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THE IMPACT OF THE INDOCHINA INVOLVEMENT ON AMERICAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

MacAlister Brown

SOUTHEAST ASIA DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY GROUP

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THE IMPACT OF THE INDOCHINA INVOLVEMENT ON AMERICAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

By

MacAlister Brown

The 1960's have been nominated by Chester Cooper, as the Decade of Vietnam.[1] This designation may catch on with American historians as well as weary and reflective Southeast Asia veterans. Since it relegates Vietnam to the past, and implies a new theme for the 1970's, it has a practical attraction. As to competing symbols for the 1960's, the self-assertion of Black America, the race to the moon, or the flowering culture of Youth, they have chapters yet to write in American life, while the war in Vietnam may none too soon become a distinct episode. Its impact on our national life has been sharp and probably lasting.

This essay will attempt to weigh its impact on our political institutions, both constitutional and administrative, and their public environment. It is not intended to suggest what the impact should have been, or what lessons should be learned from Vietnam. Rather we start with the question whether the prolonged involvement in Indochina has exerted as profound an effect on our system as the great events of previous epochs, the Great Depression, World War II, or the Cold War. Has anything as lasting as the New Deal Coalition at the polling booth, or the governmental internal security apparatus of the 1950's arisen out of the frustration and dismay of Vietnam?

The involvement of the United States with Indochina is not a thing of the past decade alone, though the intensity of the relationship moved like a skyrocket during this period. The time frame for measuring the impact of Indochina on our political institutions might reach back as far as our initial military assistance to the French in May 1950, or more significantly to the French cry for help at Dienbienphu in April 1954. Critical issues arose then concerning legitimate procedures for involving the nation in war, the availability and appropriate use of military power (including atomic bombs), and our capacity to exercise political influence in emerging nations. The choices made by the Eisenhower Administration in 1954 set the stage for hundreds of critical choices in the 1960's, which have affected our political institutions.

To attribute significant impact to the American involvement in Indochina several ground rules should apply. The Indochina-related change or stress in our institutions must be inconceivable if the United States involvement had never occurred. In other words, if the United States had not fallen in behind the departing French in 1954 (or later), the impacts we shall identify could not have taken place. This is obviously a stringent limitation on our possible findings, which will rest upon headlong historical speculation, hardly the method of the modern political scientist. Yet there can be no controlled experiment in accounting for the change in our political insti-

1. Chester Cooper, The Lost Crusade: American in Vietnam (New York, Dodd, Mead and Co., 1970).

tutions, merely before and after observations and best guesses as to what would have happened if the designated variable (in this case the post-1954 involvement with Indochina) had not appeared. To remove a seventeen-year episode of diplomatic and military involvement from our political life leaves tremendous room for other relationships of equivalent nature to have developed. We shall assume, however, that any United States involvements which might have developed elsewhere in the world would not have been wholly equivalent to that in Indochina. The impacts which we associate with Indochina should stand as the outcome of that particular overseas involvement. They should not reflect secular trends which would have appeared if Ngo Dinh Diem and John Foster Dulles had never entered public life and John F. Kennedy had never visited Dallas. They should not be the artifacts of a particular President or political leader unrelated to the unique problems which Indochina presented to him. The further question of whether changes in our institutions were prevented from happening by the Indochina engagement is a speculative problem of even greater dimension, which we cannot hope to solve. However, the question of lasting impact versus the temporary impact, that is, effects on our institutions which will lose their hold as the United States recedes from the region, is not too formidable to permit a modest effort at prediction. The purpose of the exercise in any case is reflection in the interest of suggesting areas for definitive assessment upon the conclusion of the Indochina affair.

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

With the memory of the 1968 Presidential election still discomfiting us and speculation about Richard Nixon's prospect for reelection growing topical, a linkage between Indochina and the Presidency is easy to assert. Lyndon Johnson believed that Vietnam cost him 20 points in the public opinion polls, and though his wife's memoirs tend to confuse the issue, it seems clear that without Vietnam President Johnson would have seen no need to remove himself as a Presidential candidate in 1968. Even though later scholarly analysis of the polls has attributed to the Vietnam War no independent additional impact on Johnson's decline in popularity, it is Johnson's perception of the matter that counts for our purposes.[2] Harry Truman also decided not to seek another term in office in the midst of an unpopular war, but his initial memorandum to himself on the subject antedated the war itself. Richard Nixon now faces the prospect of a challenge to his renomination, similar to Johnson's in that it will arise out of the Congress and express itself in the earliest state primary elections. Without projecting the parallel any further, one must ask whether this intra-party challenge to incumbent Presidents is significantly new and whether it is war-related.

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2. John E. Mueller, "Presidential Popularity from Truman to Johnson," American Political Science Review, March, 1970.

Customarily, incumbent Presidents have been able to use their office as a presumptive claim on renomination and deter all but the most determined or alienated party cohorts from challenging their return.[3] Since 1952 the Twenty-second Amendment has limited the President to one such renomination, and national television coverage of state primary campaigns has heightened their significance. The party primary challengers to Johnson in 1968 and Nixon in 1972, have presented the War in Indochina as their fundamental issue, with an unaccustomed moral fervor. The primary voters in 1968, however, were actually responding to a variety of issues concerning the Man in the White House, and will doubtless do the same in 1972.[4] The Indochina War has served as a catalyst to ambitious political personalities which has demonstrated the political fame and fortune awaiting a bold and independent campaigner against his own party leader. With the presumptive claim so clearly diminished by the primaries of 1968, and possibly 1972, there is reason to foresee this intra-party challenge continuing in a manner that did not exist before the Indochina War prompted its use. This insecurity of party leadership may reflect a deeper realignment process overtaking our party system. Yet that phenomenon itself is partially related by its proponents to the existence of the war.[5] Whether or not our party politics resumes its traditional path of two parties contending over the center ground, the phenomenal decline of Lyndon Johnson's electoral prospects between 1964 and 1968 have demonstrated a new fragility in Presidential mandates arising to a large degree out of foreign relations -- which Harry Truman partially obscured by not seeking re-election in 1952. This modern source of Presidential insecurity, this threat to Presidential second terms, is unlike the political nemesis which overtook Herbert Hoover and William Howard Taft. It has been underscored, though not originated, by the Indochina War, and Presidential aspirants will henceforth give this issue area the very special attention it deserves.

The War has probably affected another aspect of our Presidential elections beside the political security of incumbents. We saw in 1968 a shredding of the conventional civility accorded our President in the

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3. The most notable party primary challengers to incumbent Presidents have been Senator Hiram Johnson in 1924, Vice President John N. Garner in 1936, Senator William Knowland in 1956, and Governor George Wallace in 1964.

4. Philip E. Converse, et al., "Continuity and Change in American Politics: Parties and Issues in the 1968 Election," American Political Science Review, December, 1969.

5. Walter Dean Burnham, Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970), and Frederick G. Dutton, Changing Sources of Power: American Politics in the 1970's (McGraw-Hill, 1971) argue that a new era of party loyalties and alignments is in the offing. A conventional interpretation of the 1968 election is Philip E. Converse, et al., op. cit.

public pursuance of his ceremonial and partisan duties. One can only speculate whether the threshold has been lowered to a new level of abuse of the President's person, which Lyndon Johnson spared himself by abandoning the quest but which future Presidents might none the less have to suffer. The siege of a President in his White House can be lifted by helicopter and carefully selected friendly audiences, prepared to hear uplifting messages. Yet the physical threat to the dignity, not to mention the safety, of the Presidency, which the radical anti-war movement posed to Lyndon Johnson in 1968 may be regarded by many extreme political activists of the future as a proven instrument for ending presidencies.[6] If young people are ready to resort to such intimidating tactics, it may reflect changes in their values quite apart from the purely political element of their socialization; but the passions generated by the prolonged and bloody war in Vietnam have stimulated and reinforced this change in values.

The public relations efforts which four sucessive Presidents have devoted to explaining their Indochina policies to a steadily more attentive public have become inventive and consuming. As the burdens for the taxpayer and fighting man have grown heavier, so have the "selling" techniques, and the public doubts and skepticism. If President Kennedy's finest speeches, at American and Yale Universities, were devoted to international affairs and economics, President Nixon has almost nothing to choose among but a series of televised protective reactions on the Vietnam question. The overriding salience of the War issue has also affected the relationship between the Presidents, and possibly their successors, and the press. Lyndon Johnson, to be sure, broke immediately with his predecessor's pattern of rather regular bi-monthly, televised performances before the press corps, because he shrewdly saw his talents more effectively applied to impromptu encounters in a variety of more intimate settings.[7] The perverse turn of fortunes he experienced with the war, however, combined with his ingrained conviction that the press would never give him, a Texan, a fair break, made any return to regularly scheduled general encounters with the journalists quite out of the question.[8] Johnson's penchant for springing surprises and his many months of groping for good news and withholding real news from Vietnam and other trouble spots developed a public uncertainty which the press labeled "the credibility gap," thereby intensifying the tension.

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6. Theodore H. White alludes to the abuse experienced by Johnson, more vicious than any modern President has had to live with, and the intense worry of his Secret Service based on actual evidence of planned degradations of the President. The Making of the President 1968 (New York, Atheneum, 1969), pp. 103-04.

7. Elmer E. Cornwell, Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion (Indiana University Press, 1965), pp. 201-03 contrasts L.B.J.'s techniques with his predecessors'.

8. Eric F. Goldman, The Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson (New York, A.A. Knopf, 1969), ch. 15 describes Johnson's manipulative responses to being beset by criticism over Vietnam.

President Nixon, relieved by Johnson of the periodic general press conference tradition, has groped for his own best medium. Again, the threat of disagreeable questions about a clearly unpopular war (as well as a famed unwillingness to "be kicked around again" by the press) have encouraged him to minimize the formal conferences and find more intimate and favorable settings.[9] These have veered from old-fashioned press conferences to televised chats with a few correspondents or the hostess of the Today Show. The electronic media affords a variety of formats for the President to convey information and advocacy to the nation, which resourceful Presidents were bound to try out, just as their opponents have captured television time with articulation devices of their own. The unpopularity and dragging quality of the Indochina War issue, however, have reinforced the use of Presidentially staged presentations to the public at the expense of encounters shaped by the press. This precedent, if sustainable after the War, would seriously alter the manner in which the press can function as a democratic device within our political system.[10]

Another striking feature of the Indochina involvement has been the close White House guidance over operations as the war expanded. In part, this Presidential control over military action reflected the restless, domineering nature of Lyndon Johnson, but it reflected his situation as well, and implicitly assimilated the lessons learned by Harry Truman in dealing with his theater commanders in a limited war in Asia. President Johnson's grudging decision in February 1965 that he must selectively and punitively bomb the North to save the South confronted the enthusiasm of the Air Force for its vocation and served to turn the White House into an air command post, which carefully designated targets and missions in weekly packages. The gradual narrowing of vision, the rigidification of thought, which overtook this informal, secretive, and personalized system of civilian control has been deplored by journalists and peripheral participants.[11] It has not apparently prompted Lyndon Johnson's successor, however, to reduce the involvement of the President and his national security staff in military operations.

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9. TRB, The New Republic, April 27, 1971, complained that President Nixon has met with the press corps only 17 times in 28 months, less than once every two months.

10. Daniel P. Moynihan, in his critique of the Press' handling of the Presidency, acknowledges that "in the most essential encounters between the President and the press, the advantage is with the former." He also concludes that the relationship between the two have grown so troubled most immediately because of the war in Vietnam, which involved "a massive deception of the American people by their government." "The Presidency and the Press," Commentary, March 1971.

11. Cf. Chester Cooper, op. cit., pp. 421-425, and "Vietnam Archive," New York Times, June 15, 1971, p. 23. Also, Townsend Hoopes, The Limits of Intervention (New York, D. McKay Co., 1969), pp. 6-7. In spite of the concentration of control on such tactical matters at the White House, Cooper notes with regret that no one person, no "Mr. Vietnam," was ever designated to insure a comprehensive grasp and coordination within the government.

The burgeoning growth of the National Security Council Staff under Henry Kissinger, and the prominence of the McGeorge Bundy operation during the Kennedy and Johnson periods reflect to some degree the force of personalities, both in the White House basement and on the Seventh Floor of the State Department. Yet the Indochina intervention surely reinforced the principal innovation of the Kennedy and Johnson years, the creation of an influential national security adviser to the President himself. The competing perspectives of the diplomatic, military, and intelligence bureaucracies were continually juxtaposed in conducting a limited war in tandem with an unpopular, incapable client regime before a dismayed or hostile world audience. Walking such a tightrope, the President has needed an additional voice and an organizing hand to clarify and resolve conflicting biases of his military and political bureaucracies. With the National Security Council Staff growing to more than one hundred persons under Kissinger, a reaction may be brewing which will reduce the scope of influence and the unaccountability of the Special Assistant in the future. The staff is not a product of the war per se, but Congressional resentment of it is an outgrowth of investigations into executive secrecy about Indochina operations.[12]

Led by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, a strong reaction has also set in to the flimsy legal basis upon which our Presidents committed the nation to so costly a military venture. The reassertion of the Senate in this confusing constitutional struggle is a topic to be dealt with in its own right, but the net impact on the Presidency can be estimated here. Under Secretary of State Nicholas Katzenbach asserted before the Fulbright Committee in 1967 that the Protocol to the Southeast Asia Treaty extending its scope to the "free territory under the jurisdiction of the State of Vietnam," together with the Tonkin Gulf Resolution approving Presidential determinations to assist Vietnam, constituted a "functional declaration of war." This seemed to be a high water mark in interpretation of the Constitution in favor of the Chief Executive. The Tonkin Resolution has since been not only renounced by its Senate sponsor, J.W. Fulbright, but repealed by the Senate altogether (July 10, 1970). Senators Mansfield and Mathias are gunning to wipe out all such enabling resolutions which Presidents have received from the Congress since Korea for authorizing military aid or action in the Formosa Straits, the Middle East, and Cuba. The second thoughts which arose out of the suddenness and confusion of the Tonkin Gulf affair were sharpened by the almost taunting use to which the Resolution was put by the President many months and thousands of casualties later. The well of Congressional trust has been poisoned by President Johnson's dramatic stage-management and rhetorical legalisms. The "blank

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12. Speech by Senator Symington, Congressional Record, March 2, 1971, Vol. 117, No. 2, criticizes Kissinger and describes his apparatus. A fuller historical view is given in Robert H. Johnson, "The National Security Council: The Relevance of its Past to its Future," Orbis, XIII, 3, Fall, 1969.

check" resolution authorizing discretionary Presidential use of force so neatly used by President Eisenhower, will not be passable in the Senate for some time to come. President Nixon has already prepared himself for the situation by asserting no need for such resolutions in achieving his purposes.

Here is a case of the political style of one President nullifying a particular device for "modernizing" the war-making clause of an 18th century constitution. It need not necessarily have happened. The further ramification of the issue, however, is the Senate's National Commitments Resolution of June 25, 1969 which Senator Javits has hailed as a "watershed in the American Experience";[13] even though the Executive Branch has expressed no similar enthusiasm. This resolution affirms the sense of the Senate that "a national commitment by the United States results only from affirmative action taken by the Executive and Legislative branches of the United States Government by means of a treaty, statute, or concurrent resolution of both Houses of Congress specifically providing for such commitment." Pursuing the matter through investigative hearings, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has pried loose information concerning nuclear weapons abroad, intelligence activities, and other matters previously locked in Executive Agreements with Asian and non-democratic governments receiving American military assistance.[14] Having once divulged this much, the Chief Executive will remain under pressure to disclose more to the Congress and perhaps the public than he has been wont to do in the past. It would be hard to argue that this diminution of Executive discretion (or expansion of the public's right to know) is simply a reaction to the penchant for secrecy of President Johnson. It seems quite probable that the issue would have arisen under any presidential personality once the nation had committed itself incrementally to such a costly, ill-defined venture as the war in Indochina and began to worry about whether it could happen again.

CONGRESS

As the Indochina venture has been drained of patriotic immunity to public criticism, the Congress has asserted a more independent role in the enterprise. Traditionally such Congressional reassertions have occurred in the aftermath of wartime enhancements of the Presidency, as Woodrow Wilson learned to his sorrow. Harry Truman, despite the "pork

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13. Jacob K. Javits, "Congress in Foreign Relations," Foreign Affairs, January, 1970, Vol. 48, No. 2, p. 234.

14. Cf. Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad, Report, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, 91st Congress, 2d Session, December 21, 1970.

chop" election of 1946 and the overriding of his vetoes in key domestic legislation, was able to cultivate Senator Vandenberg and sound the alarm over British bankruptcy and the Greek and Turkish jeopardy, to maintain Presidential initiative in fighting his Cold War with Communism. Presidents after Indochina may find their leeway in overseas affairs even more restricted by the Congress than Harry Truman's would have been without the civil wars and Communist Parties of Western Europe. Not only has the U.S.S.R. settled down and the international system become more complex since the 1940's, but also important precedents have been established during the Congressional agonizing over the withdrawal from Vietnam.

In the final moments of the 92nd Congress (Dec. 22, 1971) the two houses of Congress agreed in the Foreign Assistance Act on prohibiting the introduction of United States combat troops or the provision of military advisers to Cambodia and requiring full disclosure regarding other aid activities there. This legislation was a logical extension of the Senate's Cooper-Church Amendment to the Foreign Military Sales Act of 1968 which had sought in June to bar the retention of U.S. forces in Cambodia. The House would not agree at that time to tie the President's hand in military operations. Six months later, as its aged Speaker McCormick , steeped in World War II and Cold War perspectives, stood on the threshold of retirement, the House began to catch up with the Senate. It passed a joint resolution admonishing the President "whenever possible" to consult with Congress before involving American forces in armed conflict, and acceded to the Senate version of the Defense Appropriations Act which sought to make illegal any introduction of American ground forces into Cambodia or Laos.

The spate of bills and resolutions designed to control the President's use of military forces which the shock of the Cambodia incursion produced, has been followed by more deliberate efforts by the appropriate committees in both houses to scrutinize and redefine the Constitutional responsibilities for initiating and waging war.[15] Although the tide of such efforts may crest and recede without legally restraining the President, just as the Bricker Amendment to restrict Executive Agreements fell just short of Senate adoption in 1954,the notice will be served that military operations abroad will not automatically receive the benefit of legislative doubt in the future. A significant precedent has been established in using the defense appropriations process to legislate limitations on the disposition of military forces during an actual military campaign.

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15. Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, Vol. XXIX, No. 7, Feb. 12, 1971 lists the bills and resolutions on ending the Indochina War and curbing the war powers of the President introduced in the 92nd Congress. On May 11, 1971 Senator John Stennis, the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, most notably joined the movement to limit Presidential use of armed force.

A potent use has been made in the Senate of the televised hearing process to focus public attention on the Executive rationale for his policies, and on learned criticisms by outsiders. The dogged performances of Secretaries Rusk and McNamara before the Fulbright Committee and the frequent invitations to Secretaries Rogers and Laird to testify are measures of the strain arising in the bipartisan modalities of Congressional advice and consent when foreign military interventions bog down short of Executive promises. In 1951, General MacArthur's letter to Republican Minority Leader Joe Martin challenging Administration policy in Korea did not evoke the sustained critique within the Congress or its appropriate committees that the Senate has witnessed with respect to Indochina since 1966. To be sure, the issue is curiously reversed. In 1951 the Congressional critics wanted more military power to be used, in 1966 they pressed for less. In 1951 the testimony of the Chiefs of Staff and their military Secretary of Defense held wide respect, in 1966 the military men were overshadowed by the uningratiating Rusk and McNamara. In 1951 the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee remained loyal to the President's policies, even though the internal security committees rampaged through the attic of recent Far Eastern policy in search of spies and scapegoats. In 1966, some members of the Foreign Relations Committee were written off by the White House.

Another important difference between these wartime relationships is the larger staff available today to gather information independently for the foreign affairs committees. The publication of Staff Reports for the use of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations has served to arm the attentive public with official documents from the legislative branch which challenge Executive policy quite independent of Executive testimony.[16] The build up of committee staff, reflects a need felt throughout the Congress in seeking to retain a grasp on the immensity of Government operations. The dispatch of investigators abroad, however, and prompt publication of their findings and opinions is a new dimension in the struggle between the two branches of government for control over American foreign policy. The more decorous procedure of issuing reports by individual Senators, which Senator Mike Mansfield first used with respect to Indochina in 1955, or publishing reports following committee hearings, might still be in vogue but for the frustrations and surprises of the Indochina War and the deep distrust of Executive testimony which they have deposited. As Senator Javits put it, "Senators today are inclined to cast a jaundiced eye on Presidential assessments, and, unfortunately, even on assertions of fact."[17]

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16. A notable example of this device is the series of Staff Reports entitled Cambodia: May 1970, and Cambodia: December 1970, written by two staff members and issued as Committee Prints, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, 91st Congress, 2nd Session.

17. J.K. Javits, op. cit., p. 227.

The fabric of bipartisanship so carefully woven by Secretary of State Dean Acheson and Senator Arthur Vandenberg for coping with the Cold War has been stretched and torn but not wholly rent. President Johnson's sternest critics arose within his own party, swelling the band of two Democratic Senators who voted against the Tonkin Gulf Resolution of August 1964. The opposition party did not threaten to deny him legislative support for his diplomatic or military moves so much as the "doves" and presidential aspirants in his own camp. President Nixon chose a shrewd veteran of the legislative halls as his Secretary of Defense and a likeable, low-keyed lawyer for his Secretary of State. These men have won a minimal forebearance of the Democrats for their policy of gradual withdrawal from Indochina, even though the U.S. Senate today is much richer in budding Presidents than it was in the days of Acheson and Vandenberg or John Foster Dulles and Walter George. The Secretaries' efforts have been hampered, it seems, by the lesser grasp that they have had over the shaping and ultimate deciding of policies such as the incursion into Cambodia or the prison camp rescue mission. Unlike the fateful consultation between the Eisenhower Administration and the leadership of Congress over whether to rescue the French at Dienbienphu, the Nixon Administration avoided taking the Democrats into their confidence before their sweep into Cambodia in 1970. Despite the shock and anger this breach of bipartisan conventions produced, the Administration was able half a year later to win a moratorium on hostile Congressional criticism during its allied Laotian incursion. The failure of this mission to live up to the promise of its secret Senate briefing, however, burst the bonds of bipartisan self-restraint with a new round of committee hearings aimed at pushing the Administration to accelerate its indefinite, unsteady course of withdrawal. Bipartisanship, and the courtesies and devices by which it has been nurtured, has not been obliterated by the Indochina War, but many Senators now consider the War an exception to the rule, and such redefinitions can become habitual.

The strenuous opposition to the Anti-Ballistic Missile, the Super Sonic Transport, and the proposed B-1 supersonic bomber fall somewhat outside the critical zone of bipartisan tradition, but they provide a warning that the President cannot count on the unquestioning support of his own or the opposition party for major spending programs related to defense or national prestige. The enormous financial burden and pernicious economic effects of the precipitous Vietnam military build-up ordered by President Johnson have contributed to the Congressional readiness to resist the Executive in previously sacrosanct areas of expenditure.

THE EXECUTIVE BUREAUCRACY

In addition to affecting the relationships of the Presidency and Congress, the Indochina involvement has left its mark upon the many agencies and personnel of the Executive Branch, particularly the national security elements. One of the most fruitful byproducts of the period has been the forced acquaintance of Americans with Southeast Asia. Thanks to a tradition of relative indifference toward the area during western colonialism, and the debilitating purge of State Department Far East experts spurred by Senator McCarthy in the 1950's, the government assumed respon-

sibility in Indochina with precious little knowledge at the time of the Geneva Conference of 1954.[18] The fateful consequences of this inadequacy during the Eisenhower administration has been pointed out many times, but even eleven years later, as we moved into full scale military operations, the number of true Vietnam experts in this country "could be counted on one's fingers."[19] Our deep involvement in not only military defense but also economic and political development of South Vietnam, with limited efforts in Laos and Cambodia, has created a civil corps of Indochina veterans, but effective use of them has been hampered by the rapid turnover rate of military and even State Department personnel in the theatre. The disenchantment and hostility toward our policies in Indochina which swelled up after 1965 within the academic community may have turned some younger scholars away from serving in the area, but it also stimulated a good deal of semi-scholarly writing about Indochina.[20] Even though military, administrative, and social science research experience in the field has developed a knowledgeable cadre of Vietnam hands during the 1960's, these persons are often torn or sensitized by their past involvement in the policy controversies, operations, and predictions in the area. If the United States will not lack for experienced people in dealing with these countries in the future, it may find it hard to decide, nonetheless, whose advice may claim proven or even probable reliability.

The national Peace Movement, beginning with the Teach-Ins organized on university campuses in early 1966, polarized faculties, and students, and professional academic associations alike. The Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars, organized in 1968, united social scientists of many disciplines who had jostled and disturbed their own Associations but generally failed to "politicize" them to the point of passing condemnatory resolutions on the Government's Vietnam policy. The deep animosity and scholarly training of thousands of professors and students who felt they must condemn their Government produced a parade of "radical" commentary and journalism which has undermined the linkages between the Government and universities. The resort to bomb attacks on prominent Centers of International Studies by extreme elements in the anti-war and young radical movement will probably decline with the casualty lists. The political residue of the radical challenge, however, will be a widespread unwillingness of faculties and scholarly groups to formalize relationships with Government agencies or their semi-autonomous research organizations. The sensitivity to being branded as a "CIA cohort" or the chosen instrument of the Department of Defense will prevail not only on the campus of Michigan State University or Southern Illinois University, but also within the minds of individual scholars who might otherwise have been useful consultants to Government and among the officers of foreign area study groups which heretofore have accepted Government funds to support their work. These inhibitions to joining the national security enterprise in any indirect fashion may pro-

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18. C. Cooper, op. cit., pp. 16-18. A year after World War II the United States had but one consul and two vice consuls in the area.

19. No More Vietnams!: The War and the Future of American Foreign Policy, Richard M. Pfeffer (ed.) (New York, Harper & Row, 1968), p. 204.

20. A somewhat special example, Noam Chomsky, whose training was in linguistics, turned himself into a prolific writer-journalist on Indochina. Cf. N. Chomsky, At War With Asia (New York, Pantheon Books, 1969).

vide a more discerning outside criticism and evaluation of Government policies. Yet it may also deprive the Government of acute inside consulation and contractual services and haunt the reputations of scholars who have been "compromised" by Vietnam service prior to 1968.

Another reaction to the Indochina failures of the bureaucracies is emerging in the writings of both outside critics and former insiders. The acclaim which Robert McNamara initially won for cost-benefit analysis at the Pentagon has been dissipated not only by the bitterly contested, unreliable TFX aircraft but also by the tragic use of quantitative indicators to publicly pronounce the "light at the end of the tunnel" or the "turning of the corner" in the warfare and "pacification" in Vietnam. Under mounting criticism of the War at home, McNamara's Department was driven ever harder to provide systematic measurements of progress. The techniques of systems analysis were geared to providing a flood of statistics "on priority programs in key provinces, graphs, slides and charts, regression curves. Numbers! There was a number mill in every military and AID installation in Vietnam.... Sometimes the numbers were plucked out of the air, sometimes the numbers were not accurate. Sometimes they were accurate but not relevant. Sometimes they were relevant but misinterpreted."[21] Even though the systems analysts may have accurately gauged the failure of the bombing policy and played a part in turning President Johnson around, the future claims of systems analytic approaches, both within and outside Government, will receive less presumption in their favor. Estimates of political viability of regimes and the capacity and tenacity of hostile forces will be made with more recognition of the unquantifiable elements.

This caution may make for better estimates, but what is not so salutary is the public skepticism of Government numbers, surveys, and predictions which the dismal catalogue of "progress reports" on Vietnam has helped to reinforce. This impact has been somewhat compounded by the hyperbole which has characteristically intruded into Presidential addresses on Vietnam and provoked contradiction from the press or anti-war spokesman. No doubt systems analysis will continue to play a constructive role within the Government, but its opponents have been armed with telling examples of its disutility with which to fight their rear guard delaying action.

A more sweeping challenge to the Government's approach to the outside world is found in the indictment of "national security managers" expounded by writers such as Richard J. Barnet and utilized in part by "establishment" liberals.[22] Even though many participants in the Adlai Stevenson Institute's

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21. Chester Cooper, op. cit., p. 422. Stanley Hoffmann indicts this phenomenon, the shorthand translation of hard facts into statistics, which we tried to use "in ignorance of the context" and with "excessive self-confidence," in R.M. Pfeffer (ed.), op. cit., p. 134.

22. Richard J. Barnet, Intervention and Revolution (New York, World Publishing Co., 1968). See A.M. Schlesinger's critique of Barnet's thesis in R.M. Pfeffer (ed.), op. cit., pp. 83-85. John K. Galbraith points to the problem of "bureaucratic momentum" in his article, "The Plain Lessons of a Bad Decade," Foreign Policy, Winter, 1970-71.

conference on Vietnam in 1968 considered Barnet's analysis extravagant or erroneous, it speaks the viewpoint that will be held by aggressive elements of the coming generation of potential civil servants. The "interventionist thrust" of postwar American foreign policy can be accounted for in their view by the exaggerated definitions of threat, the confrontation model of world politics, imposed upon the nation by the "national security bureaucracy." A military mold has encased our foreign policy. With young revisionist historians challenging the conventional view of the Cold War Decade, as might be expected this long after the event, the dolorous results of the Indochina intervention are undermining the operational code of the Cold War generation bureaucrats who conducted it. The generalized discredit the revisionists have cast upon the foreign affairs bureaucracies may prompt some sophisticated members of the Vietnam generation to move into Government where they might reorient the structure, but many others will be inclined to seek the company of non-governmental or domestic reform agencies instead.[23] The impact on recruitment to the national security services may very well be significant. A State Department task force on recruitment found in 1970 many college students less interested in Foreign Service career possibilities than in asking questions about the efficacy of the State Department and our Southeast Asia policy. The "applicants as a whole are frequently not of as high quality" as they once were and often the most promising candidates fail to accept appointments or resign early. The applications from the best colleges and schools of international studies have declined.[24]

The post mortems of the Indochina failure are hard upon us, spurred by the writing of memoirs and publication of documents at an unaccustomed rate. However bitter the public recriminations may ultimately become if the popularly held objective of an independent non-Communist South Vietnam is not achieved, the Indochina episode has left our foreign and military affairs departments ready for new doctrines to replace the tatters of their operating assumptions of the 1960's. A Kennedy stalwart of the Defense Department, Adam Yarmolinsky, has plainly questioned the "flexible response" posture which he once considered such an improvement over the "massive retaliation" doctrine of the Eisenhower Administration.

> Theories of limited war and programs to widen the President's range of choice made military solutions to our foreign problems more available and even more attractive.[25]

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23. In 1971 applications by college graduates for civil service jobs were up 65% over the previous year, but many of these will draw the line at entering the Department of Defense. For summary impressions of the new generation, see Graham Allison, "No More Vietnams," Foreign Policy, Winter, 1970-71, and James A. Johnson, "The Coming Generation of Isolationists," Foreign Affairs, October, 1970.

24. Diplomacy for the 1970's: A Program of Management for the Department of State, Department of State Publication 8551, U.S. G.P.O., December 1970, pp. 268-269.

25. Adam Yarmolinsky, "The Military Establishment (or How Political Problems Become Military Problems,") Foreign Policy, Winter, 1970-71.

The Green Berets and exotic training schools for counter-insurgency techniques may be viewed as dangerous temptations to imbibe in intervention in an era when that term has taken on a negative connotation as evocative as "appeasement" in the 1940's. "No more Vietnams" will ring as an alarm through the halls of Government for some time, just as the post-Korean "Never Again Club" prompted U.S. Army staff officers to counsel, unsuccessfully, against land warfare in Asia.[26] President Eisenhower's simile of the falling row of dominos will be not only old-fashioned but unconvincing to boot. Many critics of our Vietnam policy have already challenged it. They have also argued that a Great Power can afford to withdraw from a mistaken foreign undertaking. The Congress has sounded its warning about secret executive agreements with foreign governments. If that were not enough, the agonies of two Administrations in "selling" their Indochina policies to the public has certainly demonstrated the pitfalls of over-dramatizing American involvements and objectives abroad.

The atrocity incidents and anti-warfare journalism gradually reaching the public consciousness may force an examination of the crypto-racism implicit in many American policies in Indochina, from the forced relocations to saturation bombing and "free fire" zones, or the use of Meo and Montagnard mercenary forces.[27] The sham and connivance involved in managing a mini-war in Laos via the Central Intelligence Agency will come under closer scrutiny once the fighting ebbs in South Vietnam, and the public tolerance of such subterfuges may be effectively reduced. A public mood of introversion, mixed with bitterness over such prolonged and pointless losses, will call for new sets of operating assumptions in the national security apparatus to replace the weary rationale of the European Cold War so rudely applied in Asia.

Of all the Government services, the military have probably suffered the most notable effects from Indochina. To be sure they have practiced their vocation under combat conditions for a longer period than any previous war afforded them. They have tested weapons and tactics at the sub-nuclear level against a determined foe. Yet they may have reason to wonder whether this will prepare them for any comparable engagement in this generation. Furthermore, the prestige and credibility of their chief spokesmen which was so high following World War II, and even during the dismissal of General MacArthur in 1951, has been severely wounded by the record of false promises of victory and grim insistence on pursuing an unpopular war. The failure of aerial bombing once again to achieve victory, the rejected recommendation of General Westmoreland to invest another two hundred thousand troops in the contest following the Tet Offensive, and the sickening weight of armament and explosive so lavishly expended in this corner of Asia to such little tangible gain for the United States,

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26. Joseph Kraft, Profiles in Power (New York, The New American Library, 1966), Ch. 14.

27. James C. Thomson, Jr. raised the issue as an "unprovable factor" in R.M. Pfeffer (ed.) op. cit., p. 48, and subsequently in his "How Could Vietnam Happen?" in R. Manning and M. Janeway, (eds.) Who We Are: An Atlantic Chronicle of the United States in Vietnam 1966-1969 (Boston, Little Brown and Co., 1969).

raise frightening challenges to the competence and vision of the military profession. Doubtless the senior officers who helped plan and fight the war will raise challenges of their own,[28] just as the field commanders who were not allowed to win the Korean War vented their spleen on "political influences" and civilian leaders for some years after the Armistice. The post-Korea Army had grown to accept the doctrine of limited war by the time the Vietnam situation beckoned -- the debate was largely settled by the Congressional investigation following General MacArthur's dismissal -- but it will be more difficult this time for the military services to take stock and reorder their thinking. The prolonged and partially successful effort at counter-insurgency and creation of a self-sustaining foreign military force will leave a confusing record for assessment.

The fall of the military elite from its former high repute is paralleled by alarming avoidance of military service by draft eligibles. The readiness of young men to flee abroad, construct a conscientious objection, accept imprisonment, connive at draft exemptions, or resign commissions from the Military Academies is a reflection primarily of the particular war which faced them. An attack upon the territory of the United States or a war to defend our capacity to exist as a Great Power would not produce such anti-war behavior. Pending such a catastrophe the military services, probably operating without a draft, will face a recruitment problem which televised commercials about the Army wanting to "join You" will not entirely rectify. The Reserve Officer Training Program will be dead at many university campuses, and veteran officers may retire in bitterness over the punishment of officers implicated in the My Lai and perhaps other incidents. The recriminations over atrocities committed in Vietnam may swell before subsiding, and it may etch into the minds of potential Service Academy appointees an image of a dangerous profession scarcely offering honor or renown.

The restoration of morale and discipline within more narrowly recruited post-war military services will be a major undertaking due to Indochina. The easy access to drugs in the alleys of Vietnam has not in itself produced their widespread use among armed forces stationed there. The drug craving has also flourished at home, fed in turn by returning Asia veterans. The tensions and disorientation of American military service in Vietnam, the death and maiming suffered in behalf of a strange and even sullen people, are nonetheless a major cause of the phenomenon. Once this proximate cause is removed, with the exit from Vietnam, the services will probably be

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28. Some civilian strategists, (such as Albert Wohlstetter,) have taken up the argument originally made by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1964 that the escalation of force applied to North Vietnam was so gradual that its coercive impact was dissipated by the enemy's opportunity to adjust to each step up the ladder. Cf. "Vietnam Archive"; New York Times, June 14, 1971, p. 31.

able to restrict serious drug abuse, estimated in 1970 as between 10 and 20% among G.I.'s in Vietnam.[29] The scars left upon the veterans of Vietnam will remain for the nation and the Veterans Administration to handle. More than 300,000 wounded servicemen, not to mention the psychologically disturbed, will keep that organization going for decades to come.

The traditional authority of officers over their men has been loosening with the growth of humane standards in our society, but the Indochina War has weakened the command relationship within the services to the point of threatening operational effectiveness. Flogging or execution of deserters are well removed from our military practice, but the current procedure of separating new men in the field from those who have already refused to fight is a sign of fundamental weakness in an Army. The wearing of uniforms may be scorned without diminishing fighting capacities, but it becomes serious when maintenance of equipment is neglected. If weapons in garrison must be turned in and locked up, the situation is serious. The "fragging" of officers or NCO's in revenge or resentment of their authority claimed 39 lives in 1969, and the 209 incidents in 1970 was double the previous year.[30] The alienation and license suggested by these figures are a threat to military effectiveness which an end of combat or a different sort of war will doubtless rectify. Yet the military services will have to proceed cautiously in deciding how much of the terrain of traditional military manners and discipline they will try to reoccupy following the departure of their unwilling and unruly drafted manpower.

THE POLITICAL PUBLIC

The state of the public mind during the Indochina War has been difficult enough to understand without trying to project it beyond the end of hostilities. Relatively high levels of information about the war were found by opinion surveys well before the 1968 election campaigns. The vivid presence of the battlefields on televison in the homes of news-watchers has been a unique feature of this war. Passive support for the President in his "handling of the situation" was strong, as it customarily is in foreign policy matters, but a readiness to negotiate and an opposition to the prosecution of the war were also found in significant proportions well before the election.[31] The distribution of opinion among

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29. Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars, The Indochina Story (New York, Bantam Books, 1970), p. 109. The Secretary of the Army testified to 10 or 15% hard drug addiction in the Army in Vietnam in May 1971.

30. Fred Gardner, "War and G.I. Morale," New York Times, Nov. 18, 1970, and New York Times, April 21, 1971. "Fragging" refers to assaults with fragmentation grenades, often rolled under a tent flap.

31. Sidney Verba et al., "Public Opinion and the War in Vietnam," American Political Science Review, June 1967, and William R. Caspary, "The Mood Theory: A Study of Public Opinion and Foreign Policy," ibid., June 1970.

members of Congress in 1966 represented rather accurately the mood of the people, but in September 1970 a majority of the public favored withdrawing troops by the end of 1971, while the Senate rejected such a plan by 55 to 39. Partisan loyalty to the President helps account for this lag behind public opinion.[32] Six city-wide referenda during 1966-68 on the question of withdrawal from Vietnam, and public opinion polls, show that the lower the income, education and occupational status the greater the tendency to favor withdrawal.[33] It is also apparent that Blacks have been more hostile to the war than non-Blacks and would remain hostile to future diversions of attention from their demands at home. Also, women have shown greater disapproval of the war than men.

None of this is particularly surprising, but it may have some consequences for the American political system. The persisting "permissive mood" toward Presidential leadership in foreign policy and the "rally round the flag" upsurge of approval of the President following his involvement in dramatic international events have shown unprecedented weakness in the final stages of the Indochina War. The allied incursion into Laos in February 1971 was followed by a decrease in public approval of the President in the next month's Gallup poll.[34] The stealthy nature of the Administration's public announcement of the venture may have dissociated the event from the President himself sufficiently to account for this unexpected lack of uplift. On the other hand, the independent press and the Peace Movement may have achieved such influence as to counteract the long prevailing presumption in favor of Presidential foreign affairs leadership. Such a phenomenon would be of major significance were it to

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32. September 1970, the month of the vote on the Hatfield-McGovern plan, a Gallup poll showed 55% favoring withdrawal by the end of 1971. In January 1971, 72% favored withdrawal before the end of the year.

33. Harlon Hahn, "Correlates of Public Sentiments About War: Local Referenda on the Vietnam Issue," American Political Science Review, December 1970. This finding contrasts with that of Verba, et al., op. cit., who found no consistent relationship in polling data between social status and opinions on this issue.

34. The Gallup Opinion Index, March 1971, pp. 1 and 10. Public approval of President Nixon's "handling of his job" declined from 56 to 50% during the month in which the Laos operation began and Americans by a 2 to 1 ratio thought the invasion would lengthen rather than shorten the war.

continue, but the likelihood of prolonged disapproval of Presidential leadership in Indochina is somewhat limited by the coming elections. Nonetheless the striking disparity between public preferences with regard to a withdrawal timetable and the probable achievement will push many of the generation just entering politics to view our institutions as impossibly unresponsive.

The new voters entering the political system in 1972 will be younger than ever before, thanks in part to the War itself, which has dramatized the claims of eighteen year olds to a voice in their nation's policy making. They will enter with a mood of skepticism of official pronouncements and distrust of old dogmas which few political generations have experienced. And though their distrust of officialdom has been shared by leading Senators and television networks, their own "impudence" will be a political issue in the minds of older generations. The confrontation mode of politics which the Black Revolution stimulated in the early 60's has been carried further with grim imagination by the Peace Movement into new chapters in political articulation. The youthful imagination of anti-war groups has developed mass convergence on Washington or political convention sites, student strikes, teach-ins, local referenda on international issues, symbolic "seizure" of buildings, obstruction of government recruiters and military induction, relentless harassment of pro-government speakers, guerrilla theater, and a host of other devices for expressing their political views. The response of television news teams, law and order forces, and public opinion will help to sift out the political effectiveness of all these new devices. Already "martyrs" have emerged from the conspiracy trials with which the Justice Department has responded to key leaders of the Movement. A sufficient sense of efficacy has probably been retained by the rank and file activists, however, to keep them from turning to more violent modes of protest.[35] As the War becomes a less immediate issue, all but the most ideological protestors will probably be co-opted into normal electoral forms of politics, but they will be joining a political system whose prevailing assumptions about the range of United States responsibilities abroad have been notably affected by the arguments expressed by the Peace Movement.

CONCLUSION

The Indochina involvement of the United States has left its mark on the political security and the operating processes of the Presidency, and on its relationships with the Congress in the overlapping spheres of national security policy-making. It has challenged and shifted the perspectives of the bureaucracies which manage these policies and possibly affected their recruitment.

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35. A short analysis of the anti-war protest in relation to other forms of protest is found in The Politics of Protest Jerome H. Skolnick, Director, Task Force Report to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (New York, Clarion Book, 1969). See also, Arnold H. Miller, "Perceptions and Recommendations of Activists in the Vietnam Protest Movement," Polity, Spring 1971.

It has activated a young generation of political participants, whose claims and outlooks have made headway in the public mind. While these impacts may not add up to the political earthquake that the Great Depression caused in party re-alignment and philosophical re-evaluation, they equal in intensity and significance the turbulence of old versus new perspectives on the outside world and our responsibilities therein which the much larger event, World War II, precipitated two decades ago.