return, the chopper crew saw that the all the women and children had been gunned down. The crew had no idea what had happened to the villagers and who gunned them down. They saw a young wounded girl in the grass and marked her with green smoke (green to mark that it's safe to approach) because they saw a squad not too far away. When the captain from the ground unit came and shot the wounded girl in the grass, it was at that point that they realized that it was the American soldiers that had done all of the killing. This was a major turning point in Vietnam, but not for the overall war but change for the three helicopter crew. It was this turning point that dictated what they did next when they saw a group of women and children running toward a bunker followed by soldiers. The pilot Hugh Thompson landed the chopper between the soldiers and the women and children, who had taken refuge in an abandoned bunker. The three man helicopter crew had a stare down with a platoon of American soldiers, and had to call in another helicopter to get the civilians out safely. For Colburn this was a major moment in his life in which he and the other crew did not just see the enemy but saw people in need of help.

Part 2

Nguyen Thi Binh, was one of the founders of the National Liberation Front, and she also served as the National Liberation Front's foreign minister, in which she was the chief delegate for the Front's provisional Revolutionary Government during the Paris negotiations. The negotiations in Paris spanned all the way from November, 1968 to January, 1973 and were among the longest negotiations in history. Binh was present for the ending of the Paris negotiations but also witnessed the end (or more correctly failure) of diplomacy in the war that had torn her country apart. She had been an activist for a free Vietnam since she joined youth and student movements in Saigon during the August revolution in 1945 and when America backed the French after World War II she turned her focus towards protesting the arrival of the Americans in to the country. Arrested and imprisoned in 1951 for three years because of her anticolonial activism by the Saigon regimen, and after prison, was forced along with many others underground. It was then that they started the National Liberation Front. As a diplomat for the NLF she traveled to many international conferences for support for her cause. Over time she had gained support from foreign media for her role in diplomacy as a leader in the NLF. The international community took note that she and many others in the group were women, but she notes that their goals were not for equal rights for men and women but for matters of life in death in her country. At the end of the Paris negotiations an agreement had been hashed out, but the agreement was never implemented or honored. Binh notes that if the agreement had been honored the end of the war would have been the same, except without as many losses and damages. The negotiations failed to end the war but she notes that the one thing that did not end was the overwhelming desire of the north and the south for freedom and independence and unification of the nation.

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