MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

29 November 1951

Document No.

Subject: Responsibilities of the Office of Scientific Intelligence
(Summary of discussion between
Mr. Peel - of Management 29 November 1951)

25X1A9a

SECRETS

A MEMOIR OF VIETNAM AND THE PENTAGON PAPERS

DANIEL ELLSBERG

DANIEL ELLSBERG SECRETS

VIKING

17

War Resisters

In the last week of August 1969 I went to the campus of Haverford, a Quaker college near Philadelphia, to attend the triennial conference of the War Resisters' International (WRI). The theme of the meeting, "Liberation and Revolution," was not unlike that of the Princeton conference "America in a Revolutionary World," sixteen months earlier. But this gathering of war resisters had no Ivy League cosponsor. And I was no longer coming as a committed counterrevolutionary.

Neither was I, on the other hand, a Gandhian nonviolent revolutionary or a pacifist, as many of the other participants thought of themselves. But after a year of reading along lines Janaki had suggested, I had reached a point where I wanted to meet people who did see themselves that way. So far Janaki was the only such person I had really come to know or had even met more than briefly. Since Princeton she had visited me in Malibu, and we had spent a few days together in London. She had made a profound impression on me. I could say she was a hero of mine, like one I had only read about, Rosa Parks. Fifteen years earlier one of my heroes was John Wayne, who had helped recruit me, and a lot of others, into the Marine Corps with *Sands of Iwo Jima.* Something had happened to me, I noticed about this time. My heroes had changed color and sex. But I wanted to meet some others on this path, preferably some whose life experience was closer than Janaki's to my own and who were living daily the Gandhian principles that I had been reading about. I was ready to be challenged and even changed by them.

In the last year I had read books Jana
others, King's *Stride Toward Freedom;*
Bondurant, on the philosophy and prac
action; and *Revolution and Equilibrium*
on the need for nonviolent resistance t
over. I did the same with another essay
though it was written a century earlier
Henry David Thoreau's "On the Duty
nal, equally subversive title was "Resistan

Disobedience to civil authority a "dut
In certain circumstances, yes, according t
try is unjustly overrun and conquered by
invading army." In such a case, he said,
cause was itself a choice, the wrong choi
fusing to pay a poll tax, in protest against
referring above). It was just for one night
one interfered, and paid the tax." Thorea
King, but against the evils of slavery and
call to mutiny, to nonviolent rebellion. B
Parks, something beyond verbal dissent a
ation, militant disobedience by a *civilian,*
refuses to serve in an unjust war." In his st
such a soldier was applauded by many, bu
sands who are *in opinion* opposed to slave
fect do nothing to put an end to them. . .
and sometimes they petition; but they do
fect. They will wait, well disposed, for oth
may no longer have it to regret. At most, t

To a century of readers (Tolstoy quoted
distributed his words in India before sev
claimed: "Cast your whole vote, not a strip
influence. A minority is powerless while i
not even a minority then; but it is irresis
weight."

I read that passage first in the summer
casting strips of paper had failed once again
wanted over, it was reverberating in my
your whole influence. I had come to Haverf
that might mean.

In the last year I had read books Janaki had recommended to me, among others, King's *Stride Toward Freedom; The Conquest of Violence,* by Joan Bondurant, on the philosophy and practice of Gandhian nonviolent direct action; and *Revolution and Equilibrium,* by Barbara Deming, whose essays on the need for nonviolent resistance to the Vietnam War I read over and over. I did the same with another essay on what seemed the same subject, though it was written a century earlier during a different American war, Henry David Thoreau's "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience." The original, equally subversive title was "Resistance to Civil Government."

Disobedience to civil authority a "duty"? Was it even a legitimate choice? In certain circumstances, yes, according to Thoreau, as when "a whole country is unjustly overrun and conquered by a foreign army," when "ours is the invading army." In such a case, he said, obedience to leaders in an unjust cause was itself a choice, the wrong choice. He himself went to jail for refusing to pay a poll tax, in protest against the Mexican War (to which he was referring above). It was just for one night because, against his wishes, "someone interfered, and paid the tax." Thoreau was as nonviolent as Gandhi or King, but against the evils of slavery and of a wrongful war his essay was a call to mutiny, to nonviolent rebellion. By his example he urged, like Rosa Parks, something beyond verbal dissent and protest: withdrawal of cooperation, militant disobedience by a *civilian,* akin to that of a "soldier . . . who refuses to serve in an unjust war." In his state of Massachusetts, he claimed, such a soldier was applauded by many, but not imitated, out of the "thousands who are *in opinion* opposed to slavery and to the war, who yet in effect do nothing to put an end to them. . . . They hesitate, and they regret, and sometimes they petition; but they do nothing in earnest and with effect. They will wait, well disposed, for others to remedy the evil, that they may no longer have it to regret. At most, they give only a cheap vote. . . ."

To a century of readers (Tolstoy quoted him against conscription; Gandhi distributed his words in India before several mass actions) Thoreau proclaimed: "Cast your whole vote, not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence. A minority is powerless while it conforms to the majority; it is not even a minority then; but it is irresistible when it clogs by its whole weight."

I read that passage first in the summer of 1968. A year later, after voters casting strips of paper had failed once again to end a war that most of them wanted over, it was reverberating in my mind. *Cast your whole vote . . . your whole influence.* I had come to Haverford in hopes of finding out what that might mean.

Many things had happened during those sixteen months that should have made a difference and had not: a presidential election campaign that had begun with the war as the central issue; a complete change of party and administration; at the onset of the new administration, a thorough reexamination of alternative options and a questioning of the bureaucracy; the opening of negotiations with Hanoi. Not one of these, or any other aspect of normal politics, seemed to have brought extrication any closer, despite an electorate that expected it and was obviously anxious for it. If I was ready to change my own relation to the situation, ready even to change my life, there was reason for it.

Janaki had invited me to the conference, of which she was one of the organizers. She had urged me to be a speaker, to raise the questions about pacifism I had been posing to her from the reading she had suggested to me. I turned that down quickly. I was too new at this subject, and my thoughts were too tentative, for me to be sounding off from a platform. My usual credentials, from Harvard, Rand, the Defense and State departments, and Vietnam, would not impress this crowd favorably, and I didn't have much else to qualify me as a speaker in their eyes. I told her I wanted to listen, not to debate.

At the conference I saw little of Janaki. She was too busy as one of the organizers. But I did begin to meet, as I had hoped, the sort of activist who had shared a lunch table with us at Princeton the day I met her. In fact, all those same people were here. One of them, Bob Eaton, who had sailed to North and South Vietnam on the *Phoenix,* was scheduled to be sentenced to prison on the third morning of the conference, in the federal courtroom in the Post Office Building in downtown Philadelphia. He expected a three-year sentence.

Eaton was the first draft resister I had ever met. That was probably one more than any of my associates in Washington or Santa Monica. Looking back, I find it striking how isolated my colleagues and I were, as late as 1969 and even after many of us had become deeply critical of the war, from the active antiwar movement or the broader and older peace movement. My knowledge of such people still came almost exclusively from media accounts, overwhelmingly negative, in which they were presented as being, in varying degree, extremist, simplistic, pro-Communist or pro-NLF, fanatic, anti-American, dogmatic. I went to Haverford in part to find out if these labels were accurate. None of these was a trait I wanted to be associated with. (In coming years, as a price of joining in nonviolent resistance to the war, I heard all these terms applied to me.)

But no such problems arose with
and hearing. The four days of intens
including much controversy over pri
tactics, refuted each of the stereotyp
anarchist-pacifist critique of state pow
ticipants shared provided little basis
the Soviet Union, the Hanoi regime,
ering opposed the war without roman
olent revolutionaries, or socialist stat
states.

Just as in opposing the war, so i
they went beyond criticism from the
including Michael Randle, chairman
Devi Prasad, WRI general secretary, h
Eastern Europe in September 1968, lea
against the Soviet and Warsaw Pact inv
demonstrating in city squares where s
stant arrests. In most cases they had b
onment.

I had misgivings about the dogmati
presumed they shared. The War Resis
Resisters League (WRL) was the Amer
War I as an association of conscientiou
tries formally recognized that status. I
dhian perspective and now furthered a
struggles, but it had kept its pacifist pre
the San Francisco WRL branch and o
I believed I couldn't join WRL becaus
signing a pledge to refuse participatio
garded as crimes against humanity. D
tendency to look skeptically at the clai
I told Kehler, I still thought (as I do tod
tified against aggression, like Hitler's.
reservations. "I've never signed that ple
ing around us and found that most of
was nondogmatic, evolving and explori
of uncertainties and dilemmas.

A striking aspect of the conference w
means in the forefront of attention, eit

But no such problems arose with the real people I was now meeting and hearing. The four days of intense, articulate discussion I encountered, including much controversy over principles and broad strategy as well as tactics, refuted each of the stereotypes above. To mention just one, the anarchist-pacifist critique of state power and violence that nearly all the participants shared provided little basis for an admiring or uncritical view of the Soviet Union, the Hanoi regime, or the NLF. The people in this gathering opposed the war without romanticizing the Vietcong, third world violent revolutionaries, or socialist states any more than they did their own states.

Just as in opposing the war, so in confronting abuses of state power they went beyond criticism from the sidelines. A number of those present, including Michael Randle, chairman of War Resisters' International, and Devi Prasad, WRI general secretary, had taken nonviolent direct action to Eastern Europe in September 1968, leafleting a number of capitals in protest against the Soviet and Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia. This meant demonstrating in city squares where such protest was illegal and led to instant arrests. In most cases they had been detained and risked long imprisonment.

I had misgivings about the dogmatic commitment to absolute pacifism I presumed they shared. The War Resisters' International, of which the War Resisters League (WRL) was the American branch, had begun after World War I as an association of conscientious objectors, at a time when few countries formally recognized that status. In the twenties it had adopted a Gandhian perspective and now furthered a broad range of nonviolent liberation struggles, but it had kept its pacifist premises. I told Randall Kehler, head of the San Francisco WRL branch and one of the conference organizers, that I believed I couldn't join WRL because, as I understood it, that involved signing a pledge to refuse participation in all wars, all of which were regarded as crimes against humanity. Despite Vietnam, and my increasing tendency to look skeptically at the claims of any particular war to be "just," I told Kehler, I still thought (as I do today) that violent self-defense was justified against aggression, like Hitler's. Kehler told me he shared similar reservations. "I've never signed that pledge," he said. He asked others standing around us and found that most of them hadn't either. Their pacifism was nondogmatic, evolving and exploring, with a considerable recognition of uncertainties and dilemmas.

A striking aspect of the conference was that the Vietnam War was by no means in the forefront of attention, either on the agenda or in the discus-

sions. This despite the facts that virtually everyone present, from the United States or elsewhere, was a committed and active opponent of the war and that the war was continuing just as violently as before. True, U.S. planes were no longer bombing North Vietnam, but they had simply shifted their targets to Laos and to South Vietnam and secretly to Cambodia. Altogether they were dropping a somewhat higher total tonnage than before, at a rate of one million tons of bombs a year or half the total tonnage of World War II. Yet the transcript of the conference shows that only one of the ten background papers and one of the twenty speakers focused directly on the war, which all the speakers clearly regarded as being on the way to ending.

These antiwar activists shared an assumption accepted by nearly all segments of American society over the sixteen months since Hanoi had accepted Johnson's proposal for open negotiations on April 3, 1968. The assumption was that the Tet offensive and Johnson's offer of negotiations had permanently settled, in the affirmative, the issue of whether the United States would ever withdraw from Vietnam and end the war. Supposedly the only question that remained was what one speaker described as "the tempo of withdrawal . . . in this fag end of a long and beastly war."

But I knew the assumption was wrong. I had just learned, in Washington the week before the conference, the closely guarded secret that Nixon himself did not accept that assumption. Nixon was no more ready than Johnson to accept U.S. failure to determine the politics of South Vietnam, failure to preclude Communist predominance in Saigon and elsewhere. In my head as I went to Haverford was Halperin's flat prediction to me in Washington: "This administration will not go into the election of 1972 without having mined Haiphong and bombed Hanoi." And Vann's disclosure that there would still be tens of thousands, at the least, of U.S. troops in South Vietnam at the end of 1972. I could not reveal at the conference what I knew. It had been revealed to me on an unusually confidential basis. There was little I could say about it without seriously compromising my sources, John Paul Vann and Morton Halperin, who were themselves not supposed to be privy to the information and had learned it confidentially. In any case I was still trying to sort out its implications. I had put aside for the four days of the conference addressing the specifics of what I ought to try to do about it.

On Tuesday evening, I finally had a chance to talk with Bob Eaton, the night before he was to go to prison two years after telling his draft board that he would no longer cooperate with the Selective Service System. Since then, in addition to his voyage on the *Phoenix* to North and South Viet-

nam, he had worked on the pacifist
Group) and The Resistance, supporti
September 1968 he had been one o
risked imprisonment in Eastern Euro
vasion of Czechoslovakia.

A troublemaker. Yet given the pre
process of ending, Eaton's impendin
many of those present almost an ana
tude in his talk on the first day. It ad
large rather than to the Vietnam War
organizing now is, no one wants to b
also a problem for the Resistance, be
last guy to go into prison resisting a p

He seemed unnaturally calm abou
just that. That day before his sentenci
sessions, including one that had gon
gave way to a beer party and dance. I
the party, with a beer in his hand but
for transforming America. I suggeste
spend my last evening before going
this is what I do. I'm an organizer. I
outside."

The conference was holding no m
so that members could go into Philad
ing in a vigil while Eaton was being
been arranged to take us all in. I tried
that the others could accept, but it
own reservations. What was the prob
tenced to prison for an act of conscie
of solidarity for straightforward pol
would make him feel better. There
company of one of the heroes of the
others I admired no less. How could

The fact is, it was a problem for m
risk of my being discovered and an u
something demeaning about the whe
lice or the FBI took pictures of us? W
media and got back to Washington
sociates in either place would think:

nam, he had worked on the pacifist networks AQAG (A Quaker Action Group) and The Resistance, supporting noncooperation with the draft. In September 1968 he had been one of the members of the WRI who had risked imprisonment in Eastern Europe, conducting protests against the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

A troublemaker. Yet given the prevailing belief that the war was in the process of ending, Eaton's impending prison sentence probably seemed to many of those present almost an anachronism. He had alluded to this attitude in his talk on the first day. It addressed resistance to militarism in the large rather than to the Vietnam War, because, as he said, "The basis of GI organizing now is, no one wants to be the last guy shot in a war. . . . That's also a problem for the Resistance, because I think no guy wants to be the last guy to go into prison resisting a particular war."

He seemed unnaturally calm about the thought that he might be doing just that. That day before his sentencing, August 26, he had attended all the sessions, including one that had gone on till ten-thirty that evening, till it gave way to a beer party and dance. I found him in a side room away from the party, with a beer in his hand but still talking long-range strategy, tactics for transforming America. I suggested to him that wouldn't be the way I'd spend my last evening before going to prison. He said offhandedly, "Oh, this is what I do. I'm an organizer. I'll organize in prison, same as on the outside."

The conference was holding no meetings the next morning, Wednesday, so that members could go into Philadelphia to circle the Post Office Building in a vigil while Eaton was being sentenced inside. Buses and cars had been arranged to take us all in. I tried to think of an excuse to get out of it that the others could accept, but it wasn't easy. I was embarrassed by my own reservations. What was the problem? A man I admired was being sentenced to prison for an act of conscience. He and his friends wanted a show of solidarity for straightforward political reasons and perhaps because it would make him feel better. There was an invitation to join that in the company of one of the heroes of the century, Pastor Martin Niemöller, and others I admired no less. How could I not go?

The fact is, it was a problem for me. It was a combination of the small risk of my being discovered and an undeniable feeling I had that there was something demeaning about the whole thing. What if the press or the police or the FBI took pictures of us? What if my name was mentioned in the media and got back to Washington or Santa Monica? I knew what my associates in either place would think: that I had gone out of my mind. They

would see it as a total sacrifice of dignity and of elite insider status, for nothing, for an action of no consequence, no effectiveness, nothing worth taking the smallest risk of losing access to secret information and to people of influence. It could be explained in no other way than a fit of madness. I could hear their reaction in my head, and I couldn't really argue with it. This was hardly the place, or the way, to announce to Rand, the Pentagon, and the White House that I was joining the public opposition to the war. To their war.

But Bob Eaton was going to prison, and I couldn't think of a reason I could give his friends for refusing to see him off. I thought of saying I was sick, but the conference had two days to go, and I couldn't keep that up plausibly. So, on an August morning in 1969, while Martin Niemöller and Devi Prasad were inside with Bob, making statements to the court on his behalf, I found myself on a sidewalk in downtown Philadelphia in a line of variously dressed peaceniks, some of them carrying placards, others handing out leaflets. I walked along with them, at first with great misgivings. The sidewalk outside the Post Office Building in Philadelphia that morning was a long way from the Executive Office Building in Washington, where I had spent February that same year writing memos for the president. Both were places perhaps for "speaking truth to power," the Quaker phrase for vigils and acts of "witness to peace" of the kinds we were engaged in that morning. But you could not do that in both places, not if you wanted to be welcomed back to the NSC. You could not have the opportunity to draft top secret commentaries for the president on Vietnam options, or give his national security assistant confidential advice, if you were the sort of person who spent days off from work demonstrating in support of draft resisters on street corners in Philadelphia.

You could not have the confidence of powerful men and be trusted with their confidences if there was any prospect that you would challenge their policies in public in any forum at all. That was the unbreakable rule of the executive branch. It was the sacred code of the insider, both the men of power and those, like me, privileged to advise and help them. I knew that as well as anyone. I had lived by that code for the last decade; it was in my skin. I was, it seems, in the process of shedding that skin on that morning. Before I had grown a new one.

I felt naked—and raw. My memory is of feeling chilled on a gray, wintry day; I have to remind myself that it was Philadelphia in August. But no one after all was noticing me. There was no press, no police. People passed by incuriously, mostly without pausing to read our placards. Some accepted the leaflets we handed to them; others didn't or handed them back. Pas-

sersby looked briefly at us or kept th
glance, or not, at panhandlers or now

As a form of political communicat
ing on a soapbox in Hyde Park. With
making a spectacle of yourself, being
who didn't count for much themselv
were going to confront the state wi
imagine a lower-status or less effectiv
officials or consultants were mine as
with several hours of your time than
dozen random pedestrians by handing
erless indeed. The thoughts "Why a
here?" seemed at first as visible on my
bors were carrying. I felt ridiculous.

That passed. After all, no one was p
other. My companions seemed at ease
fore. I wanted to be helpful. I took a
them to the people walking by. There
ting them to accept one. I experimente
ant, and various verbal formulas. Some
into it. Before the morning was over, I w
to cars stopped momentarily in the a
changed. I was feeling unaccountably
was passed that Eaton had been senter
The judge had listened respectfully to
and the others and had then given Bo
pected. We went back to the conferenc

Something very important had hap
if I could have explained that at the ti
hilaration often enough in others, in p
through their first action of civil diso
been taken to jail. This simple vigil, r
from a nearly universal fear whose inh
underestimated. I had become free of t
ing foolish, for stepping out of line.

One other thing had happened, tho
till later. By stepping into that particu
Eaton and in company with others who
commitment I respected, I had stepped

sersby looked briefly at us or kept their eyes straight ahead, as they would glance, or not, at panhandlers or nowadays at the homeless.

As a form of political communication this seemed one step below standing on a soapbox in Hyde Park. Without even saying very much, you were making a spectacle of yourself, being a public nuisance, in front of people who didn't count for much themselves and felt free to ignore you. If you were going to confront the state with a public stand, it seemed hard to imagine a lower-status or less effective way to do it. The views of my fellow officials or consultants were mine as well. If you had nothing better to do with several hours of your time than to try to change the minds of a few dozen random pedestrians by handing them leaflets, you must be very powerless indeed. The thoughts "Why are we doing this? What am I doing here?" seemed at first as visible on my forehead as the signboards my neighbors were carrying. I felt ridiculous.

That passed. After all, no one was paying much attention one way or the other. My companions seemed at ease. They all had probably done this before. I wanted to be helpful. I took a bunch of leaflets and began offering them to the people walking by. There seemed to be some technique to getting them to accept one. I experimented with different expressions, all pleasant, and various verbal formulas. Some worked; some didn't. I started to get into it. Before the morning was over, I was offering leaflets, with some success, to cars stopped momentarily in the adjacent intersections. My mood had changed. I was feeling unaccountably lighthearted. Around noon the word was passed that Eaton had been sentenced and had been taken off to a cell. The judge had listened respectfully to the statements by Pastor Niemöller and the others and had then given Bob the three-year sentence he had expected. We went back to the conference.

Something very important had happened to me. I felt liberated. I doubt if I could have explained that at the time. But by now I have seen this exhilaration often enough in others, in particular people who have just gone through their first action of civil disobedience, whether or not they have been taken to jail. This simple vigil, my first public action, had freed me from a nearly universal fear whose inhibiting force, I think, is very widely underestimated. I had become free of the fear of appearing absurd, of looking foolish, for stepping out of line.

One other thing had happened, though again I didn't fully recognize it till later. By stepping into that particular vigil line, in solidarity with Bob Eaton and in company with others whose views I shared and whose lives of commitment I respected, I had stepped across another line, an invisible one

of the kind that recruiters mark out on the floor of an induction center. I had joined a movement.

On the next day, August 28, 1969, the final day of the conference, I heard a talk by Randy Kehler during the last session in the afternoon. Alone out of all the presentations at the conference, Randy's talk was personal. He said he wanted just to share some things on his mind.

I hadn't had a chance to talk with Kehler at any length earlier, but he had made a good impression on me. He listened carefully, responded thoughtfully and with good sense. Of the many younger American activists I had met at the conference, he was one I wanted to see more of; I had decided to arrange to visit him in San Francisco soon. He had a very simple and direct manner, along with warmth and humor. He was a very appealing person. I was somewhat surprised, when he began, to hear that we had gone to the same college, that he was, like me, a transplant from Cambridge to California. I remember thinking, Well, here's a credit to Harvard! And one who learned some things after he left. I then heard for the first time about the path that had led him to head the War Resisters League office in San Francisco.

"When I finished Harvard College and three weeks of graduate school at Stanford, I was out on the West Coast. I was involved in a demonstration in which hundreds of men and women were sitting in the doorways of the [Oakland] induction center trying to pose a question to all those going through the doors, to be inducted or to take their physicals. We wanted that question to be very real, and not just a matter of words, so we actually placed our bodies in those doorways.

"Well, that was a very new experience for me and one that really changed the whole course of my life. Before I knew it, I was behind bars with that same couple of hundred people, and I found a community of people for the first time that not only . . . were committed to each other, but a community of people that were committed to something larger than themselves, something probably more noble, more ideal, than anything I had been involved in after twenty-two years of public education. And it was as a result of that demonstration and that time I spent in jail with those people that I saw a very real alternative to the kind of life I was leading, which made me leave school and go to work for the WRL in San Francisco."

He talked about nonviolence as a way of life, about hope, about two worlds both existing just now, a waning world dominated by fear, an emerging world becoming more and more like a family. What I remember most vividly is not the content of what h
made on me as he spoke without pr
to him was like looking into clear w
remember having had in any other
him as an American. I was proud,
man on the platform was American.
ine anyone whose looks, manners,
Randy Kehler's. That was what was
lately, of national pride. The auditori
the world. I was thinking as he spoke
ing a chance to hear this. He's as goo

At that moment he brought me
with a catch in his voice. He had jus
to jail." He had to pause for a mome
had tears in his eyes. He smiled and
ding we had a month ago, when Jar
San Francisco, because I always cry a
steady voice. "Last month David H
and John and Terry and many other
as sad about that as it may seem. The
and I'm very excited that I'll be invit

Again he had to pause. The audie
tering of applause began, then sudde
up. But he was going on, and peop
rise, in silence. "Right now I'm the on
office because all the others have gon
go, it will be all women in the office.
I know that, and I think Bob and D
reason why I guess I can look forwar
and that's because I know that everyo
world like you will carry on."

The whole audience was standing.
time. I stood up for a moment with
breathing hard, dizzy, swaying. I was
crying, but then I began to sob silently
shaking. Janaki was to talk next, but I
in the very last row in the amphitheate
corridor till I came to a men's room. I

vividly is not the content of what he had said so far but the impression he made on me as he spoke without preparation from the platform. Listening to him was like looking into clear water. I was experiencing a feeling I don't remember having had in any other circumstances. I was feeling proud of him as an American. I was proud, at the end of this conference, that this man on the platform was American. As a matter of fact, it was hard to imagine anyone whose looks, manners, and virtues were more American than Randy Kehler's. That was what was recalling to me a sense, not so familiar lately, of national pride. The auditorium was filled with people from all over the world. I was thinking as he spoke, I'm glad these foreign visitors are having a chance to hear this. He's as good as we have.

At that moment he brought me out of my reverie by saying something with a catch in his voice. He had just said, "Yesterday our friend Bob went to jail." He had to pause for a moment. He cleared his throat. Evidently he had tears in his eyes. He smiled and said, "This is getting to be like a wedding we had a month ago, when Jane and I were married on the beach in San Francisco, because I always cry a lot." After a moment he went on, in a steady voice. "Last month David Harris went to jail. Our friends Warren and John and Terry and many others are already in jail, and I'm really not as sad about that as it may seem. There's something really beautiful about it, and I'm very excited that I'll be invited to join them very soon."

Again he had to pause. The audience seemed taken by surprise. A scattering of applause began, then suddenly swelled, and people began to stand up. But he was going on, and people stopped applauding, continuing to rise, in silence. "Right now I'm the only man left in the San Francisco WRL office because all the others have gone to prison already, and soon, when I go, it will be all women in the office. And that will be all right. . . . I think I know that, and I think Bob and David know that, but there's one other reason why I guess I can look forward to jail, without any remorse or fear, and that's because I know that everyone here and lots of people around the world like you will carry on."

The whole audience was standing. They clapped and cheered for a long time. I stood up for a moment with the rest, but I fell back into my seat, breathing hard, dizzy, swaying. I was crying, a lot of people must have been crying, but then I began to sob silently, grimacing under the tears, shoulders shaking. Janaki was to talk next, but I couldn't stay. I got up—I was sitting in the very last row in the amphitheater—and made my way down the back corridor till I came to a men's room. I went inside and turned on the light.

It was a small room, with two sinks. I staggered over to the wall and slid down to the tile floor. I began to sob convulsively, uncontrollably. I wasn't silent anymore. My sobbing sounded like laughing, at other times like moaning. My chest was heaving. I had to gasp for breath.

I sat there alone for more than an hour without getting up, my head sometimes tilted back against the wall, sometimes in my hands, without stopping to shake from my sobbing. I had never cried like this before except, more briefly, when I learned that Bobby Kennedy was dead. A line kept repeating itself in my head: We are eating our young.

I had not been ready to hear what Randy had said. I had not been braced for it. When he mentioned his friends who were in prison and remarked that he would soon be joining them, it had taken me several moments to grasp what he had just said. Then it was as though an ax had split my head, and my heart broke open. But what had really happened was that my life had split in two.

We are eating our young, I thought again, sitting on the floor of the men's room in the second part of my life. On both sides of the barricades we are using them, using them up, "wasting" them. This is what my country has come to. We have come to this. The best thing that the best young men of our country can do with their lives is to go to prison. My son, Robert, was thirteen. This war would still be going on when he turned eighteen. (It was.) My son was born to face prison. Another line kept repeating itself in my head, a refrain from a song by Leonard Cohen: "That's right, it's come to this, yes, it's come to this. And wasn't it a long way down, ah, wasn't it a strange way down?"

After about an hour I stopped sobbing. I stared blankly at the sinks across from me, thinking, not crying, exhausted, breathing deeply. Finally I got up and washed my face. I gripped the sink and stared at the mirror. Then I sat down on the floor again to think some more. I cried again, a couple of times more, briefly, not so violently. What I had just heard from Randy had put the question in my mind, What could I do, what should I be doing, to help end the war now that I was ready to go to prison for it?

No transition period occurred, during which I asked if I was willing to go to prison to help end the war. That didn't come up as a question; it would have answered itself. I knew myself from Vietnam. I had risked my life or, worse, my body, my legs, a thousand times driving the roads there or walking in combat. If I could do that when I believed in the war, and even after I didn't, it followed self-evidently that I was capable of going to prison to help end it.

Might some action that risked p
Randy thought so. That came close t
I could have little doubt, from my o
was right. I had just felt the power
evening, I realized that I had the pow

Might some action that risked prison help shorten the war? Obviously Randy thought so. That came close to being a good enough answer. Besides, I could have little doubt, from my own experience in the moment, that he was right. I had just felt the power of his action on my heart. As of this evening, I realized that I had the power and the freedom to act the same way.

18

Extrication

I returned from Haverford by way of Washington, where I stopped to pick up another eight volumes of the McNamara study from the Washington Rand office to bring home to Santa Monica. I had postponed reading the earliest studies covering the years 1945 to 1960, assuming initially that they weren't very relevant to the current situation. That was a mistake, for me as a reader. Now I read them as confirming—with official, classified U.S. government internal documents—what I had just read in accounts by French journalists and historians. No other volumes of the papers—the later ones held few surprises for me—had so great an impact on my perspective toward the war.

But for me, in addition to the moral conclusions I've explained, there were also conceptual and tactical conclusions to be drawn from this new reading in September. These not only complemented my earlier research but led to a new conviction on how this steady course of history might be changed in the months ahead. On the one hand, these findings closed the book for me on the quagmire myth, the notion that presidents had been misled at critical turning points by unrealistic optimism in their civil and military advisers. It was clear that Harry Truman, in his decision to support the French directly in May 1950 (after years of knowingly allowing American aid to be used indirectly to support the war), must, like each of his four successors, in similar situations, take heavy personal responsibility for the ensuing bloody stalemate punctuated by "crises."

Likewise, Eisenhower's support after 1954 of a police state dedicated to

silencing, jailing, or exterminati
munist and others, who called fo
Accords for elections and unific
resume. We had no more right
had, and that was zero. Moreove
tance, we could prolong it year b
ning that struggle than the Frenc

That last point, on prospects,
ers to every president from Trun
hood that his chosen approach (
any approach) would be stalemat
and defeat. That had been my ow
since 1966, but every president
sources far more authoritative tha
dier on," deceiving the public on
told its prospects were.

Better internal forecasts at mo
made a difference to presidential
March 1969 President Nixon had
ordinated answers to NSSM-1 pe
different course from the one Ha
the basis of the record ever since 19
confidentially—what I and my c
and greatest opportunity we coul
entirely unpromising as a way to e

That conclusion challenged th
professional career. To read the c
ments and forecasts for Vietnam f
sion that informing the executive
war—or to fulfilling one's responsi
if power were brought to bear up
with the important secondary effec
more broadly, might the presidenti
mate rather than "failure" in Vietna
advice, as in the Rand mode, or t
tablishment" withheld from Congr
tative judgments needed for the s
By that very silence—no matter ho
it supported and participated in th

silencing, jailing, or exterminating every political figure in Vietnam, Communist and others, who called for observance of the provisions of the Geneva Accords for elections and unification ensured that armed struggle would resume. We had no more right to win that struggle than the French had had, and that was zero. Moreover, though like the French with U.S. assistance, we could prolong it year by year, we had no better prospect of winning that struggle than the French had had. Again, zero.

That last point, on prospects, had been presented by authoritative advisers to every president from Truman on. Each had been told of the likelihood that his chosen approach (and, as some advisers told each of them, any approach) would be stalemated and would at best postpone departure and defeat. That had been my own message at intermediate levels each year since 1966, but every president since 1946 had heard it personally from sources far more authoritative than I. Yet each of them had chosen to "soldier on," deceiving the public on what he was doing and what he had been told its prospects were.

Better internal forecasts at moments of decision would not reliably have made a difference to presidential choices. As I had hoped and expected, in March 1969 President Nixon had gotten a ration of realism from the uncoordinated answers to NSSM-1 perfectly adequate for him to have chosen a different course from the one Halperin had revealed to me in August. On the basis of the record ever since 1946, "telling truth to presidents" privately, confidentially—what I and my colleagues regarded as the highest calling and greatest opportunity we could imagine to serve our country—looked entirely unpromising as a way to end our war in and on Vietnam.

That conclusion challenged the premises that had guided my entire professional career. To read the continuous record of intelligence assessments and forecasts for Vietnam from 1946 on was finally to lose the delusion that informing the executive branch better was the key to ending the war—or to fulfilling one's responsibilities as a citizen. It appeared that only if power were brought to bear upon the executive branch from outside it, with the important secondary effect of sharing responsibility for later events more broadly, might the presidential preference for endless, escalating stalemate rather than "failure" in Vietnam be overruled. "Inside" consulting and advice, as in the Rand mode, or the normal practices of the broader "establishment" withheld from Congress and the public the facts and authoritative judgments needed for the self-confident exercise of such a power. By that very silence—no matter how frank or wise the "private" counsel—it supported and participated in the structure of inordinate, unchallenged

executive power that led directly in circumstances like Vietnam to its rigid, desperate, outlaw behavior. To absorb and act on that perception looked inconsistent with remaining long at Rand, to which I'd returned with the desire and expectation of staying the rest of my professional life.

That wasn't all. Along with their implications of the illegitimacy of our policy and thus the urgency of changing it, the early volumes of the Pentagon Papers confirmed for me what I had begun to suspect with my reading of the subsequent volumes over the last two years: *The president was part of the problem.* This was clearly a matter of his role, not of his personality or party. As I was beginning to see it, the concentration of power within the executive branch since World War II had focused nearly all responsibility for policy "failure" upon one man, the president. At the same time, it gave him enormous capability to avert or postpone or conceal such personal failure by means of force and fraud. Confronted by resolute external resistance, as in Vietnam, that power could not fail to corrupt the human who held it.

The only way to change the president's course was to bring pressure on him from outside, from Congress and the public. The best chance of mobilizing that was to give outsiders knowledge of Nixon's preferred course. Unfortunately I didn't have documents to prove what that was, to contradict the deceptive gloss the White House could be expected to give it, presenting it as a path toward total U.S. withdrawal with no prospect of escalation. Without those documents, my account could only seem implausible, even incredible. Halperin and Vann knew the truth, but it didn't even occur to me to urge them to go public with what they had told me. They didn't have documents, either, to back up such testimony, and indeed (like me) they weren't supposed to know it and wouldn't want to compromise their confidential sources. For the same reason it didn't enter my mind to reveal them as sources, ending their careers. There were those who, knowing my own general access, would give my views great credit, though as I expected (and discovered) even they found what I was claiming "extreme," alarmist, almost impossible to believe: that Nixon could be following a course so evidently unrealistic, so foreseeably unpopular, in the post-1968 circumstances. None of them of course had read the Pentagon Papers.

If the American people couldn't be shown documents that proved what the president was about to do or hear accounts from current members of the administration, a next best approach seemed to be to present them with public recommendations by former officials with great authority or second-level analysts who could claim access to classified information, even if not to current highest-level plans. In the first category were the sorts of notables

that the Carnegie Endowment had
earlier. In the second were those ar
more than a year been pressing for e
our "expert" and "informed" views,
specifically, to get former Democrat
ing that openly, before Nixon had
secretly preferred course, they coul
credibly that they would share resp
pecially after completing my readin
three years covered by the McNama
assurance by potentially rival politi
ness to face charges of "losing a wa

Leaders within the Democratic
would have to accept, against their
the appropriate course and of overr
dissent from impending presidenti
Even harder for them, they would
predicament that forced such a cho
him of their willingness to share res
consequences. This would not be e
to be the task that most needed d
which I set myself.

Organizing pressure on the curre
self-condemnation of his oppositi
Rand analyst. It also looked design
leaders of two political parties, the
my visit to Haverford, both these co
to seem unlikely that I would ever
ther party again, up till now my hi
gon Papers on the disastrous behav
reflecting on my own experience wi
made that easy to accept. It had bu
presidents, to be in any sense a "pre

That might sound pretentious,
had served. I had never, after all, so
a receiving line, in 1967, when m
Scotton got a medal from Presiden
the USIA). But even as a lieutenant
self as serving in a presidential guard

that the Carnegie Endowment had gathered together in Bermuda two years earlier. In the second were those among my Rand colleagues who had for more than a year been pressing for extrication. Perhaps by going public with our "expert" and "informed" views, we could get the first group to join us, specifically, to get former Democratic officials to call for extrication. By doing that openly, before Nixon had committed himself in public to his own secretly preferred course, they could not only pressure him but assure him credibly that they would share responsibility for the withdrawal. It was especially after completing my reading, that September, of the entire twenty-three years covered by the McNamara study that I had come to see such an assurance by potentially rival politicians as essential to a president's willingness to face charges of "losing a war."

Leaders within the Democratic opposition, including former officials, would have to accept, against their instincts, both that extrication was now the appropriate course and of overriding interest and that their own public dissent from impending presidential policy was essential and worthwhile. Even harder for them, they would have to take most of the blame for the predicament that forced such a choice on the new president and convince him of their willingness to share responsibility for shifting course and for its consequences. This would not be easy to bring about. But it seemed to me to be the task that most needed doing right now, and it was the one to which I set myself.

Organizing pressure on the current president, in part by encouraging the self-condemnation of his opposition, was inconsistent with the life of a Rand analyst. It also looked designed to incur for me the hostility of the leaders of two political parties, the Democratic and the Republican. After my visit to Haverford, both these concerns appeared petty. It was beginning to seem unlikely that I would ever be able to consult for a president of either party again, up till now my highest ambition. But reading the Pentagon Papers on the disastrous behavior of four presidents in Vietnam, and reflecting on my own experience with the fourth and now a fifth, suddenly made that easy to accept. It had burned out of me the desire to work for presidents, to be in any sense a "president's man."

That might sound pretentious, considering the lowly levels at which I had served. I had never, after all, so much as met a president (except once in a receiving line, in 1967, when my friend and Saigon housemate Frank Scotton got a medal from President Johnson for his innovative work with the USIA). But even as a lieutenant in the Marine Corps I'd thought of myself as serving in a presidential guard, ready to fight wherever and whomever

the president should decide. I think some sense of responsibility directly to the president, of working for him, is characteristic of most, or very many, members of the executive branch. But that satisfaction died for me that month, after what I had learned of five presidents' behavior in this particular generation-long war. I no longer identified with presidents, no longer saw serving a president as the most desirable, or best, or most effective way to influence policy or to serve the public welfare.

However, with this disillusionment also came a new freedom. I would no longer be awaiting a call from the White House or from any official serving at the president's pleasure. That was as liberating, as expanding of options of resistance, as my newfound willingness to go to prison if necessary. I now found it easy to contemplate forms of opposition to present policy that were likely to bar me from future employment in the executive branch. Fear of that particular penalty, not jail, was the ultimate deterrent that kept most of my colleagues, past and present, from considering political actions that went beyond a certain point. I was no longer held in line by that fear. From their point of view, I was about to become dangerous to know.

In mid-September I told my colleague Konrad Kellen that I was now ready to join with those at Rand who had been pressing for two years for a strategy of unilateral extrication from Vietnam. I suggested we meet to discuss what we should do, and he brought four others together in his office one afternoon: Mel Gurtov, Paul Langer, Arnold Horelick, and Oleg Hoeffding. Gurtov was an expert on China and Southeast Asia, Langer on Japan, and Horelick and Hoeffding on Russia.

I told them what I had learned from Halperin and Vann about Nixon's policy. The president had tried the approach of proposing mutual withdrawal in negotiations, and that had failed. He seemed to be hoping that this could still happen if we stayed long enough, but I didn't expect this, and I didn't want to go on bombing and fighting while we waited for it. I now accepted the group's argument that the only way for us to get out of Vietnam was to get out unilaterally. Because Nixon hadn't spoken much about his policy since he had announced his hopes for mutual withdrawal in the spring, I thought there was still a chance to encourage him to take a different path before the passage of time, more U.S. casualties, and his own public pronouncements made him feel so personally responsible for the outcome of the war that he couldn't accept less than success.

That was likely to happen, we all agreed, even with Clark Clifford's July

1969 proposal in *Foreign Affairs* (he was now out of office) to withdraw all U.S. ground combat troops from Vietnam by the end of 1970, leaving the eventual withdrawal of logistics, airlift, and air support units to be determined by later developments. Though it was in the right direction compared with current strategy and went further than what any other public figure had so far proposed, it wouldn't end the war, nor would it end direct U.S. combat participation—with airpower—by any definite or foreseeable time. However, Clifford was right to propose that the United States should set a course toward disengagement that was independent of the wishes or the adaptations of either Saigon or Hanoi. But the others at the meeting had wanted for the last two years to go further than he was proposing, and I now agreed with them.

Thus far since King's death the only public figures who had been willing to say to the government, "Get out," get all the way out, had been counterculture activists like Abbie Hoffman, radicals perceived as supporters of North Vietnam, and advocates of direct action and civil disobedience. What they called for was ignored or discounted. In fact their advocacy of complete withdrawal served to tar it and to threaten mainstream figures who might have been tempted to discuss it favorably with the stigma of association with them. The single closely reasoned and eloquent expression of this approach had been a pamphlet by the historian and civil rights activist Howard Zinn, *Vietnam: The Logic of Withdrawal.* But Zinn's powerful argument, which was endorsed by Noam Chomsky in a review, didn't recruit any allies among mainstream academics and intellectuals.

Former LBJ advisers who had become public critics of his policy, like Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Richard Goodwin, and John Kenneth Galbraith, had called in Johnson's last year for reducing our involvement, ending bombing, and negotiations. But they chose to distance themselves from and denigrate more "extreme" proposals; they all took pains to say that they were not proposing, in fact *opposed,* simple "withdrawal." The same was true for politicians like Eugene McCarthy, George McGovern, Frank Church, and even Bobby Kennedy before his death. None of these had gone beyond this so far in 1969; not much had been heard from them at all. When they called for negotiations, they didn't say what their subject should be or what outcome we should be prepared to accept. An earlier exception had been a statement by Bobby Kennedy in early 1966 that we should deal with the NLF in negotiations and that it should have a role in the future government, but the reaction from both the administration and the establishment had been so fierce that he backed off and didn't bring it up again

in public. In early 1967 Bobby had urged this same proposal on President Johnson in private, as had Robert McNamara a month later, but neither of them had ever made their advice known to the American people or to Congress after the president had dismissed it.

In this climate, if the new president were to do what I thought he ought to do—for example, what Kennedy and McNamara had proposed privately, in the context of a plan to withdraw—he would have to get out publicly *in front* of those establishment figures who had been most critical of the war, risking that even they would attack him for taking too simplistic and extreme an approach. It would be the most dangerous kind of leadership, a sharp change in policy and a repudiation of near-sacred premises of the cold war without his having identified any allies with authoritative credentials. That seemed the last thing any president was likely to do.

The beauty, the power, and the purpose of the Rand analysts' making a public statement along the same lines as the antiwar activists was that it demonstrated that you didn't have to be a radical or a hippie, you didn't have to be unpatriotic or a fan of Hanoi, and above all, you didn't have to be ignorant of classified information to advocate total and prompt U.S. disengagement from the Vietnam War. Zinn and Chomsky could be written off not only as "radicals" but as uninformed of the secret information available to the president and his advisers. Rand "defense intellectuals," with clearances and government contracts as Vietnam researchers and consultants, could not.

We hoped our public statement would encourage opinion leaders in the media and Congress who intuitively agreed with this approach but were not Vietnam specialists to feel confident enough of its soundness to support it openly. In the face of foreseeable charges by their colleagues that it was simplistic and extreme and reflected innocence of the real considerations at high policy levels, they could point to us for protection. Together with us, they would give the same kind of confidence to members of the general public and to their representatives in Congress. At a minimum, we could aim to expand the range of respectable, responsible debate to include total extrication as a legitimate option or position.

Even if Nixon didn't accept this approach in the next year, serious discussion and advocacy of it could help influence him to a much faster drawdown of U.S. forces in Vietnam than he was now secretly planning, maybe a schedule closer to what Clark Clifford had proposed in July (withdrawal of all U.S. combat troops by the end of 1970). That wouldn't get us out, and it was very much worse in our eyes than what we were proposing, but it was a lot better than Nixon's current adopted.

I was happy to join in any such to get our views into the public d a public stand. Another conside against the war were planned for place all across the country on the in a form of general strike. In lieu paign was being called the Morat Nixon would be reacting to them We should try to affect the posit weeks away, as well as influence N variety of options, internal and ex thoughts out.

"We can only do it in a letter," was the only way we could publish through a formal clearance process. read at outside conferences were su porate rules, only spontaneous, un a letter to a newspaper or journal pass clearance. I was dubious that pose. I thought we needed a study them and present our argument m do. A letter just wouldn't be convin with us.

"It's a letter or nothing," the oth rity clearance, the argument would our position on classified data to w tent this was true. We even wanted seen such official data. But ironic drawing our conclusions were kno were hidden only from those who ernment. The secret we were exposi the data privately available to the g tic knowledge and conclusions that ready shared, about the folly of our

What needed revealing was that as a sophisticated, expert, informed, consultant with access to the same e

a lot better than Nixon's current policy and more likely than ours to be adopted.

I was happy to join in any such effort. Speed was important. We needed to get our views into the public domain within weeks, before Nixon took a public stand. Another consideration was that major demonstrations against the war were planned for October 15. They were scheduled to take place all across the country on the same weekday, cutting into the workday, in a form of general strike. In lieu of that provocative description, the campaign was being called the Moratorium. If these pressures were powerful, Nixon would be reacting to them in the fall, either positively or negatively. We should try to affect the positions expressed in the Moratorium, just weeks away, as well as influence Nixon's response to them. We discussed a variety of options, internal and external, formal and informal, to get our thoughts out.

"We can only do it in a letter," someone in the group finally said. That was the only way we could publish something outside Rand without going through a formal clearance process. Even written comments we intended to read at outside conferences were supposed to be cleared. According to corporate rules, only spontaneous, unplanned remarks at such a conference or a letter to a newspaper or journal (an odd loophole in the rules) could bypass clearance. I was dubious that a letter would be adequate for our purpose. I thought we needed a study that would lay out the facts as we saw them and present our argument more exhaustively than a brief letter could do. A letter just wouldn't be convincing to anyone who didn't already agree with us.

"It's a letter or nothing," the others said. If we invited a process of security clearance, the argument would be made that we were indirectly basing our position on classified data to which we had had access. To a certain extent this was true. We even wanted it to be understood that we had indeed seen such official data. But ironically, the realities from which we were drawing our conclusions were known to most people in the world. They were hidden only from those who believed the public lies of the U.S. government. The secret we were exposing, that we wanted to expose, was that the data privately available to the government did not invalidate the realistic knowledge and conclusions that most people outside our government already shared, about the folly of our hopelessly stalemated involvement.

What needed revealing was that it was possible to have pursued a career as a sophisticated, expert, informed, responsible government researcher and consultant with access to the same estimates and plans and inside dope that

high government officials relied on, and also to have reached the same conclusion as Abbie Hoffman and a growing number of observers around the world without special information: that the place for the United States to be, relative to Vietnam, was out.

A letter could do that. It didn't need a lot of argument; it didn't need to convince people who were resistant to the conclusion. It would serve an important function if it just gave some confidence to the many who already agreed with it and if it got the notion at last onto the agenda of the public debate as a serious, "responsible" alternative. Gurtov and Kellen volunteered to work on a first draft, and we made a date to meet again and go over it.

Meanwhile I started work on a second letter of my own, not for publication but to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, which had called together a group of consultants and former officials to try to influence President Johnson's policy two years before. I wanted the group or one much like it to meet again, to the same end, extrication, as our letter from Rand (though not to be bound to our same proposal). I called Joe Johnson, the head of the Carnegie Endowment. He sounded encouraging and told me to write a letter with my proposal to Charles Bolté, the executive director.

This was a much longer and more analytical letter, because I actually wanted to persuade these readers, all former (and, they mostly hoped, future) high-level insiders, to do something that was strongly against their instincts: to bring public pressure to bear on an incumbent president. Nevertheless, I took the chance of using language in my closing appeal that I knew risked putting them off, because I wanted to convey the sense of an unusual sort of challenge and urgency. I proposed that a group be convened to declare a policy "aimed unconditionally at U.S. extrication," and that discussion within the group should be limited to proposals that had that clear character. I ended:

> There should by now be an extreme burden of proof upon any proposal that might compromise the certainty of ceasing the—to use precise, necessary words—bloody, hopeless, uncompelled, hence surely immoral prolongation of U.S. involvement in this war.

The wording of that final sentence of the letter, especially the adjective "immoral," was anything but casual, and it did not go unnoticed at the other end. Bolté told me later that Joe Johnson had read the letter carefully and brought it back to him, pointing at the word "immoral." He said to

Bolté, "We can't invite Ellsberg to a
objectivity."

I sent many copies of my letter to
and to other high officials of the Jo
members of Congress. The response
executive committee, which was that
endowment could contribute at this
dividuals agreed that there was nothi

My own feeling was that there cle
do and that time was running out. I
scientious statements of dissent to th
icy" before the president, any day no
course. For the effect I wanted, some
cisely from *Democrats,* above all
thereby be providing Nixon with pro
to give the Republican administra
against attack by their opposition pa
otherwise be challenged as an aband
mitment."

For that they needed to go beyon
do," in fact what was essential if the
edge, at last, before the American pe
misguided and failed policy of the
readiness to share with the new presi
for any consequences that might follo

I decided to make this argument d
officials in the Johnson administratio
my appeal. I knew they both wanted
of Vietnam. They were both on the D
tee, a key group formulating the party
a position to line up top Democrats f
To the one I called first, I outlined w
Nixon, in a public statement by form
sponsibility for the Vietnam involven
was to be induced to end it.

I told him what I'd come to believe
think any president who expected to b
come of a war would be willing to en
why public demonstration of an effec

Bolté, "We can't invite Ellsberg to any more of our meetings. He's lost his objectivity."

I sent many copies of my letter to past members of Carnegie study groups and to other high officials of the Johnson administration and Democratic members of Congress. The response from all was essentially that of Carnegie's executive committee, which was that it was "hard to see anything useful" the endowment could contribute at this moment. The other establishment individuals agreed that there was nothing to do just now; it wasn't the time.

My own feeling was that there clearly was something they could usefully do and that time was running out. I wanted "clear, uncompromising, conscientious statements of dissent to the present course of Administration policy" before the president, any day now, committed himself publicly to that course. For the effect I wanted, some of these statements had to come precisely from *Democrats,* above all former Johnson officials who would thereby be providing Nixon with protective, bipartisan cover. They needed to give the Republican administration as strong assurance as possible against attack by their opposition party for a change in course that might otherwise be challenged as an abandonment of a Kennedy-Johnson "commitment."

For that they needed to go beyond dissent. What they could "usefully do," in fact what was essential if the policy was to change, was to acknowledge, at last, before the American people, their own responsibility for the misguided and failed policy of the past and present. They had to show readiness to share with the new president responsibility for changing it and for any consequences that might follow.

I decided to make this argument directly to the two Democrats, former officials in the Johnson administration, I thought most likely to respond to my appeal. I knew they both wanted strongly to see the United States out of Vietnam. They were both on the Democratic Policy Advisory Committee, a key group formulating the party's platform and policy, so they were in a position to line up top Democrats for what I had in mind if they agreed. To the one I called first, I outlined what I thought had to be addressed to Nixon, in a public statement by former officials who had in fact shared responsibility for the Vietnam involvement that Nixon had inherited, if he was to be induced to end it.

I told him what I'd come to believe from a tactical point of view. I didn't think any president who expected to be held solely accountable for the outcome of a war would be willing to end it with less than success. That was why public demonstration of an effective readiness to share responsibility

with him for a shift in course couldn't be delayed any longer. Before long the continuation of the war would be so identified with his own term in office that he couldn't reasonably hope to escape primary responsibility for the outcome. I knew that what I was asking was very hard to do, or even to contemplate, and that was why there was probably no precedent for it. I would be happy to join in the statement myself, but what was really needed was a declaration by people of much higher status, like him. I said, "You don't have to use these words, but this is the real substance of what has to be said: 'Mr. President, this is not your war. This is our war. Don't make it yours. We made the mistakes that got us in. Don't make those same mistakes. Get us out. We will stand with you if you do.' "

There was a silence on the other end of the phone. Then he said, "Dan, we can't do that. Not now. It would mean the destruction of the Democratic party. The Republicans would say, 'You got us in, and now you're pulling the rug out.' We'd be blamed for starting the war and then for losing it. It would be another stab-in-the-back legend."

I argued a little further. I pointed out that there was a good deal of truth to the charge that we had gotten the country in; didn't that give us an obligation to take unusual steps to help get us out? But he was firm. He didn't dismiss my logic, but the cost to the party would be just too great, and that wouldn't be good for the country either. This wasn't the time. It was too soon after these same officials had left office; it would sound like sour grapes. (That was how the French had sounded to us in 1964: "What we couldn't win, you can't win." But the French had been right!) What he was really responding to, I think, was a sense that I was proposing that Democrats take all the responsibility for an unwinnable war and most of the responsibility for losing it. That *was* pretty much what I was proposing. He couldn't go along. Maybe at some later time, he said. As we hung up, I was thinking, *Later?* Later would be too late.

It was beginning to occur to me, from the reactions I was getting, that there were Democrats who actually had some willingness, even preference, to see the war go on for a while under Nixon until it did become "Nixon's war." I suspected they were secretly looking forward to that, to the time when the failure was no longer their sole responsibility. *Then*—they might be telling themselves—they could work with him to end it or, better yet, follow his lead when he decided to seek their support in giving up. The initiative would come from him, from his own bitter experience, rather than be triggered by their guilty admission. The trouble was, as I saw it, that an appeal to them from Nixon to share responsibility for a change in policy

would never come later. Once it
willing to give up his hopes of s
crats might be willing to say then
on for years.

These somewhat bitter though
ond person, who had been a Whi
talked with him several times wh
seemed to be totally on the same
closely with the first and with Cl
Johnson to end the bombing of
started. I knew he was well wired
same pitch and got the same reacti
ended dramatically: "Dan, if we di
bloodbath such as you've never see

I was shocked by his last words.
well be right about that. That wou
we would just have to deal with th
ing to protect my own political futu
of more lives of American soldiers
going on right now, in Vietnam. I
that for a day, or a month, or a yea

He made no reply. We said our

would never come later. Once it had become Nixon's war he wouldn't be willing to give up his hopes of some sort of success, whatever the Democrats might be willing to say then. It would be too late. The war would go on for years.

These somewhat bitter thoughts were confirmed when I called the second person, who had been a White House aide to Lyndon Johnson. I had talked with him several times when I came back from Vietnam, and we seemed to be totally on the same wavelength. In early 1968 he had worked closely with the first and with Clark Clifford to try to persuade President Johnson to end the bombing of the North in order to get negotiations started. I knew he was well wired into Democratic politics. I gave him the same pitch and got the same reaction as before, almost the same words. He ended dramatically: "Dan, if we did what you suggest, there'd be a political bloodbath such as you've never seen. And that means you and me, Dan."

I was shocked by his last words. I said, as evenly as I could, that he might well be right about that. That would be a hard time for us. But I thought we would just have to deal with that, as best we could. I said I wasn't willing to protect my own political future, or the Democratic party's, at the cost of more lives of American soldiers or Vietnamese. There was a bloodbath going on right now, in Vietnam. I wouldn't want to think we'd prolonged that for a day, or a month, or a year, just to save my political skin or his.

He made no reply. We said our good-byes and hung up.

19

Murder and the Lying Machine

On the morning of September 30 I got out of bed, opened my front door to the Pacific Coast Highway, and picked up the *Los Angeles Times*. As I usually did, I went back to the bedroom overlooking the beach and got back into bed to read the paper.

The main story that day concerned what had become known as the Green Berets, or Special Forces, murder case in Vietnam. I had been following this story for weeks, and it had appeared on the cover of every newsmagazine. Since July the colonel in command of Special Forces in Vietnam, Robert Rheault, and five intelligence officers assigned to him had been charged with premeditated murder and conspiracy to commit murder. A sergeant and a warrant officer were being held with charges held in abeyance.

The lead story by Ted Sell summarized the charges: "The victim in the case was reported to be Thai Khac Chuyen, 31, a native of North Vietnam, who had been employed by the Special Forces since December 1963. . . . Information reportedly became available that Chuyen had taken part in meetings with communist intelligence officers. After interrogation—both with lie detectors and under the so-called truth serum sodium pentothal—these charges were allegedly considered confirmed by Special Forces officers. On June 20, Chuyen was reported to have been shot, his body placed in a weighted bag and the bag sunk in the South China Sea."

The headline on Sell's story in t

CHARGES AGAINST GREEN BERETS D

The Army Monday overruled its f
murder charges against eight Gree
double agent.

The surprise action was ordered
who only 11 days earlier had indi
brought to trial.

Resor said he took the action o
fair trial because the Central Intel
nesses available. But it was appare
higher levels. . . .

Sell explored two theories of the
field may have approved and then
that testimony by clandestine CIA
of agents suspected of also workin
hence singling out the soldiers was

On the first point, Sell reported la
portedly told the Army group to
phrase said to mean death. Then, a
scinded that direction and urged th
according to the report, Chuyen was

Sell wrote that Resor appeared to
present information regarding the all
ceive a fair trial, so charges had to be
self-evident, that the CIA could not
the backing of the president. Both Pe
denied any White House involveme
this story (and all others) took it for
(The diary of Nixon chief of staff H.
that all decisions were made by Nixo

Why had the unprecedented trial
place? According to Resor: "I want to
charged, but not proven, represent a
lations, orders and principles. The Ar
lawful acts of the kind alleged." As
cannot condone murder." General Cr
forces in Vietnam, who ordered the c

The headline on Sell's story in the middle of the front page was MURDER CHARGES AGAINST GREEN BERETS DROPPED BY ARMY. The story read:

> The Army Monday overruled its field commander in Vietnam and dismissed murder charges against eight Green Berets suspected of killing a Vietnamese double agent.
>
> The surprise action was ordered by Secretary of the Army Stanley R. Resor, who only 11 days earlier had indicated he strongly felt the case should be brought to trial.
>
> Resor said he took the action on grounds the soldiers could not receive a fair trial because the Central Intelligence Agency had refused to make witnesses available. But it was apparent the decision involved soul-searching at higher levels. . . .

Sell explored two theories of the case: the first, that CIA operatives in the field may have approved and then disapproved of the killing; the second, that testimony by clandestine CIA operatives might reveal that the murder of agents suspected of also working for the enemy was not uncommon, hence singling out the soldiers was unfair.

On the first point, Sell reported later in the story: "Local CIA officials reportedly told the Army group to 'terminate with extreme prejudice'—a phrase said to mean death. Then, according to other reports, the CIA rescinded that direction and urged that Chuyen not be killed. But by then, according to the report, Chuyen was already dead."

Sell wrote that Resor appeared to be saying that "if the CIA refused to present information regarding the alleged crime," the soldiers could not receive a fair trial, so charges had to be dropped. He didn't say, but it appeared self-evident, that the CIA could not "refuse" to produce witnesses without the backing of the president. Both Pentagon and White House spokesmen denied any White House involvement in the process or the decision, but this story (and all others) took it for granted that these denials were false. (The diary of Nixon chief of staff H. R. Haldeman has recently confirmed that all decisions were made by Nixon and Kissinger.)

Why had the unprecedented trial been brought by the army in the first place? According to Resor: "I want to make it clear that the acts which were charged, but not proven, represent a fundamental violation of Army regulations, orders and principles. The Army will not and cannot condone unlawful acts of the kind alleged." As Resor repeatedly put it, "The Army cannot condone murder." General Creighton Abrams, commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam, who ordered the court-martial, took the same position:

that he had no choice but to bring charges, given the evidence of murder. There was some tension between this position and the assumption that the White House had chosen to drop the unpopular charges; it appeared that although the army could not condone murder, apparently the president could.

Yet if it were true that such murders were not uncommon but had never before been brought to trial, the question remained, "Why had these charges been brought at all?" Why this trial, in particular, when it seemed especially likely to prove embarrassing to the administration and its war policy? Resor's and Abrams's accounts of the motivations for prosecution appeared inadequate—that is, untrue.

Later in his account Sell commented that "Abrams's motive in approving a trial that would almost certainly focus attention on unseemly aspects of the war in Vietnam was reported to be rage at having been told a lie. According to these reports, Rheault, or others, queried by Abrams's headquarters about Chuyen, said that he was on a sensitive secret mission outside South Vietnam when he was already dead."

An accompanying analysis by reporter Robert Donovan added that Rheault himself had been initially misled on what had happened by intelligence operatives under his command, including Captain Robert F. Marasco, the alleged triggerman, and other captains, who had ordered subordinates down to the sergeant and warrant officer to participate in a false cover story.

I lay on my bed and listened to the ocean and the gulls and thought about what I had read. One aspect of it was the outrage by Democrats and Republicans in the House and the Senate that American officers should ever have been put under criminal charges, risking imprisonment, just for killing one Vietnamese civilian in cold blood. And there was a sense of unfairness, of selective prosecution, in singling out these particular soldiers for a kind of killing that was "not uncommon."

Donovan's report cited statements of approval of the dismissal by many leading members of Congress. "I think this action by the secretary," said Representative George Bush, "is a correct one and should prove significant in helping the morale of our combat troops."

Nevertheless, Donovan noted, "It raised a serious moral question about the right of soldiers to kill a prisoner in cold blood without a trial, if that is indeed what happened, as has been charged. . . ."

Could killing under orders, in wartime, be murder? My infantry training said yes. Killing prisoners or civilians in your custody? For sure. It so happened that I had just come to a much broader answer to that question, to

cover all killing in an unjust wa
Army Secretary Resor or Genera
narrow circumstances like these,
condone an individual murder, t
the bringing and dismissing of c
was what seemed to be the skelet
der of lies about a murder case.

Actually the only time the w
connection with General Abram
Colonel Rheault. But neither wri
ficial untruth was not confined t
practice, neither reporter attache
by officials. They simply followe
dictory account, headed by locu
"Hence, it appeared . . ."; "What
was apparent. . . ." However, the
ment on the truth value of offic
was striking how nonjudgmenta
about the existence of all these di
granted, at every single level of th

General Abrams himself, in Se
ted to a deceptive cover story; s
president. Not only Colonel Rh
tains, a warrant officer, and a serg
given to Abrams. That was pretty
ian and military.

I lay in bed that Tuesday morn
have been working for, the systen
fifteen, including the Marine Co
every level from bottom to top—
conceal murder.

That described, as I had come
what that system had been doing
continuously for a third of a cent
I'm not going to be part of it any
ing machine, this cover-up, this m

It occurred to me that what I h
pages of documentary evidence c
ministrations over twenty-three y

cover all killing in an unjust war like our war in Vietnam. I didn't expect Army Secretary Resor or General Abrams to agree with me on that, but in narrow circumstances like these, they had to. Yet if they didn't personally condone an individual murder, they were taking part in a lot of lying about the bringing and dismissing of charges of it. A vision forming in my mind was what seemed to be the skeleton of the two stories I had just read: a ladder of lies about a murder case.

Actually the only time the word "lie" occurred in either story was in connection with General Abrams's rage at being deceived, he thought, by Colonel Rheault. But neither writer attempted to conceal his belief that official untruth was not confined to this one incident. Following journalistic practice, neither reporter attached the words "lie" or "untrue" to statements by officials. They simply followed most of these statements with a contradictory account, headed by locutions like "The fact that . . . suggests . . ."; "Hence, it appeared . . ."; "What appeared to have happened . . ."; "But it was apparent. . . ." However, these euphemisms didn't conceal their judgment on the truth value of official pronouncements. At the same time, it was striking how nonjudgmental, how matter-of-fact the journalists were about the existence of all these discrepancies, how much they took them for granted, at every single level of the bureaucracy.

General Abrams himself, in Sell's and Donovan's accounts, was committed to a deceptive cover story; so were the secretary of the army and the president. Not only Colonel Rheault, but below him several majors, captains, a warrant officer, and a sergeant had constructed the false cover story given to Abrams. That was pretty much the whole chain of command, civilian and military.

I lay in bed that Tuesday morning and thought: This is the system that I have been working for, the system I have been part of, for a dozen years—fifteen, including the Marine Corps. It's a system that lies automatically, at every level from bottom to top—from sergeant to commander in chief—to conceal murder.

That described, as I had come to realize from my reading that month, what that system had been doing in Vietnam, on an infinitely larger scale, continuously for a third of a century. And it was still going on. I thought: I'm not going to be part of it anymore. I'm not going to be part of this lying machine, this cover-up, this murder, anymore.

It occurred to me that what I had in my safe at Rand was seven thousand pages of documentary evidence of lying, by four presidents and their administrations over twenty-three years, to conceal plans and actions of mass

murder. I decided I would stop concealing that myself. I would get it out somehow.

It would have to be copied. I couldn't do that at Rand or at a copy shop. Maybe it was possible to lease a machine. I got out of bed and picked up the phone in my living room and called a close friend, my former Rand colleague Tony Russo. I said there was something I would like to discuss with him. I'd be over shortly.

Tony had been part of the Rand VC Prisoner and Defector Interrogation Study in Vietnam. I'd first met him briefly when I arrived in Saigon in 1965. When we were back together in Santa Monica in 1968, he had often discussed with me, in his office just down the hall from mine, what he'd learned from his interviews. He showed me a number of the transcripts, some of them sixty single-spaced pages. Many of those he had talked to, through interpreters, had impressed him very much by their patriotism and dedication, their conviction of the rightness of their cause. Even the defectors, nearly all of whom had left for personal reasons or because of the hardships of guerrilla life, had nothing negative to say about the cause or their national leaders. (Konrad Kellen, who had dealt with prisoner interrogation material in World War II and Korea and defectors from Eastern Europe, read hundreds of these transcripts for the Rand project and told me he had never seen any like these. "Prisoners and defectors tell you what they think you want to hear. These people, you can't get them to say anything critical of their regime." His conclusion, which he urged me to pass on to Kissinger, was that this was one adversary whose leadership and population simply "could not be coerced." They could be annihilated but not coerced.)

Tony had a degree in aeronautical engineering and had worked for NASA before studying political science at Princeton. He had started out as a cold warrior like me, but meeting the North Vietnamese and Vietcong and hearing their stories had changed him. He had come not only to admire them as people but to believe they were right about the justice of their cause. I remained focused on the injustice of ours, as I had come to see it by mid-1969. I hadn't had his face-to-face experience—I never knowingly encountered an actual member of the NLF—and I remained skeptical that their hopes would be fulfilled if their well-justified nationalist struggle led to a Stalinist regime, as I thought likely.

In any case, it wasn't nominally for his political views that Tony had been

dropped from the Rand Econom
only hints of his sympathy for the
he didn't make it public or put it
writing, I was sure, that got him
chairman, Charlie Wolf. He had
fects on the population of our h
addressed to denying food to the
from his personal observations of
classified study, the widespread pr
oners by ARVN captors and jailers
Wolf didn't like these or another st
trol to land tenure policies, and ot
of these studies by our air force sp
sonal basis when he told me that
pressed by his work, and I told Ch
a real loss for the department. Cha
budgetary reasons, though Tony se

After Tony left Rand, I started s
more and more. He was funny, a
mind, and not just about the war.
reading radical analyses that preser
ration or misadventure but as being
jectives and covert activities elsewh
there yet; I hadn't done that readin
But on September 30 I didn't have
only one, I could tell what I wanted

As I got dressed, I was thinking ab
I'd just read about, the ones who'd d
many of them had lied (and some
other reason than that they'd been t
by a boss. They were told it was for
the administration, or the Special F
jobs. That was good enough for ther
derstood that. I'd been there, and
they'd been mistaken to have acted li
no longer.

A thought came into my head in
ing to tell me again that I have to li
right just because someone's telling m

dropped from the Rand Economics Department, in effect fired. I had seen only hints of his sympathy for the VC in our talks while he was still at Rand; he didn't make it public or put it in writing. But it was what he did put in writing, I was sure, that got him in trouble with our hawkish department chairman, Charlie Wolf. He had written a careful statistical study of the effects on the population of our herbicide program, which was supposedly addressed to denying food to the VC but had a much wider impact. Also, from his personal observations of prisoners in custody, he had exposed, in a classified study, the widespread practice of beatings and torture of VC prisoners by ARVN captors and jailers, often with American advisers observing. Wolf didn't like these or another study Russo did on the relation of VC control to land tenure policies, and others at Rand worried about the reception of these studies by our air force sponsors. I didn't yet know Tony on a personal basis when he told me that Wolf was firing him, but I had been impressed by his work, and I told Charlie that I thought it was a mistake and a real loss for the department. Charlie insisted that the decision was only for budgetary reasons, though Tony seemed the only one affected.

After Tony left Rand, I started seeing him after work. I came to like him more and more. He was funny, and he had a very original and creative mind, and not just about the war. We became close friends. He had begun reading radical analyses that presented our Vietnam policy not as an aberration or misadventure but as being in line with unacknowledged U.S. objectives and covert activities elsewhere in the third world. Again, I wasn't there yet; I hadn't done that reading (and didn't get to it till after the war). But on September 30 I didn't have any doubt that this was one friend, the only one, I could tell what I wanted to do.

As I got dressed, I was thinking about what was in the minds of the people I'd just read about, the ones who'd done the lying and helped the killing. So many of them had lied (and some of them may have helped kill) for no other reason than that they'd been told to. They were ordered to lie, or kill, by a boss. They were told it was for the good of the service, or the war, or the administration, or the Special Forces, or their bosses, or to keep their jobs. That was good enough for them; it was all they needed to know. I understood that. I'd been there, and I'd worked in those same offices. But they'd been mistaken to have acted like that, just as I'd often been. Too long, no longer.

A thought came into my head in the form of a rule: No one is ever going to tell me again that I have to lie, that I have a duty to lie, that it's all right just because someone's telling me to do it. No one is going to say that

and have me believe him, or think I have to obey him. I'm not going to listen to that anymore. It no longer has any authority for me.

Lying to the public, about anything, but above all on issues of life and death, war and peace, was a serious matter; it wasn't something you could shift responsibility for. I wasn't going to do it anymore.

It came to me that the same thing applied to violence. No one else was going to tell me ever again that I (or anyone else) "had" to kill someone, that I had no choice, that I had a right or a duty to do it that someone else had decided for me.

This new principle, as I already thought of it, didn't answer all questions about whether one should ever use violence or when, the questions I'd been wrestling with ever since I met Janaki and began reading Gandhian and Christian pacifists, but it did answer some. For example, about whether unquestioningly to accept being drafted. That wouldn't face me again, but it might face my son Robert. I would tell my kids, I thought, that no one could make it all right for them to carry a gun or shoot anyone just by telling them they had to. That would have to be their choice, their entire responsibility. If I ever did it again—I would tell them, as I now told myself—it would be because I chose to do it or chose to follow such orders as the right thing to do, not just because someone gave me an order. I would also examine very critically my own reasoning for it. I would have to have better reasons, which stood up better under a skeptical look, than I had in Vietnam. Responsibility for killing or being ready to kill was not something you could delegate to someone else, even a president.

Meanwhile, as I drove over to Tony's house, I was thinking how this would fit in with what I was trying to do this month. Sickened, at last, as I was by the lying machine, the simple act of exposing it wasn't an urgent priority. My concern was what the current lies (like the old ones, in this history) were about: what they were concealing, what they were facilitating. It was bad that they indicated past killings to have been murder, but I personally had no interest in putting anyone on trial or behind bars. I certainly wouldn't have courted trial or a life behind bars myself to accomplish retribution or just to set straight the historical record of Vietnam. My interest was in stopping the ongoing killing, preventing murders in the months and years ahead.

At first it wasn't obvious that revealing the McNamara study to the public would contribute to that at all, however educational it might be for the longer run. But from the moment that morning I had decided to do it anyway, I had begun to have new thought
ful even in the short run.

It was true that the study didn't pro
Nixon's secret strategy: what Halperin
my Rand colleagues and to the establis
But at the same time, it did strengthe
showed that what I was claiming Nixo
predecessor had done. When I claime
gress and the American people on wha
do, and what his real aims were, the stu
decessors had done exactly that. Gran
aims and priorities that they all had ac
revealed raised questions about that,
might be persuaded to pursue.

Simply revealing the McNamara st
close to it. But it could help, and in m
enough. If I could get this out—ideall
based on it, with witnesses under subp
lished otherwise—Nixon would hav
couldn't be protected from debate and
hope for the same effect I'd sought eig
to the *New York Times*. It would warn
the assurance of invisibility. He might

Now that I was thinking positively
there was another way these studies co
much easier for Nixon, the new preside
on the Democrats. After all, the Demo
(even if their motive had been largely
wingers like Nixon himself!). He woul
his own prior support of the war, as vi
He could say that the Democrats had s
pair; it was now too late to do anythi
That wasn't far from the truth (though
been even worse if Nixon had won in
mended all these years), and if that's w
intentions, that was fine with me. I k
thank me for this, but as far as I was co
I had made a serious effort to get some

way, I had begun to have new thoughts that suggested that it might be useful even in the short run.

It was true that the study didn't prove what needed to be exposed about Nixon's secret strategy: what Halperin had told me, what I'd passed on to my Rand colleagues and to the establishment figures I had written recently. But at the same time, it did strengthen the case for it, more than a little. It showed that what I was claiming Nixon was doing was essentially what his predecessor had done. When I claimed he was prepared to mislead Congress and the American people on what he was doing, what he was ready to do, and what his real aims were, the study demonstrated that *four* of his predecessors had done exactly that. Granted, he implied he had given up the aims and priorities that they all had acted on, but the continuity the study revealed raised questions about that, to say the least, questions Congress might be persuaded to pursue.

Simply revealing the McNamara study would not end the war or come close to it. But it could help, and in my present mood that was justification enough. If I could get this out—ideally, if there were hearings in Congress based on it, with witnesses under subpoena and oath, or if it could be published otherwise—Nixon would have to worry that his secret policy couldn't be protected from debate and skeptical challenge. In effect, I could hope for the same effect I'd sought eighteen months earlier, with my leaks to the *New York Times*. It would warn a president that his policy had lost the assurance of invisibility. He might be induced to give it up.

Now that I was thinking positively about this project, it occurred to me there was another way these studies could be helpful. They would make it much easier for Nixon, the new president, the Republican, to blame the war on the Democrats. After all, the Democrats pretty much deserved the blame (even if their motive had been largely to avoid domestic attacks by right-wingers like Nixon himself!). He wouldn't have to change course, to disown his own prior support of the war, as vice president and when out of office. He could say that the Democrats had screwed it up irrevocably, beyond repair; it was now too late to do anything but clear the decks of their mess. That wasn't far from the truth (though I felt sure that the mess would have been even worse if Nixon had won in 1960 and had done what he'd recommended all these years), and if that's what it took to get him off his present intentions, that was fine with me. I knew some Democrats who wouldn't thank me for this, but as far as I was concerned, it was a matter of priorities. I had made a serious effort to get some of them to volunteer to share the re-

sponsibility for getting out by taking the blame for getting in. So far, no volunteers. Nixon wouldn't thank me either. But if the hidden history in the McNamara study could make the American people even more disgusted with the war than they already were, and at the same time make it easier for Nixon to claim that he was cutting losses that the Democrats had incurred, it might tip the balance for him toward accepting a "disguised defeat" rather than prolonging the war.

I'd told Tony before that I'd worked on a study in Washington about Vietnam decision making, but I hadn't talked about what was in it until, as it happened, just a couple of weeks earlier, one afternoon on the beach behind my house. He had been describing a pattern of lying about the defector project by some of his superiors and about the nature of the war at low levels in the government, and I'd said that the study I was reading in Washington revealed the same thing at the highest levels. I didn't tell him, and he didn't guess, that it was the McNamara study or that I had access to it in Santa Monica. Tony said: "You ought to put that out."

It was an unusual thing for him to say and for me to hear. People who had had clearances didn't tell other people with clearances that they ought to leak something. Tony didn't know of my leaks to the *Times* a year and a half earlier; I hadn't told anyone. But I wasn't shocked at his suggestion. In his present situation, away from Rand, it was natural for him to think of it (just as it was natural for him earlier not to have thought of taking his own classified reports with him when he left Rand). He knew that now I shared his state of mind about the war, which was that it was a time for acts of resistance.

Compared in effectiveness even with the Rand letter I was helping draft, and my other overtures to Democrats, Tony's comment had scarcely struck me as worth considering. The McNamara studies hadn't seemed sufficiently relevant to this crisis. They said nothing about the "new" Nixon as president, and they ended on March 31, 1968, under LBJ. Nixon had just won an election precisely on the claim that he had grown during his years out of office and, more plausibly, that he had no intention of following the obviously failed policies of the past. What I needed, and lacked, were documents that disproved that. If Mort had given me, in Washington in late August, a document demonstrating what he believed about Nixon's policy, I would have put it in the hands of Senator Fulbright or the *New York Times,* or both, before I ever went to Haverford. I didn't have that proof, and the McNamara study wasn't a substitute.

But two weeks later the overtures to Democrats had gone nowhere, and our letter might or might not ever get out. Meanwhile in those two weeks I

had finished reading the earliest sect
war. The *L.A. Times* story that morn
past month, had tipped me over the
expose lies about murder. Once I beg
see that it might actually be useful t
be done fast, before the president ma
signs, the president would go one wa
as good as I might have wished for t
along with the letter from Rand, the
my whole vote.

When I got to Tony's apartment, I sa
you about a couple of weeks ago? I've
ing to put it out." As I expected, Ton
said, "Great! Let's do it." He didn't w
through on the way over. I'm not su
wasn't necessary. I told him the study
work to copy. I wanted to give a copy
pers. Did he happen to know where w
He said he did. He had a girlfriend,
vertising company. He called her whil
fine for us to use her machine after ho

had finished reading the earliest sections of the study, on the origins of the war. The *L.A. Times* story that morning, on top of all the influences of the past month, had tipped me over the edge. I felt ready to go to prison just to expose lies about murder. Once I began really to think about it, I started to see that it might actually be useful to make this history public—if it could be done fast, before the president made it Nixon's war. Within weeks, by all signs, the president would go one way or another. These documents weren't as good as I might have wished for the job of influencing that choice, but along with the letter from Rand, they were what I had. It was time to cast my whole vote.

When I got to Tony's apartment, I said to him, "You know the study I told you about a couple of weeks ago? I've got it at Rand, in my safe, and I'm going to put it out." As I expected, Tony didn't need to be asked to help. He said, "Great! Let's do it." He didn't wait to hear the reasoning I'd just come through on the way over. I'm not sure I ever did discuss it with him; it wasn't necessary. I told him the study was very long and would take a lot of work to copy. I wanted to give a copy to the Senate or maybe the newspapers. Did he happen to know where we could get hold of a Xerox machine? He said he did. He had a girlfriend, Lynda Sinay, who owned a small advertising company. He called her while I was there, and she said it would be fine for us to use her machine after hours. We could start the next night.