

expose American policy in Vietnam so thoroughly as to end the war. According to Ellsberg's version of the story, McGovern agreed that he would probably want to accept the Papers but later backed down after consulting with Senator Gaylord Nelson (D-Wis.), a good friend of McGovern and a lawyer. Later Ellsberg would attack McGovern for not having the courage to help flush out the truth on the war.

But McGovern's recollection of their relationship is substantially different. "I concluded after talking with him for a while that he was a hawk with a bad conscience," McGovern says. "I've had a dozen professors and preachers and foreign service officers give me memoranda in the past that they said would end the war if disclosed. . . . I had no idea what he had, and I didn't know if his judgment was good or bad. I didn't even know whether he was rational." McGovern says he also pointed out to Ellsberg that it would be better to approach someone other than a candidate for President, in order to avoid the impression that the release was for purely partisan political purposes. McGovern, who was proud of a long record of voting against the war in the Senate, resented Ellsberg's argument that everyone should be willing to go to jail in order to end the war: "I figured that if anybody was to go to jail, it would be better for him to go than me, since I was a United States Senator, doing what I think is important work." John Holum, McGovern's legislative assistant, did not like Ellsberg. "There are a lot of people you encounter who are recent converts on the war," Holum observes with the passion of a long-time believer. "They usually don't have much to offer." He and other staff members were offended by Ellsberg's manner and the knowledge that he had already "told off" Senator Nelson. McGovern denies that he ever encouraged Ellsberg or even looked at the papers before making his decision. According to McGovern, he urged Ellsberg to go instead to a large newspaper, such as *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*. In retrospect, however, he concedes that if a member of

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THE PAPERS AND THE PAPERS.
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