

Due date:	Sunday, November 18, 2012, 11:55 PM
Last edited:	Sunday, November 18, 2012, 11:56 PM (327 words)

Part 1 Turning Point

While there are many stories in Appy's book that had turning points the story that stuck with me was by Clark Dougan and The Cleveland Press. Clark Dougan and Greg Fischer graduated from highschool together during a time when many their age coped with the war by making fun of it. Dougan went on to college and Fischer went on to enlist in the Marines. Fischer knew it was only a matter of time before getting drafted and wanted to support the best, the Marines. A year goes by and Dougan comes home to visit. He opens up The Cleveland Press to read "He was only 19- Did you know him?"-Cleveland Press, and a story about his dead classmate Greg Fischer. The editorial talks of a ordinary boy who has died in the war leaving his 'death money' to his sisters college fund and his hockey shoes to Joey. This editorial was a huge turning point for americans and their support for the war. Greg Fischer could be anyones son, nephew, nieghbor. Many Americans thought is this war worth losing these young men?

Part 2

There are many different versions and dates as to when the war ended. For many of the soliders it was 1970 when they decided to quit following orders. Mnay soliders went as far as killing their commanding officers to not complete these orders. In the stories by Judith Coburn she shares seeing these soliders perform anti war demonstrations. History books state that the end of the war was April 30, 1975, but what about the POWs? The war for them ended much later. John Mc Cain shares his story of hearing from his captures that his own country didnt support him or the war. His loyalty and faith kept him alive to only come home and find this to be true. For many he Vietnam War has and will never end. It is in their nightmares.

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Last edited:	Sunday, November 18, 2012, 01:46 PM (222 words)

A major turning point was when John Gilligan went to Vietnam and had experienced it all for himself. After, he arrived back in the United States along with twelve others; he was convinced that the war should be ended, as did nine of the returned combatants. In addition, he ran for Senate and won in the year 1968 for the Democratic party. John Gilligan proposed a ,“peace plank”, which would call for a quick end to the Vietnam War. Though, the “peace plank” was voted down by 1,567 to 1,041 Americans; it had mounted a huge protest consisting of hundreds of peace delegates.

In the year 1972, Judith Coburn was kicked out of Vietnam. It was apparent to Judith Coburn that the reasons for this was that American officials or possibly Saigon had not appreciated her reports on what was really happening in Vietnam. It wasn't until December 1979 that she was able to return to Vietnam; however, she could not return as a journalist, so she went with a group of women antiwar activists. Judith Coburn was in the group that was the first to enter Cambodia after Vietnam had overthrown the Khmer Rouge. Judith Coburn spent six weeks with her translator driving from village to village witnessing the devastation these people had endured because of the war.

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Last edited:	Sunday, November 18, 2012, 11:46 PM (338 words)

Being one of the most publicly played out wars in American history there was no shortage of controversy surrounding the Vietnam War. Our involvement was masked and later glorified to the American public by more than one presidential administration over the years. From 1965 to 1967 drastic increases of American soldiers came with a not only a monetary price tag, but also one of greater public scrutiny and civil unrest over our policies in Vietnam.

Our progress in the war was so difficult to decipher that the "body count" of the enemy that was killed in action became our only measure of success. The problem with those reports was that, "Throughout the chain of command there was heavy pressure to produce favorable figures, and padding occurred at each level until by the time the numbers reached Washington, they bore little resemblance to reality"(Herring, 187). With hopeful, positive numbers being conveyed by Washington, and less optimistic reports by the media being released, the American public had to start to question the credibility of the Government and their reports of progress. With the war being played out so much in the public eye our government officials were held to a greater standard of accountability and in turn more pressure was put on them for the resolution of our involvement in Vietnam. Barry Zorthian, the director of the Joint United States Public Affairs Office stated in his account of the Tet Offensive to Christian Appy that, "The sudden shock of these attacks, and the fact that they hit so many of places at the same time, was a tremendous blow to the U.S. public thinking and particularly to government officials and Congress. Our credibility was very low of course" (Appy, 291). With the attacks of the cities brought more media attention and even greater public awareness and protest, even though the from a military standpoint Tet was not a loss the ever growing public doubt and opinion that ruled the times was definitely a turning point of the war.

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Last edited:	Saturday, November 17, 2012, 10:58 PM (1066 words)

Turning Point in a War of Public Opinion

Clark Dougan's story, "He was only 19—Did you know him?" represents a distinct turning point in the Vietnam war. From the beginning, North Vietnamese leaders recognized the war as being more about turning the American public against the war than anything; the U.S. was a powerful nation and would not be defeated on the battlefield. Therefore, it wasn't a military victory or defeat that marked a turning point in this war, but rather the point at which Americans became so fatigued with the death and the waste and dishonesty that they turned against the war they had once supported. To Dougan, this moment occurs in the wake of a former classmate's death—a boy who was just 19 when he was killed in Vietnam.

In his interview, Clark Dougan tells of a boy whom he went to school with, Greg Fischer, who volunteered for the marines just after graduation (Appy 304). Even in high school, far removed from the war, the students could feel its presence. The principal would frequently announce the death of another local youth in Vietnam (Appy 304). The students coped with the oppressive reality of the war using black humor, even spontaneously singing "The Caissons go Rolling Along" and the theme to *The Bridge on the River Kwai* during their graduation ceremony (Appy 305). In his first year of college, Dougan opened a copy of the *Cleveland Press* to find that Fischer had been killed in Vietnam at the age of 19 (Appy 305). The tone of the accompanying editorial was angry, which was unusual because the newspaper wasn't typically anti-war. It was in fact "part of the Scripps-Howard chain, a conservative syndicate that had strongly supported the war," (Appy 306). Dougan concludes that this is "the moment when 'Middle America' really turned against the war," (Appy 306).

The Vietnam War was in many ways a war of public opinion. The United States and its South Vietnamese held their ground, but had little hope of a lasting victory against guerillas with popular support. In the words of Walter Cronkite, "To say that we are mired in a stalemate seems the only reasonable, yet unsatisfactory conclusion," (Herring 241-242). Although the war was costly in lives and resources, the U.S. was still a large and enormously wealthy nation, too powerful for a small nation like North Vietnam or the southern guerillas they supported to defeat on the battlefield. From an early point, North Vietnamese leaders saw that public opinion and popular support were the United States' weak point (and therefore the weak point of the South Vietnamese as well); they used this to their advantage. Collateral damage inflicted on civilians by ARVN soldiers was powerful propaganda for southern guerillas (Herring 107). Hanoi was known for using captured American pilots to produce propaganda and other material meant to increase international opposition to American involvement. At one point, interrogators tried to get evidence of American war crimes to send to the Stockholm war crimes tribunal, torturing a crew of F-4 pilots to produce false written confessions (Porter Halyburton as quoted in Appy, 226). Although this particular incident backfired on Hanoi, it demonstrates how important public opinion was in this conflict. If American public opinion turned against the war, the U.S. would be forced to withdraw troops and aid, leading to the defeat of the undermanned and demoralized ARVN.

In the early years of the Vietnam War, most Americans public and politicians supported their government's efforts. Over 60 percent of Americans supported the Vietnam War at the end of 1965 (Herring 212). At the time of the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, only two U.S. senators, Wayne Morse and Ernest Gruening, opposed expansion of the president's military powers (Appy 112). However, as American involvement expanded and U.S. casualties grew larger, so did opposition to the war. In 1970, the Senate overturned the Gulf of Tonkin resolution (Herring 294). In the same year, amendments were proposed to cut off funds for American military in Cambodia and to withdraw all U.S. forces in Vietnam by 1971 (Herring 294-295). U.S. lawmakers had gone from strongly supporting the war to clamoring for its end.

Mass antiwar demonstrations gained momentum across the nation. Violent protests occurred during the 1968

Democratic convention in Chicago, prompting Chicago Mayor William Daley to mobilize over 25,000 police, National Guard, and army troops (Herring 261). On October 21, 1967, 100,000 protestors demonstrated at the Lincoln memorial, and 35,000 marched on the Pentagon (Herring 209). Americans "could no longer turn away from the fact that the war in Southeast Asia... was causing a kind of civil war in the United States," (Zaroulis as quoted in Herring, 261). Although demonstrators constituted a minority of Americans, they expressed attitudes that were beginning to be felt at all levels of society.

As stated by Historian George C. Herring, "The antiwar movement caused fatigue and anxiety among the policy makers and the public, thus eventually encouraging efforts to find a way out of the war" (Herring 210). In August of 1967, polls indicated that "for the first time a majority of Americans felt the United States had erred in intervening in Vietnam," (Herring 211). Between 1967 and 1968, approval of President Johnson's conduct in the war fell from 40 to 26 percent (Herring 242-243). The support that the Johnson administration had sought so hard to build was crumbling; America was fed up with the war.

To Greg Fischer, the time at which the *Cleveland Press* published an angry editorial about the death of a 19-year old Ohio boy in Vietnam was a turning point in the war. This was the moment in which American opinion shifted from supporting the war to opposing it, and ultimately what led to the U.S. withdrawing from Vietnam and the victory of North Vietnam. Many 19-year old Americans died fighting in Vietnam; in Dougan's eyes, Greg Fischer was one too many for the American public.

References

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Herring, George C. *America's Longest War*. 4th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002.
Print.

Nancy Zaroulis and Gerald Sullivan, *Who Spoke Up? American Protest against the War in Vietnam, 1963-1975* (New York, 1984), p.200.

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Last edited:	Sunday, November 18, 2012, 10:09 PM (1221 words)

Peter Kuznick's story represents a turning point in the war because it begins to display the seriousness of the antiwar sentiment, from the depth of their beliefs to the violence of the American police. In addition Kuznick's final statement accurately sums up why his story was a turning point, "Chicago had a radicalizing effect on campuses. It was a real dividing line. In the spring of '68 I felt that on most campuses antiwar students were a distinct minority. But that fall the movement mushroomed and there was a pervasive radicalization," (Appy 316) .

Before 1968 it seems that the antiwar sentiment and especially antiwar protestors appeared in the minority. Their movement while in the process of growing had not reached an overwhelming majority nor had it gained respect . However the publicity of protesting during the Democratic Convention brought the fact to light that many people of America were willing to protest Vietnam policies. The majority of Americans may still have not liked the antiwar movement, but it did enable the protestors to show the government that there was major opposition to their policies.

This story is also a turning point because Kuznick said that "we weren't afraid to risk bodily harm and even our lives. Our commitment to ending the war was certainly as great as the government's commitment to prosecuting it," (Appy 314). The reason Kuznick's statement displays a turning point is because the majority of people aren't typically ready to lay down their body and possibly their life for their convictions and beliefs, but these people were. When there is that kind of transformation happens it shows that people's minds are changing and that change tends to spread like wildfire.

The reason violence of American police represents a turning point within Kuznick's story is because it shows how far the government will go to control protestation and depicts the gravity of the matter. It is conventional for protests to be broken up with demands, tear gas and possible use of moderate violence, but it is not so common for protestors to be broken up under the threat of a shoot-to-kill order, as was the case in Chicago (Appy 313). This escalation depicts how the police force or the government will address these matters in the future and further shows the deepening beliefs of the protestors who are willing to risk everything.

All of these instances with Kuznick's story show why his account is a turning point in the war. It displayed the growing opposition of the war for the American people which is a key factor in any war. For with growing opposition, comes a greater call to end the war and the more a public demands the end of a war the less our government is able to continue the war. It also showed a turn from merely opposing the war to actively fighting against the war. This is a big step for it is one thing to complain to another person about the current war, but it is another to fight our governments policy on the war. This step is crucial because disliking the war can't do much to push our government to end the war, but fighting in opposition of the war threatens the stability of society and forces the government's hand in its wartime policies. Extreme violence on protestors is another step that showed a decisive change in the Vietnam war. For while at first there may be more "sympathy for the police than for the victims of the police," as seemed the case in Chicago, continued violence against civilians will lead ordinary people to further question the government 's actions and with more questions comes a basis for more opposition that could rise as a result (Appy 315). In essence Kuznick's story was a change in the Vietnam war because it showed that the American people are faltering in their belief of the war. Once public belief or faith in the war falters it is a slippery slope from there, for the soldiers and the government rely on public support. With high public support the government can essentially do anything in the war, but without, the government is crippled and soldiers morale is decreased overall decreasing our ability to fight the war.

Charles Cooper's (II) story represented the end of the war for similar reasons that Peter Kuznick's story represented a turning point in the war. It wasn't because of a decisive military victory or defeat, but it was because of the loss of morale and internal division from the ground troops Cooper was commanding.

During Cooper's service in Vietnam the army was suffering from race problems and a defeatist attitude, with the race problems being the most immediate problem. For Cooper himself said that he "was as concerned about race relations as I was about the enemy," and in one situation "you had all whites on one side and all blacks on the other and they all had loaded weapons pointing at each other" (Appy 445 - 46). Having that serious of race problems is bad for the army not just because you have the potential of people killing each other, but because the army can't fight a war within themselves and the war they are supposed to be fighting at the same time. A army needs to be one cohesive unit, to fight together against the common enemy in order to stand firm and produce quality results, with minimal losses.

The deterioration of morale seen in Cooper's companies was because of constant casualties, rather than general discontent with the war. Extensive loss of morale is bad because it affects the will of troops to fight, however in Cooper's story this loss of morale was worse because it appeared that one of his units attacked and murdered people of a village where a VC child had gone a day earlier (Appy 447). In this situation loss of morale showed the worse sides of humanity. For it is one thing for

soldiers to feel depressed, but in this case it affected the judgement of soldiers and influenced them to take questionable if not illegal actions. This situation begins to display that the American armed forces are falling apart from the inside.

All in all as said earlier, both the end of the war and the turning point stories were a turning point and the end of the war, not because of any military action within Vietnam, but because they depicted changes within America. Cooper's story showed the end of the war because it showed the army as being internally divided and disillusioned. The internal fighting was destroying the army's effectiveness to fight to the war they were supposed to be fighting. It was these internal divisions of American people and soldiers that allowed these stories to represent decisive points in the war. A country can not fight a war when it is divided on the homefront and abroad. That is why Cooper's story is the "end" for his story represents the end of Americans willing to fight with each other and fight the war.

Citation

Appy, Christian. *Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides*. New York: Penguin Books, 2003. Print.

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Last edited:	Sunday, November 18, 2012, 10:21 PM (553 words)

1. Lyndon Johnson said "If I've lost Walter Cronkite, I've lost Middle America." Barry Zorthain remembers him saying this after the Tet Offensive. When Cronkite publicly said that the war could not be won, it was a major turning point not really in the war but, how it was perceived at home. Cronkite was America's most trusted and popular journalist at a time when we did not have 24 hour news channels. People tuned into his reports every day to see how the war was going. Most historians do agree that Tet was the main turning point of the military efforts, but it also was a pivotal mark when the media and a huge percentage of American civilians began to see the conflict in a different light. Zorthain explains how the military was adamant with the press to put a positive spin on their reporting coming out of Vietnam. With Tet, this was difficult. After the initial offensive and what actually happened became clear, the media really never returned to the positive stories that was fed to them by the military. The started to focus on more of the negative aspects of the war and also began covering more of the anti-war demonstrators. This was a critical turning point of the war. Without the support of the public, it is incredibly difficult to maintain high moral. That goes for the troops, civilians and politicians. Tet was a turning point but, when Cronkite and most of the rest of the media turned against the conflict, it really was lost it just took 25,000 more dead Americans for the government to realize it. I feel that selling a war to the public is almost as important as how well you actually fight it. It is unfortunate that we maintained a military presence after all this occurred in 1968 but, without pressure from journalists and protesters, we may have been there even longer and lost even more lives.
2. John McCain probably had one of the worst experience in Vietnam other than the ones who did not come back. I have a new found respect for the man not only because of what he went through, but how he handled himself once he returned to the U.S. Of all people, I would expect him to have been furious with anyone involved with the anti-war movement but, he recognizes that in a free country it is perfectly okay to disagree with your government. He mentions how divided this country was following the war and I can try to relate how he felt with how I see this country now. When he was released and able to come home, that would be a very different feeling then it would for someone who did not fight or was not a POW. Those soldiers were treated horribly by their captors and deserve our respect and gratitude which they did not necessarily receive upon their homecoming. Throughout his political career, there has been relatively little that I can agree with John McCain about, but I do respect him for overcoming such a tramatic experience and living what can only be described as one of patriotism and valor. The "ending" for him and other POW's was not only life changing, it meant that they were free.

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Due date:	Sunday, November 18, 2012, 11:55 PM
Last edited:	Sunday, November 18, 2012, 11:47 PM (375 words)

Justin Wease

History of Vietnam

Mr. Joseph Escobar

11/15-2012

Turning point and ending

A major event that I believe to be an understated yet pivotal moment in the Vietnam War is contained within the recount of My Lai by Larry Colburn. The most compelling line of the work within its entirety is the very first line. It is, at least, the quote which stirred me up the most, it is:

“We weren’t pacifists. We did our job and when we had to kill people we did.” (Appy 346)

I believe that Larry Colburn’s experience and witnessing of the slaughter of presumably innocent people to be an accurate turning point in the war in the hearts of men. With warfare raging and revenge looming in the air, American soldiers, the booby-trapped and far from home men began to become monsters themselves. With television and the news media changing the way we view war, it would be found out that a lot of the people labeled Enemy KIA were not exactly military combatants but thought to be harmful, realistically innocent unarmed and bewildered civilians. Not as significant as the Tet offensive, the My Lai tragedy remains an incredibly important piece in the turning point of the Vietnam war and its eventual end.

The best example of an ending that I could find to the Vietnam War was Alexander M. Haig’s retelling of the events that surrounded his experience with serving as a high level military officer and political advisor. I think that the likely end is in the bombing of the North. The initiative, in its entirety began to be thought of as politically based, and due to the high amount of unpopularity with American citizens was abandoned soon after it started and considered a failed offensive. Haig believes that more bombing, in a much more strategic fashion would have possibly won the war for the South Vietnamese and American supporters. This is not the most popular ending of the war, but I do believe it is an important one because it shows the opinions of a self-proclaimed “war-hawk”

and his ultimate understanding of a failed agenda and the politics which drive the war machine forward in biased ways.

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Last edited:	Monday, November 19, 2012, 12:06 AM (421 words)

Clark Dougan's story that "he wanted most to tell" illustrated the biggest example of a turning point. Coming from Ohio he went to Valley Forge High school whose mascot happened to be the "Patriots". It's not so much a turning point for him, but for "middle America".

He talks of an article written by the *Cleveland Press* titled "He Was Only 19—Did You Know Him?" It was written about the death in Vietnam of a kid he went to school with. It was the proverbial kid next door, the kid "who had worked in the local pharmacy", the kind of kid that we all know. The editorial was asking how many more people like this kid "are we willing to waste." What was interesting about the article was that the *Cleveland Press* was part of a chain that was very conservative and had strongly supported the war. This was an indicator of the growing attitudes and beliefs of working-class communities. Dougan says that even a lot of the WW2 vets were starting to think or even say that the war wasn't worth the cost of American lives. Couple this with Walter Cronkite, who was the trusted, familiar face of the news saying that the war was unwinnable, and people are going to start questioning what they'd been fed and what they believed to be true about the war.

Truong Tran hit the nail on the head. Vietnamese people have been fighting for their freedom for many, many years. When America, "the most powerful country in the world" came over with assistance, it was a rallying point for both Northerners and Southerners in that it was just another invading force to them. When a people have been raised since childhood to be "courageous enough to fight foreign aggressors", no matter what our intentions are, we were still foreigners occupying their land. U.S. soldiers in Vietnam had a far-reaching effect. Tran says that it not only destroyed their political cause, but also their economy and their social fabric. It was great insight to see that the best the South could hope for was to keep half their country, where as the worst the North could do was keep half their country. Since all Vietnamese wanted a unified country, the North had a more persuasive goal.

American troops occupying Vietnam was the beginning of the end. Egos, legacies, conventional war strategies are just some of the reasons it took so long to come to an end.

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Last edited:	Sunday, November 18, 2012, 06:18 PM (1039 words)

I think a great story that underlines the devastation that was happening over there and shows a turning point into what was going to happen in the near future is on page 346. It was told by Larry Colburn, a helicopter door gunner who saw the butchering that happened to the Vietnam people. He talks about how their job was to strictly spot and take out enemy troops; there was no random killing or displays of gunfire. They would act as a scout team and fly into areas allied and their own troops were, and target enemy troops with red smoke. They would also signal out allies or civilians with green smoke allowing their own troops to approach calmly. Colburn talks about how one morning after coming to the station about seven A.M. and getting briefed right away on a mission to take place that day. He was told that they were going to put fellow company down with helicopters to sweep and village and surrounding area. The weird thing was that they usually go in first and check everything out to spot and signal enemy and allied troops or civilians. After their first sweep and seeing only a few Vietcong troops they made their way to the village where they then started to see something they never wanted to see. As they made their sweeps around the perimeter they saw woman and children as well as bodies starting to pile up closer to the village. They figured that Vietcong or militia had go to them before the American troops got their but that wasn't the case. They were flying near a rice paddy field as they saw a young woman kneeling in the grass with an evident chest wound so they smoked the area with green that meant, safe to approach. As they begin to see one of their captains on the ground approach her, he walked up to her and kicked her, then shot her to finish her off. After seeing that, they then realized what was going on and that their own troops were massacring innocent people. They then had to continue their day when they saw a group of woman and children heading toward a bunker in hills. They saw that American troops spotted them and started advancing towards the bunker so he decided to tell the pilot to take the helicopter down in front of the bunker. At this point he was in the ground troop captain's face arguing about what they were going to do with the villagers inside the bunker. They practically had a standoff with their own troops just to let innocent villagers go and not be killed. At this point it was just too much for Colburn and it has scarred him for life. It was a changing point in his life and a changing point in the war when people were coming back to the States getting triad for things like this in Vietnam. These events have struggled Larry Colburn his entire life, no matter if it was for revenge or insanity, it wasn't right. I think this story shows the brutal encounters in Vietnam and when it began to become a massacre and devastation to the people. I feel like this was a big deal because of how the war played out after this became common. Presidents were changed and things started to change which lead to the pulling out and end of the Vietnam War. I think this story was a huge turning point in both Larry Coburn's life as well as career, and a turning point in the Vietnam War as a whole.

Part 2

I think a great story that shows a great idea of how the war ended would be Nyguyen Thi Binh's story. Binh was a Vietnamese anti war protestor and was well known for her leadership in the National Liberation Front. Her beliefs were that they didn't want to start a war with the United States but when the French were invading them and the US sent political and military support to them they had no choice. Their focus wasn't just on stopping the war and ending the involvement of French on Vietnam soil, but to stop the deaths of woman and children. Her Liberation Front led the group of legislators and diplomats to negotiate with the French. The Negotiations in Paris were some of the longest peace talks in history. They started in late November, 1968 and didn't end till the start of 1973. She talks about how these negotiations lasted longer than they should have, and they would have stopped and minimized many deaths and bombings. The history might of turned out the same and the outcome of the war probably would have been the same but so many people could have been saved and so much devastation could have been stopped. Her point of view was that because of the American involvement in the war and because they didn't act upon the negotiations in Paris by making similar policies as the French, America destroyed Vietnam. After everything that happened she still would like to see Vietnam heal from its wounds and that they are very proud of standing up and fighting for their country. I think her story is a political, but great way of showing an ending and explaining it in a different point of view. Although the ending to the war would of happened no matter what, all she cared about was eliminating as much as the the destruction and deaths and came along with it This story was from the other side and point of view to this War but still relates in so many ways. A lot of things happened that shouldn't of happened and things weren't handled as they should have been, and casualties were the consequences. Also, along with many other Vietnam veterans from both America and Vietnam she ends her story believing in her country and proud to be a part of history and all she wants is peace. This was common

among a lot of stories in Appy's book from Part 1 all the way to Part 5.

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Last edited:	Sunday, November 18, 2012, 10:12 PM (751 words)

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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Last edited:	Sunday, November 18, 2012, 08:13 PM (1021 words)

In reading part 4 of the book by Christian Appy, "Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from All Sides" the Tet Offensive is an obvious turning point in the war. Another turning point that is less easy to define is the My Lai massacre. In Christian Appy's book, he includes the stories of two different people. One is Larry Colburn, an American helicopter door-gunner who stopped some of the killing in the village. Another is of Michael Bernhardt, a member of the company who committed the massacre. The story of Larry Colburn is most illustrative of the turning point in the war that My Lai represents.

Colburn does not represent himself as pro-war or anti-war in his narrative. As he says "We weren't pacifists. We did our job and when we had to kill people we did. But we didn't do it for sport. We didn't randomly shoot people. In our gun company it was very important to capture weapons, not just to legitimize your kill, but psychologically it was easier when you could say 'If I didn't do that, he was going to shoot me.'" The reader is not directly given Colburn's opinion on the war, but it is clear that he felt he had a job to do and was to a degree justified in doing it.

Colburn begins to tell the story of what happened on the day of the My Lai massacre, March 16, 1968. As his company was working the perimeter of the village, they noticed wounded villagers and piles of dead bodies. Colburn was not able to make any sense of this until he saw a young girl killed. "...we saw a young girl about twenty years old lying in the grass. We could see that she was unarmed and wounded in the chest. We marked her with smoke...the smoke was green meaning it's safe to approach...Captain Medina came over, kicked her, stepped back, and finished her off...When we saw Medina do that, it all clicked. It was our guys doing the killing."

With this event, Colburn began to view the war differently. Prior to the My Lai massacre he described the war as a job, and killing was part of that job. After his experience, he describes a different view of the war. My Lai was a personal turning point for him. Colburn saw what the war was doing to soldiers, and that for some killing was revenge. "They'd lost men to booby traps and snipers and they were ready to engage...They didn't capture any weapons. They didn't kill any draft age males...It's something I've struggled with my whole life, how people can do that." At the end of his narrative, there are two brief paragraphs about what happened after the My Lai massacre. Colburn talks about the moment that he realized there would be no justice for the people who died. Clearly, his viewpoint of the war before the My Lai massacre and after it are dramatically different, with the importance of what happened remaining with him his entire life.

The My Lai massacre was not just a turning point for Larry Colburn. It was also a turning point for the American people and their attitudes toward the war. In his introduction to the My Lai stories, Appy says that "... My Lai eventually brought a turning point in American attitudes almost as significant as the Tet Offensive. Millions who had believed the war was a misguided policy or a tragic mistake began to consider the possibility that it was fundamentally unjust and immoral." My Lai demonstrated that some Americans had begun to feel hostile toward all Vietnamese, not just those they were fighting against. (Herring 260) The My Lai massacre may not have been "the" turning point in the war, but for Larry Colburn and millions of Americans it was an important turning point in attitudes toward the war.

The most obvious ending to the war is the fall of Saigon. Morton Halperin's story is representative of an 'ending' to the war, but a different kind of ending. This account demonstrates an ending of policies and beliefs regarding the war. Halperin was the deputy assistant secretary of defense at the end of the Johnson administration. One of his tasks included heading a Vietnam Task Force that reviewed war policy. Halperin says that before the review "...I'd sit in meetings and there were people in the room with profoundly different views about what was going on and what to do about it but we never talked about it. Everybody was very polite and the discussion was all about immediate, operational issues, not fundamental questions." Clark Clifford, the secretary of defense, "...began raising at the highest levels questions that had been avoided for years. He demanded of Wheeler and Westmoreland precise information on how the additional troops might be deployed and what results could be expected. He instructed his civilian advisers to study all the implications of the request and to review possible alternatives." (Herring 236) This was an end to Westmoreland's 'free hand' in Vietnam.

Halperin's account also represents another ending in Vietnam policy. The 'domino theory' had been the basis for US policy in Vietnam since the beginning of the war. Clifford discovered that "...none of the countries in the region shared our view about dominoes...the dominoes didn't believe in the domino effect." The end of the 'domino theory' as US policy raised fundamental questions about American involvement in the war.

According to Appy, the war policy review by the Vietnam Task Force convinced Clifford that the war was unwinnable. Clifford said "I see more and more fighting with more and more casualties on the U.S. side and no end in sight to the action". Halperin's account does not illustrate the end of the Vietnam War. What it does give is 'endings' to US policy. Those endings are representative of an end to the Vietnam War because they fundamentally changed the war and views of it.

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Due date:	Sunday, November 18, 2012, 11:55 PM
Last edited:	Sunday, November 18, 2012, 04:34 PM (608 words)

Part 1:

I saw a big turning point in a shorter passage in Appy's fourth section of his book. In the passage Appy recalls regarding Philip Griffiths, we learn about lost loyalty and betrayed trust. In war, loyalty is a critical factor. Loosing loyalty can result in a person or groups of people trading sides, or giving up entirely. Loyalty played a major role in this war. If the Americans had perhaps gained more legitimate, not just simply stated, loyalty from more of the people of Vietnam, perhaps the war itself would or could have been avoided. That is the power of loyalty. A person's loyalty to a team creates a team. America was fighting for loyalty in this war, and not only did they seek it, but they were seeking to protect it as well. Learning about how America sought to protect District Eight, a district in which some of their most powerful Vietnamese loyalists lived, and ended up destroying it along with there loyalty, resulted in also learning about a turning point.

One very clear way to loose loyalty in any relationship is by breaking promises. Appy writes, "The Americans had always told the Vietnamese that they'd be safe in the cities. But what happened in '68 is that the Viet Cong said, 'You're not safe in those cities'" (295). Although, the Americans were seeking to protect their loyalty and hold their promise, they unfortunately lost their loyalty and broke their promise, by not handling the situation in District Eight correctly. "They sent a dozen guys into District Eight and got them to shoot a few policemen and fire a few rounds knowing that the Americans would overreact. And indeed, within an hour U.S. helicopters were killing everything that moved" (295).

The big turning point here was loosing loyalty and ending trust. These things can result in big game changers (switching sides, and giving up the will to fight for the cause), and you can be sure that their actions did result in lost loyalty.

Part two:

A war should have a legitimate reason to exist. When lives are at stake, there should be a cause that we are fighting for. When there is no clear idea of the cause and the cause itself can not be made justifiable, people have even more of a reason to question it. Morton Halperin's passage illustrates a clear ending of belief of justifiable cause of the Vietnam War. Halperin went from being a clear and public supporter to realizing that what was happening in Vietnam could not be justified. "So I started out being supportive of the war. But by the time I got involved in the government in the spring of '67, I had concluded that we could not win and should get out" (403).

My favorite illustration of Halperin's, "no cause mentality" is when Halperin mentions the fact that he avoided having an actual map of Vietnam in his office, and instead had the actual world map. Here is a part of that recollection, "Half of them couldn't find Vietnam on the world map and the other half would say, 'Vietnam is too small on this map to show you what I want to show you.' I would look at them and say, 'That's the point!'" (404). With this, he is saying that why fight with such a small country in the first place. Where is the cause there? His realization of this "no justifiable cause" belief marks an ending for powerful support of the war. Without support like Halperin's, things would and did have to end.

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Due date:	Sunday, November 18, 2012, 11:55 PM
Last edited:	Sunday, November 18, 2012, 09:17 AM (1545 words)

Sierra LaVoie

11/17/2012

History 195

Nathan Houser's story represented the turning point in the war. Nathan really focused on Kennedy's assassination and how it shook his faith in the government. "Kennedy's assassination had an enormous impact on me...that's when I began taking a critical stance toward our government." (336) Kennedy's assassination, with all the government conspiracies and misconceptions behind it really made Americans question their government. If our government had more to do with Kennedy's assassination then it was confessing to there must be more that they are covering up. America had been shocked by the brutality inside of its country when someone dared to shoot the president. This really opened the eyes of so many people. Suddenly the government wasn't the good guy.

Nathan Houser went from being an all American patriot to fleeing to Canada to avoid being drafted into a war he didn't believe in. "...that the American way of life was the right and just one...I fully shared a typical Midwestern attitude that somehow war was glorious and being a soldier was the pinnacle of bravery." (335) Nathan didn't go to Canada because he was afraid to fight. Quite the opposite he says he was very comfortable with fighting. It was the cause American that he was over there fighting for that he questioned. "I felt it was wrong. It was clear we weren't fighting for democracy." (337) Nathan didn't believe it was right for the government to force him to fight a war he didn't think was right. This was a time where so many people were experiencing the same feelings as Nathan and the war was becoming unpopular. "The way the war was being conducted, the veil of secrecy that the media cloaked itself in, and the music of Bob Dylan and Joan Baez..." (337)

The peace movement had become popular and began to sweep up America, which combined with Kennedy's assassination began to change the popular opinion on the Vietnam War. Many Americans began to question their government and why men were losing their lives for a cause they were having a hard time understanding. The Domino Theory made the war in Vietnam seem absolutely necessary. But this theory may be all wrong. After all Vietnam was a tiny country clustered in between so many big countries. People began to wonder if it was really feasible that such a small country could matter so much in the grand scheme of things. The late 1960's was also a time when the media had begun to turn against the war in Vietnam. The public began to hear about the horrible deaths of thousands of Vietnamese citizens. While America began to promote peace, the war escalated and more Vietnamese citizens were killed.

Martin Luther King who was a big promoter of peace had been assassinated during the war in Vietnam. Martin Luther King's assassination combined with Kennedy's assassination along with the war in Vietnam began to overwhelm America. There was so much strife in America and needless bloodshed. Brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, the general public and the government were divided. A nation divided is never at its strongest. Nathan's brother volunteered to go to Vietnam and Nathan fled to Canada. Although both brothers weren't sure how honest the cause Vietnam was Nathan's brother still fought. Nathan refused to fight for a cause he didn't believe in. All over the country this kind of strife was in American families. Ideals were changing; hawks and doves were constantly opposing each other. As time went on the strife in our nation just got worse. The turning point in the war was long in coming but for most American's it was the Kennedy assassination in 1963. From that time on many American began to raise some serious doubts about the war. The protests started slowly but with a few years' time they became enormous. These protests were big enough that the government could no longer ignore them.

Le Minh Khue's story was especially touching. It seemed like the perfect story to use when speaking about the end of the war from the Vietnamese point of view. America was able to just leave the mess they had made. The Vietnamese were the one who had to clean it all up. Although, the Vietnamese won the war they had a lot of

damage and bloodshed that even now thirty plus years later they are still recovering from.

Khue was one of the first to witness the liberation of Danang in 1975. "As we approached, southern soldiers were fleeing the city in their shorts and undershirts...they didn't make any effort to resist. They waved to us. It meant the war was over. What an unbelievable feeling."(511) She joined the volunteer youth corps when she was only 16 and was a part of the war until the very end. She was raised by communist foster parents but she has a different understanding. "We learned to distinguish truth from falsehood, rectitude from corruption."(509) Khue's whole life has been surrounded by war and unjust actions. Her parents were killed by communists and then she was raised by communist favoring family. She witnessed unbelievable bloodshed but she kept on fighting the war to reunite her country. She never lost faith in her cause even though in the end she was left worse off than before. All the Vietnamese were left with was a divided country and a ruined country.

The people in the north thought the cities in the south were beautiful and very nice. However upon entering the city of Danang it was obvious that this wasn't true. "It was just another impoverished city."(511) All the Vietnamese had fought so hard to keep their country. They were left with improvised cities and countless dead Vietnamese in the end. The Vietnamese people are strong and they have a will to survive. "Thanks to their purity of motive and their zeal they survived the war and even won a victory."(509) The cost of this victory was so high. Khue mentions that she used to get letters from many young soldiers. "Now the letters remain but the senders are gone forever."(510)

After the liberation of Saigon things began to change dramatically. Things were so different, after all the Vietnamese had finally forced American to withdraw its army. After decades of fighting for their country now the Vietnamese could finally breathe easy for a while. There was little time to really celebrate the victory because as Khue soon discovered the country was in very bad shape. "The ten years after the liberation were a nightmare. Something had broken down; something had fallen apart. People had no money but money was the master. We lacked everything even soap and rice. It was terrible." (511) The war was over but now the Vietnamese faced another challenge rebuilding their economy. Villages and fields had been burned down. Cities had been bombed to the ground. Agent Orange had destroyed the plant life and the health of countless Vietnamese The war had been won at a great cost.

Despite all Khue has lost she still managed to find beauty even in the midst of a war. "Even in such chaotic times we enjoyed moments of peace and beauty. You know, the jungle was so beautiful."(510) It's hard to believe to believe that after witnessing such devastation and so much bloodshed that any Vietnamese citizen could still find beauty in it all. All the soldiers she once knew are long gone, her family is gone, and the land she fought so hard for is destroyed. What an amazing testimony. The war in Vietnam hurt so every single citizen in some way or another. Too often I think we forget the level of devastation they have to deal with every day. In some of the accounts in *Patriots* the American soldiers called the Vietnamese gooks. When you hear of a story like Khue's it makes you remember that they too are human and they can feel everything we can. Khue was not a gook she fought hard and bravely for her country. The American soldiers fought hard and bravely for their country. Although there are some stark differences in reality we are all just alike.

Khue's story was a good example about the end of the war because it represented a more personal Vietnamese view. Khue's was specifically chosen because Vietnamese. America's had many losses because of the war but not even close to how many losses and devastation the Vietnamese had. It's important to remember that the Vietnamese are human to. They are just like us. I chose Nathan Houser's story because he brought attention to Kennedy's assassination and how it directly affected his views. He was not alone in this. Soon after the assassination the peace movements really swept through America. This all influenced the war. The assassination caused the American to question the war and the government more heavily than ever before. All these questions led to the opposition against the war in Vietnam.

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Due date:	Sunday, November 18, 2012, 11:55 PM
Last edited:	Sunday, November 18, 2012, 05:43 PM (1303 words)

Tom Grace's account of the Kent State shooting provides an excellent definition of the "war at home". Up until Kent State the American people were growing more and more dismayed with the government and its handling of Vietnam. Students, Veterans (both Vietnam, Korea, and WWII), white, black, Latino, were all protesting at various institutions, capitals and local recruiting offices. The "war at home" was waging not only among our citizens but within our own government as well. Several "us vs them" dynamics broke out with our officials and citizens. With the invasion of Cambodia and the continued bombing of North Vietnam, the US citizens felt ignored and betrayed. Public opinion of Nixon was at an all time low of 31%, and with the ever growing dissent from past soldiers and current evaders, Nixon's tolerance of protesters was growing thin. At Kent State, a demonstration against the war was being held. Tom Grace was in attendance as the National Guards men were being taunted by the students and rocks were being thrown at the NG jeeps that were parked along the campus.

The story of Kent State provides an interesting parallel between the Vietnamese and American troops, to that of American Citizens and their government. American troops in Vietnam were seen as guides to help the Vietnamese people obtain independence and to resist the Communist North Vietnamese power. Troops were to help establish and build a working economic and democratic system within Vietnam. They were to maintain order and peace among the people and to help protect their land. Just as our government is our guides in keeping our independence and peace as a nation, our government is to keep our established working economic and democratic system. But like in Vietnam, our government was instead failing to realize our competence as a nation, our ability to know when policies and strategies are not working, and when peace and order are not being kept.

Kent State brought to light that turning point in history where our own government was turning against its citizens in fully realizing the failure of the war. The shooting at Kent State was said to have lasted only 13 seconds, those seconds fueled the fires of anti-war protests even more. Now the government didn't have to send you to war to die, they will just shoot you while you question their policies. Violence bred violence in America during Vietnam, but the shootings at Kent State really solidified that sentiment. Protesters and police were always at odds with each other, tear gas, rocks, clubbing, etc. But when a gun is pulled on students, working class students, and they are shot with no means to defend themselves, that was when America decided that something had to be done. Violent policies were not working, either here or in Vietnam. The public knew that, people within the government knew that, but those with the power to change that ignored it. Nixon, Kissinger, Johnson, all of those capable of ending and ceasing the violence knew it, but ignored it. It was that ignorance and that college shooting that created a collective turning point in the American view of Vietnam, it just wasn't a war in a foreign country. It had spread to America, we let it spread to America, and there were no Viet Cong holding the guns here.

Frank Maguire's story chips away at the Vietnam Wars veneer, it brings forth the steady decline in American involvement in "helping" Vietnam fight against the Viet Cong. While the finer points of the war were never very clear, the general understanding was that America was to aid Southern Vietnam in reclaiming their country from Communist threat. America was to aid in housing, economics, democracy, and in establishing an independent nation. Vietnam was to be our poster child for the way we could build nations. Instead, we left Southern Vietnam in the dark and fought their war for them. They became reliant upon the US for more than just military power, we were the ones to build their houses, schools, and hospitals. We took charge in establishing politics and tried to impose a democratic rule in a place where input was only flowing from one side.

The end of this so called nation building, which was what the war was presumed to be based upon, started when disillusionment set in for American soldiers. During Vietnam the progress reports shifted from being that of how many societal changes we have made to how many Viet Cong have we killed. The pressure to destroy the enemy over-shadowed the main goal of freeing a country from an imposing rule. When there ceased to be accurate data on the enemy, figures were moved around, statistics were altered, we couldn't honestly say we were losing. The facade of the war had to be upheld, and with the pressure to uphold something many Americans already seen as false, soldiers engaged in other types of behavior. Many of the US funds for the war went to continued bombing, air strikes, weapons, and other normal military expenditures. The things that Maguire's story brings to light, about hotels with "girls in every room" being funded and paid for by the State Department are not things that go into nation building nor war.

When American troops started to become more focused on body count, rather than actually getting the enemy is a little point in knowing the war is ending. Instead of instilling a sense of responsibility in the native people, they

instilled reliance, co-dependence, and fear is another little point in knowing the war is over. My Lai was an example of the war coming to an horrific end in some soldiers eyes. American troops just completely massacring Vietnamese citizens, women, children, whole villages. Lines blurred in who the enemy really was, was it the Viet Cong? Was it the North Vietnamese? South? All of Vietnam? We ignored our nation building quest, we ignored the people we were sent in to help, and in the end, most Americans lost their sense of self. Everyone was the enemy at some point, Americans and Vietnamese alike. It became an all out war against everyone and everything.

When you do not know who your enemy is in war, it can have devastating effects. This type of behavior is a key indicator that there is no war, or that there is a war, but there is no leader calling the shots. Soldiers are left to guess who their next target is and where their next mission is taking place. There is a false war being presented to the soldiers and to both the American and Vietnamese public. Boozing, drugs, prostitution, and arms dealing under the table are not things that are foreign to wars. But the magnitude of which those things were done in Vietnam and for the extent to which they were done, played a very big part in showing how the Vietnam War was not only finished, but lost. America had taken over, we had successfully "Americanized" Vietnam in the worst ways.

The way in which the American and Vietnamese were let down by the American government both in terms of much needed guidance and knowledge will forever be the worst kind of ending for Vietnam. Conspiracy, secrecy, and lies over-shadowed much of the information that was needed on the basic levels of Vietnam. To quote Frank Maguire; *"I think it's a national trait that we always feel we know what's better for everybody. It was an attitude of misguided benevolence – that we know what's good for them and they don't really understand what's happening. We really wanted to win their hearts and minds, except we could never find one or the other."*

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Due date:	Sunday, November 18, 2012, 11:55 PM
Last edited:	Sunday, November 18, 2012, 09:53 PM (851 words)

Robert McNamara observed in his 5th lesson of Vietnam "we failed. . . the tasks of winning the hearts and minds of people from a totally different culture"(Fog of War). Winning over hearts and minds entails two things. The first is getting the people to adopt a set of political ideologies. The second, is a willingness to make the necessary sacrifices to achieve the goals of those ideologies. The people must be convinced to go to war. Because the U.S. was building the new country of South Vietnam, the people of that region had to be convinced of both the ideologies of capitalism, and independence from the northern region. They then had to be convinced to fight and die for those ideologies.

Nguyen Qui Duc's story represents a turning point in the war. As a self described elite, Duc's 'heart and mind' had been 'won over' to the cause of an independent capitalist South Vietnam. He speaks of how he enjoyed Rock-n-Roll music, and other cultural influences from the West. However, Duc continues to describe being conflicted as he progressed through adolescence. Ultimately he became alienated from the U.S. agenda by witnessing the violence and destruction caused by the military occupation.

As a ten-year-old during the Tet Offensive, Duc witnessed his father's arrest by the North Vietnamese army. Yet, he describes how he didn't hate them despite witnessing the arrest of his father and the destruction of the bridge over the Perfume River -which had been symbolically important to the people of the city of Hue. Instead of hating the Northerners, Duc describes being confused over the matter. He was friendly to western influence, but also expressed a curiosity about the opposition's motivation. He spoke of having a certain admiration for the message of the lecture he was given by one of the NVA soldiers. Obviously this soldier doing the lecturing was a propagandist; and a ten-year-old is probably susceptible to propaganda. However, the United States employed propaganda techniques as well, and these evidently were only able to make this young person tolerate the military occupation. This story of an evolving change of personal politics does not represent a traditional turning point. However, this was not a traditional war. The United States was trying to create an independent country.

Nguyen Qui Duc was probably born around 1958. President Eisenhower's agenda expected a quick success, leaving his generation to grow up without war. Ten years later, the battle for hearts and minds continued. What was in the hearts and minds of the entire generation cannot be said. However, Duc's story of inner conflict could represent a large segment of that generation. Surely some were so alienated by the military occupation that they joined the National Liberation Front. Duc says he became an adult when he began listening to Vietnamese antiwar songs by Trinh Cong Son instead of Creedence Clearwater Revival. That was his definitive turning point-when he could no longer reconcile his conflicted emotions. This is the moment when his desire for peace trumped his sense of nationalism. This is an individual and personal turning point. One in an entire generation that, according to the U.S. agenda, was supposed to be militantly anticommunist.

In addition to the people of South Vietnam, the American people had to be 'won over' as well. The American people had to be convinced both of the logic of U.S. foreign policy, and be persuaded to use military might to enforce that policy. After volunteering for the military in 1966 to show his patriotism, Steve Sherlock began to doubt the nobility of the war before he was even deployed. By the time he got there, he was "neutral". Steve's story represents an ending of American resolve to 'fight communism' with aggressive military force in foreign lands. Eventually, it seems, there was a failure to keep the hearts and minds of many American soldiers, resulting in an ineffective fighting force, and the end of America's ability to sustain prolonged war. Keeping soldiers motivated to fight, according to Steve Sherlock, became a serious problem, to the point where the Army had to relieve an officer of his command for insisting on the humanity of their enemies. The story he tells of anti-war petitions being passed around the military in Vietnam, and the pseudo-antiwar demonstration on the beach reveal a significant number of individual soldiers who no longer were convinced of the morality and necessity of that war. Contrary to a significant portion of the military publicly questioning the premisses for military action, Sherlock describes his objections to the war in his statement "it wasn't an intellectual protest, just a gut feeling from what I was seeing and hearing" (p. 495). Some soldiers' hearts had not been won over, other soldiers' minds had not. Many of these soldiers threw their medals at the White House steps in a well organized momentous demonstration. This was an end to the willingness of many American's to fight and support that war.

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