

Vietnam

## VIETNAM WHITE PAPER -- INTRODUCTION

For four agonizing years, Richard Nixon has stood virtually alone in the Nation's capital while little, petty men flayed him over American involvement in Indochina. For four years, he has been the victim of the most vicious personal attacks. Day and night, America's predominantly liberal national media hammered at Mr. Nixon, slicing from all sides, attacking, hitting and cutting. The intellectual establishment -- those whose writings entered America into the Vietnam war -- pompously postured from their ivy hide-aways, using their inordinate power to influence public opinion to malign the President. And over all those years, there were the incessant attacks from the United States Congress -- the low-motivated partisan thrusts from many who envied the President's office and many more who cynically molted their hawk's feathers for those of the dove.

No President has been under more constant and unremitting harrassment by men who should drop to their knees each night to thank the Almighty that they do not have to make the same decisions that Richard Nixon did. Standing with the President in all those years were a handful of reporters and number of newspapers -- nearly all outside of Washington. There were also the courageous men of Congress who would stand firm beside the President. But most importantly there were the millions upon millions of quite ordinary

Americans -- the great Silent Majority of citizens -- who saw our country through a period where the shock troops of leftist public opinion daily propagandized against the President of the United States. They were people of character and steel.

What follows is a partial record of how wrong and how harsh were the critics when things were most difficult. The Overwhelming evidence supports the observation that pessimism and gloom were the watchwords of the wordsmiths and electronic media commentators. Marking the reportage of Vietnam is the unavoidable impression that the worst of everything was to be found and prominently reported. And especially in the most powerful quarters of the mass media, there was rarely an indication of simple trust in what the leader of the free world was doing, or a hopeful tone that the partisans and cynics just might be wrong and the President right.

Through four years of distorted television reports -- such as those of CBS during the Cambodian incursion and that of ABC during the Laotian action -- the American people were, over the great preponderance of time, given negative and disheartening reports of Vietnam progress. NBC's Phil Brady often echoed what seemed to be an anti-American script. John Hart of CBS traveled to Hanoi and brought back hundred's of feet of Communist-sanctioned film to show the American public. All networks have used countless



reels of enemy film -- and though fairly labeling it -- the steady process of the display of obvious enemy propaganda cannot but have an eventual toll.

And the media has tended to believe the worst about the American presence -- remember the "destroyed" dikes ? Each time it was something new -- the dikes, the civilians, the hospital, the neutral ships and always the truth took longer to catch up with the distortions.

Now, through the worst gauntlet of opprobrium and malicious defamation in American history, the President has brought us to a successful end in Indochina. The guns are silent, and our men will be coming home to stay. History will record in the generations to come what only a few have seen first hand: that in this most darkening crisis, Richard Nixon thought more of his country than himself, bringing his skills, his heart, and the extra dimension of a rare and courageous human being.

VIETNAM WHITE PAPER -- SO WRONG FOR SO LONG

THE NEW YORK TIMES

"The American bombs falling on . . . North Vietnam. . . have dimmed prospects not only for peace in Indochina but for the wider detente for which all mankind has prayed."

Editorial, December 30, 1972

Tom Wicker

"The answer can only be that he has no plan to end the war, much less win the peace, that Vietnamization by itself is not and cannot be such a plan, . . ."

May 3, 1970

"It is not going to be so easy to explain away a North Vietnamese military success this time."

April 4, 1972

". . . the President -- by imperial fiat -- has placed the nation in hazard of the gravest confrontation with the Soviets since the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. . . . this is failure on a grand scale."

May 12, 1972

". . . why should bombing a people make them want to deal in good faith?"

December 26, 1972

James Reston

"This (the bombing) is war by tantrum, and it is worse than the Cambodian and Laotian invasions, . . ."

December 27, 1972

"Accordingly (after Cambodia), he is now in a dangerous situation, both at home and abroad."

May 8, 1970

"There is something, not only illogical, but almost dishonorable in his (the President's) present strategy."

February 28, 1971



Anthony Lewis

"(Nixon and Henry Kissinger) . . . have no options except more of the destruction that everyone knows is morally outrageous and politically useless."

April 10, 1972

"The North Vietnamese say they are clearing American mines from the Haiphong harbor as planes drop them . . . ."

May 18, 1972

". . . the elected leader of the greatest democracy acts like a maddened tyrant, . . . ."

December 30, 1972

"Even with sympathy for the men who fly American planes, and for their families, one has to recognize the greater courage of the North Vietnamese people . . . ."

January 6, 1973

". . . they (the enemy) are a people of extraordinary determination and bravery."

January 8, 1973

THE WASHINGTON POST

"He has conducted a bombing policy. . . so ruthless and so difficult to fathom politically as to cause millions of Americans to cringe in shame and to wonder at their President's very sanity."

Editorial, January 7, 1973

Joseph Kraft

". . . the more the President's policy becomes known, the more the support for it wanes."

March 3, 1971

" . . . To anybody who tells them (the enemy) to negotiate, they can say that the United States betrays secret dealings for internal political advantages. In these conditions, the negotiating prospect is now virtually nil."

January 27, 1972

"But President Nixon's action does put in hazard the summit meeting with the Russians. . . And it washes out the rapport Mr. Nixon established with the Chinese leaders in what he called 'the week that changed the world.' "

May 11, 1972

"It is not wrong to say that if the war is not ended in the next few months, it will probably not be ended in the next few years."

June 4, 1972

" . . . we have been shamed as a nation, . . ."

November 26, 1972

" . . . Mr. Nixon called on the bombers -- an action, in my judgment, of senseless terror which stains the good name of America."

December 24, 1972

Tom Braden and Frank Mankiewicz

"Vietnamization was always doubtful. . . Now the failure is plain through all of Indochina."

June 2, 1970

ST. LOUIS POST DISPATCH

"Over and over again Mr. Nixon has tried to bomb Hanoi into submission. It has not worked before and it will not work today."

Editorial, December 19, 1972



CBS NEWS

Dan Rather

"The scheduled summit in Moscow next month is clearly in danger. None of these are pleasant thoughts."

May 5, 1972

Eric Sevareid

"It is no longer a question of repelling the Hanoi general offensive, but of holding it. On present evidence, there is no prospect of driving them out of the provinces they have taken. . ."

May 4, 1972

"I would suspect that the summit will not come off."

May 8, 1972

"The realistic argument is whether this new gamble for peace in Vietnam will not, in itself, set off unpeaceful moves in Europe or the Mideast out of Russia's need to save face if nothing more."

May 9, 1972

"The bad news in the next few days could be the fall of Kontum rated as probable here and the fall of Hue rated only as possible. . . ."

May 17, 1972

Charles Collingwood

". . . Certainly the Moscow summit meeting, from which so much had been expected, is now in jeopardy. . . ."

May 9, 1972

Marvin Kalb

"One casualty of the President's mining and blockade may well be his upcoming summit to Moscow."

May 9, 1972

NBC NEWS

David Brinkley

"The best settlement would be to get out, . . . the American people long ago decided the war was a mistake, . . . the American people are mature enough to accept a bad settlement. . . . it is hard to see any good reason for delaying the American withdrawal from Vietnam."

December 19, 1972

John Chancellor

"The summit is in jeopardy today."

May 8, 1972

ABC NEWS

Harry Reasoner

"The news. . . about the Vietnam negotiations breaking down was very scary and depressing. . . Dr. Kissinger's boss has broken Dr. Kissinger's word. It's very hard to swallow. . . backing off from a cease fire is a weight and comes very close to a breaking of faith, with Hanoi maybe, with Americans more certainly."

December 19, 1972

Howard K. Smith

". . . as a, I hope, judicious commentator, I doubt the wisdom of what has been done."

May 10, 1972

NEWSWEEK

"The Specter of Defeat." -- Cover title

May 15, 1972

". . . the Nixon Administration suddenly found itself faced with the specter of defeat in Vietnam."



" . . . the President must have been aware that he was running grave risks. "

" . . . Mr. Nixon now seemed to be contemplating a massive military counterstroke -- a move that could scuttle the summit and severely damage his image as a President whose strongest suit was foreign policy. "

" . . . many U.S. military men expected (Kontum) to fall soon, opening the way for the North Vietnamese to cut South Vietnam in half. "

" . . . a blockade of Haiphong. . . would almost certainly bring an immediate cancellation of the Nixon visit (to Russia). "

"The North Vietnamese offensive has already dealt a serious blow to the so-called Nixon doctrine. "

" . . . the weight of evidence over the years suggests that much of America's bombing has been in vain. "

May 15, 1972

#### TIME

"The Big Red Blitz. " -- Cover title

May 15, 1972

" . . . it is universally recognized that the Communists are able to keep fighting at a brisk pace for many months. "

"Blockading the ports of Haiphong and other entry ports. . . would risk direct conflict with Soviet and Chinese vessels. "

May 15, 1972

#### OTHERS

Mary McGrory

" . . . (President Nixon) will negotiate with anyone but the North Vietnamese and will go anywhere but Paris in search of peace. "

Washington Evening Star

October 24, 1971

Carl Rowan

"So Nixon decided -- and make no mistake about it -- that he would risk war with Russia and/or China rather than accept defeat and 'insolence and insult' from . . . North Vietnam."

Washington Evening Star

May 12, 1972

Milton Viorst

"So what's left? I hate to use a dirty word, but what's left may be the nukes. . . ."

Washington Evening Star

May 6, 1972

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### CONGRESSIONAL CRITICISM

Reaction to Mining Decision -- As compiled in Congressional Quarterly, May 13, 1972

Mike Mansfield - (D Mont.)

"What we are witnessing is not a shortening of the war. . . but rather a lengthening of it. . . ."

Vance Hartke - (D Ind.)

The President "has thrown down the gauntlet of nuclear war to a billion people in the Soviet Union and China. . . . Armageddon may be only hours away."

George McGovern - (D S. D.)

"The President must not have a free hand in Indochina any longer. The nation cannot stand it."



Edward M. Kennedy - (D Mass.)

"(It is) a senseless act of military desperation by a President incapable of finding the road to peace."

Edmund S. Muskie - (D Maine)

"By taking these actions, the President is jeopardizing the major security interests of the United States. . . ."

Hubert H. Humphrey - (D Minn.)

"It is fraught with danger and will not contribute to the settlement of the war."

John G. Dow - (D N. Y.)

"The President is taking the risk of exterminating our civilization for a shabby purpose."

Bella S. Abzug - (D N. Y.)

"There are those, and I join with them, who intend to introduce a motion to impeach the President. . . ."

#### General Congressional Criticism

Senator Edward Kennedy

". . . events suggest a return to the same old war."

". . . we cannot read about the heavy bombing. . . without a deep and despairing sense that peace is not at hand."

". . . Congress must and will act on the peoples' mandate for peace."

December 27, 1972

New York Times

Senator George McGovern

"If we continue under the Nixon policy, we're not going to see our POW's again."

June 14, 1972

Buffalo Evening News

"(President Nixon's decision to mine the harbors of North Vietnam is) a desperate attempt to save political face. . . It won't work."

May 12, 1972

Detroit News

"We are watching the Nixon Administration strike out in a helpless panic as they see their Vietnamization program crumble before their eyes."

April 13, 1972

Speech, Boston State College

Senator Adlai Stevenson III

"Mr. Nixon's policy is to defend a corrupt military regime. It's a policy for staying in. . . (and) a prescription for more of the same. . . It has already proved Vietnamization wrong."

April 14, 1972

Press release

Senator John Tunney

"This is the tragedy of the President's policy of escalation -- it will make it much more difficult to achieve a modus vivendi with the Soviet Union and it will keep Americans in Vietnam indefinitely fighting and dying."

May 16, 1972

Congressional Record - S. 7944