

**THE PENTAGON'S
SECRETS
AND HALF-
SECRETS**

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FOREWORD

The disclosure of the Pentagon papers on the Indochina war has shocked public opinion in the United States and the world. For those who lack time or opportunity to read them in full, we have gathered in this booklet the most important documents. We have also contrasted them with documents issued by the Vietnamese and Lao sides (DRVN, South Viet Nam NFL, Lao Patriotic Front) regarding the same events and periods. A few statements by US officials have been quoted from other sources; they usefully complete the recently disclosed papers

Hanoi September 1971

INTRODUCTION

Honest people hate to think that such an honourable government as that of the US had for long years pre-meditated, prepared and meticulously planned a systematic aggression, a war which was to degenerate into a crime, a genocide and a biocide, against a small people, a small country over 10,000 kilometres from the USA; that this government had for years on end deliberately lied to cover its crimes, camouflage its designs and deceive American opinion, the American Congress and the allies of the USA as well as all its friends and followers in the world.

When US presidents declared that they wanted nothing but peace, that they would never commit aggression, and never use force, that they only wanted to defend democracy and freedom in Viet Nam, many people in the world could hardly believe that these statements were sheer lies and, worse still, cynical cover for careful and elaborate war preparations. Those words should contain, so thought those honest people inclined to believe in others' probity, a minimum of truth and sincerity on the part of the heads of one of the major governments in the world, and there should

perhaps be a fair dose of propaganda in the charges made by the other side against the White House and the Pentagon.

Today, one can't fly in the face of facts. The truth has burst into the open. Official documents, reports, notes, accounts of hearings, directives, circulars—7,000 pages and two and a half million words in all—now reveal in black and white the scope of the US plot and bluff.

For over twenty years, US imperialism had lain in wait for its prey, set its snares, orchestrated its propaganda and framed the necessary provocations, eventually to pour on Viet Nam over 11 million tons of bombs and shells and throw into the Indochina abyss 200 billion dollars (figures quoted in a report to the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee). Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and now Nixon display quite different personalities; the Democratic Party and the Republican Party have succeeded each other in power. But Washington's policy on Viet Nam and Indochina has not deviated an inch from a set line.

Aid to the French colonialists to try and quell the resistance of the Indochinese peoples, brutal hold on South Viet Nam right after the 1954 armistice, wilful violation of the Geneva Agreements, bloody repression of the South Vietnamese people, "special war" and even more atrocious "limited war", provocations, bombardments against the DRVN: these events have followed a scenario directed by an inflexible stage manager. The most murderous weapons have been tested, the most barbarous war methods applied, and the most

blood-thirsty stooges enthroned only to be physically liquidated when they proved to be duds.

For the Vietnamese people — who, as early as March 1950, saw the first US warships come to Saigon, then ever since 1950 have seen US military missions at work, and a swarm of Yankee “advisers” of all kinds, followed by hordes of G.I.’s — the disclosure of the Pentagon papers only confirms the views they have held on Yankee imperialism over a score of years. For the Vietnamese, Lao and Khmer peoples, as for all those who have had to face Yankee imperialism over the last years, these documents reveal no secret. For they have judged the men in Washington by their deeds, not by their words, and the succession, the logic of their action has amply proved the real nature of Yankee imperialism.

These documents by no means reveal all the facts; on Diem’s death, on the refusal to hold general elections in 1956, on the “Tonkin Gulf incident”, on the threatened use of nuclear weapons in Indochina, there is much more to say.

But they contain the essential fact: the policy of intervention and aggression carried out with obstinacy and perfidy by Washington against Viet Nam and the Indochinese countries. And beyond Indochina, beyond the towering crimes perpetrated in the course of this war, the whole US policy towards the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America is unveiled. Where can US neo-colonialism lead? How can it act? What credibility can one give the Washington leaders’ speeches and

pledges? The whole world is now warned. Nobody can any longer say he did not know the facts.

The other aspect revealed by these documents is the weak position of Yankee imperialism at each stage, each turning point of this long history. Bellicose and possessed of colossal means, it nevertheless had to admit its powerlessness at every turn and its best trumpcards have proved ineffective. Hence this profound division which splits even the Washington ruling circles, and which has in fact brought about the disclosure of these state secrets.

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One wonders why President Nixon has stubbornly opposed the publication of secret documents on preceding administrations.

For eight years (1953-1960) Richard Nixon was Vice-president of the United States. He consistently supported the decisions taken by the Eisenhower administration, which led to an enlarged commitment of the United States in Indochina. One should not forget that during the siege of Dien Bien Phu, he backed Radford's and Dulles's proposal for massive bombings of that camp's perimeter to save France from impending defeat. Harold Stassen, then a National Security Council member, recently disclosed that Nixon, as Vice-president, did his best to induce Eisenhower to send land forces to Viet Nam (AP, Philadelphia, July 8). Nixon stood for such an intervention even publicly. "The United States as a leader of the free world cannot afford further retreat in Asia", he stated on April

16, 1954 at a newspaper editors' convention. "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." According to officials of the Eisenhower administration, Nixon went so far as to propose the use of tactical nuclear weapons (*Chicago Sun Times*, June 18, 1971).

Then he sought to torpedo the 1954 Geneva Conference. At the same convention he said: "... the United States must go to Geneva and take a positive stand for a united action by the free world. Otherwise it will have to take on the problem alone and try to sell it to the others." The French and the British being forced to negotiate by public opinion in their countries", he thought, the United States was "the only nation politically strong enough at home to take a position that will save Asia".

Nixon fears to see his past stance revealed, or recalled. For, exactly thirty-six days after the publication of the Pentagon papers by *The New York Times*, he boasted on TV that all through his eight years as Vice-president of the United States, "there were no American combat forces in Viet Nam" and that "no Americans had died in combat".

For eight other years (1960-1968), outside the administration, Nixon never failed, at crucial moments, to advocate all-out war.

There is no substitute for victory in South Viet Nam.

Saigon, April 1, 1964

I believe we should win the ground war in the South and better use our air and sea power in the North.

Newsweek, Dec. 25, 1967

Nixon opposed bombing halts in North Viet Nam and negotiations of any kind.

Now that we have hit the oil supplies we should not be inhibited by the fiction that targets in Hanoi should not be hit... There is no reasonable possibility of a negotiated settlement.

Saigon, August 7, 1966

I rule out any kind of a settlement which would be interpreted as an American defeat or victory for the communists.

Newsweek, December 31, 1967

Nixon persistently advocated intensification of the war, and to this end, maximum utilization of the US military potential.

I am convinced that the war effort will be served by a substantial increase in the Americans available on the ground and by a substantial increase in the air capability...

The most effective way to accomplish this is not to have a marginal number in order to accomplish our objectives, but more than enough, because the more power we have concentrated, the sooner this war can be brought to a conclusion.

Saigon, Aug. 7, 1966

Nixon took Kennedy and Johnson to task only on one point: he thought they did not go far enough in their war efforts.