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Part 1: Turning Point

Although the following story is centered on the Tet offensive, the journalist that described the events in district 8 during the Tet offensive really hammers home the hopelessness and downright confusion of the Americans, who were simply trying to find something to grasp and hold on to at this point of the conflict.

Philip Jones Griffiths writes in "You're not safe in those cities" about how the Viet Cong worked masterfully in using deception and a clear sign of knowing the enemy in order to use the Americans for their own agenda. As the author writes, and until now, the South Vietnamese were supposedly safe in their towns and cities in the south with this assurance coming straight from the Americans occupying the cities. Once the Tet offensive began, all past promises were thrown out the window. District 8 was maintained for government workers and middleclass, the ones who would ultimately lead the South Vietnamese into democracy, the ones who were the most loyal to the cause. The Viet Cong's plan? Turn the Americans against their enemy. By shooting a few police officers and firing a couple errant rounds, the Americans reacted horribly, and proceeded to lay waste to anything that moved within the district, friendly or foe. Exactly what the Viet Cong had predicted. This was clear sign that the Americans were acting as an army with its back to the wall, an act of desperation. Even with many believing the Tet Offensive was the turning point in the war, the picture painted by Philip Jones Griffiths really shows how desperate the Americans were and how badly the Tet Offensive damaged the American's psychologically. It was also another clear sign that the Viet Cong were not just a peasant militia armed with random weapons and living in the jungle. This showed exactly, the resolve the North possessed and a clear upper hand. Up until 1968, the Tet holiday was observed by both sides as a cease fire. After the Tet Offensive, the South Vietnamese could not only trust the North Vietnamese, but the Americans as well. This fell directly in line with how Ho Chi Minh believed the war would be won, on the American home front. And now, he had the South Vietnamese civilians on his side as well.

Part 2: Ending

The story that best describes the end of the Vietnam War and how dysfunctional the entire conflict was is by Daniel Davidson, "I wouldn't buy a used car from that man". Although they were peace talks, there was nothing constructive that came from these talks. Here were four groups of people, attempting to come to terms with what had happened and what should happen moving forward and they can't even decide on the shape of the table at the delegation, a process that took months to discuss. Here, we are using the body count to measure our success in Vietnam and the some of the

initial dialogue being used was used to debate what shape should the table should be that will be used for these peace talks. Some of these interactions are likened to what one may witness on the playground of any elementary school on any given day, not the voice of nations, attempting to end a senseless war. How many additional lives were lost while these “table” negotiations went on? This entire interaction perfectly sums up and highlights the entire Vietnam Conflict for those opposing the spread of communism. Worthless strategy, poor leadership, the inability to cut losses and the thought that no one (but the NVA) really wanted a hasty climax to the fighting. Fighting which had a profound effect on all nations involved for more than a decade.

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