

Due date: Sunday, 27 May 2012, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Saturday, 26 May 2012, 06:01 PM (675 words)

Clark Dougan relates an event that changed many middle class Americans' views of Vietnam. One day after returning home from college, he notices an article on the front page of the paper regarding the death of Greg Fischer, his high school friend. For the first time, the war became relevant and real for Dougan; no longer was the Vietnam War some far off political skirmish. When he remembered his face, Dougan saw himself. "I understand how easily it could have been me," says Dougan (305). That was primarily the effect of the article which asked, "Did you know him?" He was an average everyday person who was worried about what was going to happen to his roller skates. It is easy to distance oneself from a war involving people who are different, unrelated, or far way. When it affects neighbors and loved ones, the public can no longer turn a blind eye to the war. Thus, the statement made by the article, published in a conservative pro-war newspaper, caused many people to open their eyes to the realities of Vietnam.

Dougan's interview is perhaps one of the best examples of a turning point because he describes the experience of the American public. The large anti-war feeling in the United States certainly played a significant role in the latter half of Vietnam. Although political issues and accusations of deceit against the government irritated the public, the loss of sons, brothers, and friends for a seemingly lost cause is what outraged the American people. The famous chants outside of Johnson's office were, "Hey, hey, LBJ! How many kids have you killed today?" thereby representing the public's feelings about the soldiers' deaths (Herring 209).

According to Herring, the antiwar movement began along three principles. The first principle was founded on the immorality of war (206). People claimed that, "the use of cluster bombs, herbicides, and napalm violated basic standards of human behavior, and in the absence of any direct threat to American security, the devastation wreaked on North and South Vietnam was indefensible" (207). Young American men like Fischer were not the only people suffering in Vietnam. Moreover, thousands of prospective draftees mutilated themselves or found other ways to avoid the draft, which also contributed to the public distaste for war.

part 2

The belief in the Vietnam War ended for Daniel Ellsberg when he read about the Special Forces team who murdered their Vietnamese ally without receiving just punishment. Ellsberg knew the government was deceitful and corrupt, but the fact that it was lying for an unjust war pushed him to act. He began releasing the Pentagon Papers to the local media, infuriating President Nixon and causing significant legal drama. Furthermore, Nixon's actions against Ellsberg eventually led to his involvement in the Watergate Scandal.

According to the interview, Ellsberg believed that if the Pentagon Papers and Watergate Scandal had not occurred, then Nixon would have remained in office and continued the war in Vietnam. Evidence supports this theory, as Nixon planned to escalate the war and threatened the use of “tactical nuclear weapons” in an attempt to intimidate the North Vietnamese (Herring 277-280). Furthermore, Herring concurs with Ellsberg's connection between the Watergate Scandal and the Pentagon Papers (300). His harsh defense of his policy in Vietnam led to the Watergate Scandal, "would eventually force his resignation" (Herring 320). Thus, it is possible that the Pentagon Papers indirectly caused an early end to the war.

Yet, one might note that Nixon successfully escalated the war for 3 years after the Pentagon Papers were released. In fact, more bombs were dropped in Vietnam during Nixon's presidency than ever before (316). He acted almost in spite of Congress' decisions and public opinion. Thus, although the Pentagon Papers and Watergate may have contributed to Nixon's resignation, they did not significantly shorten his presidency nor prevent him from intensifying the war. In fact, his need to protect his injured reputation may have encouraged him to increase the conflict.

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