

Pentagon Papers

Ellsworth Tells Why He Did It

Los Angeles

Daniel Ellsberg told a federal court jury yesterday that he photocopied the top-secret Pentagon Papers in 1969 in a "desperate" effort to get the material to Congress because he had concluded that the Vietnam war "would not end until Congress shared responsibility with the President for ending it."

He testified that he believed that disclosure of the documents could not "cause the death of a single American soldier" or in any other way injure the national defense.

By providing congressional access to the information in the Defense Department history of American involvement in southeast Asia, Ellsberg said he hoped to "give congress the confidence to act" to end the war, to show the legislators that a succession of presidents had no "super secrets" that justified the war effort.

STAND

Ellsberg was on the witness stand for the third day yesterday in his own defense against charges of conspiracy, espionage and theft of government property.

Winding his way through a thicket of objections by chief prosecutor David R. Nissen, fumbling by his own attorneys and strict legal rulings by U.S. District Judge W. Matt Byrne Jr., Ellsberg finally had the opportunity to explain his actions.

The explanation came as the defendant answered a question about the "basis" for his belief in 1969 that disclosure of the documents could not have harmed the nation.

Ellsberg testified that



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DANIEL ELLSBERG
He told why he copied the Pentagon Papers

when he first read the Pentagon papers in 1969 as a researcher at the Rand Corp. in Santa Monica he found that they dealt with "four realities":

- That the war had its origins in A French effort at military reconquest of a former colony," which would have failed in the late 1940s and early 1950s "without support except money and bombs."

- That the South Vietnamese governments supported by the United States were "narrow-based, corrupt and unrepresentative regimes that had no basis of support except money provided by the United States."

- That "the desire of the vast majority of people in (South Vietnam) was to end

the war," regardless of who came into power.

• That "the war was not going to end with success for the United States, because such a large percentage of the (Vietnamese) people were so dedicated to removing foreign influence from their country."

MOVEMENT

There was no way to destroy the Vietnamese independence movement, Ellsberg said, "without destroying the Vietnamese and ev-

ery piece of the country."

Ellsberg told the jury he had come to fear that the war "wouldn't end at all" so long as "the President had all the responsibility for failure and . . . had the power to postpone failure, prolong the war and deny the realities."

The Pentagon papers contained "painful knowledge," he said, but added that "it could not hurt the United States to have that knowledge."

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