I. F. STONE: AN INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST'S EARLY DISSENT ON THE VIETNAM WAR, 1961-1965

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
MICHAEL MANLEY
1973

ABSTRACT

I. F. STONE: AN INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST's
EARLY DISSENT ON THE VIETNAM WAR,
1961-1965

This study examines independent journalist I. F. Stone's coverage of the early years of the Vietnam war and compares his reportage with that of the "establishment" press. The two-fold purpose of this thesis is to study the first American journalist who was outspokenly critical of U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia and, by so doing, point out some of the failures of the national news media in adequately informing the public about the longest, costliest, and most tragic war in American history.

Stone was editor, publisher, and sole reporter of his one-man publication, I.F. Stone's Weekly, a four-page journal of fact and opinion published in Washington from 1953 until his retirement in December, 1971. The study covers the early period of growing American involvement in Vietnam, from the beginning of President John F. Kennedy's administration in 1961 until March, 1965, when President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered the sustained bombing of North Vietnam. During this time, American ground combat forces increased from 685 to over 20,000.

Stone's reportage is examined along with that of three of the largest and most influential members of the print medium, the New York Times, and weekly news magazines Newsweek and Time. These three were chosen because of their national impact on public opinion and because each had a correspondent in Vietnam during the early years of the war and, therefore, should have had more accurate first-hand information than those newspapers and magazines that covered the war exclusively from Washington. Editorial opinions of the war are examined closely and compared with Stone's. All reportage is examined and analyzed in light of the Pentagon Papers, which serves as a major source in this study, and other public documents.

During this period, Stone was the lone dissenting voice on Vietnam in the American press. As early as 1961 he urged complete U.S. withdrawal from Southeast Asia and warned that the present policy of intervention, unless halted, would lead to a major land war involving the United States. The national press at this time was unanimously united behind the policies of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson and, as a result, became a willing and often eager tool of the government. There were no dissenting editorial voices and little investigative reporting. Stone and the national press differed sharply in their coverage of such major events as the coup against South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem, the Buddhist protests, the Gulf

of Tonkin incident of 1964, and the U.S. State Department White Paper of March, 1965, which sought to fix the responsibility for the war on outside intervention by North Vietnam. The difference in the reportage came about because Stone was the only journalist to probe beyond government handouts, official papers, and briefings to seek the truth about the war. Refusing to take government spokesmen at their word, Stone sought out the findings and opinions of independent scholars of all nations, foreign journalists, and the handful of Congressional dissenters. He also poured over official government reports, congressional testimony, and other documents. As a result, he caught the government in numerous contradictions and many outright lies as it sought to justify its policy. His detailed dissections of the Gulf of Tonkin incident and the 1965 White Paper have become classics in investigative reporting.

Stone's journalism during the early years of Vietnam was in the best tradition of the American free press. If other larger, more established institutions of the press would have demonstrated the same independence and courage, the war in Vietnam might not have lasted for more than a decade.

I. F. STONE: AN INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST'S EARLY DISSENT ON THE VIETNAM WAR, 1961-1965

By

Michael Manley

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

School of Journalism

1973

Accepted by the faculty of the School of Journalism, College of Communication Arts, Michigan State University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree.

W. Cameron Meyer

Director of Thesis

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am an acknowledgments freak. Whenever I pick up a book I instinctively turn to the page on which the author gives his or her profuse thanks to everyone from spouse to typewriter repair man. I used to think they were clichés. Now I know better.

Many people were involved in this study even though they knew the only public exposure it is destined to receive will be on my living room coffee table when friends come over. I would like to thank first of all my adviser, Dr. W. Cameron Meyers, whose inspections, detections, and suggestions helped immensely in making this study coherent. When he finished with the first draft, the red pen marks almost outnumbered the black type. It was Dr. Meyers who first turned me on to Izzy Stone. I would also like to thank Henry Koch, the assistant librarian at M.S.U., for cutting through the red tape to obtain the complete microfilm run of the Weekly from 1953 on. I would have been lost without it. Deepest thanks also to June Burnett for typing the final manuscript, and to my wife, Judy, for working so hard while I hung out at the library and sat at home in front of the typewriter waiting

for divine inspiration. Special thanks also to the U.S. Selective Service, whose abiding interest in my future was a source of constant inspiration.

And finally, thanks to I. F. Stone for being the best damn journalist I've ever read. His impact on my future will be immeasurable.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

American foreign policy during the early 1960s was shaped by the Cold War. The ideological confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, particularly over Cuba, dominated the news and made the threat of nuclear war a very real one. As Time magazine viewed it, the United States, as leader of the "free world," had the obligation "to meet and battle, in a time of great national peril, the marauding forces of Communism on every front in every part of the world."[1] Both the United States and the Soviet Union had produced devastating nuclear weapons and phrases like "first strike capability" became part of the international vocabulary. Fallout shelters quickly grew to be as much a part of American popular culture as rock 'n' roll music.

At no time was the threat of nuclear war more evident than during the Cuban Missile Crisis of late October, 1962, when President John F. Kennedy demanded that the Soviet Union remove all its missile bases from Cuba. Only the last minute decision of Soviet Premier

---

[1] Time, Jan. 5, 1962, p. 14.

Nikita Krushchev to divert his ships from sailing directly into the American blockage around Cuba avoided a direct confrontation. That Cuba is just ninety miles off the coast of Florida made the crisis even more immediate. But while the American press focused on the Cold War rivalry between the United States and Soviet Union, this country was gradually increasing its involvement in a war some 10,000 miles away in Vietnam. Lacking both the geographical immediacy and drama of the Cuban crisis, Vietnam went virtually unnoticed by the American press. As late as 1963, when South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem was assassinated in a military coup, the only newspaper in the United States with a full-time reporter in Vietnam was the New York Times. The rest had to rely on wire service reports and government sources in Washington. Yet it was during this period (1961-1964) that major decisions were made that led to the full-scale commitment of both American ground troops and air power in a war that in early January, 1973, cost the United States more than 50,000 lives and some $150 billion.

What role did the American press play during this significant period of the war? Why was there so little critical reporting and editorial comment among newspapers and magazines in the United States? Jules Witcover, Washington Bureau chief for the Los Angeles Times, writing in the Columbia Journalism Review, offered this assessment of the press:

> While the Washington press corps in those years diligently reported what the Government said about Vietnam, and questioned the inconsistencies as they arose, too few sought out opposing viewpoints and expertise until very late, when events and the prominence of the Vietnam dissent no longer could be ignored. [Alaska Senator Ernest] Gruening and other early dissenters from official policy in and out of the Senate attest that they found very vew attentive ears among Washington reporters in the early 1960s.
>
> In coverage of the war, the press corps' job narrowed down to three basic tasks--reporting what the Government said, finding out whether it was true, and assessing whether the policy ennunciated worked. The group did a highly professional job on the first task. But it fell down on the second and third, and there is strong evidence the reason is that too many reporters sought the answers from the same basic source--the Government. . . . One can only speculate how the course of the might have been affected had more members of the Washington news community relied less on their government and more on its responsible critics in appraising the veracity and effectiveness of government policy.[2]

There was one journalist in Washington, however who did not rely on government propaganda on Vietnam and who became an outspoken critic of United States involvement as early as January, 1961, even before John F. Kennedy was inaugurated. He is I. F. Stone, editor, publisher, and reporter of his one-man publication--I. F. Stone's Weekly, (since 1968, a bi-weekly) a four-page journal of opinion and fact published in Washington from 1953 until his retirement in December, 1971.

---

[2]Jules Witcover, "Where Washington Reporting Failed," Columbia Journalism Review, Winter, 1970-71, pp. 7-8.

The purpose of this study is to examine Stone's coverage of the Vietnam war and to compare and contrast it with that of the "establishment"[3] press. This study will concentrate on the critical years of increasing American involvement in the war in Southeast Asia from 1961 to March, 1965, when President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered the sustained bombing of North Vietnam. Stone's reportage will be examined along with three of the most influencial members of the print media, the New York Times, and weekly newsmagazines Newsweek and Time. These three were chosen because of their national impact on public opinion and because each had a correspondent in Vietnam during the early years and, thus, should have had more accurate first-hand information than those newspapers and magazines who covered the war exclusively from Washington. Editorial opinions on the war will be examined closely and compared with Stone's. All reportage will be examined and analyzed in light of the Pentagon Papers, which will serve as a major source.[4]

---

[3]Journalist Henry Fairlee first introduced the term "Establishment" into the common language and speech of England in an article in the London Spectator, Sept. 23, 1955. He described the term as meaning, "the whole matrix of official and social relations within which power is exchanged." Fairlee was referring to government in the article but since then the term "establishment" has come to encompass a variety of institutions, including the press. For a fuller discussion, see Fairlee, "Evolution of a Term," New Yorker, Oct. 19, 1968, pp. 173-206.

[4]The Pentagon Papers, a series of articles based on a 2.5 million word study of United States' involvement in Indochina from 1946 to May, 1968, commissioned by then

Before examining the specific news coverage of the war, some background is needed. The first chapter, accordingly, will trace I. F. Stone's career as a journalist and attempt to develop his philosophy, which plays such an important role in his writing. The second chapter will trace the path of American involvement in Vietnam from 1950 to 1960 during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations.

Hopefully, this study will not only examine the reportage of I. F. Stone on Vietnam but, in doing so, point out some of the failures of the establishment press in adequately informing the public about the longest and most tragic war in American history.

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara in 1967, appeared in the New York Times beginning on June 13, 1971. The papers are based on investigative reporting by reporter Neil Sheehan and earned the Times a Pulitzer Prize.

CHAPTER I

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

> If a man does not keep pace with his companions perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him keep step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away. [1]
>
> --Henry David Thoreau

Isadore Feinstein Stone has been marching out of step with his contemporaries all his life. He became a radical while in his teens, an atheist by the time of his bar mitzvah, a publisher at fourteen, and a member of the Socialist party before he was old enough to vote. Non-conformity and a belief in utopian idealism have been life-long characteristics.

Stone began his career as a newspaperman during his sophomore year in high school in Haddonfield, New Jersey, where he was born in 1907. He published a monthly newspaper called the Progress. His first issue attacked William Randolph Hearst's Yellow Peril campaign, praised Ghandi, and called for the cancellation of World War I

---

[1] Henry David Thoreau, Walden (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Co., 1969), p. 348.

debts provided that the debtor nations agreed to stay out of the arms race for twenty-five years.[2] This philosophy, which Stone calls "practical idealism," was to become a fundamental characteristic of his newspaper career. The paper was a financial success with Stone selling adverti-ing to local merchants after school. But his father, who noted his son was spending too much time with the paper and not enough on school work, made him retire the Progress after three issues.[3]

But the newspaper business was in his blood and within a few months Stone went to work for the local paper. During his junior year in high school, at age fifteen, J. David Stern, publisher of the Camden, (New Jersey) Evening Courier, hired Stone to cover Haddonfield for his paper. Stone confesses: "I was a natural in the business from the start."[4] The newspaper business took its toll on his school work however, as Stone graduated forty-ninth in a class of fifty-two and had his application to Harvard rejected. Instead, he attended the University of Pennsyl-vania which, fortunately, had open enrollment for schools in the Philadelphia area. He began working ten hours a day on the Philadelphia Inquirer and eventually dropped out of college during his junior year.

[2] I. F. Stone's Bi-Weekly, December, 1971, p. 1.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

> I loved learning and hated school. I devoured books from the moment I first learned to read but resisted every effort to make me study whatever I saw no sense in learning. A few teachers I loved, the rest I despised. At college I was a philosophy major, and Penn had two philosophy teachers of stature, Newbold and Singer, whom I revered. I thought I might teach philosophy but the atmosphere of a college faculty repelled me; the few islands of greatness seemed to be washed away by seas of pettiness and mediocrity. The smell of the newsroom was more attractive. I was full of romantic nonsense and looked down on college degrees as artificial.[5]

Stone's idealism was molded during his teenage years when he began reading such authors as Jack London, Frederick Engels, Herbert Spencer (he became an atheist after reading First Principles), Karl Marx, and Peter Kropotkin. His idol was the Russian philosopher Kropotkin, whose vision of Communist anarchism had a profound effect on Stone's thinking.

> Kropotkin really thrilled me. I thought this was the way to organize a good society, without coercion, without police, without private property, on a voluntary basis. I still think it's the most beautiful ideal, because once you get cops and soldiers, well . . .[6]

While Stone was attracted to anarchism, he still was active in conventional American politics during the 1920s, although he shunned the traditional Democratic and Republican parties. At seventeen, he supported Wisconsin Senator Robert LaFollette, the Progressive candidate for

---

[5] Ibid.

[6] Thomas Powers, "The Achievement of I. F. Stone," Rolling Stone, Feb. 17, 1972, p. 22.

President. Four years later, he worked as a volunteer for Norman Thomas, the Socialist party candidate. But Stone soon moved away from left-wing politics because of what he called "the sectarianism of the left."

> . . . I felt that party affiliation was incompatible with independent journalism, and I wanted to be free to help the unjustly treated, to defend everyone's civil liberty and to work for social reform without concern for leftist infighting.[7]

Stone quit the Camden Evening Courier in 1927 when the city editor would not let him cover the execution of Nicola Sacco and Bartolemeo Vanzetti, the two socialists who were found guilty despite questionable evidence in 1921 of murdering two factory employees in one of the most controversial "political" trials in American history. The trial took place during a period of "anti-radicalism" in the United States and aroused world-wide protest. From 1932 to 1939, he worked as an editorial writer on the Philadelphia Record and the New York Post, both of which were strongly pro-New Deal newspapers. In 1939, he also became associate editor of the Nation magazine.

Stone moved to Washington, D.C., in 1940 as the Washington editor of the Nation and has been there ever since. From 1946 to 1952, he worked as a reporter and columnist for a series of independent, radical dailies,

---

[7] I. F. Stone, The Haunted Fifties (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), p. xvii.

PM, the New York Star, and the Daily Compass. When the Compass folded in November, 1952, Stone inquired about getting back his former job as Washington editor for the Nation, but the magazine was in financial trouble at the time. After waiting several weeks for an answer, Stone decided to start his own publication. As Sol Stern pointed out in an article in Ramparts in 1968, Stone had few choices at this stage.

> When the Compass folded, he had few options. As a journalist, he had pretty much burned his bridges to respectability behind him when he publicly supported Henry Wallace in 1948, at a time when many of his old liberal colleagues such as Max Lerner and James Weschler were already enthusiastically embracing the Cold War. Stone had become anything but an "insider." . . . Perhaps if he had trimmed his sails a bit, he could have returned to the New York Post, where he started as an editorial writer in the '30s. But "Izzy" had been spoiled, having always enjoyed the good fortune of writing for publishers who let him have his say.[8]

The idea of publishing an independent newsletter was not a new one. A decade earlier journalist George Seldes put out a four-page paper, In Fact, which offered readers news they could not find in the conventional press. Seldes had the advantage of publishing his liberally-oriented newsletter however, during the late 1930s and early 1940s, when the political climate was more receptive to left-wing journalism and powerful labor unions and liberal organizations were willing to support

---

[8]Sol Stern, "The Journalist as Pamphleteer," Ramparts, February, 1968, p. 53.

such a venture. Stone's newsletter made its debut in less friendly surroundings. When the Weekly began publishing in January, 1953, Senator Joseph McCarthy, Republican from Wisconsin, and the anti-Communist crusade were reaching their peak in the United States, intimidating nearly everyone left of center. Also, the Cold War with the Soviet Union was under way. It was not the most ideal time to launch a radical publication, especially when its editor and publisher had supported Henry Wallace in 1948, fought for civil liberties of Communists, and urged peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Union while a newspaperman during the 1940s. As Stone admitted: "There was nothing to the left of me but the Daily Worker."[9]

The Weekly was made possible by what Stone calls "a piggy-back launching."[10] Using the mailing lists of the two defunct radical papers, the Compass and PM, Stone was able to get 5,300 subscribers by the time the first issue was published on January 17, 1953. Financially, Stone had $3,500 in severance pay from the Compass, and received some $10,000 in contributions through the mail. Since he would work in his Washington home, expenses would be minimal. He also received a financial helping hand from an admirer, who lent him $3,000 without interest.[11]

---

[9] Stone, Haunted Fifties, p. xviii.

[10] Bi-Weekly, December, 1971, p. 3.

[11] Ibid.

Despite the political climate of the period, Stone was able to secure a second-class mail permit that made it possible to mail the Weekly at that time for one-eighth of a cent per copy. It is hard to imagine the Weekly surviving without it. As Stone wrote:

> I shall always be grateful that the post office not only granted second class quickly but gave me a refund for the first few issues mailed at a higher rate. Second class made my survival possible. Though I was regarded in the paranoid atmosphere of those McCarthy years simply and plainly as a Red, I had no trouble whatsoever with the post office. No political questions were asked me. I was treated with the utmost courtesy by the postal authorities then and since. It is no small testimonial to the strength of the First Amendment that a new publication could be launched in those years with what amounts to a postal subsidy to a left-wing journalist.[12]

Stone made two basic decisions at the outset, one business and one editorial. He decided to concentrate on doing a thorough and accurate job of reporting and to let the paper grow with its reputation rather than attempting to spend time and energy on raising money for quick financial growth. Although the paper grew slowly,[13] Stone feels he made the right decision because it left him more

---

[12] Ibid.

[13] Stone began with 5,300 subscribers in 1953. His circulation increased to 10,000 in 1955 but it took another eight years to reach 20,000. In 1968, when he switched to a bi-weekly publication, it reached 40,000. Stone

time for reporting.[14] His wife, Esther, handled the business side of the Weekly from the beginning.

The other decision Stone had to make concerned the kind of publication he wished to put out. He decided to make the Weekly radical in viewpoint but conservative in format.

> I picked a beautiful type face, Garamond, for my main body type, and eschewed sensational headlines. I made no claim to inside stuff--obviously a radical reporter in those days had few pipelines into the government. I tried to give information which could be documented so the reader could check for himself. I tried to dig the truth out of hearings, official transcripts and government documents, and to be as accurate as possible. I also sought to give the Weekly a personal flavor, to add humor, wit and good writing to the Weekly report. I felt that if one were able enough and had sufficient vision one could distill meaning, truth and even beauty from the swiftly flowing debris of the week's news. I sought in political reporting what Galsworthy in another context called "the significant trifle"--the bit of dialogue, the overlooked fact, the buried observation which illuminated the realities of the situation. These I often used in "boxes" to lighten up the otherwise solid pages of typography unrelieved either by picture or advertising. I tried in every issue to provide fact and opinion not available elsewhere in the press.[15]

In the premier issue of the Weekly, Stone told his readers that he intended to "fight for peace and civil liberties" and that he would be as "independent as Sandburg's

---

added 10,000 readers a year from that point and at the time of his retirement in 1971 his publication had 70,000 subscribers.

[14] Bi-Weekly, December, 1971, p. 3.

[15] Stone, Haunted Fifties, p. xviii.

hog on ice."[16] Holding his "utopian ideals" and hatred of war, Stone was not likely to be converted to the Cold War arguments of men like Secretaries of State Dean Acheson and John Foster Dulles, and Presidents Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower. From the beginning, the Weekly was a constant critic of the United States' militant, anti-Communist foreign policy. In fact, the first page-one piece in the Weekly was critical of President Truman's final State of the Union message. Stone wrote:

> Mr. Truman fears war, but remains evasive on peace. . . . Mr. Truman's emphasis was on his old hope that if the cold war and containment were continued long enough the Soviet regime would somehow crack up from within. Negotiation requires compromise, but there was in Mr. Truman's message the same self-righteous insistence that any settlement must be made on our terms. . . . Only negotiation, coexistence and peace can emancipate us from the campaign of hate and its hateful consequences.[17]

Stone also wasted little time in exposing Senator Joseph McCarthy. In that first issue, he highlighted a Senate subcommittee report on the Senator's financial dealings while in office, a report that was not given prominence by the daily press. In the article, Stone wrote:

> The picture drawn is of a man who cannot resist speculation on margin. His activities in and out of the market since 1942 are those of a born gambler. . . . Newly brought to light in this report is the $20,000 note signed for McCarthy by the Washington representative

---

[16] I. F. Stone's Weekly, Jan. 17, 1953, p. 3.

[17] Ibid., p. 1.

> of Pepsi-Cola at a time when the Senator's bank account in Wisconsin was overextended. Pepsi-Cola was then lobbying for decontrol of sugar and McCarthy was Chairman of a Senate subcommittee--on sugar![18]

In the piece, Stone reported the other financial dealings of McCarthy that were exposed by the subcommittee report, including the $10,000 loan to fight communism deposited in a special account only to be withdrawn by the senator three weeks later and passed on to a friend for speculation in soybeans.[19]

Stone issued this prophetic warning to government officials at the end of his first McCarthy article:

> Outgoing Democrats and incoming Republicans will live equally to regret that they did not cut McCarthy down to size when they had the chance. With his congenital cheek and the enormous powers conferred upon him by his key Senate chairmanship, McCarthy promises to become Eisenhower's chief headache. McCarthy is in a position to smear any government official who fails to do his bidding. With much daring and few scruples, McCarthy can make himself the most powerful single figure in Congress and terrorize the new Administration.[20]

That first issue was a preview of the kind of reporting that would fill the pages of the Weekly during its nineteen years. Unlike the reporters who work for the large daily newspapers, Stone not only reported the news but wrote with a point of view and with emotion. He was

---

[18] Ibid., p. 2.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

not merely a reporter, but a writer who could capture the mood of an event. One of his finest pieces appeared during the Weekly's first year, a biting satire of Cold War America entitled "Charlie Chaplin's Farewell Custard."

> There are two voices of America. One is the Voice with a capital V, which broadcasts in so many languages so many hours a day what we would like people abroad to think about us. The other, the voice with a small v, is the inadvertent message of our own actions. This, the real voice of America, broadcast a strange message last week about Charlie Chaplin.
>
> It told the world that the little funny man on whom we were brought up could no longer bear the spirit of contemporary America and had turned in his re-entry permit. It said there must be something seriously wrong with our America if Chaplin could no longer live in it.
>
> The "voluntary" exile of Chaplin is a measure of how America has changed since we were children. He never became an American citizen but Charlie Chaplin was and will remain more truly American than the blackguards and fanatics who hounded him, the cheap politicians who warned him not to come back.
>
> We do not blame Charlie Chaplin for leaving us. Who could blame a comic genius--one of the greatest of all time--for being unwilling to live in a country which seems to have lost its sense of humor? But we ask him not to desert us altogether.
>
> The man who made "The Great Dictator" owes it to us and to himself to put into a new film the tragi-comedy overtaking America where greasy informers are public heroes, protectors of gambling dens set themselves up as guardians of public morality, and a senator who is afraid to answer questions about his own financial accounts becomes the great investigator of others. Come to think of it, "The Great Investigator" would be a worthy successor to "The Great Dictator."
>
> Turn the laugh on them, Charlie, for our country's sake. This capital needs nothing so badly as one final well-flung custard pie.[21]

---

[21] Weekly, April 25, 1953, p. 2.

During the cold war days of the 1950s, when he was one of the few dissenters, Stone said he felt like a guerrilla warrior, swooping down in surprise on a stuffy bureaucracy where it least expected independent inquiry."[22] This was his method of operation for nineteen years with the Weekly. In fact, it is ironic that while he was labeled a radical by many critics, Stone owned and operated his own business along purely capitalistic guidelines that would doubtlessly make Adam Smith smile with satisfaction. He was the complete nineteenth century entrepeneur, as he admits:

> I am, I suppose, an anachronism. In this age of corporation men, I am an independent capitalist, the owner of my own enterprise, subject to neither mortgager or broker, factor or patron. In an age when young men, setting out on a career of journalism, must find their niche in some huge newspaper or magazine combine, I am a wholly independent newspaperman, standing alone, without organizational or party backing, beholden to no one but my good readers. I am even one up on Benjamin Franklin--I do not accept advertising. . . . I pay my bills promptly, like a solid bourgeois, though in the eyes of many . . . I am regarded, I am sure, as a dangerous and subversive fellow.[23]

What makes Stone unique in Washington journalism is that he disassociates himself completely from government officials. As he told A. Kent MacDougall of the Wall Street Journal: "You've really got to wear a

---

[22]Stone, Haunted Fifties, p. xviii.

[23]Ibid., p. xiii.

chastity belt in Washington to preserve your journalistic virginity. Once the Secretary of State invites you to lunch, you're sunk."[24] So instead of lunching with the Secretary of State, attending a Pentagon briefing, or sitting in on a presidential press conference (he is not accredited to do so anyway), Stone spends his time pouring over official documents, transcripts of congressional hearings, numerous domestic and foreign newspapers, checking facts and figures, and then after synthesizing the material he has accumulated he draws his own conclusions. One admirer comments that "as a document searcher, he gets more out of footnotes than anyone else ever sees."[25] Robert Sherrill, Washington correspondent for the Nation, notes that Stone "hoards facts the way Senator Symington would like to hoard gold."[26]

One of Stone's most valuable assets is his ability to read--and remember what he has read. He developed the habit of reading because of his almost total deafness between 1938 and corrective surgery in 1964 and 1965.

> I went deaf in 1939 and it improved my reporting. I couldn't hear what was said at briefings, so I'd go around the next day to study the transcripts. I'd

---

[24] Wall Street Journal, July 14, 1970, p. 1.

[25] Newsweek, Jan. 22, 1968, p. 52.

[26] Commonweal, Jan. 26, 1968, p. 507.

> catch things the guys who had listened and written on deadline had missed. Governments lie, but they don't like to lie literally. They use corkscrew sentences and disingenuous statements, and you have to read these documents as though they were mortgage contracts drawn by a shyster lawyer.[27]

Stone and his wife, Esther, put out the Weekly from their home in the suburban North Cleveland section of Washington. This family operation prompted him to call his publication, "the journalistic equivalent of the old-fashioned Jewish momma-and-poppa grocery store."[28] Before his retirement his work day began at 6:00 A.M. with the delivery of his morning papers, the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal, and the Baltimore Sun. He read the papers closely, looking for something he might use in the next issue--contradictory stories, buried but significant statements, news items of importance that had been overlooked or ignored. After reading the papers, he often went to Capital Hill to read transcripts. In the afternoon, Stone went to his favorite newstand to pick up the daily copies of the foreign press.[29] He supplemented his daily reading with such publications as Standard & Poors, the Air Force & Space Digest, and the Peking Review. As Geoffrey Wolff

---

[27]Wall Street Journal, July 14, 1970, p. 1.

[28]Life, Jan. 21, 1972, p. 68.

[29]Ramparts, February, 1968, p. 53.

pointed out in Newsweek: "It is brutal, punishing work, and it requires a critic's sensibility to nose out the false prose, an accountant's eye for doctored books and a prosecutor's memory for contradictory evidence."[30] But through this tedious ritual, Stone almost always found something neglected by the daily American press.

For a journalist who has been dropped by Who's Who in America during the McCarthy era, Stone achieved a new respectability around Washington in recent years. Forty subscriptions of the Weekly were sent to Capital Hill, and even the White House joined the mailing list in 1970. And Vice President Spiro Agnew lumped Stone's publication with the New York Times and the Washington Post as "another strident voice of illiberalism."[31] As a maverick pamphleteer, it must have been distressing for Stone to find himself categorized with those two newspapers. He is critical of most American journalism, including the Times and the Post:

> The fault I find with most American newspapers is not the absence of dissent. It is the absence of news. With a dozen or so honorable exceptions, most American newspapers carry very little news. Their main concern is advertising. The main interest of our society is merchandising. All the so-called communications industries are primarily concerned not with communications, but with selling. This is obvious on television and radio but it is only a

---

[30] Newsweek, Feb. 8, 1971, p. 92.

[31] Wall Street Journal, July 14, 1970, p. 1.

> little less obvious in the newspapers. Most owners of newspapers are businessmen, not newspapermen. The news is something which fills the spaces left over by the advertisers. The average publisher is not only hostile to dissenting opinion, he is suspicious of any opinion likely to antagonize any reader or consumer. . . . Most U.S. papers stand for nothing. They carry prefabricated news, prefabricated opinion, and prefabricated cartoons. There are only a handful of American papers worth reading--the New York Times, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, the Washington Post, the Washington Star. the Baltimore Sun, The Christian Science Monitor--these are news papers in the real sense of the term. But even here opinion is often timid; the cold war and the arms race are little questioned though these papers do speak up from time to time on civil liberty. . . . All this makes it easy for a one-man four-page Washington paper to find news the others ignore, and of course opinion they would rarely express.[32]

Although Stone is a constant critic of American domestic and foreign policy and of many of its institutions, he is not a despairing dissident but rather an optimist and, above all else, a humanist. It is this attitude, according to Sol Stern of Ramparts, that makes him so effective:

> Stone has an almost calculated naivete about the regenerative powers of American institutions. It is this, more than anything else in his attitudes, that can give his criticism such a corrosive effect. For when Stone makes his case against American policies which have proved to be wantonly inhumane, it comes out not as another shrill polemic, but as a carefully documented record of shattered hopes and promises.[33]

Robert Sherrill of the Nation writes of this feeling of optimism:

---

[32]Stone, Haunted Fifties, p. xxi.

[33]Ramparts, February, 1968, p. 54.

> One does not come away from Stone with a feeling of hopelessness, a feeling that we are being overwhelmed by dullards and deceivers. To the contrary, nothing is so reassuring as the awareness that one reporter--without a staff to help him, without a powerful organization like the New York Times to open doors for him--is nevertheless capable of making the Establishment watch its step.[34]

After nineteen years of editing and publishing his Weekly/ BiWeekly, I. F. Stone discontinued its publication in December, 1971. At sixty-four, Stone was worried about his health and decided to switch to a less demanding pace. On January 1, 1972 he became a contributing editor of the New York Review of Books, a publication for which he has written frequently since 1964. He also wants to write another book. Over the years Stone has written eight books--The Court Disposes (1937), Business As Usual (1941), The Hidden History of the Korean War (1952), The Truman Era (1953), The Haunted Fifties (1964) In a Time of Torment (1968), The Killings at Kent State, (1971), and Polemics and Prophesies (1971). The last four books are composed of a collection of his articles and essays published previously in the Weekly and the New York Review of Books.

Stone, in his career as a journalist, has been a constant critic of the nuclear arms race, American militarism, the space program, and political mendacity.

---

[34]Commonweal, Jan 26, 1968, p. 506.

These issues have been recurring themes over the years in the Weekly. From its inception, the Weekly crusaded for civil liberties of blacks and other minorities in the United States. And Stone was among the first journalists to urge the United States to grant diplomatic recognition to both Cuba under Fidel Castro and the People's Republic of China.

But of all the subjects Stone has written about during the past two decades, it has been Vietnam that thrust him into national attention. As journalist Thomas Powers pointed out in Rolling Stone, "his reputation has been barometer of national disenchantment with the war . . ."[35]

---

[35]Rolling Stone, Feb. 17, 1972, p. 22.

CHAPTER II

THE ORIGINS OF THE VIETNAM WAR, 1950-1960

> The United States has almost always gone to war reluctantly, and after assurances by its leaders that they would keep us out of war. But the interventionists seem to manage ultimately to have their way, whether it be in a good cause or a bad.
> -I. F. Stone[1]

Many American soldiers fighting in Vietnam today were not yet born when the United States first became involved during the administration of President Harry S. Truman. Like so many tragedies, American involvement in Vietnam unfolded slowly in a series of verbal, political, and financial commitments in the early 1950s and did not evolve into full military intervention until a decade later. But it was the policies of the fifties that set the stage for this total U.S. commitment. The political and military struggles in Vietnam since World War II are too complex to discuss here in detail. What follows then is a brief outline of American involvement during the

---

[1] Weekly, May 17, 1954, p. 1.

fifties, touching on the major issues and events of the period to serve as background for a discussion of the early 1960s in the following chapters.

Actual involvement in Vietnam by the United States began with the advent of the Cold War, in a period of strong American anti-communism reflected at home by Senator Joseph McCarthy and abroad by the foreign policy of Secretary of State Dean Acheson. At the outbreak of the Korean War on June 27, 1950, President Truman announced that he had "directed acceleration in the furnishing of military assistance to the forces of France and the Associated States in Indochina and the dispatch of a military mission to provide close working relations with these forces."[2]

The "military assistance" referred to by Truman was to support the French colonial government in its war against the Vietminh--the Independence League founded and led by Communist Ho Chi Minh who became President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam after World War II. The French had held Vietnam as a protectorate since 1884, with the exception of Japanese occupation during World War II. After the war, the Vietminh, which had received allied help in fighting the Japanese, expected to gain

---

[2]U.S. Department of State Bulletin, XXIII, July 3, 1950, p. 5.

nationhood for Vietnam and was in a position to lead a new nationalist government. But international power politics at the Yalta conference declared trusteeships for the two sections of Vietnam; the North to be administered by China and the South by Great Britain. Britain unexpectedly returned the South to the French thus precipitating what author Ellen Hammer called "the First Indochina War" between France and the Vietminh.[3]

Between 1950 and 1954, the United States supplied France with $2.6 billion worth of military and economic aid--or 80 per cent of the total cost of its war against the Vietminh. During the final two years of the war, the United States gave the French some $1.8 billion in direct aid.[4]

But even vast amounts of American aid failed to alter the outcome of the war. On may 7, 1954, the French army was defeated at Dien Bien Phu by the Vietminh and the following day sued for peace at the Geneva Conference. During the final weeks of the war, especially after the French were surrounded at Dien Bien Phu, a number of

---

[3]For an excellent history of this period see Ellen J. Hammer, The Struggle for Indochina (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1954).

[4]Robert Scheer, How the United States Got Involved In Vietnam, Report to the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, Santa Barbara, Calif., July, 1965, p. 10.

U. S. government leaders urged President Eisenhower to commit American military power in an attempt to help save the French from imminent defeat. Vice-President Richard Nixon, for one, supported intervention:

> The United States as a leader of the free world cannot afford further retreat in Asia. It is hoped the United States will not have to send troops there, but if this government cannot avoid it, the Administration must face up to the situation and dispatch forces. . . . This country is the only nation politically strong enough at home to take a position that will save Asia.[5]

Another high-level proponent of intervention was Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, who believed the "imposition" of communism on Southeast Asia "should not be passively accepted but should be met by united action." Action, Dulles admitted, which might involve "serious risks."[6]

In fact, on April 3, 1954, Dulles held a secret conference with eight ranking members of the Congress to enlist their support for a joint resolution by the Congress to permit the use of American air and naval power in Indochina.[7] Admiral Arthur W. Radford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, concurred. He argued that the loss

---

[5] New York Times, April 17, 1954, p. 1.

[6] U.S. Department of State Bulletin, XXX, April 12, 1954, p. 540.

[7] Chalmers M. Roberts, "The Day We Didn't Go To War," Reporter, Sept. 14, 1954, pp. 31-35.

of Indochina to the Communists would lead to the loss of all of Southeast Asia and, eventually of Japan and India. This was the so-called "domino theory" that was to become the cornerstone of U.S. Southeast Asia policy and, according to the Pentagon Papers, "the assumptions behind it were never questioned."[8] The congressional leaders, however, balked at intervention without first being guaranteed the support of the United States' European allies. Britain would not agree to such action and, as a result, direct intervention was tabled. Instead, Dulles came up with a proposal for the formation of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) which he hoped would provide a "united front" leading to "united action."

Although many government officials were urging military intervention, others, like Senator John F. Kennedy, were looking for an independent, nationalist alternative to French rule on one hand and Ho Chi Minh on the other. Kennedy and others were caught between their hatred of communism and their distaste for colonialism. In a Senate speech on April 6, just before the Geneva negotiations were to begin, Kennedy said he feared the Republican administration would permit a negotiated peace in Vietnam that would pave the way for participation in

---

[8]Neil Sheehan, et al., The Pentagon Papers (New York: Bantam, 1971), p. 7.

the government by the Communists under Ho Chi Minh. As an alternative, he recommended that the United States force France to grand independence to Vietnam, exclude the Vietminh from the new nationalist government, and support the new government's army whenever necessary by making "some commitment of our manpower."[9]

It was within this political climate that the Geneva Conference on Korea and Vietnam began. The Vietnam question was taken up on May 9 and after two months of debate and power politics[10] a settlement, reached in July, established three goals: (1) it ended the hostilities between France and the Vietminh, (2) it "temporarily" divided Vietnam in half at the seventeenth parallel, and (3) it provided a means for reunifying the country through nationwide elections in July, 1956, with consultations between the two zones beginning a year earlier. Thus, what the Geneva Accords accomplished was to move the struggle for Vietnam from the battle field to the political arena, a favorable settlement for the Communists who had the support of the majority of Vietnamese and believed they would be victorious in free elections. It was a compromise but after eight years of war, Ho Chi Minh elected to place his faith in the electoral process.

---

[9] 100 Cong. Rec. 4672 (1954)

[10] For a detailed discussion of the Geneva Conference see Donald Lancaster, The Emancipation of French Indochina (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 313-337

In addition to the above mentioned three results, there were several other important provisions in the Accords dealing with military activity. Article 16 stated that "the introduction into Vietnam of any troop reinforcements and additional military personnel is prohibited."[11] Article 17 prohibited the introduction "of any reinforcements in the form of all types of arms, munitions and other war material, such as combat aircraft, naval craft, pieces of ordnance, jet engines and jet weapons, and armored vehicles."[12] Article 18 prohibited the establishment of any new military bases in either zone of Vietnam. An international commission of three countries--India, Canada, and Poland--was set up to supervise the execution of the agreement.

The United States viewed the Geneva agreements as a "disaster."[13] The National Security Council, in meetings, August 8 and 12, reported that the settlement "completed a major forward stride of Communism which may lead to the loss of Southeast Asia."[14] As a result, the

---

[11]Marvin E. Gettleman, ed., Vietnam: History, Documents, and Opinions (New York: New American Library, Inc., 1970), p. 169.

[12]Ibid., p. 170.

[13]Sheehan, Pentagon Papers, p. 14.

[14]Ibid.

United States never signed or agreed to the Accords. Under Secretary of State W. Bedell Smith, in addressing the closing session of the Geneva Conference, stated the American position:

> . . . my Government is not prepared to join in a Declaration by the Conference such as is submitted. However, the United States makes this unilateral declaration of its position in these matters. . . . [The United States] Takes Note of the Agreements concluded at Geneva.[15]

The Under Secretary of State also stated that, while the United States merely "took note" of the agreements "it would refrain from the threat of use of force to disturb them" and "would view any renewal of the aggression in violation of the aforesaid Agreements with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security."[16]

If the United States was to keep Vietnam from becoming united under the Communist banner of the Vietminh and Ho Chi Minh through the proposed elections, it had to strengthen the regime in the South. An anti-Communist, nationalist alternative to Ho had to be found as a replacement for Emporer Bao Dai, the French puppet who was extremely unpopular in the wake of the growing Vietnamese nationalism that followed the French defeat. As historian Ralph Stavins pointed out in Washington Plans an Aggressive War:

---

[15]Gettleman, Vietnam, p. 184.

[16]Ibid., pp. 184-185.

> Before the concepts of nation-building and self-defense could be put into effect, however, Washington had to deal with the legacy it had inherited at Geneva. It had to ease the French out of the picture, generate support for a new and untried leader to ensure his survival for at least two years, and circumvent the scheduled elections without becoming embroiled in another war with the North.[17]

The man chosen by the United States to be the new "alternative" in the South was Ngo Dinh Diem, a devout Catholic and anti-Communist who was educated in French schools in Hanoi, who studied in the United States and who was out of the country during the Vietminh conquest of the French. Virtually unknown in his own country, Diem received the powerful American backing of such men as Francis Cardinal Spellman, Senator Mike Mansfield, Senator John F. Kennedy and his father Joseph P. Kennedy, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, political science professor Wesley Fishel, who was later to become Diem's top adviser as head of the Michigan State University Group in Vietnam, and a host of others. Although France was still in control of the South, Diem was the choice of the United States, as former Senator Ernest Gruening and Herbert W. Beaser wrote in their book Vietnam Folly:

> There can be little doubt that United States pressure upon France was responsible for the selection of Diem by Bao Dai as Premier. The United States was in an excellent position to do so since it was, and had

---

[17] Ralph Stavins, Richard J. Barnett, and Marcus G. Raskin, Washington Plans an Aggressive War (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 4.

> been pouring vast sums of money into Vietnam in aid of the French. The French war in Vietnam was going badly. The French and the non-Communist Vietnamese already knew that they were through. If anything was to be saved in Vietnam, it would have to be done with the United States' aid. In addition, continuing United States' assistance would be needed in rebuilding and defending France.[18]

When Diem assumed office on July 7, 1954, he had little popular support. The bulk of the population, according to the Central Intelligence Agency, held Ho Chi Minh in high regard as the symbol of Vietnamese nationalism, even in many areas south of the seventeenth parallel. The C. I. A. believed that all of Vietnam would be united under Ho's leadership through electoral politics, not war.[19]

Thus, Diem moved to solidify his position, politically and militarily, by crushing both Communist and non-Communist opposition and by initiating a referendum on the first anniversary of his assumption of power. The referendum, held October 23, 1955, gave the electorate a choice between himself and Bao Dai. Diem received 98.2 per cent of the vote (which the Pentagon Papers called "too resounding"[20]) and proclaimed himself president. During that year, he received $325.8 million in American aid.[21]

---

[18]Ernest Gruening and Herbert W. Beaser, Vietnam Folly (Washington D.C.: National Press Inc., 1968), p. 138.

[19]Stavins, Washington Plans an Aggressive War, p. 9.

[20]Sheehan, Pentagon Papers, p. 21.

[21]Gruening and Beaser, Vietnam Folly, p. 150.

Under the Geneva Accords, the two temporary zones of Vietnam--the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North) and the State of Vietnam (renamed the Republic of Vietnam after the Diem referendum)--were to begin consultations one year prior to the scheduled reunifying elections in July, 1956. But neither the consultations nor the internationally supervised elections were ever held. The United States government played a major role in Diem's decision to ignore the elections, as is pointed out in the Pentagon Papers. The Eisenhower administration knew that the Communists had wide popular support in both zones and did not want to risk the possibility of a Vietminh government for all of Vietnam. This policy of seeking to postpone the elections and of "requiring guarantees that the Communists could be expected to reject,"[22] were forwarded as early as July 7, 1954, in a secret cablegram from Secretary of State Dulles to W. Bedell Smith. Dulles wrote:

> Since undoubtedly true free elections might eventually mean unification of Vietnam under Ho Chi Minh, this makes it all the more important they should only be held as long after cease-fire agreement as possible and in conditions free from intimidation to give democratic elements best chance.[23]

In the months prior to the scheduled elections, Diem initiated a series of acts which, according to Ralph Stavins, "effectively reopened the Indochina war."[24]

---

[22] Sheehan, Pentagon Papers, p. 22.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Stavins, Washington Plans an Aggressive War, p. 11.

First, the Can Lao Party, a secret police apparatus relying on terror and murder, was organized. Second, the South Vietnamese army was expanded. Both the army and secret police were set up with American financial assistance and trained by American personnel. Also, the Constitution of the Republic of Vietnam was drawn up with American help, a document that gave Diem virtually dictatorial powers. In April, the French suddenly and surprisingly withdrew their forces from the south and as a result had no power to insure that the free elections would take place. Citing that his government had not signed or agreed to the Geneva Accords, Diem refused to be bound by them and ignored the elections.

During this period, eight out of every ten dollars of American aid to Diem went toward security according to the Pentagon Papers.[25] In reviewing this history, the C.I.A. commented that

> The prospects for continued political stability in South Vietnam depend heavily upon President Diem and his ability to maintain firm control of the army and police. . . . Diem's regime reflects his ideas. A facade of representative government is maintained, but the government is in fact essentially authoritarian. The legislative powers of the National Assembly are strictly circumscribed; the judiciary is undeveloped and subordinate to the executive; and the members of the executive branch are little more than the personal agents of Diem. No organized opposition, loyal or otherwise, is tolerated, and critics of the regime are often repressed. . . . The exercise of power and

---

[25] Sheehan, Pentagon Papers, p. 23.

> responsibility is limited to Diem and a very small circle mainly composed of his relatives, the most important being Nhu and Can.[26]

As Stavins concludes:

> The conclusion is inescapable. Diem--hand-picked and propped up by the U.S. government, his rule dependant upon the army and police--was the one who violated the Geneva Accords and commenced aggressive warfare against the Viet Minh, and the loyal opposition as well.[27]

The Pentagon analysis of this period of the Vietnam political struggle concludes that without American support Diem could not have sustained his power in the South:

> Without the threat of U.S. intervention, South Vietnam could not have refused to even discuss the elections called for in 1956 under the Geneva settlement without being immediately overrun by the Vietminh armies. Without U.S. aid in the years following, the Diem regime certainly, and an independent South Vietnam almost as certainly, could not have survived. . . . South Vietnam was essentially the creation of the United States.[28]

In the period during which Diem's power was being solidified, I. F. Stone was just getting his Weekly off the ground. Stone was highly critical of the U.S. position at Geneva, particularly of its refusal to agree to free elections in Vietnam. In an article published May 17, 1954, he criticized Secretary of State Dulles' statement that the reason free elections could not be held was

---

[26] Stavins, Washington Plans an Aggressive War, p. 13.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Sheehan, Pentagon Papers, p. 25.

due to the political immaturity of the Vietnamese people.

Stone wrote:

> This on reflection is a bit puzzling. If those in rebel held territories are victims of Communist oppression, as we insist they are, then surely they would vote against Ho in a genuinely free election. If the rest are menaced by aggression, as we insist they are, then they would surely vote against their aggressors in a genuinely free election. . . . On the other hand, if he regards them as politically immature--the phrase is his, as the official transcript will verify--then how does he differ from the French colonialists who think that Indo-China is part of the white man's burden? . . . Mr. Dulles is against independence for Indochina or free elections there until he feels sure its people can be counted for "the free world." But it must seem to Asians an odd kind of free world that fears free elections and independence.[29]

By 1957, Diem had won the commitment of the United States government to finance his regime. He had crushed the religious sects, and the rival political groups that opposed his regime. To help aid Diem, the United States sent 350 additional military men to Saigon in May, 1956, a move the Pentagon Papers called an "example of the U.S. ignoring"[30] the Geneva Accords, under which American forces were restricted to 342, the number of U.S. military personnel in Vietnam when the Geneva Accords went into effect. The new additions brought official American troop strength to nearly 700.

---

[29] Weekly, May 17, 1954, p. 1.

[30] Sheehan, Pentagon Papers, p. 23.

Repression during the late fifties increased as the Diem government stepped up its search for Communists in the South. French scholar and writer Phillippe Devillers wrote:

> Men who fought for the Vietminh (insultingly termed Vietcong) have since this date been to all intents and purposes outlaws. The Diem government . . . launched out in 1957 into what amounted to a series of man-hunts. . . . The organization of the police, which was already elaborate, was yet further strengthened. . . . A considerable number of people were arrested in this way, and sent to concentration camps, or political reeducation camps, as they were euphemistically called, under conditions which, to be sure, reflected no credit on a state that proclaimed itself to be a respector of the human person. This repression was in theory aimed at the Communists. In fact it affected all those, and they were many--Democrats, Socialists, Liberals, adherents of the sects--who were bold enough to express their disagreement with the line of policy adopted by the ruling oligarchy. . . .
>
> In 1958 the situation grew worse. Round-ups of "dissidents" became more frequent and more brutal. The enemies . . . were difficult to apprehend. The areas where they took refuge . . . were not favorable for operations by government forces. Moreover, the way in which many of the operations were carried out very soon set the villagers against the regime. . . . Diem never succeeded in winning the peasants and tenant farmers over to his side.[31]

Through 1957, Ho Chi Minh and the Communists were quiet. In fact, the C.I.A. found no evidence of D.R.V. aggression, despite the number of Communists in the South.[32] But the situation changed in 1958 after

---

[31] Phillippe Devillers, "The Struggle for Unification of Vietnam," China Quarterly, IX, January-March, 1962, pp. 2-23.

[32] Stavins, Washington Plans an Aggressive War, p. 14.

Washington, satisfied with Diem's leadership, said it wanted to unite the entire country under his leadership. The Viet Cong (Vietminh who remained in the South after 1954) retaliated against the GVN. A year later Hanoi entered to struggle in the South. Then, in September, 1960, Hanoi set up the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam.

The support enjoyed by Diem in the middle fifties had all but disappeared by 1960. In April, eighteen Vietnamese nobles petitioned Diem to liberalize his regime. In November, he barely survived a coup attempted by his elite paratroopers who were joined by thousands of civilians. Four hundred died in the clash. Even the American press, which had been supportive of Diem and the American effort, began to criticize the regime. Conservative Time magazine wrote on November 29: "All Diem has done in six years in office is indulge in nepotism. He has generals who don't even command a company. He lives in an ivory tower." And it added: "Diem has ruled with rigged elections, a muzzled press, and political reeducation camps that now hold 30,000. His prosperous key advisers are four brothers and a pretty sister-in-law."[33]

This is the way the situation in Vietnam stood when John F. Kennedy assumed the Presidency in 1961. The United States had become disenchanted with Diem's

---

[33] Time, Nov. 28, 1960, p. 25.

dictatorial regime and he had lost what little support he once had among his own people. But the key decisions were made in 1954 when the Eisenhower administration did not agree to the Geneva settlement and hand-picked Ngo Dinh Diem as the nationalist anti-Communist leader of the South, and in 1956 by ignoring the scheduled reunifying elections. In a series of calculated moves, the United States had decided to set up and support a separate nation in South Vietnam.

CHAPTER THREE

THE KENNEDY YEARS, 1961-1963

> Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend or oppose any foe in order to assure the survival and success of liberty.
>
> --John F. Kennedy, 1961[1]

> Vietnam . . . We have thirty Vietnams a day here.
>
> --Robert F. Kennedy, 1961[2]

When John F. Kennedy took the oath of office as the thirty-fifth president of the United States, 685 American military "advisers" were stationed in South Vietnam, the maximum number of U.S. personnel allowed under the Geneva Accords of 1954. During his thirty-four months in office, American troop strength rose to 16,000 men, many of whom were put in combat situations. In this period the number of killed and wounded Americans steadily increased from fourteen in 1961, to 109 in 1962, and to 489 in 1963. And although Kennedy decided against

---

[1] New York Times, Jan. 21, 1961, p. 8.

[2] David Halberstam, The Best and the Brightest (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 77.

committing U.S. ground combat troops, the Pentagon study points out that "the limited-risk gamble undertaken by Eisenhower had been transformed into an unlimited commitment under Kennedy." This commitment, the study concludes, gave priority to the military aspects of the war over political reforms.[3]

Kennedy's first moves in Vietnam were made secretly during the spring of 1961. On May 11, he ordered 400 Special Forces troops and another 100 military advisers to Vietnam. The Pentagon study notes that this small expansion "signaled a willingness to go beyond the 685-man limit on the size of the U.S. (military) mission in Saigon, which, if it were done openly, would be the first formal breach of the Geneva agreement."[4] At the same time he sent the additional 500 men to Vietnam, Kennedy ordered the beginning of clandestine warfare against North Vietnam by American-trained South Vietnamese agents, an action which North Vietnam protested to the International Control Commission as a violation of the Geneva Accords.

The United States commitment to South Vietnam, in both military and economic aid, increased in proportion to the political troubles of South Vietnam's president, Ngo Dinh Diem. During the Kennedy years, the United States

---

[3]Sheehan, Pentagon Papers, p. 84.

[4]Ibid., p. 79.

tried desperately to keep the Diem regime afloat as a viable anti-Communist government in the South. The political and social reforms promised publicly by Diem and hoped for by the United States never materialized, however, and in the end he and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu were assassinated in a coup by four leading South Vietnamese military officers. The Pentagon study discloses that Kennedy knew and approved of the plans for the coup in 1963 and it states: "Our complicity in his overthrow heightened our responsibilities and our commitment" in Vietnam.[5]

From the time the Vietnam war surfaced as a major news item in the United States during the Kennedy administration, the American press, especially the national press, was united behind the policy of preventing a Communist government in South Vietnam.

In the midst of this national press consensus on U.S. policy in Vietnam there was one dissenting voice, that of I. F. Stone. His Weekly was a consistent critic of American objectives in Southeast Asia, both political and military, as early as 1961. Stone was a frequent and severe critic of President Diem and his government. In the April 17, 1961, issue of the Weekly, Stone featured a box headed: "Debunking Some Dangerously Rose-Colored Views of Diem's Regime in South Vietnam." It presented

---

[5] Ibid., p. 158.

contradictory assessments of the Diem government by Leo Cherne in the New York Times Magazine and Robert Guillian, the Far Eastern expert of Le Monde. Cherne, former head of the International Rescue Committee which aimed at helping refugees from communism, wrote that "a real shooting war is going forward between Communist guerillas and defenders of freedom." Guillian, writing in the April 6 issue of Le Monde, attributed the fighting not to Communist agression but rather to "the progress of Fascism . . . of M. Diem." Cherne, in another quotation from his article in the New York Times Magazine, told his readers that "President Ngo was as emphatic in his commitment to democratic ideals during my recent conversation with him as he was . . . in 1954." Guillian, however, saw Diem in an entirely different light:

> The present regime, in fact, operates to multiply discontent and to give arms to the Vietminh; the muzzled press, the abolition of all liberty, the farce of a false parliamentary regime, the paralyzing dictatorship exercised by the Chief of State whose signature is required for the slightest affair, the corruption.[6]

Two weeks later, Stone again made the point that the cause of the fighting in Vietnam was precipitated by internal events and not Communist "aggression." In response to a statement by President Kennedy which criticized the New York Times, Stone wrote:

---

[6]Weekly, April 17, 1961, p. 3.

> He (Kennedy) said of South Vietnam that the Vietminh does not have a New York Times reporting how many people it is sending south to assassinate officials of South Vietnam. . . . These remarks of the President . . . are alarming in their implications. In the first place, they misconceive the situation in South Vietnam as seriously as our government does that in Cuba. The real causes of disintegration in South Vietnam lie in the failure of the Diem regime to build a viable government in the seven years since the Geneva settlement, its corruption, its false elections, its concentration camps, its suppression of democratic liberties, its mistreatment of minorities, are causes of the growing rebellion.[7]

This was written during the same period when Newsweek featured a cover story on Diem called: "The Little Man Who Stands Tall . . . In Vietnam." Newsweek gave its unqualified support to Diem and his government and ended the article by warning that "if the U.S. refuses to support men like Ngo Dinh Diem, patriotic men, who will fight and die to preserve their countries from Communism--these men will surely fall, and their countries will be swallowed up."[8]

The New York Times painted much the same picture for the American public in an April 14, editorial, that Communist aggression from the North, backed by China and the Soviet Union, was operating with Communist partisans in the South "in a deliberate and large-scale campaign to ruin and overthrow the Southern Government through

---

[7]Ibid., May 1, 1961, p. 1.

[8]Newsweek, May 22, 1961, p. 41.

sabotage, terrorist raids, assassinations and propaganda."[9] The Times concluded with this editorial call to arms:

> The free world must unceasingly protest against and oppose Communist subversive aggression, as practiced most accutely today in Southeast Asia. To accept it as a matter of course is to hand the Communists half a victory without a fight.[10]

While Newsweek and the New York Times were lining up behind Diem, his biggest booster in the American press was Time magazine. In its April 14 issue, Time had this to say about Diem and his regime:

> The Communists' enemy No. 1 is South Vietnam's tough President Ngo Dinh Diem, 60, and their drive is given added fury by the fact that after the Geneva conference that divided Indo-China seven years ago, just about everybody predicted that Diem could never last. Not only has he lasted, but South Vietnam has prospered to become an even more tempting target for the Reds--and a standing contrast to the poverty-stricken Communist North.[11]

These early statements by the New York Times, Newsweek, and Time became their standard positions on the war during the Kennedy years, although the New York Times and Newsweek would become increasingly disenchanted with Diem over the months. All three publications supported American presence in Vietnam. None questioned the moral or legal right of the United States to be there.

In early October, 1961, President Kennedy, faced with conflicting advice from his staff and the military

---

[9] New York Times, April 14, 1961, p. 6.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Time, April 14, p. 31.

on the need to escalate American involvement in Vietnam, decided to send his chief military adviser, General Maxwell Taylor, to Saigon to study the situation and make recommendations. General Taylor, according to the Pentagon study, was to decide among three courses of action: (1) massive U.S. intervention of up to three divisions, (2) limited intervention "for the purpose of establishing American presence in Vietnam," and (3) increased training and technical assistance to Vietnamese units. Although President Kennedy told the press that the Taylor mission was to conduct an "economic survey,"[13] its real purpose was to consider the need to commit U.S. combat forces to South Vietnam. To compound the problem, just before Taylor left Washington, Diem, in a letter to Kennedy, formally requested American combat troops and upon Taylor's arrival the South Vietnamese president declared a "state of emergency" in his country.[14]

The Taylor mission marked the beginning of increased American involvement in Vietnam and, in retrospect, was one of the most significant actions taken by the United States. During his stay in Saigon, Taylor sent several messages to Kennedy urging him to commit a military

---

[13] Ibid., p. 99.

[14] For a detailed account of the Taylor mission, see the Pentagon Papers, pp. 99-111; 140-157.

task force "capable of raising national morale and of showing to Southeast Asia the seriousness of the U.S. intent to resist a Communist takeover."[15] Taylor's recommendations were supported by Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara in a memorandum to Kennedy on November 11 in which they stated that "the United States should commit itself to the clear objective of preventing the fall of South Viet-Nam to Communist (sic)." The two men went on to support the introduction of combat troops "if that should become necessary for success."[16]

The significance of the Taylor mission and its subsequent recommendations could be seen in the increased troop levels in Vietnam during the following several months. At the end of November, 1961, there were 948 American military men in South Vietnam. By January 9, 1962, the number had increased to 2,646 and by June 30 the figure stood at 5,576.[17]

In the October 23 issue of his Weekly, Stone warned his readers that the Taylor mission could mark the beginning of direct U.S. intervention in Vietnam. Noting that the U.S. had twice intervened in countries bordering

---

[15] Ibid., p. 103.

[16] Ibid., p. 150.

[17] Ibid., p. 110.

on China since 1950, Korea and Laos, Stone issued this prophetic warning concerning Vietnam:

> Now we're on the verge of direct intervention in South Vietnam. On the plane with General Taylor were an assorted bag of men looking for trouble. There was General Van Fleet, who told a visiting Filipino delegation to the Korean front in Jan. 1952, "Korea has been a blessing. There had to be a Korea either here or some place in the world." Perhaps he hopes for a new Korea in South Vietnam. Another on the plane was Joseph Alsop, who has been dashing out to Southeast and announcing that "this is it," as the opening journalistic shot of a war that somehow never materializes. Then there is W. W. Rostow, an amateur enthusiast of anti-guerilla tactics, the White House man with a private line to Fort Bragg, and Brig. Gen. E. G. Lansdale, reputed to be the "quiet American" in Graham Greene's novel. He is now in Secretary McNamara's office as the highest military official for our new "jungle fighters," and paramilitary forces. The "cream" of this outfit was rushed to South Vietnam last May with great fanfare but the guerilla activities they were supposed to crush have grown since they arrived.
>
> Diem, the South Vietnamese dictator, has had six years and $2 billion in U.S. aid without being able to win his people or build a viable regime. He has 150,000 soldiers and a 50,000-man constabulary but cannot cope with less than 15,000 guerillas. There are three U.S. generals and close to 1,000 U.S. soldiers trying to prop up Diem's army. To go in with U.S. troops is to repeat the tragic errors of France and invite war with China. The lessons of Korea and of Laos is that this will end, after much loss of life and treasure, in another negotiation with China--or a World War. Why not negotiate now . . . [18]

While Stone was issuing warnings of intervention, the New York Times editorially called the situation in South Vietnam "menacing" and said Taylor's "expert appraisal should be of great usefulness in reaching the

---

[18] Weekly, Oct. 21, 1961, p. 3.

fateful decisions that are looming if Communist aggression . . . is to be stopped."[19] The Times, following the Taylor mission, said editorially that U.S. combat troops would be "harmful to the prestige of the South Vietnamese Government." But the editorial went on to note that the U.S. could do much "to strengthen the anti-Communist struggle," including training Diem's army, more logistical support, the use of U.S. air power, and the addition of special support units. The Times finished with this statement of support: "The battle is not yet lost in South Vietnam, and indeed it can still be won by the proper use of all resources, American and Vietnamese."[20]

Surprisingly, Time magazine reported nothing about the Taylor mission during the fall of 1961, although a cover story on Diem in August left little question as to where the magazine stood on the question of U.S. involvement:

> It was late in the game to salvage Southeast Asia and drive the Reds back within their own borders. But given resolve, hard work, and the cooperation of the longtime Communist fighter in the yellow stucco palace, the U.S. hoped that it would not be too late.[21]

In a series of articles about increased American involvement, Newsweek was also uncritical. On October 30,

---

[19] New York Times, Oct. 12, 1961, p. 28.

[20] Ibid., Nov. 9, 1961, p. 34.

[21] Time, Aug. 4, 1961, p. 30.

the magazine said that General Taylor "may not be the last American to peer through a sight at the Communists."[22] And in the November 27 issue, Newsweek held the government policy line by reporting that Kennedy was "trying to avoid the commitment of U.S. combat troops . . . but Washington let it be known that this self-limitation was not necessarily permanent."[23]

Early in 1962, Stone continued to warn of the impending buildup of American combat troop strength in Vietnam in a box he headed: "Well Not Exactly Maybe But." In it he contrasted a statement made by President Kennedy denying the presence of combat troops in Vietnam with an Associated Press article in the Washington Star, which said that 2,000 to 3,000 American servicemen were in South Vietnam "and the number is growing daily."[24] The AP dispatch went on to say that although the Americans ostensibly were there to "correct basic weaknesses in the Vietnamese armed forces," they were often involved in shooting with the Viet Cong and, as a result one U.S.

---

[22]Newsweek, Oct. 30, 1961, p. 33.

[23]Ibid., Nov. 27, 1961, p. 40.

[24]Weekly, Jan. 22, 1962, p. 2.

soldier had been recently killed in an ambush. In the February 19 issue of the Weekly, Stone wrote a page one box, "Sliding Into War and Censorship," which indicated, through a statement by Averell Harriman and a news report by Homer Bigart of the New York Times, that U.S. ground troops were being considered.[25] Stone quoted a Washington Star report as stating, "Mr. Harriman said there is no PRESENT (emphasis added--IFS) policy to use American combat troops, but some American personnel are operating air and other transportation for South Vietnam." Harriman was testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as the nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs. Beneath the Harriman statement was a report by Bigart, which said the U.S. Marine officers had just concluded a reconnaissance of mountain trails for "A POSSIBLE FUTURE COMMITMENT OF MARINE COMBAT TROOPS (emphasis added--IFS) against the Communists." And below that was a response by President Kennedy to a reporter who wanted to know how deeply the U.S. was involved in Vietnam and what were the rights of the people to know what was going on. Kennedy said: " . . . We don't want to have information which is of assistance to the enemy--and it's a matter which I think will have to be worked out with the government of Vietnam. . . ."

---

[25] Ibid., Feb. 19, 1962, p. 1.

The technique of juxtaposing official statements and contradictory evidence was one that Stone used regularly, but nowhere was it more poignant than on the subject of Vietnam. While other newspapers often published the same material that appeared in the boxes, they rarely printed the contradictory statements in juxtaposition and, as a result, the reader often was unaware of significant governmental duplicity.

In a March 5 article in the Weekly, "In Vietnam, as In Guatemala and Turkey, U.S. Trained Rebels Appear," with the sub-head, "Can You Liberate with Napalm?", Stone again noted the movement toward war:

> In the meantime we drift toward trouble in the Far East, drugged by our own public relations hashish. We tell ourselves that we are now strong on anti-guerilla activities when we are only blundering into the morass from which the French barely extracted themselves. Just as our government changed its line on Diem and put out a flood of optimistic estimates of his strength and popularity, two fliers bombed his palace. It turns out that these desperate rebels 'belonged to the most westernized of Vietnam's military services,' according to Homer Bigart's ever sharp and independent eye . . . and 'had been trained by American military advisers in the technique of dropping napalm' which they did on the President's palace. . . . The warning bells toll but we do not listen."[26]

One of the first liberal organizations to break with the Kennedy Administration on the war was the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), which adopted a resolution

---

[26] Ibid., March 5, 1962, p. 4.

urging complete American withdrawal at its annual convention in late April, 1962. However, few newspapers including the New York Times and no national news magazines made mention of the resolution. The text of the resolution appeared in the Weekly on May 7, reporting in part that

> The Civil war in South Vietnam has been presented to the American people as having been caused primarily by foreign intervention. In truth, that civil war is in the main the result of the decay of the totalitarian Diem regime. This regime has lost its popularity and the people of South Vietnam are either actively hostile or indifferent to it. . . . We vigorously oppose the unilateral commitment of America's own military power and prestige to sustain governments in Asia or elsewhere against the resistance of their own people.[27]

It is interesting to note that three of the publications that failed to mention the resolution (the New York Times, Newsweek and Time) editorially supported American intervention and blamed the war on aggression from the North instead of rebellion against the Diem government.

During the spring and summer of 1962, there was increased criticism of the Diem regime in the Weekly, including a May 28 box contrasting Under Secretary of State George Ball's assessment of Diem with that of the findings of the Special Study Mission to the Far East of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.[28] Ball, who would later become

---

[27] Ibid., May 7, 1962, p. 3.

[28] Ibid., May 28, 1962, p. 4.

the Johnson Administration's leading dove, called Diem "a determined and resourceful leader . . . creating a symbol of liberty and independence." The House of Representatives' report, which appeared below Ball's statement, had an entirely different view of the situation. The report said that since taking office in 1955, Diem had "taken dictatorial control, either directly or through a small group of intimates" and that an estimated 30,000 South Vietnamese nationalists were in concentration camps. The report went on to say that "the lack of freedom of the press and and the presence of close governmental controls, [had] been reflected in the lack of will by some of the South Vietnamese people to fight for their country."

As American military strength in Vietnam went over 4,000 in mid-summer, 1962, Stone published in the Weekly an article entitled: "Time for the Peace Movement to Call for an End of War in Viet Nam." He proposed that the peace movement, which was in those days primarily concerned with nuclear disarmament, appoint an independent commission to investigate the war and work toward negotiation and complete U.S. withdrawal. Stone said "it is time the full truth about the war and the nature of the revolt against the Fascist regime of Diem were told. . . . It is ludicrous to have a growing peace movement which does not fight for peace in the one area where warefare is going on."[29]

[29] Ibid., July 23, 1962, p. 3.

While Stone was calling for an end to American participation in the war, the New York Times was claiming editorially that the "root cause" of the conflict was "subversive activities by the Communist North Vietnam regime against the South," which violated the Geneva agreements of 1954.[30]

A Times editorial of April 17 said the United States "is exercising its legitimate right to assist a government and people that are the objects of a deliberate attempt at Communist conquest, an attempt inspired, directed, and regularly reinforced by North Vietnam. The South is defending itself against the North's campaign of subversion and aggression."[31] In an October 17 editorial, the Times called the American policy a "a much needed . . . military effort," although the paper was beginning to urge Diem to institute democratic reforms and President Kennedy to tell the entire truth to the American people. Still, the Times wrote, "there is no end in sight to the war. . . . Our moral commitment already is unlimited; our physical commitment is certain to increase."[32]

Like the Times, Newsweek stood fully behind President Kennedy's Vietnam policy. When Kennedy set up the

---

[30] New York Times, April 17, 1962, p. 34.

[31] Ibid.

[32] New York Times, Oct. 17, 1962, p. 38.

U.S. Military Assistance Command in Vietnam in early 1962, Newsweek's correspondent in Southeast Asia, Francois Sully, wrote: "Another Korea-like war involving hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops is always a possibility. But that, as the President knows well, is a risk the U.S. must take if it wants to 'hold the line.'"[33] Two months later, in its April 30 issue, Newsweek said "the U.S., which has invested its prestige as well as its dollars . . . cannot afford to allow the Viet Cong to overrun the rest of the country."[34] By late summer, the magazine reported that the war, according to many observers, was being lost[35] but even the pessimistic assessments failed to deter Newsweek from supporting American intervention.

Newsweek correspondent Kenneth Crawford seemed to sum up the magazines position on the war in the December 10 issue by writing that "whatever his [Diem's] shortcomings, confidence in his ability to hold out against Hanoi is growing. His well-wishers, whatever their feeling about the President and his family, see no preferable alternative."[36]

---

[33] Newsweek, Feb. 19, 1962, p. 37.

[34] Ibid., April 30, 1962, p. 36.

[35] Ibid., Aug. 20, 1962, p. 40.

[36] Ibid., Dec. 10, 1962, p. 41.

Time magazine was even more positive about the course of the war. By October, it could report, in an article called "Turning Point," that "even by the most skeptical judgment the war in Viet Nam is going a great deal better than a year ago."[37] And, like the New York Times and Newsweek, Time magazine placed the cause of the war entirely on North Vietnam, which "eagerly [sent] men and munitions down jungle trails to the South."[38] The U.S. military effort, according to Time, was "remarkable."[39]

Nineteen sixty-three brought a further deterioration in both the political and military aspects of the war. On April 29, 1963, with the fighting in South Vietnam increasing, particularly in the Mekong Delta south of Saigon, Senator Barry Goldwater publicly urged the United States to bomb railroad and supply facilities in North Vietnam which, he said, were being used by the Chinese to supply men and arms to Southeast Asia. Stone, in the May 13 issue of the Weekly, ran a box entitled "Confidential to Barry Goldwater," in which he contrasted Goldwater's

---

[37] Time, Oct. 12, 1962, p. 34.

[38] Ibid., May 11, 1962, p. 25.

[39] Ibid.

statement with a "backgrounder" report by Malcolm Browne, chief Associated Press correspondent in South Vietnam. Browne's report, as quoted by Stone, said:

> Most Vietcong weapons now are new U.S. military weapons, captured in ambushes on government units and attacks on outposts. Often a Vietcong unit is organized initially with no weapons. The political organizer tells his men and women they must fight at first with handmade arms--spears, daggers, swords and crude shotguns. To get better weapons, the unit must capture them from the enemy. The system evidently works, Vietcong arms now include modern recoilless cannon, heavy morters, good machine guns and very large supplies of submachine guns.[40]

It is significant to note that Stone first read Browne's report in the Rochester Times-Union. The article did not appear in the New York Times, the Washington Post, or the national news magazines.

One of the Weekly's most valuable services during this period was to provide a forum for dissenting opinions on the war.[41] Such a critic was British philosopher Bertrand Russell, who was strongly opposed to chemical warfare in Vietnam. On May 13, Stone ran a box, headed "Two Footnotes to Lord Russell's 'Arrant Nonsense' About South Vietnam," which provided two confirmations of Russell's charge that the United States was using napalm

---

[40] Weekly, May 13, 1963, p. 2.

[41] When the press imposed a blackout on coverage of anti-war speeches by Senators Wayne Morse and Ernest Gruening, the Weekly was one of the publications that made public those speeches.

and other chemicals to destroy crops and livestock.[42] In a letter to the New York Times, Russell called the use of such chemicals an "atrocity." The Times replied editorially that the charges were unsubstantiated and that Russell was indulging in "arrant nonsense."[43] Stone offered substantiation from a speech by Congressman Joseph E. Karth of Minnesota, and reporter Richard Dudman of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Then, on July 22, Stone published a letter to the Weekly from Russell on the use of poisonous chemicals in South Vietnam in which he criticized the New York Times:

> I am disturbed by the fact that I have not been able to make known to the American public the facts concerning the use of chemicals in Vietnam. When I originally raised this point in my letter to the New York Times, the New York Times attacked me editorially for failing to provide evidence. In my reply to this attack I devoted five paragraphs to specific documentation with regard to the chemicals used. The New York Times published my letter, omitting all the particular references, attempting to create the impression that my accusations were without substantiation. . . . I am disturbed that it should be possible for newspapers to behave so brazenly. It is worth pointing out that the editor of the New York Times, in reply to a private protest of mine about this, stated that the reason that my evidence on chemical warfare was not published was because it was known all along to the New York Times. . . . I should be grateful if you would allow me to make these facts known to the American public.[44]

---

[42] Weekly, May 13, 1963, p. 3.

[43] New York Times, April 8, 1963, p. 34.

[44] Weekly, July 22, 1963, p. 3. Russell provided substantial documentation in his letter to Stone.

The use of poisonous chemicals as a weapon, Stone discovered, was illegal under international law. In an article in the same issue that carried the letter by Bertrand Russell, Stone pointed out that the Geneva Protocol of 1925, signed by the United States, outlawed the use of gas, poison, or bacteria in war. Although the United States was the only "Great Power" that did not ratify the Protocol, and thus was not legally obligated to follow it, Stone's research found two earlier treaties, prohibiting the use of such poisonous chemicals, which were ratified: The 1899 Hague Convention, 32 U.S. Statutes-at-Large 1803, and the 1909 Hague Convention, 36 Statutes-at-Large 2277. "It would be refreshing," Stone wrote, "if we announced that we were going to obey these laws and cease the use of poison as a weapon in Vietnam."[45]

A week before the assassination of Diem, I. F. Stone published his first in-depth report on the Vietnam war, a special eight-page issue of the Weekly.[46] In it, Stone analyzed the historical roots of the war, American involvement, pacification, counter-insurgency, chemical warfare, "aggression" by the North, the Diem regime, the lack of freedom of information in Saigon and Washington, and other key aspects of the war. One method used by

---

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid., Oct. 28, 1963.

Stone to get at the truth of the war was the use of contrasting "boxes." As Stone explained: "On each page of this week's special issue, I have given a sample of these official myths (of the government) and with each an excerpt from some independent scholar or journalist writing on the same subject."[47] Thus, instead of relying on statements by government officials like President Kennedy, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, General Maxwell Taylor, General Paul Harkins, or Ambassador Frederick Nolting, Stone chose independent historians and journalists like historian Bernard B. Fall (The Two-Viet-Nams), Australian journalist Denis Warner, French scholar Phillippe Devillers, Ellen J. Hammer (The Struggle for Indochina), and others.

The first official myths he challenged concerned the strategic hamlet program, a counter-guerilla strategy that relocated South Vietnamese peasants in fortified villages. The objective was to isolate the villagers and weed out the Vietcong sympathizers, thus winning the people over to the Diem government. Although the press was filled with glowing success stories about the strategic hamlet program, the Pentagon study, in retrospect, said it had "failed dismally."[48] The study noted that the

---

[47] Ibid., p. 6.

[48] Sheehan, Pentagon Papers, p. 112.

reason for the failure was the resistance by the peasants to being forcibly moved from their fields and ancestral homes.

In a box entitled "Those Lovely Strategic Hamlets," Stone quoted the "official myth" of Secretary of State Rusk and contrasted it with an assessment by journalist Denis Warner. Rusk said the program was "producing excellent results" and "morale in the countryside has begun to rise." Warner, however, held quite a different view, stating that in the model hamlet at Phuoc Nguom "life is regimented" and that the regime's National Revolutionary Movement is the only political organization permitted. "The average peasant today is required to spend almost as much time on unproductive and unpaid government work as he spends in the fields." Warner noted peasants need permits to leave the hamlets, and that they were closely watched, and required to listen to hours political indoctrination each day.

The concept of pacification was a cornerstone of the Kennedy Vietnam policy. Although Stone was critical of the hamlet program, other publications were encouraged by it. The New York Times editorially said the program was "making some headway, sparked again by determined efforts at the local level."[49] In another editorial,

---

[49]New York Times, May 12, 1963, p. 22.

the New York Times said "the modern anti-guerilla tactics introduced by American military advisers are having their effect."[50] Time magazine, noting that the hamlets "bottle up the Reds in the countryside," reported the "grumbling died out after a week or two as the peasants realized that life actually was better than it had been before."[51] With its editorial fingers crossed, Newsweek reported the hamlets were "possible, just possibly, the faint beginnings of hope" and quoted an American officer who said the hamlet concept was "the first move against the Communists that made any sense."[52]

In another box, Stone quoted Gen. Earle G. Wheeler, the Army Chief of Staff, as saying at a Pentagon briefing that the Vietcong obtained arms (such as the 57 millimeter recoiless rifle) from North Vietnam and China. In the box below contradicting the "official myth," however, Stone published a piece from the Baltimore Sun that recounted an incident involving McNamara, who was told that the captured 57-millimeter rifle was American-made, not Chinese. The Box was headed: "McNamara Blushed to Learn that Captured Viet Cong Rifles are U.S. Made."[53]

---

[50] Ibid., April 18, 1963, p. 34.

[51] Time, May 11, 1963, p. 25.

[52] Newsweek, April 9, 1963, p. 45.

[53] Weekly, Oct. 28, 1963, p. 2.

The same format on the following page challenged the government's claim that the war was instigated by North Vietnamese Communists after the "success story" of Diem (a thesis offered by Rusk in a speech before the Economic Club of New York). In the following box, Stone quoted at length from French scholar Phillippe Devillers' book, North Vietnam Today. Devillers concluded his analysis of the conflict:

> The point of view of most foreign governments, especially in the West, is that the fighting going on in South Vietnam is simply a subversive campaign directed by Hanoi. . . it leaves out of account the fact that the insurrection existed before the Communists decided to take part, and that they were simply forced to join in. And even among the Communists, the initiative did not originate in Hanoi, but from the grass roots, where the people were literally driven by Diem to take up arms in self-defense.[54]

The Deviller view of the war differed sharply, of course, from that offered by the New York Times, and other national publications, all of which pointed to "Communist aggression" as the cause.

Stone used the same technique to further refute the "official myth" of the U.S. government that democracy under Diem was working by quoting from historian Bernard B. Fall's book, Two-Viet Nams and comparing his findings with the pronouncements made by Secretary of State Rusk. Rusk said the four national elections, the "thousands" of elected hamlet councils, and the forthcoming village council

---

[54] Ibid., p. 3.

elections showed steady movement toward a constitutional system resting upon popular consent." The excerpt from Fall's book, however, indicated, that constitutional government was a long way off. Fall described the "disaffection of the people" over mass arrests, the jailing of those who challenged the government, "anti-democratic elections," and public opinion and a press that had been "reduced to silence." The promised reforms, when they were finally introduced, Fall wrote, "were hardly the kind that would win the support of the villages."[55]

The final box in the special Vietnam issue of the Weekly challenged the use of chemical sprays, first brougt to light six months earlier by Bertrand Russell. At a Pentagon briefing, General Wheeler declined to comment when asked about the success of the U.S. campaign to destroy Viet Cong rice crops and their hiding places in the dense forests by chemical sprays. Beneath the "no comment" response of General Wheeler, Stone quoted from the book, Conflict in the Shadows; the Nature and Politics of Guerrilla War, by James Eliot Cross. Cross said the utility of defoliants against the guerrillas "still seems open to question" but that in the tropic new growth appears "distressingly quickly." The biggest drawbacks in using

---

[55]Ibid., p. 5.

chemical sprays Cross wrote, were "serious psychological and political" ones, that such a policy was not likely to endear it to the population of the region concerned."

Stone, in the Vietnam issue of the Weekly, was particularly critical of President Kennedy and his administration. He wrote that the "primary obstacle" to a negotiated settlement of the war was in Washington:

> Kennedy cannot afford to go into the campaign next year and face a Republican cry that under the Democrats we "lost" Vietnam, whether by withdrawal or negotiation. The politically safest course is to "stand firm" i.e. to follow the line of least resistance, though this means continuation of a war that most observers agree cannot be won, and could at any time expand dangerously. As in France, the national interest is to be subordinated to the convenience of the political leadership; we will go on pouring out blood and treasure; we have already sunk some $5 billions in the Indochinese quagmire. The Administrations's hope is by a little pressure on Diem, at least for some face-saving reforms, and a lot of flim-flam at home, to keep this tragic comedy going at least until after the 1964 elections.[56]

Continuing his criticism of the United States Vietnam policy, Stone wrote:

> The outcry about Diem diverts attention from the policies of Kennedy. The inhamanity which has made a world scandal of South Vietnam has its origin as much in Washington as in Saigon. The uprooting of the rural population and its incarceration in stockaded villages, the spraying of poisons from the air on crops and cattle in violation, the use of napalm from attacks on villages suspected of harboring rebels--these policies were all formulated and directed out of Washington. The familiar belief that the end justifies the means in any conflict with Communism was enough to wipe out qualms, if any, about the mistreatment of the

---

[56] Ibid., pp. 2-3.

> Vietnamese. It was only the unexpected clash with the Buddhists which brought relations between Washington and Saigon to a crisis. The spectacle of a U.S. supported Catholic family dictatorship oppressing the majority creed, the international repercussions in the Buddhist world and Kennedy's own Catholicism made this most embarrassing. Above all, in the cant of cold war, religion is sacred, God being regarded as safely on our side in the struggle against "atheistic communism." Religious persecution could not be reconciled with holy war. So Mr. Kennedy in his interview with Walter Cronkite on CBS Sept. 2 ventured the opinion that "in the last two months the government" of Diem "has gotten out of touch with the people." This ranks with the best understatements of our time; Diem quite obviously has been out of touch with his people a good deal longer than two months. Mr. Kennedy condemned the repression of the Buddhists but again his choice of words was tepid; he called it "very unwise." The words reflect neither moral revulsion nor human sympathy but only cool calculation. At a press conference a week later he summed up his policy. The test of official action in our government or Diem's was to be whether it might "handicap the winning of the war." This, and not justice for the people of South Vietnam or the establishment of a decent regime there, is our No. 1 aim. All else is subordinate to it. When the main objective is thus military, our main reliance is on the Pentagon and on cloak-and-dagger operations. The government becomes a prisoner of the end and the means it chooses. The type of men, mentality and institution brought into play determines the course of events and constricts the choice of alternatives. The CIA's dominant outlook, even more under McCone than under Dulles, sees Communist conspiracy in every type of colonial struggle and gravitates instinctively to repressive measures for dealing with it.[57]

After discussing the Administration's lack of candor about what was happening in Vietnam and within government circles concerning the war ("The effort to manage the news has never been more blatant than on Vietnam"[58]) Stone finished with this prophetic warning:

---

[57] Ibid., pp. 3-4.

[58] Ibid., p. 8.

> The desperate attempt to hide the truth about this hopeless but savage war is pulling our government toward the rewriting of history in an attempt to impose a party line myth on the press and public. UNLESS THERE IS A COUNTER CAMPAIGN OF PRESSURE TO BRING HOME THE TRUTH, THE WAR WILL DRAG ON, POISONING THE AIR OF FREEDOM AT HOME, IMPOSING MISERY ON THE BEWILDERED PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM AND RISKING A WIDER CONFLAGRATION.[59] (author's emphasis).

One week later, on November 1, Diem and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu were overthrown in a military coup and were killed trying to leave the country. The coup came as no surprise in Washington and Saigon to American officers who, according to the Pentagon Papers, helped plan and direct Diem's ouster.[60] In a letter to President Kennedy, U.S. Ambassador to South Vietnam Henry Cabot Lodge wrote: "We are launched on a course from which there is no respectable turning back; the overthrow of the Diem government. . . . There is no turning back because there is no possibility, in my view, that the war can be won under a Diem administration."[61]

As the Pentagon study points out, the coup offered the United States an opportunity to reevaluate its commitment and to withdraw from South Vietnam but, instead, "our complicity in his (Diem's) overthrow heightened our

---

[59] Ibid.

[60] For a detailed discussion of the events surrounding the coup see Sheehan, Pentagon Papers, pp. 158-231.

[61] Ibid., p. 197.

responsibilities and our commitment" in Vietnam.[62] As the Lodge letter indicated, the goal of preventing a Communist or neutralist government in the South had not changed, only the means to that end.

The national press in the United States continued to support the policy, even after the coup. The New York Times said "the only surprising thing about the military coup is that it has not come sooner. . . . What is needed now is a rapid move toward a broadly based government that encompasses most or all of the country's non-Communist political groups."[63] The following day, the Times editorially said that "fortunately, the new Vietnam rulers are dedicated anti-Communists who reject any idea of neutralism and pledge themselves to stand with the free world."[64] Time magazine long a Diem booster, said that "for better or for worse, Minh (General Don Van Minh, leader of the coup) [was] now Washington's man, and his success or failure in the terrible war against the Viet Cong [would] be America's success or failure."[65] Newsweek, which referred to Diem as the "little tyrant,"[66] took a wait and see attitude about the new regime but expressed hope that it would succeed.

---

[62] Ibid., p. 158.

[63] New York Times, Nov. 2, 1963, p. 24.

[64] Ibid., Nov. 3, 1963, p. 8.

[65] Time, Nov. 8. 1963, p. 32.

[66] Newsweek, Nov. 11, 1963, p. 31.

While the national press seemed resigned to the new Saigon government and expressed optimism that the war against the Communists would press forward, in his Weekly, I. F. Stone published an article headed: "What If People, After Diem's Overthrow, Vote For Peace?" Speculating on a statement made by Representative Clement J. Zablocki of Wisconsin, which advocated new "free elections" for Vietnam, Stone asked whether the United States would allow peace, or reunification of Vietnam under Ho Chi Minh, or if Kennedy would allow even neutralist, anti-war, or pro-Communist candidates. He concluded that the new generals "headed by a weak turncoat who has served any and every regime foreign and domestic will bring neither peace or freedom to Vietnam." Stone suggested the formulation of a committee to "agitate for a truly democratic foreign policy" and peace in Vietnam.[67]

In the final issue of the Weekly for 1963, Stone wrote once again that "we are approaching a turning point, either to risk widening the conflict by intervening with our own combat troops, or settling the war at the conference table."[68] And in a box headed "Slowly Catching UP," Stone quoted a New York Times dispatch that said the hamlet program "aroused deep popular resentment" under Diem

---

[67] Weekly, Nov. 11, 1963, p. 2.

[68] Ibid., Dec. 23, 1963, p. 1.

and went on to say the charges of their being "concentration camps" were in many instances accurate. Beneath the New York Times report, Stone offered this jibe:

> As long ago as The Weekly of April 17, 1961, in calling attention to some dangerously rose-colored views of Diem's regime, we compared the picture drawn of these hamlets by Leo Cherne in the New York Times Magazine, April 9, 1961, with that drawn by Robert Guillian, the Far Eastern expert of Le Monde, (Paris) three days earlier. Cherne called them Diems "most imaginative project . . . the most dramatic and fruitful pioneering rural ventures since the Israeli cooperative fare, the kibbutz." M. Guillian said this rural experiment "conducted in haste and in often brutal fashion has been almost everywhere a political and economic failure." We're glad to see the Times catch up.[69]

Despite the coup, the situation in South Vietnam continued to "deteriorate," according to Secretary of State McNamara after returning from a trip to Saigon in late December. He said: "The situation is very disturbing. Current trends, unless reversed in the next two-three months, would lead to a neutralization at best and more likely to a Communist-controlled state." The Pentagon study said this assessment by McNamara prepared the groundwork for the American escalation of the war in 1964.[70] Furthermore, the new American President, Lyndon Johnson, indicated he would follow the Kennedy Vietnam policy of helping the country win the fight against the "externally

---

[69] Ibid., p. 2.

[70] Sheehan, Pentagon Papers, p. 190.

directed and supported Communist conspiracy." He said the war would be over by the end of 1965.[71]

So 1963 ended with a new American President, a new government in South Vietnam, and the same U.S. policy of preventing a pro-Communist government in Saigon; a policy fully supported by the American press, with the exception of I. F. Stone's Weekly.

---

[71] Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE POLITICS OF ESCALATION, 1964

"We still seek no wider war."
--President Lyndon B. Johnson, 1964[1]

Nineteen sixty-four was an election year in the United States and "presidential politics" dictated that Vietnam be placed on the back burner until after November. Although President Johnson was totally opposed to French President Charles deGaulle's proposal to neutralize South Vietnam, he wanted to neutralize the war issue in the United States and, thus, keep it away from the Republicans, particularly Senator Barry Goldwater, the Republican presidential nominee, who was urging escalation.[2] So, during the first half of 1964, the Vietnam war was kept in low profile.

But that is not to say that American involvement decreased or even remained stable. On February 1, 1964, President Johnson, on the recommendation of Secretary of Defense McNamara, ordered the United States military to begin Operation Plan 34A. According to the Pentagon study,

[1]Sheehan, Pentagon Papers, p. 264.

[2]Halberstam, Best and the Brightest, pp. 401-405.

this was "an elaborate program of covert military operations against the state of North Vietnam."[3] These clandestine operations, which started six months before the Tonkin Gulf incident, were being conducted while the Johnson administration was planning to secure a congressional resolution that it could use as a virtual declaration of war.[4] The 34A operations included spy-plane reconaissance missions over North Vietnam, kidnapping North Vietnamese citizens for intelligence information, sabotage, psychological warfare, commando raids to blow up bridges, and the bombardment of coastal installations in North Vietnam by PT boats. Two other important elements in the covert war were air operations over Laos and destroyer patrols in the Gulf of Tonkin, the latter used to both "show force" and to collect intelligence.[5] The Joint Chiefs of Staff at this time were urging the administration to escalate by bombing key North Vietnam targets, commiting U.S. ground troops, and using U.S. forces "as necessary in direct actions against North Vietnam."[6] As Neil Sheehan wrote in his analysis of the Pentagon study in the New York Times:

---

[3]Sheehan, Pentagon Papers, p. 235.

[4]Ibid., p. 234.

[5]Ibid., pp. 238-240.

[6]Ibid., p. 241.

> The United States found itself particularly unable to cope with the Vietcong insurgency, first through the Saigon military regime of Gen. Duong Van Minh and and later through that of Gen. Nguyen Khanh, who seized power in a coup d'etat on Jan. 30, 1964. Accordingly, attention focused more and more on North Vietnam as "the root of the problem," in the words of the Joint Chiefs. . . . Intelligence analyses of the time stated, however, that "the primary sources of Communist strength in South Vietnam are indigenous," arising out of the revolutionary social aims of the Communists and their identification with the nationalist cause during the independence struggle against France in the nineteen-fifties.[7]

As the political situation grew more unstable in South Vietnam, the plans for bombing the North increased. McNamara, following a visit in March to Saigon, recommended two military programs to be used against the North. The first, capable of being launched on a seventy-two-hour notice, was called "Border Control and Retaliatory Actions," which provided for "retaliatory bombing strikes" into North Vietnam among other options. The other program, "Graduated Overt Military Pressure," could be put into operation on thirty days' notice and would include "air attacks against military and possible industrial targets."[8] These operations at that time were only contingency plans. As President Johnson wrote Ambassador Lodge on March 20: ". . . our planning for action against the North is on a contingency basis at present, and immediate problem in

---

[7] Ibid., pp. 241-242.

[8] Ibid., p. 243.

this area is to develop the strongest possible military and political base for possible later action."[9]

Plans for the full-scale bombing of North Vietnam were also being readied by the administration in late May under the name "Operation Plan 37-64." Although the air war would not fully commence for another nine months, this plan indicated how far the United States was willing to carry the war, to the extent of planning targets, the number of planes to be involved, and the bomb tonnages.[10]

Also underway at the time was a move within the administration to obtain a congressional resolution, an action approved by Johnson. The purpose, according to the Pentagon study, "was to dramatize and make clear to other nations the firm resolve of the United States Government in an election year to support the President in taking whatever action was necessary to resist Communist aggression in Southeast Asia." This planning would result in the Southeast Asia Resolution (more commonly known as the Tonkin Gulf Resolution) which passed the Congress in early August and gave the President what he saw as a virtual "declaration of war."[11]

---

[9] Ibid., p. 244.

[10] For a detailed discussion of the military planning during this period, see Sheehan, Pentagon Papers, pp. 242-253.

[11] Ibid., pp. 256-257.

It should be pointed out that the American public and Congress knew nothing of either the military or political planning that was underway in the first six months of 1964. It was a closely guarded secret.

During this period of increasing American involvement in Vietnam, I. F. Stone devoted more and more space in the Weekly to the war. He constantly pushed for a negotiated settlement and complete U.S. disengagement. In the February 10 issue, Stone wrote that "the Vietnamese war is a blind alley which is destroying faith in our government not only there but at home."[12] He also pointed out that all the major newspapers, except the New York Herald-Tribune, had omitted the statement of new Vietnam Premier Nguyen Khanh that he was in a position to leave his country with more than $10 million and "live the easy life" if he so chose. Stone asked how a minor general in Vietnam could amass that much money when his main job was supposed to be fighting guerrillas. Stone sarcastically wrote that this "horatio Alger" story could be put to good use by the U.S. psychological warfare corps by posting in each village a poster stating that South Vietnam is the "land of opportunity under free enterprise, where the humblest village boy may aspire to become a General and amass 10 million bucks."[13] Stone ended the article with this warning:

---

[12] Weekly, Feb. 10, 1964, p. 1.

[13] Ibid.

> The biggest obstacle to a settlement is the myth that the South Vietnamese war is an invasion, not a rebellion. Secretary Rusk in his speech Jan. 22 . . . trotted out this same stale official version. The dangerous corollary of the view that it was all a plot from outside is the reckless proposition that the way to end the fighting around Saigon is to bomb Hanoi. Short of occupation by a major U.S. army, which the guerrillas can bog down for years as they did with the French, there is no alternative to negotiation and neutralization.[14] (Author's emphasis)

On March 9, Stone continued to insist that the root cause of the war was internal, not external, and used a statement made by Rusk to support his thesis. Rusk, at a press conference, said that "no miracle in the North was going to suddenly transform or eliminate the problem in South Vietnam." But if the war was a case of aggression from the North as the government has insisted all along, Stone wrote, then a "miraculous shift" in the North would end the conflict. Stone pointed out the Rusk statement "implies that the problem is local, deep-seated and not to be solved from the outside. This contradicts all that he and McNamara and the White House have been saying about the war for three years."[15] No national publication noted this contradiction by Rusk.

A week later, Stone led off the Weekly with an article headed: "When a Nation's Leaders Fear to Tell the Truth." It caught Secretary of Defense McNamara making

---

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., March 9, 1964, p. 3.

two different statements about Vietnam, one public and one private. In what Stone called McNamara's "annual military posture statement" before the House Armed Services Committee, McNamara said "the survival of an independent government in South Vietnam is so important to the security of all Southeast Asia and to the free world that I can conceive of no alternative than to take all necessary measures . . . to prevent a Communist victory." This, Stone wrote, gave the impression the United States "was ready to extend the war in order to win."[16] McNamara, however, conveyed a different impression when questioned by the committee in closed session. His statements there were buried in more than 1,000 pages of testimony and not released for three weeks. In response to several questions, he said the major responsibility for the war belonged to the South Vietnamese and only they could win it--"doubling our military aid would not . . . substantially increase the effectiveness of their military operations." McNamara said he did not think sending hundreds of thousands of American troops was the solution to the problem.

Following the McNamara excerpts, Stone quoted the testimony of Army Chief of Staff Earle Wheeler which supported the secretary of state and went on to say that the major problem was the government of South Vietnam. In response to the testimony, Stone wrote:

---

[16] Ibid., March 16, 1964, p. 1.

> Unfortunately this realistic estimate was given in closed hearing and is buried in a voluminous record. It is out of harmony with the demonological views impressed on American thinking by cold war propaganda. This has led us to see the Vietnamese uprising simply as a Communist plot, and Communism as an occult conspiracy with magical powers whereby a handful of infiltrating agitators can 'infect' a whole population with Marxism-Leninism though these same natives can barely read the directions on a can of soup. . . . The basic problem is not in Vietnam but in the USA. So long as these melodramatic nightmares color so much of American political thinking, there will be demands for extension of the war, though we can smash all North Vietnam and China with nuclear bombs without making the peasants in the Mekong Delta any more content with the corrupt and repressive governments we have maintained in power over them. This is no doubt what Secretary Rusk meant when he said cryptically Feb. 27 that 'no miracle' in the North would solve the problem in the South. But such remarks are made sotto voce. Into the headlines which mold the public mind Rusk and McNamara continue to pour a picture of the conflict as an invasion from the North, supplied by arms from China. SO LONG AS THEY FEAR TO TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT THE WAR, THEY CANNOT FREE THEMSELVES FROM THE UNDERTOW PULLING THEM TOWARD ITS SUICIDAL EXTENSION. (Author's emphasis) [17]

In the same March 16 issue, Stone published an abridged Senate speech by Democratic Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon, who called for the complete withdrawal of all U.S. military personnel from Vietnam. Morse said "American unilateral participation in the war of South Vietnam cannot be justified, and will not be justified in American history." The senator raised the possibility of nuclear war if the escalation continued and concluded his speech with this critical assessment of American involvement: "The rationalization that our Government gives for American

---

[17] Ibid., p. 4.

troops being in South Vietnam is that the South Vietnam government invited them in. But control of the South Vietnam government has been passed around within the American-financed governing clique until its association with U.S. support is closer than its association with the people of Vietnam."[18] These were heretical words in the pre-Tonkin Gulf days of 1964 and, predicatably, the national press largely ignored the Morse speech and others like it. The Weekly was one of the few places where dissenting views of the war could be read.

The Weekly's criticism of the new Khanh regime in Saigon continued the following week. In a box, entitled "Gen. Khanh Does A Swift Job of Pulling The Wool Over McNamara's Eyes," Stone quoted a March 7 United Press International dispatch that said U.S. military observers were critical of some of the new Vietnamese commanders named by Khanh after the coup, that they were either unproved or inferior to their predecessors and were appointed as a reward for their help in the coup. Following that report, Stone published a March 9 Associated Press story in which McNamara said Khanh's reorganization of the national leadership was responsible for the "progress in South Vietnam" since his December visit.[19]

---

[18] Ibid., p. 3.

[19] Ibid., March 23, 1964, p. 2.

During the years under study, I. F. Stone used only one picture in his publication. It appeared on March 30, 1964, and showed a young Vietnamese child whose body was covered with burns from a napalm bomb. The child was held in his father's arms. Although the Associated Press usually sells its photographs to non-subscribers for $15, Stone said he was refused permission to purchase it "for no clear reason." Earlier, the wire service said Stone would have to change the caption if he were to purchase it. The caption made specific reference to napalm and indicated the boy lived in a village near the Cambodian border. Stone pointed out that the New York Times published the picture but deleted any mention of napalm. He speculated that the air attack might have occurred over a Cambodian village since the South Vietnamese, Stone noted,"have long insisted that they should be 'permitted to pursue Communist guerrillas a reasonable distance into Cambodian territory' and there, presumably, do what they do at home--burn out any village in which they suspect guerrillas may be hiding." Stone concluded the article by saying he hoped his readers would find the picture revolting."[20]

Beneath the article on napalm, Stone ran a portion of an interview with Senator Frank Church of Idaho which

---

[20]Ibid., March 30, 1964, p. 2.

had appeared in the March 15 issue of the Washington Star. In it, Church said he was not optimistic about the success of U.S. policy in Vietnam because most of the Vietnamese, North and South alike, regard Ho Chi Minh as the "George Washington of Vietnam" and "the authentic architect of independence from the French." Senator Church warned that "wars against George Washingtons are not easily won."[21]

On April 6, Stone ran the results of a Harris public opinion poll on Vietnam which showed that more people favored neutralization of the South (35 per cent) than extension of the war North (26 per cent). Assessing the results, Stone wrote:

> If a third of the people are for neutralization and another third 'not sure' despite State and Defense Dept. propaganda, it is clear the President could mobilize strong support for ending the war on the basis of free elections in a neutral South Vietnam.
>
> McNamara seems to have other plans. A Washington Star editorial the day this poll was published reported McNamara had said 'privately on Capitol Hill' that if the war did not take a turn for the better in about six months (right after November, perhaps?) it would be extended. The idea of first consulting Congress or the country does not seem to have occurred to the Pentagon computers.[22]

In a box on the same page, Stone contrasted the views of two senators, Wayne Morse, and J. William Fulbright of Arkansas, on the origins of the war. Fulbright who had not always been a critic of U.S. policy, said "a

---

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., April 6, 1964, p. 1.

very strong element of outside interference is . . . involved" in Vietnam and quoted a C.I.A. study that found that North Vietnam was the source of the trouble. (This is what the Johnson administration had claimed all along.) In reply to Fulbright, Morse drew a parallel between the situation in Vietnam and the American Revolution:

> I suppose we ought to have some appreciation of the British viewpoint at the time of the American Revolution, when the British did not look with favor upon the French assistance to the American colonies. . . . The fact that one group in South Vietnam is obtaining assistance from North Vietnam and another group is obtaining assistance from the U.S. does not change in the slightest degree the fact that it is a civil war.[23]

Morse, the senate's most outspoken critic of the Vietnam war, virtually became a regular contributor to the Weekly in the months leading up to the Tonkin Gulf events of early August. Stone reprinted a number of Morse's senate speeches during that time, speeches that were being ignored by most of the American press. In the same April 6 issue there appeared another speech by Morse calling for peace in Vietnam. Morse said Americans are dying "in the execution of a unilateral policy that no longer has a direct bearing on the defenses of the United States" and that "once the American people obtain the facts about American foreign policy in South Vietnam, they will repudiate the policy."[24]

---

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

Another Morse speech appeared in the April 27 issue of the Weekly, preceeded by a short introduction by Stone. "The press blackout on the handful of Senators opposing the war in Vietnam is scandalous," Stone wrote.[25] He cited a speech by Senator Ernest Gruening, of Alaska, which called attention to the doubling of American casualties in the past year. He said mail to his office, the heaviest he had ever received, was virtually unanimous in support of his proposal for complete withdrawal. "This," Stone wrote, "is another index of how poorly the press reflects opinion." But the worst example of news suppression, he said, was the blackout imposed on Morse's speech of April 14 in which the senator had quoted Aviation Week magazine about the expanded air war by South Vietnam beyond its borders. Morse was fearful that if the war was escalated into North Vietnam, as the article indicated, the use of nuclear weapons could be employed. He also said that the United States had no justification under international law for being in South Vietnam as a combatant. Beneath the Morse speech, Stone published an excerpt from the Aviation Week article, which told of U.S. aircraft, flown by South Vietnamese pilots, being used in "over-the-border strikes at Communist supply centers and communications

---

[25] Ibid., April 27, 1964, p. 2.

routes." The article said American officials decided during the Fall of 1963 that the war could not be won by confining it within South Vietnam.

These revelations, made public by Senator Morse, were published only in the Weekly. For one reason or another, the American press ignored the Aviation Week article telling of the expanded war. And this was at a time when President Johnson and other administration officials were denying that the United States planned to escalate the fighting.

In a May 4 article, "How to Make Peace in Cuba, Vietnam and the World," Stone outlined his proposal for peace in Southeast Asia, calling for a "neutral belt" that would include Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam.[26] Stone cited an article by Georges Chaffard of Le Monde as evidence that the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam would not accept a dictatorship in the South, and said it was time for the United States to explore the possibility of free elections under the supervision of the United Nations. Stone also offered evidence that both China and North Vietnam would accept such a solution, China because a return to the 1954 Geneva agreements and neutralization forbid the United States from using South Vietnam as a military base in the Far East, and North Vietnam

---

[26] Ibid., May 4, 1964, p. 1.

because its leaders had indicated on several occassions that they were willing to temporarily postpone reunification in order to resume trade with the South. In addition, such a settlement would provide "another face-saver for the world's most Oriental Western country." Stone concluded the article by commenting:

> Admittedly, from a narrow political point of view, it would be more comfortable to let the Vietnamese people go on suffering--and Americans dying--in Vietnam until after the election. Johnson is afraid of being outflanked on the issue by Lodge and the Republicans; McNamara, in light-headed fashion, has staked his political future on the war. But there is no reason to believe the war can be kept on ice until after November. Our puppet forces have lost the will to fight. Johnson may soon have to choose whether to intervene with U.S. troops to please the hotheads or take constructive steps toward peace, steps which, as recent polls show, have substantial support among the American people.[27]

Senator Gruening, in a speech in the senate on June 3, called for an immediate cease-fire in Vietnam. The speech was ignored by most of the press but an abridgement of it was published in the June 15 issue of the Weekly. Gruening's speech pointed out the essential difference between the anti-war Senators (Gruening and Morse) and the two major national newspapers, the New York Times and the Washington Post. Gruening stated that since the war would eventually be ended at the conference table, the United States should take the initiative to obtain a

---

[27] Ibid., p. 4.

cease-fire. The two newspapers, while admitting that only negotiation would end the fighting, editorially supported increased American involvement to "strengthen our hand at the conference table." This was what the Post called the "middle ground." Gruening's reply to that position, as quoted in the Weekly, was: "In other words we have got to kill a lot more American boys as well as Vietnamese and spend more millions of dollars before we do what we know we will have to do ultimately. What utter folly!"[28]

The small but growing number of war critics in the Congress continued to find their speeches published in the Weekly but seldom elsewhere. In the issue dated June 22, Stone published excerpts of a speech by Democratic Congressman William Fitts Ryan of New York, the first member of the House of Representatives to call for a negotiated settlement to the war. And a week later, portions of a speech by Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhone Island, who was just beginning to question the war, appeared in the Weekly.

On June 29, Stone ran an abridgement of a Senate speech by Wayne Morse, who said that President Johnson had "grossly overstepped his moral and legal rights" when he had said the United States would seek peace through military power.[29] Morse called this an "artful piece of

[28] Ibid., June 15, 1964, p. 3.

[29] Ibid., June 29, 1964, p. 1.

double-talk" and said that no president was "alone entitled to threaten war or to commit the United States to war." President Johnson, Morse said, was "making the United States the world's leading threat to world peace, and he [would] discredit himself and his Administration in the eyes of history if he leaves our people the legacy of a unilateral war in Asia." On July 6, another of Morse's anti-war speeches in the Senate was published in the Weekly, again warning of a possible nuclear confrontation with China and urging withdrawal of U.S. military personnel.[30]

In the same issue, Stone published an abridged statement by the Federation of American Scientists who protested the use of defoliants in Vietnam. The statement said the F.A.S. opposed the "first-use" of chemical and biological weapons and is "further opposed to experimentation on foreign soil."[31] The Defense Department previously confirmed reports that these defoliants were being used in Vietnam. Although the statement by the Federation of American Scientists was released to the press, it did not appear in the New York Times, the Washington Post, or the national news magazines.

---

[30] Ibid., July 6, 1964, p. 3.

[31] Ibid.

Another speech that was "blacked out" by the national press was delivered by Gruening in the Senate on July 2. It was reprinted in the Weekly on July 13. He said in part:

> Suppose we win an apparent military decision. Suppose we succeed in identifying all the Vietcong and containing them behind barbed wire. . . . We would have to feed and clothe them well into the future. We would have to seal off the borders with U.S. soldiers. We would have a U.S. colony in Southeast Asia. This might have been considered an accomplishment in the 15th or 16th centuries but not in the 20th. . . . What about the South Vietnamese people not behind bars? Would we have instilled in them a love of the U.S. as the great peace-maker who killed or imprisoned their fathers, brothers and cousins? Is this the way to spread the light of democracy abroad? . . .
>
> The GOP would-be policy-makers are advocating war and the perpetual colonization of South Vietnam. The action to be taken with respect to South Vietnam is to call for a cease-fire and take the issue to the United Nations.[32]

As the Tonkin Gulf incident drew closer, Stone's position was clear: a complete withdrawal of all U.S. troops from South Vietnam, a cease-fire supervised by the United Nations, and neutralization of the South through free elections which would include all political parties, Communist and non-Communist.

The national press saw the war in much different terms. The New York Times still viewed it as a confrontation between "the free world" and the "Communist bloc." In an editorial on March 22 the newspaper said that only

---

[32] Ibid., July 13, 1964, p. 1.

by a common, united front, could Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam stand any chance "of saving themselves from being swamped by the Communist tide."[33] Of course, to accomplish this, the United States would have to play the major role in the fight. So the New York Times, as Senator Gruening pointed out, adopted a policy of escalation and negotiation. In a May 24 editorial, the Times offered this strategy:

> Our task right now is to convince the Communists that they, no more than we, are going to attain such a victory. It may well be . . . that to teach this lesson a further substantial investment of American forces in this area will be needed. We believe the people of the United States are prepared to accept such additional sacrifices for clearly defined, limited political objectives.[34]

The New York Times, on July 4, reiterated that position by observing that the United States had "no immediate alternative but to put more in to shore up the balance of power before it tips over against us."[35] And a month later, the paper said "we should not, perhaps, give up our option to punish North Vietnam, the direct aggressor, if this becomes unavoidable."[36]

It was ironic that less than a week before the Tonkin Gulf incident, the Times could praise the Johnson

---

[33] New York Times, Mar. 22, 1964, Sec. IV, p. 8.

[34] Ibid., May 24, 1964, Sec. IV, p. 10.

[35] Ibid., June 4, 1964, p. 36.

[36] Ibid., July 3, 1964, p. 20.

administration for its "genuine effort" in facilitating news coverage of the war. The Johnson administration, the editorial said, was "now moving decisively to provide the American people . . . with accurate information about the course of the war and its aims."[37] This was during the same period that the covert war, mentioned earlier in this chapter, was being carried out against North Vietnam; that McNamara was saying one thing in open committee testimony and another in closed session; that planning for the increased air war and drafting of a congressional resolution to expand the Presidential power to make war were under way; and that the New York Times was refusing to acknowledge the existence of those few members of the Congress who opposed the war.

Newsweek's position during the pre-Tonkin months of 1964 was much the same as the Times's: that the U.S. needed to remain in South Vietnam and do whatever necessary to insure the survival of the Saigon regime against the forces of "Communist aggression." On June 8, in a cover story about North Vietnam ("Face of the Enemy"), Newsweek advanced the "domino theory": "If . . . it (the Khanh government in Saigon) weakens or falls, not only South Vietnam but all of Southeast Asia would be open to

---

[37] Ibid., July 20, 1964, p. 32.

piecemeal absorbtion by the Communists."[38] The editors said "there were no doves in Washington last week in the sense that no one advocated an abandonment of the U.S. position in Southeast Asia."[39] Newsweek evidently chose to overlook the Senate speeches by Morse and Gruening, both of whom were on record as advocating withdrawal. The editors were also uncritical of future escalation by the United States commenting "it will not shrink from escalating the war if that proves necessary to stem the Communist advances in Southeast Asia."[40]

While the New York Times and Newsweek both said escalation might be necessary and indicated their support of such a move, Time magazine was outspoken in its insistence that the war should be carried to the North. It called neutralization "unthinkable" and talked about taming "the widely hated Chinese dragon."[41] Though the magazine ran almost weekly accounts of the war, its position was probably best summarized in a story published May 8, explaining the "domino theory":

> First to be knocked over by the fall of South Vietnam would obviously be Laos and Cambodia. Little Laos . . . lies bloodied and paralyzed by a Geneva

---

[38] Newsweek, June 8, 1964, p. 27.

[39] Ibid., p. 34.

[40] Ibid., July 6, 1964, p. 19.

[41] Time, April 3, 1964, p. 36.

> neutralist agreement that has resulted only in chaos . . . . Next Thailand would be severely threatened. . . . Thailand is still the stablest country in the neighborhood. But it would have a hard time holding up amid the other falling dominoes. Likely to fall would be Burma, given its 1,370-mile frontier with Red China. . . . With the Indo-Chinese peninsula gone, the pressure southward would become increasingly hard to resist. The healthy, vigorous and anti-Communist Malaysian Federation, already under attack by Indonesia, would probably draw ever closer to the Communist camp. The Phillipines would probably hold out but would be severely menaced.[42]

The first week of August, 1964, was a crucial one in the history of the Vietnam war. The events that took place both in the Gulf of Tonkin and Washington would set the stage for massive military intervention by the United States several months later. At the time, however, with events unfolding rapidly and a lack of information, few people in government or the press forsaw the long range significance of the Gulf of Tonkin incidents.

Information concerning this period of the war has been brought slowly to public attention over the years since 1964. The following is a brief outline of the events that precipitated the first U.S. bombing raids on North Vietnam and a congressional resolution authorizing the President of the United States to "take all necessary steps" to "prevent further aggression" in Vietnam.[43]

---

[42] Ibid., p. 34.

[43] For an excellent examination of the incidents surrounding the Gulf of Tonkin affair, see Joseph Goulden,

On July 30, South Vietnamese naval commandos, using U.S. "swift boats" and under the direction of U.S. General William Westmoreland, staged the first clandestine 34A raids on the North Vietnamese islands of Hon Me and Hon Nieu in the Gulf of Tonkin. During the night, the boats shelled the two islands. The following night, the navy destroyer U.S.S. Maddox arrived in the gulf on its second electronic espionage mission to gather intelligence about North Vietnamese radar frequencies.[44] The mission brought the Maddox within four nautical miles of Hon Me just two days after the South Vietnamese attack. The Pentagon study indicates that the Maddox violated the territorial waters of North Vietnam (twelve miles) on several occasions.

The first North Vietnamese PT boat attack on the Maddox occurred on August 2. Three North Vietnamese boats chased the U.S. destroyer twenty-three miles off the coast. Fighting ensued and one PT boat was sunk by the Maddox and the other two were damaged by planes from the U.S. Ticonderoga. The North Vietnamese, according to the Pentagon study and other sources, believed the Maddox was a "South Vietnamese escort vessel."[45]

Truth is the First Casualty Chicago: Rand, 1969. A detailed account of the military planning of this period is contained in the Pentagon Papers, pp. 234-306.

[44]Goulden, Truth is the First Casualty, pp. 122-126.

[45]Sheehan, Pentagon Papers, p. 259.

Following the first attack, President Johnson sent the U.S.S. Turner Joy to the Gulf of Tonkin to support the Maddox eleven miles off the coast of North Vietnam and within the country's territorial limits. That day there were two more 34A attacks by South Vietnamese PT boats. They bombed the Rhon River estuary and a radar installation at Vinhson. The two commanding officers of the destroyers were informed of the attacks.[46]

Then, twenty-four hours after the second clandestine raid, the Maddox reported that it and the Turner Joy had been attacked by North Vietnamese torpedo boats in what was to be the significant clash. There was a severe electrical storm that night, however, and confusion seemed to be the order of the day. No crew member on the Maddox sighted any other sea vessels in the area; one crew member, however, did say he had seen an "outline" of a boat in the water. The radar and sonar sighting were contradictory. Neither the crew of the Maddox nor the Turner Joy saw or heard any gun fire on August 4, which directly refuted McNamara's statement at an August 6 press conference that the Turner Joy had reported being fired upon by automatic weapons.[47] In fact, events were so confused that at one point a gunner on the Maddox was ordered to

---

[46] Ibid., p. 260.

[47] Goulden, Truth Is the First Casualty, pp. 151-152.

fire at a target picked up by the ship's radar. He refused until he was sure of the target. The target turned out to be the Turner Joy.[48] The alleged attack by North Vietnamese PT boats resulted in no damage to either American destroyer or in the confirmed sinking of any "enemy" craft.[49]

Reports of the second attack sent the Johnson administration into action. When word reached Washington the Joint Chiefs began to select bombing targets for reprisal air strikes on North Vietnam from the list of ninety-four drawn up in late May. The military leaders chose four torpedo boat bases and an oil storage depot near Vinh. At the same time, deployment of Operation 37-64 began, which would send more air power into the area to prepare for a possible counter-attack by the North, and possibly, China. President Johnson, at a National Security Council meeting, ordered the retaliatory attacks and decided to obtain the long planned resolution from Congress.[50]

The night of August 4, at 11:36, President Johnson went on national television to inform the nation of the action he had ordered against North Vietnam. At the same time, U.S. bombers were headed toward the targets in the North for the first time in the war. In his television address, Johnson said in part:

---

[48] Ibid., pp. 111-112.

[49] Ibid., pp. 151-159.

[50] Sheehan, Pentagon Papers, pp. 261-262.

> . . . Aggression by terror against the peaceful villages of South Vietnam has now been joined by open aggression on the high seas against the United States of America.
>
> The determination of all Americans to carry out our full commitment to the people and to the government of South Vietnam will be redoubled by this outrage. Yet our response for the present will be limited and fitting.
>
> . . . we still seek no wider war. (author's emphasis)

Johnson said he had received support from congressional leaders and from Senator Barry Goldwater, the Republican candidate for President. Johnson finished his short address by saying that "firmness in the right is indispensible today for peace."[51]

The President's Southeast Asia Resolution (more commonly known as the Tonkin Gulf Resolution) arrived in the Senate the following day and was quickly managed through the Senate by William Fulbright, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. The resolution passed without amendment, 88-2 in the Senate and 416-0 in the House, with only Senators Morse and Gruening in opposition. Briefly stated, it gave the President the authority "to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression."[52] The country, like the Congress,

---

[51]Goulden, Truth Is the First Casualty, pp. 37-38.

[52]For a detailed account of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, including Senate debate and testimony, see Foulden, Truth Is the First Casualty, pp. 48-79.

rallied behind its President during the week of the Tonkin affair, approving the two key elements of the May 23 scenerio--congressional authority for wider military action, and the installation of major air combat forces. A Harris public opinion poll of August 10 showed that 85 per cent of the country approved of the air attacks.

The press response, if anything, was even more supportive than the public response. And the national press was no less uncritical than the local press. Time magazine viewed the Tonkin incident as "one of the ill-considered Communist moves against the U.S. in recent years."[53] The magazine went so far as to re-create its own dramatic version of the events that proved to be entertaining but false:

> The night glowed eerily with the nightmarish glare of air-dropped flares and boats' searchlights. For three and a half hours the small boats attacked in pass after pass. Ten enemy torpedoes sizzled through the water. Each time the skippers, tracking the fish by radar, maneuvered to evade them. Gunfire and gun smells and shouts stung the air. Two of the enemy boats went down. Then, at 1:30 a.m., the remaining PT's ended the fight, roared off through the black night to the north.[54]

After reading the account in Time, one crew member of the Maddox said:

> I couldn't believe it, the way they blew that story out of proportion. It was like something out of Male magazine, the way they described that battle.

---

[53] Time, Aug. 14, 1964, p. 11.

[54] Ibid., p. 14.

> All we needed were naked women running up and down the deck. We were disgusted, because it just wasn't true. It didn't happen that way . . . .[55]

Time called the bombing response by the United States "precisely limited" and said "it was established once again that in the cold war, strength and resolution are indespensible weapons."[56] Time failed to discuss the Tonkin Resolution and its ramifications in any detail and dismissed off-hand the two Senate dissenters. It concluded the Tonkin article by saying:

> The only two dissenters were Alaska's Democratic Senator Ernest Gruening and Oregon's irascible Democrat Wayne Morse, both of whom argued that the resolution was unconstitutional because it amounted to a 'predated declaration of war power' normally reserved to congress.
>
> On the other hand, it could be argued that technically Johnson already had all the authority he needed without the resolution--as he had demonstrated so dramatically in the Gulf of Tonkin. The congressional support mainly punctuated the fact that the U. S. was united behind the President. At week's end U.S. forces around the world stood alert. And with them stood their nation.[57]

Newsweek, usually less hawkish than Time, was just as melodramatic about the affair in its published report of the second Tonkin incident:

> The U.S. ships blazed out salvo after salvo of shells. Torpedoes whipped by, some only 100 feet from the destroyers' beams. A PT boat burst into flames and sank. More U.S. jets swooped in . . . .

---

[55]Goulden, Truth Is the First Casualty, p. 158.

[56]Time, Aug. 14, 1964, p. 11.

[57]Ibid., p. 16.

> Another PT boat exploded and sank, and then the others scurried off into the darkness nursing their wounds. The battle was won. Now it was time for American might to strike back.[58]

Newsweek covered the resolution in just two paragraphs, noting that "predictably . . . Wayne Morse, who thinks the U.S. should leave South Vietnam, came out vehemently against the resolution."[59] The magazine raised no questions either about the events in the Gulf of Tonkin or the resolution. Like Time, it viewed the attacks as an unprovoked act of aggression which was answered with a fitting response by the United States.

Although the New York Times mentioned in its news columns that ships like the Maddox sometimes supported South Vietnamese raids on North Vietnam and handled the story with much more restraint than the news magazines, it editorially lined up behind President Johnson. The Times called the attacks "the beginning of a mad adventure" by North Vietnam in an August 5 editorial.[60] The following day, the paper agreed with Johnson that the bombing response was "limited and fitting," and went on to comment:

> Congressional authority for future military action will, in effect, be delegated to the President by a joing resolution scheduled to be voted on today. The

---

[58] Newsweek, Aug. 17, 1964, p. 20.

[59] Ibid., p. 13.

[60] New York Times, Aug. 5, 1964, p. 32.

> President has rightly asked that the resolution express a determination that "all necessary measures" be taken. . . . The nation's united confidence in its Chief Executive is vital. No one else can play the hand.[61] (Author's emphasis)

The Times saw the resolution as "a declaration of national unity and a vote of confidence" and a virtual "blank check" in prosecuting the war. Like Time, it doubted Morse's contention that the resolution gave the President "blanket authority to wage war." The President, according to the New York Times, already possessed such authority. However, the Times hoped Johnson would follow the course he had set in his television address of restraint and seeking "no wider war." It also hoped that the strengthening of the President's hand and the show of national unity during the Tonkin incident would help bring about a peaceful resolution of the war.[62] Editorially, the paper was uncritical of any actions taken by President Johnson during this time. It took the President at his word.

At a time when the American press was eagerly jumping on the Tonkin bandwagon, I. F. Stone was raising doubts about the administration's version of the events. In a special four-page issue of the Weekly dated August 24, entitled "What Few Know About the Tonkin Bay Incidents,"

---

[61] Ibid., Aug. 6, 1964, p. 28.

[62] Ibid., Aug. 8, 1964, p. 18.

Stone reported the attacks on the North Vietnamese islands, covered in detail Senator Morse's dissent, criticized the retaliatory bombing raids, and questioned whether the second attack in the Gulf of Tonkin actually had occurred.

Stone began his Tonkin report with an analysis of the retaliatory bombing raids, using international law and statements by an official of the Johnson administration to condemn the actions of the United States. Stone reported that just four months earlier United Nations Ambassador Adlai Stevenson had told the Security Council that the United States had "repeatedly expressed" its emphatic disapproval "of retaliatory raids, wherever they occur and by whomever they are committed."[63] This statement was made during the debate over Great Britain's retaliatory strike into Yemen. Stevenson was quoted in the Weekly as stating he thought all members of the United Nations could "join in expressing our disapproval of the use of force by either side as a means of solving disputes, a principle that is enshrined in the Charter," especially when such "attacks across borders" could "quickly escalate into full-scale wars." "That resolution and Stevenson's words," Stone wrote, "are as applicable to Southeast Asia as to Southern Arabia." Stone pointed out that although the United Nations correspondents knew of Stevenson's

---

[63] Weekly, Aug. 24, 1964, p. 1.

speech and the passage of the resolution condemning Britain's actions in April, and that the Czechoslovakian delegate mentioned the speech before the Security Council, there was no mention of it in the newspapers.

Stone went on to write the following about the bombing raids:

> Reprisals in peacetime were supposed to have been outlawed by the League of Nations Covenant, the Kellogg Pact and the United Nations Charter. All of them pledged peaceful settlement of disputes. Between nations, as between men, reprisals are lynch law. Some White House ghost writer deserves a literary booby prize for the mindless jingle he turned out to defend ours in Vietnam. "The world remembers, the world must never forget," were the words he supplied for Johnson's speech at Syracuse, "that aggression unchallenged is aggression unleased." This gem of prose is a pretty babble. What the world (and particularly the White House) needs to remember is that aggression is unleased and escalated when one party to a dispute decides for itself who is guilty and how he is to be punished. This is what is happening in Cyprus,where we have been begging Greeks and Turks to desist from the murderous escalation of reprisal and counter-reprisal. Johnson practices in Southeast Asia what he deplores in the Mediterranean.
>
> Public awareness of this is essential because the tide is running strongly toward more reprisal raids in the Far East. The first was the raid by U.S. planes in June on Pathet Lao headquarters in Laos in retaliation for shooting down two reconnaissance planes. We would not hesitate to shoot down reconnaissance planes over our own territory; such overflights are a clear violation of international law. But the U.S., now seems to operate on the principle that invasion of other people's skies is our right and efforts to interfere with it (at least by weaker powers) punishable by reprisal. This is pure "might is right" doctrine.

The same day the United States took the Tonkin affair before the Security Council, Cambodia reported border violations by South Vietnamese and American troops

to the same body. The raid, Cambodia claimed, wounded a peasant and killed a bull. Recalling a sarcastic point made in the Manual of International Law ("military reprisals are open only to the strong against the weak"), Stone wrote that if "Cambodia could only afford a fleet large enough, we suppose it would be justified by Johnsonian standards in lobbing a few shells into the U.S.A"[64]

Military reprisals, even during wartime, were to be kept within well defined limits under international law. According to the State Department manual, Rules of Land Warfare, Stone reported, reprisals were never to be taken "merely for revenge" but "only as an unavoidable last resort" to "enforce the recognized rules of civilized warfare." The manual stated, however, that even then reprisals "should not be excessive or exceed the degree of violence committed by the enemy." After citing the law, Stone wrote:

> These were the principles we applied at the Nuremburg trials. Our reprisal raids on North Vietnam hardly conformed to these standards. By our own account, in self-defense, we had already sunk three or four attacking torpedo boats in two incidents. In neither were our ships damaged nor any of our men hurt; indeed, one bullet imbedded in one destroyer hull is the only proof we have been able to muster that the second of the attacks even took place. To fly 64 bombing sorties in reprisal over four North Vietnamese bases and an oil depot, destroying or damaging 25 North Vietnamese PT boats, a major part of that tiny navy, was hardly punishment to fit the

---

[64] Ibid., p. 2.

> crime. What was our hurry? Why did we have to shoot from the hip and then go to the Security Council? Who was Johnson trying to impress? Ho Chi-minh? or Barry Goldwater?[65]

"This is how it looks on the basis of our own public accounts," Stone said. "It looks worse if one probes behind them." Here Stone, unlike the national press, reported the questions raised by Morse during Senate debate on the Gulf of Tonkin incident. Stone published Morse's disclosure that the U.S. warships were on patrol in the Gulf of Tonkin during the shelling of the two North Vietnamese islands and were within the territorial waters of the North. Morse said U.S. warships in that position were able to give protection to the South Vietnamese boats and the situation was "bound to be looked upon . . . as an act of provocation." Morse said the U.S. knew the South Vietnamese were carrying out these operations against the islands and that it "was a well thought-out military operation." Stone pointed out that the press ignored these disclosures.

The Senate debate on the Gulf of Tonkin incidents, and published in abridged form in the Weekly, indicated that Senators J. William Fulbright and Richard Russell, chairmen of two committees briefed by administration officials, did not deny Morse's facts in defending Johnson's actions. Fulbright admitted that U.S. ships were

---

[65] Ibid.

assisting the South Vietnamese and that they were within the twelve-mile limit. He did not deny Morse's charge that the U.S. knew of the clandestine raids.[66]

Stone said that neither Fulbright nor Russell challenged Morse's main contention that the U.S. warships had no justification for being in the area while an attack was underway by the South Vietnamese and that American presence, in any circumstance, would appear provocative. "Indeed," Stone wrote, "the only rational explanation for their presence at the time was that the Navy was looking for trouble, daring the North Vietnamese to do something about it."[67]

Later in the Gulf of Tonkin issue, Stone reported evidence from several sources that indicated that the island raids and the reprisal air attacks were part of a plan to escalate the war into North Vietnam. A box published by Stone and headed "U.S. Secret Operations Against North Vietnam Began 3 Years Before Rebellion in South," presented a detailed account by Le Monde reporter Georges Chaffard of the American Special Services' role in supporting guerrilla activities in the North since 1957. From 1961, Chaffard reported, the objective of the United States was to "disorganize the economic and military

---

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid., p. 3.

potential of the North in order to prevent its aid to the rebels in the South." He said most of the commando operations were carried out by Catholic refugees from Tonkin or former members of the French army.[68] Stone also noted reports in the American press since January of 1964, which indicated the United States was planning to move from "commando operations to overt attacks of the North." Stone also cited reports of "Rostow Plan No. 6," which called for a naval blockage of Hiaphong harbor in North Vietnam, PT boat raids on coastal operations, and strategic bombing raids.

Assessing the information presented in the Weekly, Stone issued this warning about the Tonkin incident:

> These circumstances cast a very different light on the Maddox affair, but very few Americans are aware of them. The process of brain-washing the public starts with off-the-record briefings for newspapermen in which all sorts of far-fetched theories are suggested to explain why the tiny North Vietnamese navy would be mad enough to venture an attack on the Seventh fleet, one of the world's most powerful. Everything is discussed except the possibility that the attack might have been provoked. . . . The image created at home was that the U.S. manfully hit back at an unprovoked attack--no paper tiger we. On the other hand, friendly foreign diplomats were told that the South Vietnamese had pulled a raid on the coast and we had been forced to back them up. As some of the truth began to trickle out, the information agencies fell back on the theory that maybe the North Vietnamese had "miscalculated." That our warships may have been providing cover for an escalation in raiding activities never got through to public consciousness at all.

---

[68] Ibid., p. 2.

> The two attacks themselves are still shrouded in mystery. . . . The second attack North Vietnam calls a fabrication. It is strange that though we claim three boats sunk, we picked up no flotsam and jetsam as proof of the wreckage. Nor have any pictures been provided. Whatever the true story, the second incident seems to have triggered off a long planned attack of our own. There are some reasons to doubt that it was merely that "measured response" against PT bases it was advertised to be.[69]

The actual events surrounding the Gulf of Tonkin incidents lasted only a week. But, in retrospect, it was one of the most significant periods of the war. The reprisal air strikes, the Pentagon Papers point out, "marked the crossing of an important threshold in the war, and it was accomplished with virtually no domestic criticism . . . ." The study indicated that the precedent for future air strikes against the North had been established.[70]

One of the major factors in the lack of public opposition was the almost unanimous acquiescence of the press to the administration's policy. Why were the national news media reluctant to question the bombing or the subsequent resolution? Why did I. F. Stone's reportage of the events differ so substantially from the rest of the press? Why was his the only voice in opposition? Obviously, he was one of the few journalists to speak out against the war before the Gulf of Tonkin incident. But

---

[69] Ibid., p. 4.

[70] Sheehan, Pentagon Papers, p. 270.

beyond that, during Tonkin, Stone refused to accept the official government version of the incident at face value. He probed beneath the surface of official pronouncements to check international law, past administration statements, reports in the foreign press and by scholars. Unlike Time, Newsweek, and the New York Times, Stone remained independent of, rather than dependent upon, government sources and therefore was better able to assess the events of Tonkin.

It was during the presidential campaign of 1964 that the Johnson administration reached a consensus to bomb North Vietnam although the policy would not be put into operation before February of the following year. The Pentagon Papers revealed that the Administration reached a "general consensus" at a White House strategy meeting on September 7, one month after the Congress had passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. The bombing would begin, according to the study, "early in the new year."[71] In mid-August, General Maxwell Taylor, U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam, recommended in a cable to the State Department that the United States undertake "a carefully orchestrated bombing attack" to boost the morale of the faltering Saigon government.[72]

[71] Ibid., p. 307.

[72] Ibid., pp. 349-354.

From the September meeting on, the Pentagon study said, there was little disagreement about the bombing policy against the North. Immediate military action was prevented by what the study called "a set of tactical considerations." Chief among these was that "the President was in the midst of an election campaign in which he was presenting himself as the candidate of reason and restraint as opposed to the quixotic Barry Goldwater." Other considerations that precluded immediate bombing were the unstable Saigon government; a desire to "hold the line militarily and diplomatically" in Laos; the "need to design whatever actions were taken so as to achieve maximum public and Congressional support"; and the belief that the bombing might bring a call for "premature negotiations" before North Vietnam was "hurting."[73]

In the interim, President Johnson ordered several covert measures against the North. These included the resumption of U.S. destroyer patrols in the Gulf of Tonkin, the resumption of 34A coastal raids, limited air strikes by South Vietnam against the "corridors" in Southern Laos along with U.S. aerial reconnaissance, and "tit for tat" air reprisals by the United States, like those during Tonkin. American reconnaissance flights over North Vietnam and the psychological warfare continued in operation during this period.[74]

---

[73] Ibid., p. 310.

[74] Ibid., p. 316-317.

Two days before the election, on November 1, the Vietcong staged a damaging attack on Bienhoa airfield sixteen miles from Saigon. Four Americans were killed and five B-57 bombers destroyed in the raid. Under pressure from the Joint Chiefs and others to respond militarily, the President, according to the Pentagon study, declined to authorize any overt action. "One thing is certain," the study noted. "There were no retaliatory strikes authorized following the attack on the U.S. bomber base."[75] Instead, the President appointed an interagency working group to develop military and political options for future direct action against the North. Under the direction of Assistant Secretary of State William Bundy, the group came up with three options, all of which included bombing of the North. The Pentagon Papers indicated that there was no reexamination of American policy and that the basic objective of "an independent, non-Communist South Vietnam," set forth by President Johnson in March, 1964, "did not seem open to question."[76] On December 1, President Johnson approved option "A" of the Bundy group, which called for intensified reprisal attacks and coastal raids of Operation 34A along with air strikes over the Laos panhandle. This plan was to operate for thirty days,

---

[75] Ibid., p. 322.

[76] Ibid., pp. 322, 323.

according to the Pentagon study, at which time option "C" would go into effect. This called for the commencement of the air war over North Vietnam, lasting from two to six months.[77]

It should be pointed out that none of this information was made public by the government.

The result of all this planning was Operation Rolling Thunder, the government's nickname for the sustained air war over North Vietnam, which began on February 13, 1965.

Despite the failure of American policy to create a stable government able to win popular support in South Vietnam and to control guerrilla activities, the national press did not challenge the Johnson administration's basic aims. The New York Times, Newsweek, and Time continued to strongly back American policy even in the wake of coups and counter-coups in the Khanh government and the intensified fighting between Buddhists and Catholics in Saigon. During the final four months of 1964, I. F. Stone was still the only Washington journalist who raised a dissenting voice.

In the September 21 issue of the Weekly, Stone published a Senate speech by Fulbright, who criticized Barry Goldwater's foreign policy concerning Communist

---

[77] Ibid., pp. 323-336.

countries. The Senator said that Goldwater was mistaken in his belief that Communist and "free societies" cannot live together in peace. "The Republicans," Fulbright said, "build their policy on the ideologies that divide the world; the Democrats look beyond ideology to the common hopes, the common interests and the common dangers that that unite the world." Above the box containing the speech, Stone's headline asked: "But When Will These Humane and Pragmatic Views Be Applied to Cuba and Vietnam?"[78] Once again Stone used the words of a government official to underscore the fallacy of the Vietnam policy.

Stone, in the same issue, wrote a satirical piece about the war, "What A Little Lanolin D Can Do for That War in Vietnam." The subject was a new television series called "Letters from Vietnam." In part, Stone wrote:

> The program, if not the war, seemed to be self-sustaining. It was sponsored by Purex, the cleanser with the woman's touch; Instant Fels, with that built-in fabric softener; Trend, with the tiny suds, so much better than the big bubbles; and Sweetheart Soap, which makes elegance affordable today. Part of the hour long program permitted us to listen in as a U.S. Army Lieutenant talked into a dictaphone for his absent wife those "letters from Vietnam" which gave the program its name. . . .
>
> It was nice to be assured that our soldiers don't take the war as personal. The lieutenant explained to his wife on the dictaphone that to our fighting men the Viet Cong are "vermin, they're not human, so you don't worry about it as you shoot them up." The finer feelings, like the finer hands in washing with Purex, are not calloused. In another memorable scene

---

[78] Weekly, Sept. 21, 1964, p. 1.

> we could watch a village being shot up from the air. The announcer explained, 'the VC got his back a thousand fold--a return designated to make VC even more unpopular in the countryside.' Without this explanation, shooting up a whole village because we suspected a few guerrillas were hidden in it might be regarded as making us a little unpopular in the countryside too. 'We may sometimes kill women and children inadvertantly,' the Lieutenant wrote his wife that night, 'but never on purpose.' Then he added what seemed to us a dangerous thought, that he supposed the VC have a family too. A later sequence, to demonstrate his kindly feelings, showed the Lieutenant visiting an orphanage in Saigon. As the orphans waved goodbye, the painful scene merged into a happy commercial, with American children playing about their mother, her hands protected against dryness by Gentle Fels soap, which contains Lanolin D, 'nature's own skin conditioner to make your work easier.' We hope the Vietnamese war can be kept going until this series is completed. It shows how smoothly a war can be fought, with a little Lanolin D.
>
> The war may not be going as well as we would like it from a military point of view, but with this series we have hit our stride when it comes to merchandising it. The war is at last being packaged properly, and it's the package which makes the sale. The U.S. Army has achieved a break-through.[79]

Another alleged incident between North Vietnamese boats and an American destroyer took place in the Gulf of Tonkin on September 19. This time, as I. F. Stone pointed out on September 28, "the whole encounter took place on the radar screens."[80] No North Vietnamese boats were actually cited. When Secretary McNamara refused to answer questions about the alleged raid at a press conference, Stone speculated that he either feared embarrassing questions or did not know the answers. "It's not news that

---

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid., Sept. 28, 1964, p. 1.

the American people long ago lost touch with what is really happening in Vietnam," he wrote. "It's painful to discover that their leaders aren't sure either." Stone asked what the U.S. destroyers were doing in the Gulf of Tonkin when the government said they were being removed after the August 5 incident. He also asked if it was the first patrol since then and if coastal raids were being initiated at the same time. He also inquired as to how North Vietnamese radar could distinguish American vessels from those under South Vietnamese command. Stone continued his list of questions:

> Do U.S. patrols engage in reconnaissance which pinpoints radar and coastal defense installations along the North Vietnamese coast and is this information then turned over to the South Vietnamese to help them in raiding activities? If Russian or Chinese destroyers prowled the Florida coast while ships they supplied Castro engaged in coastal raids, what would we do? Send hampers of Florida grapefruit to their skippers?[81]

Assessing the chaotic situation in Saigon, Stone wrote that the "indifference of the populace in Saigon was the most striking feature of the abortive coup." He said South Vietnam is "sick and tired of us, especially of our habit of napalming and machine-gunning whole villages to get a few suspected guerrillas." At the root of the Buddhist-Catholic feud, Stone reported, was the Catholics' desire to continue the war and the Buddhists'

---

[81] Ibid., p. 2.

equally strong desire to return to a civilian government and an end to the fighting. Stone said that "our puppets have a way of making us dance on their strings" and continued to warn of the possibility of a wider war.[82]

These same events--the latest Tonkin incident and the Saigon political situation--received far different treatment in the national press. Time, for instance, raised no questions about the attack on the U.S. destroyers, choosing to report only the government version. Two U.S. ships "were menaced," said Time, and the magazine could only wring its hands in desperation about the latest political crisis. The articles were patronizing to the Buddhists who Time saw only as deterents to the war effort. When Buddhist protests continued, after the final coup against Khanh, Time wrote: "Any reasonably clear head should have seen that the Buddhists were gravely hurting the war against the Reds . . . ."[83]

Newsweek took much the same position on both events, refusing to question the Tonkin incident and opining that the Buddhists were holding up the war effort. Newsweek said the internal fighting, if not an "absolute disaster" for the U.S., was at least "a grevious blow." It warned that the Buddhists were "more interested in

---

[82] Ibid.

[83] Time, Dec. 25, 1964, p. 21.

building their own power than in the war against the Vietcong" and that the neutralization that would likely be supported by the Buddhists would lead to a Communist take-over.[84] In a later issue, Newsweek asked "how the greatest military power in the world, virtually unchallenged by its one international peer" was unable to win or even "seize the initiative" in a war in which it had invested so heavily.[85] But the article failed to examine the basic policy assumptions of the United States and concluded by stating that there was "no alternative but to maintain the status quo."

The New York Times editorially raised a very low key criticism of the Tonkin incident of September. It called the government's explanation "inadequate" and urged "greater frankness" on the administration's part in revealing what is happening in Vietnam.[86] "Bureaucratic confusion and secretiveness in Washington are still denying to the American people a detailed account of what the United States Government knows about the skirmish," the New York Times said in an editorial published September 23.[87] The Times raised none of the questions posed by Stone in the Weekly, however, and did not seem anxious to press the point.

---

[84] Newsweek, Sept. 7, 1964, p. 34.
[85] Ibid., Sept. 28, 1964, p. 44.
[86] New York Times, Sept. 20, 1964, Sec. IV, p. 8.
[87] Ibid., Sept. 23, 1964, p. 42.

In an editorial on October 8, the New York Times supported Johnson's policy in Vietnam, calling it "a sensible balance between firmness and restraint," while criticizing Goldwater's "victory" approach. The Times said the U.S. must negotiate a peaceful settlement to the war and said it was "clear that Johnson seeks no wider war."[88]

While these publications continued to provide their readers with the standard government pronouncements about Vietnam, Stone was publishing an article from the French magazine Realities which did not, for some reason, appear in its English language edition. The article, "Vietnam--A New Korea," was written by the editor of Atlantic Community (a publication of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization), Edgar Ansel Mowrer. The article, which appeared on page one of the October 12 Weekly made five revelations:

1) that General Edward Lansdale, ret., former head of the U.S. operations in Vietnam, favors a joint declaration between the U.S. and South Vietnam to conduct an anti-Communist revolution in North Vietnam;
2) that Lansdale organized commando raids on the North when he served as Diem's military adviser from 1954-1956;
3) that some 3,000 Vietnamese had been trained by Special Forces to carry out the raids;
4) that despite the urging of Assistant Secretary of State Walter Rostow, the Kennedy Administration called off the raids as "too difficult and too dangerous;"
5) that there are still a number of U.S. military leaders who favor them.

---

[88] Ibid., Oct. 8, 1964, p. 42.

"In our issue of August 24," Stone wrote, "we called attention to an article in Le Monde (Aug. 7) which said U.S. training of commando units against the North began in 1957, three years before the rebellion broke out. Mowrer dates them even earlier."[89] The Pentagon Papers, made public in 1971, confirmed this information published by Stone seven years earlier.[90]

In the November 9 issue of the Weekly, Stone offered a documented account of how the government attempted to manage the news and distort the realities of the war. He compared, side by side, three separate articles that appeared in the same edition (November 2) of the New York Times. One was filed from Washington, one from Saigon, and one from Bienhoa airbase, which had just been attacked by guerrillas. The Washington piece said the attack "should not be taken as proof that the overall situation in Vietnam was deteriorating" and that, in fact, the Administration was greatly encouraged by the formation of a civilian government in Saigon . . . and that it hoped that the stabilization of the political situation would be reflected in better conduct of the war effort." The Saigon report, on the same page, said the situation was "more desperate . . . than ever" and that the

---

[89] Weekly, Oct. 12, 1964, p. 1.

[90] Sheehan, Pentagon Papers, pp. 19-20.

"deterioration" has "touched all aspects of the life of a weary people." And from Bienhoa came the report that nine guerrillas were able to inflict $25 million on U.S. aircraft. Stone's headline for the comparison of the three stories said: "The Worse the War in Vietnam The Finer the Double-Talk in Washington."[91]

Following the attack on the Bienhoa air field, in the November 9 issue of the Weekly, Stone suggested that in light of the recent developments the peace movement should call for a cease-fire to be accompanied by free elections. He said that the new civilian government, if it were free, "will not continue an unpopular war." Stone said also that "it is time to bring home to Americans the full cruelty of the war we have been supporting." Indeed, Stone wrote, "how can we claim to be with the people when we burn their homes simply because those houses happen to be in the Vietcong-controlled territory?"[92] On the same page, Stone published an excerpt from historian Bernard B. Fall's book Street Without Joy, which related an attack by Vietnamese guerrillas on the largest French airbase and blew up eighteen transport planes during the French-Indochinese war--an act similar to the raid of Bienhoa. Stone's headline above the excerpt read: "It Happened to the French, Too."

---

[91] Weekly, Nov. 9, 1964, p. 1.

[92] Ibid., p. 2.

On December 21, Stone published an abridged speech by Senator Morse in which the leading war critic in the Congress warned that the Johnson administration was moving toward a policy similar to the "Goldwater prescription in Vietnam." Morse said the signs--including an increased emphasis on North Vietnamese infiltration--point to increased bombing and a deepening America commitment in the war. Morse emphasized that close to 90 per cent of all guerrilla weapons "were captured from government sources and that "the civil war would continue whether or not it received aid or leadership from North Vietnam." The speech urged President Johnson "to lead the American people out of this morass."

Thus, 1964 ended with the news media editorial positions relatively unchanged. The Weekly called for complete American withdrawal, an end to the fighting, and free, internationally supervised elections, while the national press lined up behind the Johnson administration policy that blamed the war on Communist aggression and subversion from North Vietnam. Stone warned of a widening war while the New York Times believed that withdrawal would mean a Communist takeover.

CHAPTER V

THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT WHITE PAPER MARCH, 1965, AND STONE'S REPLY

> The record is conclusive. It establishes beyond question that North Vietnam is carrying out a carefully conceived plan of aggression against the South.
>
> --from a White Paper[1] published by the U.S. Department of State

> The striking thing about the State Department's new White Paper is how little support it can prove.
>
> --I. F. Stone[2]

On Sunday, February 28, 1965, two weeks after Operation Rolling Thunder had begun, U.S. and South Vietnamese officials in Saigon announced jointly that President Johnson had ordered continuous air strikes over North Vietnam. No longer would the United States merely fly retaliatory raids. The day before the escalation of the air war was announced, the State Department released a White Paper entitled "Aggression From the North: The

---

[1] U.S. Department of State Publication 7839, Far Eastern Series 130, February, 1965, p. 29. The White Paper is reprinted in Gettleman, Vietnam, pp. 324-357.

[2] Weekly, March 8, 1965, p. 1.

Record of North Viet-Nam's Campaign to Conquer South Viet-Nam." The thesis of the White Paper was stated in its opening paragraph:

> South Vietnam is fighting for its life against a brutal campaign of terror and armed attack inspired, directed, supplied, and controlled by the Communist regime in Hanoi. This flagrant aggression has been going on for years, but recently the pace has quickened and the threat has now become active.[3]

The U.S. government attempted to prove through what the White Paper called "massive evidence" that the cause of the fighting was precipitated by North Vietnamese aggression rather than a spontaneous rebellion in the South against an unpopular government. The evidence was gathered by the South Vietnamese government and analyzed by U.S. and South Vietnamese "experts."[4] The White Paper contended that for ten years the government of South Vietnam has fought to prevent a Communist takeover below the seventeenth parallel.

The first section of the sixty-four page report concerned the personnel sent South by Hanoi. "The hard core of the Communist forces attacking South Vietnam are men trained in the North," the paper said. The government paper stated that since 1959 nearly 20,000 men had been sent into South Vietnam and the numbers of "infiltrators"

---

[3]U.S. Department of State Publication 7839, p. 1.

[4]Ibid.

were on the increase.[5] The White Paper reported "case histories" of eleven captured guerrillas who the government claimed were trained in the North. It also discussed the infiltration of native North Vietnamese soldiers, Vietcong agents, and student propaganda agents.

In the second section, the White Paper attempted to show Hanoi as the major supplier of war materiel to "its forces" in the South and that the program to equip the guerrillas increased over the years as the intensity of the war increased. The report said the evidence was "incontrovertible."[6] Among the evidence was a cargo ship, sunk by the South Vietnamese, which contained "at least 100 tons of military supplies" in the form of weapons and ammunition. The ship, according to the report, had been built in China and the weapons were primarily of Communist origin.

The remainder of the White Paper detailed the political origins of the war, which, according to the report began with the Third Lao Dong Party Congress in Hanoi in 1960. The congress had stated its intention "to liberate South Vietnam," and the report said the congress undertook the task of destroying the "legal" government of South Vietnam. It did not, however, mention in this

---

[5] Ibid., p. 3.

[6] Ibid., p. 15.

or any other section the guarantee of free elections specified in the 1954 Geneva Accords. Those elections, scheduled for 1956, were never held. According to the government paper, the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam was created and controlled by Hanoi and sought "not liberation but subjugation of the South."[7] The Front was "a screen behind which the Communists [carried] out their program of conquest."[8]

In its section of the history of the war, the White Paper said the war began because the North could not compete with the growing progress and prosperity of the South under Diem from 1955 to 1960 "and decided to use violence and terror to gain its ends."[9] The White Paper stressed the war was not related in any way to the political problems of the Diem regime, and that the internal struggles for power only served to give the guerrillas "an invaluable opportunity" to encourage disaffection and exploit demonstrations in Saigon and elsewhere."[10]

The final portion of the White Paper stated the American position in Vietnam and made clear the fact that the United States would continue to aid South Vietnam until "aggression" by the North was terminated:

[7] Ibid., p. 20.

[8] Ibid., p. 22.

[9] Ibid., p. 26.

[10] Ibid., p. 27.

> Until the regime in Hanoi decides to halt its intervention in the South, or until effective steps are taken to maintain peace and security in the area, the Governments of South Vietnam and the United States will continue necessary measures of defense against the Communist armed aggression coming from North Vietnam. . . . The people of South Vietnam have chosen to resist this threat. At their request, the United States has taken its place beside them in their defensive struggle.[11]

The paper, in its conclusion, said the North Vietnamese aggression violated the Geneva Accords of 1954 and 1962.

Appendix D of the White Paper listed the Communist weapons captured in South Vietnam and which were submitted to the International Control Commission on January 29, 1964. The weapons were of Chinese, Soviet, Czechoslovakian, and North Vietnamese origin.

The reaction of the national press to the State Department White Paper was supportive and, for the most part, restrained. This was no doubt due to the fact that the basic thesis of the government report was identical to the positions taken by the press since the fighting broke out in 1961. For years, the New York Times, Time, and Newsweek had blamed the war on North Vietnamese aggression, so the White Paper served to substantiate their views. None of the three publications sought to question the evidence or the conclusions of the report despite the

---

[11] Ibid., p. 29.

fact that it was prepared by the United States and South Vietnamese governments, both of which had a vested interest in the war. This was not an independent investigation by an outside institution like the United Nations. Nevertheless, the national press treated the White Paper like a small-town weekly might handle a press release from its mayor. The press believed what the government said about the war and if there were any doubts, they were not expressed in print.

Newsweek, in fact, virtually ignored the White Paper. It devoted only a short paragraph to the report in the middle of an article on the Johnson Administration's war strategy, calling it "the capstone of the Administration's counterattack" on congressional war critics. Newsweek made mention only of the paper's contention that 20,000 North Vietnamese troops and technicians has entered the South since 1959 and that they were being increasingly supplied with Chinese arms.[12] There was no attempt at a critical assessment in the March 8 issue and no mention of the White Paper in any following issue.

Time magazine devoted more than a page of its March 5 issue to the White Paper, viewing it as a justification of the periodical's long-stated position on the Vietnam war. The opening paragraph said:

---

[12]Newsweek, March 8, 1965, p. 22.

> There apparently are still some people who think that the war in South Viet Nam is a civil war. To end that fiction, and to explain why it is stepping up its attack on North Viet Nam, the U.S. last week issued a 64-page White Paper replete with photographs, maps, charts and case histories to prove that the Communist Viet Cong are inspired, armed and controlled from the North. . . . It nails down earlier estimates of North Vietnamese infiltration, making nonsense of the often-heard contention--previously pushed by the Administration itself--that punishing the North would not change the situation because the guerrillas in the South are self-sustaining. The report describes how Hanoi runs its show, and points up the quickened pace of Hanoi's effort--an aggression 'as real as that of an invading army.'[13]

The magazine cited numerous examples from the report about the troops and arms from the North and about the political leadership and history of the war. "The White Paper," Time concluded, "convincingly demonstrates the tight control exercised by Hanoi over the war in South Vietnam." The article ended with the paper's statement that the United States no longer act with its past restraint since Hanoi had decided to use "greater violence" in its attempt to take over the South.

The New York Times played the White Paper as its major story on page one of the issue for Sunday, February 28, with the headline: "Hanoi Aggression Detailed by U.S. in White Paper, It Documents Growing Red Aid to Vietcong and Warns 'Restraint' May Cease." Like Time magazine, the New York Times relied entirely on the

---

[13] Time, March 5, 1965, p. 27.

government report for its story and offered no critical assessment of the findings. It reprinted the text of the White Paper but did not include Appendix D, which provided a list of weapons manufactured by Communist countries. Editorially, the Times was more cautious than Time and said the Johnson administration "seems to be conditioning the American people for a drastic expansion of our involvement in Vietnam."[14] The Times appeared less eager than Time for further escalation of the war in North Vietnam. While warning about escalation, however, the newspaper did not disagree with the findings of the government report:

> The assertion that North Vietnam is a principal supplier of men and munitions to the Vietcong is certainly not new, nor is the charge that the extent of its support is increasing. Such activity by Hanoi constitutes the sole reason for our being in South Vietnam, and has since the United States moved into the vacuum left by the French withdrawal in 1954.

In accord with the government's major premise of aggression, the Times, however, was skeptical about the success the bombing of the North would have on the war below the seventeenth parallel. The New York Times found some of the evidence offered in the White Paper unconvincing, such as the supply of weapons on the cargo ship sunk by the South Vietnamese which, the editorial said, was small in relationship to other munition ships, adding:

---

[14] New York Times, Feb. 28, 1965, Sec. IV, p. 8.

> Page after page of similarly miniscule detail about Communist infiltration from the North merely raise anew the question of whether massive air strikes would accomplish anything except large-scale civilian casualties in industrial centers and ports. The question is made sharper by the absence of any stable government in Saigon to fight or even to speak in the name of the South Vietnamese people.

Obviously, the New York Times saw some danger in escalation, and it again stated the necessity of a negotiated settlement to the war. As in the past though, the Times urged the United States to negotiate from a position of strength:

> It is not too late for the President to make it plain that the United States is ready to talk as well as fight, and thus leave China isolated as the obstructor of any attempt to achieve a sound and enforceable peace. (Author's emphasis)

This was the only editorial on the White Paper to appear in the New York Times and while it was less enthusiastic than the reaction of the editors of Time magazine, the newspaper did not criticize the evidence, find fault with the history, or disagree with the contention of the U.S. government that the roots of the war laid outside South Vietnam rather than inside and that the United States had no responsibility in either the initiation or continuation of the war.

Again, the only American journalist to ask the critical questions, to probe beyond the government's propaganda was I. F. Stone. Stone's special four-page March 8 issue of the Weekly, "A Reply to the White Paper,"

was an in-depth, point-by-point assessment of the State Department's report. His investigation found the government's case of outside conspiracy inadequate:

> That North Vietnam supports the guerrillas in South Vietnam is no more secret than that the United States supports the South Vietnamese government against them. The striking thing about the State Department's new White Paper is how little support it can prove.[15]

Stone began his investigation of the White Paper by putting the government's weapons and ammunition supply figures in perspective. The detailed evidence of Hanoi's supply program, Stone wrote, was in Appendix D and it was "more revealing than the report." He criticized the New York Times and other newspapers for not publishing the appendices. To "debunk" the government's "incontrovertible evidence" Stone obtained some additional figures from the Pentagon--the number of weapons captured from and lost to the guerrillas from June, 1962 to January 29, 1964:

	Captured from Guerrillas	Lost to Guerrillas
1962	4,800	5,200
1963	5,400	8,500
1964	4,900	13,700
3-Year Total	15,100	27,400

Noting that the guerrillas captured 12,300 more weapons than they lost, Stone wrote:

---

[15] Weekly, March 8, 1965, p. 1.

What interests us at the moment is not this favorable balance but the number of guerrilla weapons our side captured during the past three years. The grand total was 15,100. If Hanoi has indeed engaged in an 'elaborate program' to supply the Viet Cong, one would expect a substantial number of enemy-produced weapons to turn up. Here is the sum total of enemy-produced weapons and supplies in that 18-month tally to the Control Commission--

72 rifles (46 Soviet, 26 Czech)
64 submachine guns (40 Czech, 24 French but 'modified' in North Vietnam)
15 carbines (Soviet)
8 submachine guns (6 Chinese, 2 North Vietnamese)
5 postols (4 Soviet, 1 Czech)
4 mortars (Chinese)
3 recoilless 75.mm rifles (Chinese)
3 recoilless 57.mm guns (Chinese)
2 bazookas (1 Chinese, 1 Czech)
2 rocket launchers (Chinese)
1 grenade launcher (Czech)

179 total

This is not a very impressive total. According to the Pentagon figures, we captured on the average 7500 weapons each 18-months in the past three years. If only 179 Communist-made weapons turned up in 18 months, that is less than 2 1/2% of the total. Judging by these White Paper figures, our military are wrong in estimating, as they have in recent months, that 80% of the weapons used by the guerrillas are captured from us. It looks as if the proportion is considerably higher. The material of North Vietnamese origin included only those 24 French submachine guns 'modified' in North Vietnam, 2 machine guns made in North Vietnam, 16 helmets, a uniform and an undisclosed number of mess kits, belts, sweaters and socks. Judging by this tally, the main retaliatory blow should be at North Vietnam's clothing factories.

But these figures can be judged in another way, as Stone pointed out, by breaking them down to the battalion level. Stone said a Communist battalion was composed of about 450 men and needs 500 rifles, four 80-mm. mortars, eight 60-mm. mortars, and at least four recoilless rifles. "The weapons of Communist origin captured in 18 months

would not adequately outfit one battalion," Stone wrote. He used the same analytic method to put in perspective the amount of ammunition captured from the guerrillas and said to be of Communist origin:

> We captured 183 (Chinese) shells for a 60 mm. mortar. This fires about 20 shells a minute, so that was hardly enough ammunition for 10 minutes of firing. There were 100,000 (Chinese) cartridges for 7.26 mm. machine guns. That looks impressive until one discovers on checking with knowledgeable military sources that these machine guns fire 600 rounds a minute. A machine gun platoon normally has four machine guns. This was enough ammunition for about 40 minutes of firing by one platoon. Indeed, if the ratio of Communist-made weapons captured is the same for weapons used, then only 12 1/2 days of those 18 months were fought by the guerrillas on the basis of Communist made supplies.[16]

Stone also raised the point that aside from these supplies being manufactured in Communist countries, one would have to prove in a court of law that these weapons actually were supplied by the Communist countries. "There is a world-wide market in second-hand weapons," Stone noted. In fact, he said, Soviet, Czech and Chinese guns could be bought just two miles from the Pentagon at Interarmco, Limited, in Alexandria, Virginia. Interarmco, Stone said, "can provide more Communist weapons than we picked up in 18 months on Vietnamese battlefields."[17] Weapons from any country could conceivably turn up in any other country. Stone provided the

---

[16] Ibid., p. 2.

[17] Ibid.

example of American weapons and U.S. Marine Corps uniforms being used by the Algerians in their war against France which resulted in France accusing the United States of supplying the Algerian rebels.

Stone also subjected the White Paper's story of troop infiltration from the North to critical analysis. Noting that Appendix C of the report indicated that there were 19,500 "confirmed" military infiltrees from 1959-60 through 1964, Stone wrote the following assessment:

> One way to measure this number is against that of the military we have assigned to South Vietnam in the same years. These now total 23,500, or 25% more, and 1,000 are to be added in the near future. The number of North Vietnamese infiltrees is 'based on information . . . from at least two independent sources.' Nowhere are we told how many men who infiltrated from the North have actually been captured. There is reason to wonder whether the count of infiltrees may be as bloated as the count of Viet Cong dead; in both cases the numbers used are estimates rather than actual bodies.
>
> The White Paper calls the war an invasion and claims 'that as many as 75% of the more than 4400 Viet Cong who are known to have entered the South in the first eight months of 1964 were natives of North Vietnam.' But a careful reading of the text and the appendices turns up the names of only six North Vietnamese infiltrees. In Part I of the White Paper, Section B gives 'individual case histories of North Vietnamese soldiers' sent South by Hanoi but all nine of these are of South Vietnamese origin. The next Section, C, is headed 'Infiltration of Native North Vietnamese.' It names five infiltrees but one of these is also from the South. That leaves four North Vietnamese natives. Then, in Appendix C, we are given the case histories and photographs of nine other Viet Cong sent South by Hanoi. The report does not explain which ones were originally from the South but it does give the names of the provinces in which they were born. When these are checked, it turns out that only two of the nine were born in North Vietnam. This gives

> us a total of six Northern infiltrees. It is strange that after five years of fighting, the White Paper can cite so few.[18]

Stone found significant discrepancies and omissions in the White Paper history of the war that were not brought to light in the national press. Since 1961, he had been reporting that the cause of the war was an internal rebellion against the United States-controlled governments of Ngo Dinh Diem and his successors and not an "invasion" by the North. In his special White Paper issue, Stone noted the discrepancies between the official history and the government's version:

> The White Paper witholds all evidence which points to a civil war. It also fails to tell the full story of the July, 1962 Special Report by the International Control Commission. Appendix A quotes that portion in which the Commission 2-1 (Poland dissenting) declared that the North had in specific instances sent men and material south in violation of the Geneva Accords. But nowhere does the State Department mention that the same report also condemned South Vietnam and the U.S., declaring that they had entered into a military alliance in violation of the Geneva agreements. The U.S. was criticized because it then had about 5,000 military advisers in South Vietnam. The Geneva Accords limited the U.S. mission to the 684 in Vietnam at the time of the 1954 cease-fire. The U.S. and South Vietnam were also criticized by the ICC for hamstringing the Commission's efforts to check on imports of arms in violation of the Geneva Accords.
>
> The reader would never guess from the White Paper that the Geneva Accords promised that elections would be held in 1956 to reunify the country. The 1961 Blue Book at least mentioned the elections, though somehow managing to make them seem a plot. . . .

---

[18] Ibid.

> The White Paper omits mention of the elections altogether and says, 'South Vietnam's refusal to fall in with Hanoi's plan for peaceful takeover came as a heavy blow to the Communists.' From the Viet Minh point of view, the failure to hold the elections promised them when they laid down their arms was the second broken promise of the West. The earlier one was in 1946 when they made an agreement to accept limited autonomy within the French union, and welcomed the returning French troops as comrades of the liberation. Most of the French military did not want to recognize even this limited form of independence, and chose instead the road which led after eight years of war to Dienbienphu.[19]

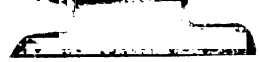
Stone concluded his analysis of the White Paper by criticizing the U.S. government version that the North's jealousy over the "economic miracle" of the Diem regime precipitated the war. "We are asked to believe," Stone wrote, "that for the first time in history a guerrilla war spread not because the people were discontented but because their lot was improving."[20] Stone said the rebellion began in the "grass roots" of the South Vietnamese peasants before North Vietnam gave its support, when Diem canceled the scheduled national and local elections, abolished all political opposition, instituted the unpopular strategic hamlet concept of pacification, and became a virtual dictator. In summary, Stone wrote:

> Long before the North was accused of interference, its government was complaining to the Control Commission of 'border and air-space violations by the south and infringements of the Geneva agreement by the

---

[19] Ibid., pp. 3-4.

[20] Ibid., p. 4.



> introduction of amrs and U.S. servicemen.'[21] For four years after Geneva, both North Vietnam and China followed the 'peaceful coexistence' policy while the U.S. turned South Vietnam into a military base and a military dictatorship. It is in this story the White Paper does not tell, and the popular discontent it does not mention, that the rebellion and the aid from the North had their origins.[22]

Following the release of the White Paper, the American involvement in Vietnam escalated dramatically, first with increased air operations over North Vietnam and the introduction of the first two Marine battalions in March. U.S. troop deployment gradually increased during the following months until 393,887 American soldiers were in Vietnam by mid-summer. One year later the troop level would increase to one-half million.

Even as late as March, 1965, at the time of the White Paper release, the American press was serving as an almost willing arm of the government. It published the Johnson administration's pronouncements about Vietnam without challenge. As this chapter shows, it even deferred from questioning obvious lies and omissions of history. Only I. F. Stone, whose circulation could not come close to matching the established press, thoroughly investigated the White Paper to point out the gap between the government's evidence and its conclusions. It is unfortunate

---

[21] Stone refers his readers to an article by French historian Phillippe Devillers in the China Quarterly, January-March, 1962.

[22] Weekly, p. 4.

that the performance of the press during this chapter of the Vietnam war should so closely parallel the period of the Tonkin Gulf incidents. Five months had brought only increased American involvement, and still the only critical voice was I. F. Stone's Weekly.

CONCLUSION

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution provides for a free press. The rationale for this unqualified freedom is that a free and unfettered press will provide the American public with the information it needs to make intelligent, rational decisions. It is the cornerstone of a democratic society.

Often, however, the press does not take full advantage of that basic freedom. Instead of providing a check on government, the press becomes just another arm of the government it is supposed to watch.

Such was the case during the early, formative years of the Vietnam War. In this period, the press abdicated its constitutional responsibility to scrutinize what was happening both in the formation and execution of important foreign policy that would gradually involve more than one-half million Americans in a major war in Southeast Asia.

Not much was known about Vietnam during this period of the war. Few Americans could even locate it on the map. Little was known about the government's policy toward Vietnam. Thus, it was the responsibility of the American press to uncover what was happening, to cut

through official government propaganda and provide the public with an accurate undistorted account of U.S. policy in Vietnam. This meant probing beyond official pronouncements.

The national press, tragically, did little probing during the Kennedy and early Johnson administrations. And if the national press, with its tremendous resources, did little independent investigating, it could hardly be expected that the local press would do so. As a result, the press became in effect a willing tool of the government. The New York Times, and Newsweek and Time magazine were seduced by both Kennedy and Johnson on Vietnam. They accepted the government's basic policy assumptions of Communist containment, the "Red China menace," and national honor. And most importantly the press, like the government, believed in the cold war. The press failed to question whether the United States had a legal or moral right to be in Vietnam. All this is not surprising because, for the most part, the established press and the government held the same beliefs, the same values and tended to look at the world in the same way. There was little organized opposition to the war at this time. Congressional critics of the war were few, and only Senators Morse and Gruening regularly spoke out against it. In the administration, Under Secretary of State George Ball, who was the first in-house critic, would

not break with President Johnson until the idea of U.S. ground forces came up. And the first Vietnam teach-ins on American college and university campuses would not begin until the summer of 1965.

While Congressional opposition to the war could be counted on one hand during the early sixties, critics among the press numbered even less. The only independent, investigative inquiry into the government's Vietnam policy was found in I. F. Stone's Weekly. Stone's courageous reportage was published at a time when it was not fashionable to oppose the war.

As indicated throughout this study, Stone went beyond government handouts, official papers, and statements in seeking the truth about the war. He refused to take government spokesmen at their word. Instead, Stone chose to publish reports by independent scholars and foreign journalists. More than once he trapped government officials with their own words. Because of this independent journalism, Stone was warning his readers about a possible major war in Vietnam and urging withdrawal of all American advisers as early as 1961.

Stone's reportage has been borne out by over a decade of war. His early disclosures gradually have been brought to public attention over the years by other journalists and scholars. The Pentagon Papers, released in the summer of 1971, ten years after Stone's first

dissent, appear to be Stone's ultimate vindication. As noted in this study, the Papers confirm much of what appeared in the Weekly in the early years. In fact, constant readers of the Weekly were not as surprised and shocked by the revelations in the Pentagon Papers as the rest of the American public. They had read much of it before.

Stone's journalism during the early years of Vietnam was in the best tradition of the American free press. If the other, larger, and more established institutions of the press would have demonstrated the same independence and courage, the war in Vietnam might not have lasted for more than a decade.

Surely, if the New York Times can be awarded a Pulitzer Prize for its publication of the Pentagon Papers, then I. F. Stone deserves recognition for his journalism on U.S. involvement in Vietnam. It is an accurate commentary on the state of American journalism that he has neither been awarded a Pulitzer Prize nor is he likely to receive one in the near future.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Newspapers and Periodicals

Fager, Charles. "With Atheists Like Him, Who Needs Believers?" New Republic, November 4, 1970, pp. 1313-1317.

I. F. Stone's Weekly, January, 1953-August, 1956; January, 1961-March, 1965.

MacDougall, A. Kent. "I.F. Stone Achieves Success, Respectability But Keeps Raking Muck." Wall Street Journal, July 14, 1970, p. 1.

Newsweek, January, 1961-March, 1965.

Powers, Thomas. "The Achievement of I.F. Stone." Rolling Stone, Feb. 17, 1972, pp. 22-23.

Sherrill, Robert. "Washington's Exquisitely Unforgiving Reporter." Commonweal, January 26, 1968, pp. 506-507.

Stern, Sol. "The Journalist as Pamphleteer." Ramparts February, 1968, pp. 53-55.

New York Times, January, 1961-March, 1965.

Time, January, 1961-March, 1965.

Witcover, Jules. "Where Washington Reporting Failed." Columbia Journalism Review, Winter, 1970-71, pp. 7-12.

Books

Aronson, James. The Press and the Cold War. Chicago: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968.

Ellsberg, Daniel. Papers on the War. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972.

Fall, Bernard B. Two Vietnams: A Political and Military Analysis. 2nd rev. ed. New York: Praeger, 1967.

Gettleman, Marvin E. Vietnam: History, Documents, and Opinions. New York: New American Library, 1970.

Goulden, Joseph C. Truth Is the First Casualty: The Tonkin Gulf Affair--Illusion and Reality. Chicago: Rand. 1969.

Gruening, Ernest, and Beaser, Herbert W. Vietnam Folly. Washington D.C.: National Press Inc., 1968.

Halberstam, David. The Making of a Quagmire. New York: Random House, 1965.

_____. Ho. New York: Vintage Books, 1971.

_____. The Best and the Brightest. New York: Random House, 1972.

Sheehan, Neil; Smith, Hedrick; Kenworthy, E.W.; and Butterfield, Fox. The Pentagon Papers. New York: Bantam, 1971.

Stavins, Ralph; Barnett, Richard J.; and Raskin, Marcus G. Washington Plans an Aggressive War. New York: Random House, 1971.

Stone, I. F. The Haunted Fifties. New York: Vintage Books, 1963.

_____. In a Time of Torment. New York: Vintage Books, 1968.

_____. Polemics and Prophecies. New York: Random House, 1970.

Walton, Richard C. Cold War and Counterrevolution: The Foreign Policy of John F. Kennedy. New York: Viking Press, 1972.

Reports

Scheer, Robert. How The United States Got Involved In Vietnam. A Report to the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, Santa Barbara, Calif., July, 1965.