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The Turning Point

A great majority of historians believe that the Tet offensive was the turning point of the war, and because of this history teachers everywhere have continually and relentlessly read paper after paper about this turning point. What I would like to focus on specifically instead is the effect that this particular part of the war had on the public back home in the US. The story that touched heavily on this subject and the ~~PUBLIC~~ turning point was that of Barry Zorthian, the head of public and media relations and the "official voice of America in Vietnam."

nice intro

In the eyes of the good people of the United States, the war was becoming more and more widely viewed as a mistake. The fact that Vietnam was widely noted as the first "televised war" definitely gave citizens more of an open range to form opinion than the usual babbling politician with promises of victory and honor. Folks got the chance to sit in their own living rooms and see the horror that their sons (and daughters) were facing on the other side of the globe.

The front page of The Washington Post showed a very vivid picture of dead Viet Cong on the embassy lawn. And CBS sent back raw footage of the fighting in the center of Saigon that was run unedited.

(Appy, Christian p. 291).

This realness that was brought back to our nation's television sets would have been terribly shocking to experience for the first time, and of course stirred many patriotic emotions. The coverage of the Tet Offensive and live broadcasting of fighting on a day that was suppose to be declared a ceasefire gave the public yet another sign that things were out of America's hands in Vietnam. By the mid-sixties Zorthian's daily press conferences were widely known as the "Five O'Clock Follies" in light of the routine lies and embellishments. (Appy, Christian p. 290). The coverage of the war gave many people the power to disagree with the route their presidency was taking them, placing raw footage in front of them that couldn't be twisted nearly as easily as the words of their politicians. It was in fact the publication of the Tet offensive that was the real turning point of the war.

quite the opposite

no 1 p

You include to outside sources have (good) without being specific (poor)

? more than that

written? video

The Ending

awk ending.

By the late sixties public opinion was starting to have real life consequences on the decision makers of the war, making situations even more difficult for our leaders. Those feelings of regret and uneasiness were spreading to many of the US' own officers and commanders. Morton Halperin was one of our own over in Vietnam who was starting to have his doubts. In the March '68 review of Vietnam policy, the beginning of the end was emerging. In this meeting a question was asked that voiced the now much different views of commanding officers:

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awk

The whole focus was to ask the Joint Chiefs how many forces and how many years they would need to assure victory. [Secretary of Defense Clark] Clifford thought that was a perfectly reasonable question. And the chiefs said, "No matter how we answer that

question, we cannot guarantee victory."

Appy, Christian (p. 404).

Now that those directly involved in the war and those influencing decision were starting to realize the hopelessness of America's role in Vietnam, (things could begin to shift toward Vietnamization and the return of our boys.) - this doesn't follow

By 1971, fully 71 percent of Americans told pollsters they believed intervention in Vietnam had been a "mistake" and, remarkably, 58 percent regarded the war as "immoral." - why?

Appy, Christian (p. 393)... In anticipation of congressional and public criticism, the administration decided to rely on South Vietnamese combat troops with Americans restricted to flying air support. It would be the first major test of Vietnamization.

Appy, Christian (p. 393).

north or south?

Just as the strength of the Vietnamese people drove their relentless and passionate fighting, the weakness of America's doubt was the essential beginning to our withdrawal and the Vietnamization of the war. Many will choose to write of specific events that determined the end but I feel strongly that the force of the passion of both nations were the strongest driving factor in both the persistence and the ending of the war.

very vague

Part 2 was not convincing,
Too vague & strayed far from
Halperin's story. Started well,
but didn't end well.

Analysis needed some specific facts
from outside sources to support your
claims.

But MUCH BETTER than 1st paper