

DANIEL ELLSBERG

Dissent, the Nixon Doctrine, and Our Covert Empire

CHRISTIAN APPY: Most of you know that, almost fifty years ago, in 1971, Dan Ellsberg released the Pentagon Papers, a seven-thousand-page set of secret papers concerning U.S. decision-making that exposed systematic war-related lies from different administrations, Democratic and Republican. Some would call the Nixon Administration's response to the Papers an overreaction. They tried to shut it down and charged Ellsberg with twelve felony counts. Some of those charges came under the Espionage Act of 1917, for which he faced a possible 115-year sentence in prison.

Though many people have forgotten this, Nixon also wasn't satisfied with trying Ellsberg in the courts. His concern about Ellsberg led him to form what he called the Special Investigations Unit—nicknamed “The Plumbers,” because plumbers plug leaks and Ellsberg was the most famous leaker of his time. This group then committed serious crimes against Ellsberg, including breaking into the office of Dan's psychiatrist. By the time his trial—as well as the trial of Ellsberg's friend, Tony Russo, who helped him copy the Pentagon Papers—were coming to an end, the Watergate trials and investigations were really heating up. Watergate exposed the series of crimes against Ellsberg, so the judge really had no choice but to throw his case out.

During the next fifty years, Ellsberg became an outspoken and consistent critic of U.S. nuclear and foreign policy, a committed peace activist who has been arrested more than seventy-five times for acts of civil disobedience, and it's a great honor to have him join us at this conference.

Let me start by asking you, why do you think President Nixon took such extreme measures against you, or, to put it differently, why did he apparently agree with his National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger, who described you to him as the most dangerous man in America?

DANIEL ELLSBERG: I've long known the answer to that question, Chris. But in fifty years I can't remember ever having been asked it, strangely enough. Without the actions Nixon took to get me, I believe he would have stayed in office, and the war would have continued. So, it's a very critical question. And most people imagine, without knowing an answer, that he was simply impulsive, paranoid, off the wall, irrational. That's not the case. He had, in his mind, reasonable grounds for the actions that he took. And other presidents would have done much the same in the same circumstances.

The reason was that I was a danger to his policy. Egil Krogh, chief of the White House Plumbers, when he was being sentenced, told the judge that he saw the freedom of the President to pursue his chosen foreign policy as the essence of national security. That's an interesting definition, actually, and one which I think is widely shared. I did threaten Nixon's freedom of action, because he did have a secret plan, in effect to win the war, or to end the war acceptably. And it had to be secret from the American people. Not from the government in Hanoi: he was threatening *them* explicitly, telling them his plan, and making his demands. But both the threats and the demands had to be kept secret from the American people, because they would have been seen as crazy, or reckless, or too dangerous and costly, and he would not have been allowed to pursue them.

And Nixon knew that I knew. I had an understanding of the secret plan, and I'd said as much to Kissinger at San Clemente, a year before the Papers came out. And Nixon knew I had copied critical documents, separate from the Pentagon Papers, that hinted at what his plan was. What he didn't know is how much I had.

He had reason to believe that the people who left the National Security Council—five of them, in protest over the Cambodian Campaign—did know his plan: specifically, the nuclear threats he was making, which were critical to his plan. Roger Morris, one of his main aides and a deputy to Henry Kissinger, had seen the target folders for nuclear weapons in North Vietnam in the fall of 1969, before he left. And, as Roger told me later, "We should have thrown open the safe and screamed bloody murder." Because that's exactly what it would have been.

But they hadn't done that, unfortunately. Roger said that was the greatest regret and shame of his life. And they could have. Nixon did have a reasonable fear that news of his plan would come out and expose what he was trying to do. In order to shut me up, then, they went into

my former psychiatrist's office to find material not, as is generally thought, to defame me—I was on trial facing twelve felony counts, that's already something of a stigma—but in order to threaten me, to blackmail me, to keep me from doing what I might have done to reveal his policy. When they didn't find what they needed for that, they made efforts to incapacitate me, to attack me on the steps of the Capitol, on May 3, 1972.

As it happened, they'd overheard me, on Mort Halperin's phone, without a warrant, with a warrantless wiretap. All of those things, in those days, were illegal. They have been in effect legalized since 9/11, so nowadays Nixon wouldn't have needed to lie about them and obstruct justice. But, at that time, he was threatened with indictment for criminal actions and impeachment. When finally, toward the end of my trial, thanks to John Dean and thanks to Alex Butterfield, who revealed the taping, and thanks to the people who resigned rather than fire the Special Prosecutor, that information came out. Without these actions by other people, it was unlikely to have done so, and yet, as a result of that chain of events, Nixon faced impeachment and had to resign. And that made the war endable.

CHARLES M. SENNOTT: I want to follow up on Chris's question and dig in even a little deeper, on the subject of Nixon and on his campaign promises in 1968. At the time Nixon was saying, consistently, that he would bring "peace with honor." I'm not sure what he meant by that, but he did promise to bring peace with honor in Vietnam. Then, of course, the Pentagon Papers land in 1971 and contribute to the intense resistance against the war. But the war goes on. And it goes on until 1975.

So it's a two-part question, really: Why do you think the war did go on so long? Could it have gone on longer, as it did with Afghanistan? And how would you frame the historical comparison between the U.S.-led wars in Vietnam and in Afghanistan?

DE: Again, very important. I think oddly, over fifty years, very few people have asked this question: Why did it take so long to end the war? What were they negotiating about? They don't ask this question, and so they don't find the answer. There are historians like Larry Berman who have probed into this issue, and they have the answers, but their accounts are not widely known.

Nixon never defined what he meant by peace with honor. I think people thought he meant getting out under a fig leaf of some sort, using some excuse, as quickly as possible. And also that “peace with honor” meant accepting that there would be unification of all of Vietnam, North and South, quickly, as one country under communist control. But that Saigon and other cities would come under communist control, at best after a decent interval—say, six months, a year, a year and a half—after the U.S. troops got out. I think, by the way, Hubert Humphrey might well have done something like that, had he gotten into office.

Nixon had no intention of letting that happen. For him, “peace” meant an absence of U.S. ground army conflict, basically. He felt the American people would accept that as a resolution, as the end of the war, because it would be the end of the American ground war and casualties. He was pretty shrewd about that, I’m sorry to say. His plan was to get the American troops out, hopefully—and he really did hope—in his first year, a quick end. But, at worst, he planned to do it by the end of his first term, or the start of the second. And he planned for Saigon and the other major cities to remain under the control of our appointed puppet, General Nguyen Van Thieu, until the end of his second term.

That would be in early 1977. He was looking at American troops being gone, but envisioning that Thieu—our anticommunist, American-controlled puppet—would remain in power, without the American troops for eight years, not just for a year, or year and a half. Almost no one in the public imagined that Nixon could achieve such a thing, or that he would even think of it. The heart of his plan was to bring that about, which might have seemed almost impossible, by assuring that as American troops left, North Vietnamese troops would also leave South Vietnam and go back to the North, so that Thieu would then only have to confront the NLF—the southern guerrilla forces—with the help of an enlarged Army of the Republic of Vietnam. ARVN, they called it: our troops—paid for, managed, trained, pretty much along our principles. Everything they carried: their arms, their boots, their helmets, all from the United States. They would be enlarged, and they would be supported by American air support—which Nixon did not foresee removing at all. The war would go on in the air, as far as the U.S. was concerned, but he counted on the American public essentially accepting that.

To jump right away to the end of your question, that's what we have in Afghanistan right now. And what we have had for almost twenty years. That is what Nixon was aiming at: a war where the U.S. participation would keep—in the capital and the major cities—a U.S.-dominated government, with the help of U.S. air and local troops.

So how is Nixon going to get the North Vietnamese troops out? The answer was by threatening them with nuclear weapons: if they did not leave, mutually, at the same time as the Americans, he would destroy, annihilate, North Vietnam. And he had plans for doing that as early as 1969. He'd gotten that idea when he was vice president, under President Eisenhower, and saw what he regarded—and Eisenhower regarded—as successful nuclear threats: in the Taiwan straits in '54–55 and in '58, and in Korea even earlier, and in Iraq and Kuwait at various times.

So Nixon felt, *Okay, these nuclear threats do the job, and if necessary, you'll carry them out*, but, hopefully, as he thought and said, *Ho Chi Minh will be in Paris and sue for peace as soon as he hears the threats*—which was wrong. Mort Halperin, who was still working for Kissinger in '69, told me that was wrong. And I also understood that, from having been in Vietnam, and from having studied the Pentagon Papers, so I was sure these threats would not succeed in getting the Northern troops out, or in keeping Thieu in power. So, instead, I saw this as a plan for extending the war indefinitely—not what Nixon expected or wanted, but it's what would happen. And I also saw it as a plan for enlarging the war, possibly to the point where, with our attacks on North Vietnam, the Chinese would come in, and we would have another Korea, essentially.

Now, your question is, why did the war go on? Well, because my expectations, and Mort's expectations, were fulfilled. The North didn't meet those terms. They never did take the Northern troops out. The war became endable only after three years, when finally Nixon and Kissinger dropped their demand that the Northern troops get out. And so we had gotten our troops out, but most people saw that as essentially conceding Vietnam to the North Vietnamese. To Hanoi.

But the events of 1972—the offensive there and the heavy bombing of North Vietnam and later of Hanoi—also showed that their basic concept was feasible: American air power could in fact hold off the North Vietnamese troops and the NLF long enough, well, to keep Thieu in power. In the end, it cost twenty thousand more American

lives to get there, and an uncounted number of Vietnamese, half a million or a million, but that was acceptable to them.

A key point here, finally, and one that we didn't fully appreciate until relatively recently: the sticking point in the negotiations—the single point that kept any agreement from being held year after year after year—was Nixon's strange, determined demand that Thieu—specifically Thieu—must not leave the government and must remain in power. And Hanoi absolutely would not accept that, at least until after the offensive and the bombing in '72, when the Soviets and the Chinese pressed them to accept it for the time being. But the North Vietnamese were strongly against it.

Why was Nixon so adamant on this point? The public didn't know, and even the historians didn't know, for a while. It's only a couple of years ago that John Farrell finally came up with proof from Haldeman's diary, which had not previously been released, that Nixon himself had run the operation, in October and November of 1968. And Nixon—through other intermediaries, and through the Vietnamese ambassador in Washington, and via Anna Chennault—had assured Thieu that he would get a better deal from Nixon than from Humphrey. This pledge was not only sincere on Nixon's part, it was true.

And, in fact, Thieu did get a better deal than he would have gotten from Humphrey. Thieu outlived Nixon in office. But with the election looming, Nixon intended to keep Thieu from going to Paris for peace negotiations. In a matter of days, the prospect of those negotiations had brought Humphrey up, from way behind, until he was even with Nixon, at the very end of the campaign. In fact, in one poll, he was ahead of him. Probably he could have surpassed Nixon and won the election; in the end, the outcome depended on only 500,000 votes.

But Humphrey's rise stopped abruptly when Thieu refused to go to Paris and take part of the negotiations. As Thieu said to Tran Ngoc Châu, a fellow officer in Vietnam and his friend at that time: *I elected Nixon*. He had, and Nixon knew that. And Nixon also knew that Thieu could reveal that state of affairs at any time. Nixon had done what Donald J. Trump was accused of doing with the Russians in 2016—collusion with a foreign power, by a Republican rival for the presidency, in order to win an election. And though the accusation was not proved in the case of Donald J. Trump (through his stonewalling, perhaps, or perhaps because it didn't happen, who knows?). But Trump was

charged with it. And it did happen under Nixon, and it was an impeachable offense at any time.

This hidden, adamant demand that Thieu must remain in power, which kept the war going year after year—twenty thousand more American dead, and let's say half a million Vietnamese—I believe was strongly based on the fact that Nixon could not afford to have Thieu release his recordings of those communications. They would have shown that Nixon had won that office corruptly. And he virtually did succeed in his plan, except that, as it happened, his maneuvers in order to keep it secret, the crimes against me, did become public, thanks to John Dean and thanks to the other people in this chain of events resulting in a very unusual, a remarkable instance: that the crimes of a president were revealed, while he was in office and running for office.

CA: That's great, Dan. I'd like to ask a question about the Pentagon Papers. What has been learned from them? And what might have been learned that is relevant to our own time?

DE: Well, I was rather amazed to read—and it's in my book *Secrets*—that on the second day of the Pentagon Papers, H. R. Haldeman, the chief of staff, reported to Nixon about a staff meeting that they'd had. Donald Rumsfeld, later Secretary of Defense but at that time part of the White House staff, had spoken on the import of the papers. And Rumsfeld said, "To the ordinary guy, this is a bunch of gobbledygook, but out of the gobbledygook comes a very clear thing: you can't trust the government. You can't believe what they say, and you can't rely on their judgment. And the implicit infallibility of presidents, which has been an accepted thing in America, is badly hurt by this. Because it shows that people do things the president wants to do, even though it's wrong, and the president can be wrong."

When I read that, I thought, *Wow*, you know, *smart guy!* Rumsfeld has never been accused of being dumb. (Though his judgment in getting us into Iraq would come into question later.) I thought, *Okay, if you learned those lessons*, and if those are the lessons, which is absolutely right, *and if he's right that the public can see it*, and I think that was largely true, *then how could he have done what he did later in Iraq and Afghanistan?* And I think the answer is *he learned from those twenty-three years of history that the president can get away with it*. This is what happens, and it doesn't come out, except under extraordinary conditions. This time

it did come out. And yes, the president can do wrong, and people will carry it out for him, and they will keep the secret.

And it has been true later; we don't have the Pentagon Papers of Iraq or Afghanistan. Yet certainly we got into those wars on the basis of as much lying and delusion and ignorance by the public as in Vietnam years earlier. In other words, the public hadn't learned to avoid that kind of trap. And one reason for that even Rumsfeld got wrong. He said that people had learned that presidents do these things; unfortunately, what the Pentagon Papers showed them was that *past* presidents did them.

What I think Nixon went on was a better assumption: they won't assume it of the present president; even if it was true, as I was pointing out, of four past presidents in row. They were pursuing this stalemate, basically, in order not to give up part of the empire and to be accused of being an incompetent manager of the empire. Not that that word would have been used, but that was the idea.

People give so much benefit of the doubt to the president. They are so willing to believe what he says, even though they didn't vote for him, that he really could continue to get away with it. As a result, the lesson that I hoped would come out from the Papers, that a fifth president in a row was doing what others have done, didn't get through it all. The papers did not ask the question, *What is Nixon doing, in contrast to what he is saying? What is the upshot of all this, what is really going on now?* That didn't come out, and to this day really it hasn't.

So . . . things that the government learned: Get rid of the draft. Ground troops, do without ground troops. The "Nixon Doctrine" was announced in mid-'69. Here's a point that I've almost never heard anybody else make, and I myself didn't understand it at the time. This is the Nixon Doctrine: Our policy is going to be to provide air power, and we'll let the ground troops come from the local people that we're supporting and defending. We had 500,000 troops at that time in Vietnam. So everybody thought, including me, he's talking about the future, that's the goal he wants to get us to. But that is what he wanted with Vietnam: to get our troops out, and to get the North Vietnamese troops out, which he didn't get. But it did turn out that, with air power, he could compensate for them. We did beat back the offensive in '72, with minimal involvement of our troops—it was mainly B-52s and fighter bombers and whatnot. We did manage to do it, and that's what they are doing in Afghanistan, and we've done it now for twenty years.

So, going back to Charlie's question, if I may. He asked, Why did the war go on so long? Because it could, at that point—and it was going to go on much longer. I think the war was fated, except for an extraordinary set of circumstances, to go on longer than it did. Nixon was going to bring back the air war; he had actually ordered that, by mid-April, as soon as our troops were out. But he had to rescind that order when John Dean's information about the break-in to my psychiatrist's office came out, following the attempt to incapacitate me physically, on the steps of the Capitol on May 3rd. Those events came to pass, and Dean's information was verified by tapes and testimony, and all of those things had to happen to make something absolutely amazing happen—and that was *keeping Nixon from renewing the air power*.

Now here I'll say something that will be controversial. There are those who say that without the American ground troops, the war would have been over shortly anyway. I don't believe that, and my friend John Vann definitely did not believe that. John Vann was probably the most knowledgeable military expert at the time, and in early '69, when he was over there, he said, "You should get American troops out, remove one hundred thousand right away. And a couple hundred thousand within the year. And get it down to one hundred thousand, or forty thousand or something like that. Because *US air power* will do this. It will hold on to what you have."

Nixon could have avoided three or four years of heavy escalation, and he could have avoided the interventions he made into Laos and Cambodia, which were intended to convince Hanoi that he would carry out the threats of escalation, that he would go beyond what Lyndon Johnson had done—and therefore they should give in. They didn't. The interventions didn't achieve what he wanted. But they were also not needed.

I'm saying that we've learned from Afghanistan what the American people will put up when it comes to bombing other people, without American casualties. That's a sad and dismaying lesson, and we have to come to terms with it somehow.

In November '70, Charlie Goodell lost his office as a Republican from New York because he opposed the war; later, he was a member of my defense team. In December '70, while he was still in the Senate and before the Pentagon Papers came out, he said to me, "Dan, the American people don't care about Vietnamese casualties." He said, "They don't care. They care about American casualties, but they are

not going to care about the Vietnamese.” And I remember saying to him at the time, “You might be right, Charlie. I hope you are not right, because he’s going to get the American casualties down, and then the war could go on indefinitely.”

I’m afraid Charlie was pretty much right. In fact, I have been thinking about the recent trial of Derek Chauvin and the charge he was convicted of, depraved indifference—carrying on lethal activities with conscious evidence of an unconcern for the risks. They call it a depraved heart, or depraved indifference, murder. And really, I don’t think Americans are unusual. I think they are human, but at that time their concern for the people we were killing in the process of controlling these areas was imperceptible. And that has to change. If it does not change, we will not escape the consequences of our own policies, over the last seventy years, in the nuclear era.

CMS: Thanks, Dan. That is a very powerful history, and it brings us up to this moment. I want to ask a question about our yearlong history project. As you know, we’ve been focusing on the themes of truth and dissent, so we’ve built all of the work around that: the seminar, the podcast, the website. How do you evaluate those two terms in our own moment, when it feels like truth is really being eroded, and when it feels too often like dissent is being muted? What lessons about truth and dissent can we learn from your life, and what might they offer to give us some inspiration today?

DE: Well, a truth that I learned in Vietnam—as did nearly all of the three million people we sent to Vietnam—was that what we were doing had no prospect of success. That there was no progress being made: progress was a lie we told to the public. There was no end in sight, in terms of what we were doing, and it wasn’t going to get better.

Before my two years in Vietnam, I had been in the Pentagon, and I was prepared to say that more bombing is not going to do it. I was there during the bombing escalation. More troops are not going to do it. And that’s why I came to think that it was essential to do something to change what we were doing.

And let me mention one broad truth, something that I did not understand right away, not until after the trial. As I think very many Americans did and still do, I continued to think of Vietnam as kind of an aberration in our policy, that it was something that needed to be

ended, but that it was just a mistake. We planted our flag in the wrong place, for whatever reason, and that action didn't characterize American policy generally. That was wrong.

It was only after the trial that I had time to read the so-called revisionist historians, like Walter LaFeber (who just died), Gar Alperovitz, and a number of others. My wife Patricia says that it would be better simply to call them historians, rather than revisionists. Based on history, they're showing that Vietnam was absolutely the pattern of what we do, especially in the former colonial areas, which we more or less took over.

I thought, for a very long time, that I understood. Everyone knows that we took over the French colonial project in Vietnam in a way that surprised even the French. Yet this is what we have done everywhere in the former colonial areas. We take over the "support and obligations," and the supposed rights of regime change, determining who runs, who governs, who rules in the so-called Third World areas, the underdeveloped areas. We use them for resources, investment, cheap labor, and so forth. In short, it took until after the war for me to realize fully that I had been part of what I would now call a covert empire.

This is one of the truths that I think America has yet to learn. And it can't learn it too soon; it should be right away. Here's what I mean by that term: "covert" implies plausibly denying. It means that you not only lie, you not only conceal who is the sponsor of these acts, and what their purpose is, but what is being done. In addition, you provide false or misleading evidence for what you are saying and plausible cover stories about who is doing what. These false claims are especially plausible to people who want to believe what you are saying.

Americans do not want to believe that we are an empire, not in the sense that we have an illegitimate influence and determination about who governs other nations and people, as we do. The term "regime change" has become actually commonplace now, and yet it's the very definition of empire—we decide who governs someone else. And we do it with means that have to be denied too: assassinations, coups, military dictatorships, paramilitary operations, bribes, and so forth, as well as cultural influences.

The truth then is that we are an empire, even if we think of ourselves as more of an anti-imperial project—with our revolution as the first war of national liberation. We have always really been an empire, especially regarding the continental U.S., but also beyond that. In Central America, we hardly disguise that it is our so-called sphere of influence.

But also when you look as far afield as Indonesia, and not only the Philippines, and also, of course, Vietnam. And now the Middle East.

So, what do we do about that? Well, the problem is that empire involves us in subduing resistance to our distant influence, our control. And it involves acts like torture, detention, mass killing. Depraved indifference murder. A key thing that I really came to know then: the truth is what I read in the earliest parts of the Pentagon papers. We have accepted the imperial project from the French and replaced them. I came to see then that, from the beginning, our effort had no legitimacy at all; there was no justification for the killing we were doing. It was unjustified homicide, and that included all the people: the military on their side as well as on our side, the civilians on both sides. All of them, I think, were subject to unjustified homicide as a result of U.S. policy, and to me that meant murder. I just didn't have a word for it then, but it's since gotten named in the Chauvin case: depraved indifference murder.

The Pentagon Papers show clearly an absolute lack of concern for what we were doing to Vietnam, to the society, to the people. It just isn't there. We think: *This is the cause, and it's worth it*. So, then we have to face the question: Who are we? We think, it's not American to torture. Well, it turns out it is, as we have learned from the Middle East, in a report that remains classified, six thousand pages for the Senate Intelligence Committee. It contains details of our use of torture, and also the fact that it did zero good.

Now that you could not predict entirely, but that's the way it comes out. Maybe that is why it's still totally classified. So, that is not us? Well, actually that is us. *We are for self-determination, and we are for democracy, everywhere, including the Third World?* Actually we're not. That is not the truth. We are not supporters of democracy in the former Third World, the underdeveloped world. Any more than they had democracy under their colonial rulers; democracy doesn't serve our corporate interests, our national interests. So we overthrow it, very regularly. As in Chile, Indonesia, and other places, such as Iran, Guatemala—these are harsh truths.

So, what does one do about them? That was the other thing that Randy Kehler revealed to me, as one of the many people influenced by Martin Luther King (who was influenced by Gandhi and Thoreau and Tolstoy). Namely, that there are wrongs and evils that demand opposition, and they demand opposition at the level of personal self-

sacrifice. If necessary—and it usually is necessary. You can almost define it that way: extreme evil, wickedness, is something which you should not participate in and something which you should expose and resist. But in addition, according to the views of MLK and Gandhi, you must resist nonviolently. You must recognize that these people, though they are doing wrong and you oppose them, have human rights; they have a right to life, and they are human, like ourselves. The nonviolent withdrawal of indifference and support is very powerful, and nothing less than that is adequate and appropriate.

So, these people put that thought in my mind. Without them, I would not have thought of giving the public the Pentagon Papers. We will, of course, see the same course of action taken later by Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden.

CA: Dan, we only have three minutes left, and I know you can be more of an optimist than what you've just said. So, perhaps a few words of hope at the end?

DE: Things are uncertain. Humans are uncertain. While there's life, there's hope. As my friend Joanna Macy puts it, hope is not a feeling or expectation, it's a way of acting. And I choose to act as if there's a chance for humans to develop this kind of concern for the lives of others.

I think that as humans we are subject to—not just as Americans, but as humans—we are fundamentally subject to dichotomizing the rest of humanity: us and them, we and others. And then there are other widening circles of “us.” But in the end, you get to a point where, I'm sorry to say, the truth is, people have essentially no concern at all for those others, so long as they are far enough distant—and that distance can be defined by our leaders. Very quickly.

I think we have to develop a species identity and concern, and a loyalty that is not normally human. At least we haven't seen it up to now in the millennia of civilization. So is it possible? Well, we don't know. We haven't seen it. We now affect the climate with fossil fuels, and with the nuclear possibility, we can afflict almost all of humanity. That wasn't true before, it wasn't something that we had to worry about. I think we have to show this new attitude, find a concern for ourselves as a species, and I think that it's possible.

It would be almost a miracle for this to change as fast as it needs to

change. But we have seen miracles like that. In 1983 or '84, the Berlin Wall coming down and Soviet Union dissolving: all that was not just "unlikely," it was impossible. It was unthinkable. But it did happen. For Nelson Mandela to come to power in South Africa, without a violent revolution, was impossible. And it did happen.

And I will say one thing that Patricia and I are very aware of, though at the time most people weren't. The chance that I wouldn't go to prison was impossible. We didn't see that at the time, we thought it was unlikely. But later we learned that, from the beginning, the judge was thought to be have been successfully bribed: he was told that he'd be head of the FBI if my trial came out right. So that meant I had no chance, that it was impossible I wouldn't go to prison.

I did believe, and rightly so, that the war would not end while Nixon was in office. He was going to continue it in the air. So, when the troops came out, and everyone celebrated, *End of the war. It's peace, peace, and so forth. Peace with honor.* No, it was still war, with Thieu still in power. And that was true in January of 1973. After the landslide election of November '72, an unprecedented landslide, the chance that Nixon would be out of office during the next four years, and thus the war would become endable, that chance was zero. No way that was going to happen.

And yet, what followed were the actions of a lot of different people. Our acts were one link in a chain of actions, none of which could have been expected. John Dean was not expected to take on the president the way he did. Alex Butterfield was not expected at all, zero chance, to reveal the taping in the Oval Office. Elliott Richardson was not expected to refuse to fire the special prosecutor. Remember, Richardson had gotten to that post by one act after another, always doing what the president demanded. Yet all of those things did come about. And the war was ended in '75, after all of these actions, without which, not.

So, in short, I choose to act as if it's possible that we can come to have a sufficient concern for humanity at large. And that we can come to have a sufficient sense of our own responsibility. Chelsea Manning and Ed Snowden faced, and I faced, a perception: *it is necessary for this truth to come out. And others are not going to do it. Therefore, I must do it.*

People can tell the truth, and they can risk their jobs. Which is the critical thing: risk their reputations and their careers. Very unlikely. Not normally human. But also not impossible for humans.

And it has even occurred to me, we just need to realize that, when

it's a matter of us and others, that others' lives matter. The lives of others matter. You know, people say Black Lives Matter. Then opponents of BLM will retort, of course, "all lives matter," etc. But that's not really true, for most humans, unfortunately. What BLM is saying is that the police often act as if Black lives don't matter much, if at all. And we act in Afghanistan, we act in Iraq, and we act in these other places as if the lives of those others didn't matter at all.

Yet we can change that thinking, because they all do matter.