

Figure Morse looks back

# Former Senator Describes Study Made For Kennedy on Vietnam Intervention

By Bob Woodward  
Sentinel Reporter

Former Sen. Wayne Morse of Oregon said Saturday that a still secret 1963 study of American Vietnam policy was causing President Kennedy "to fear the Pentagon, State Department, and CIA would suck him into a Bay of Pigs in Vietnam."

The disclosure of the celebrated Pentagon papers has generally been seen as shifting a large portion of the burden of the Vietnam war on the Kennedy administration; Morse's statements, made in a two and one half hour interview at his farm in Poolesville, Md., however, do just the opposite.

Morse said flatly, "In my judgment if Jack Kennedy had lived a year we'd have been out." Since the 1950s, Morse had been one of the most outspoken critics of American policy in Southeast Asia.

Conference With Kennedy  
Morse said he based his conclusions on a conference he had with President Kennedy 10 days before the latter's assassination, and an interview on the eve of the 1964 election with John Kenneth

Galbraith, Kennedy's Ambassador to India.

Recalling the conference with President Kennedy in the White House, Morse said he was there to confer on some education bills. Morse quoted the President as saying he was then reviewing "an intense study" that had just been completed about American Vietnam policy.

At that time Morse said he was giving Kennedy "a shellacking" on the Senate floor about Vietnam. After discussing Vietnam at some length, Morse said Kennedy indicated the study showed Morse's criticism of the Vietnam policy "may not be wrong."

### Outback Planned

Morse said that during the meeting, Kennedy repeatedly answered his criticisms with the phrase, "This is not my intention." Morse said President Kennedy kept emphasizing that his intention was to cut back military aid.

According to Morse, Kennedy wanted him, as the most outspoken critic of the Vietnam policy, to come to the White House several weeks later and analyze the study himself.

The visit never took place because Kennedy was assassinated 10 days later on Nov. 22, 1963.

Morse said he finally learned more about the study on the eve of the 1964 election when Galbraith was in Oregon.

At that meeting, Morse said Galbraith identified himself as the author of a secret study on American Vietnam policy that had been completed just before President Kennedy was assassinated.

### Picturesque Man

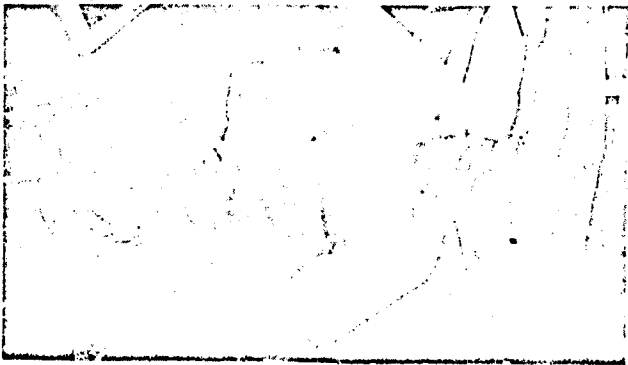
Morse continued, "Galbraith is a very picturesque man. He said that the study led Kennedy to fear the Pentagon, State Department and CIA would suck him into a Bay of Pigs in Vietnam."

According to Morse, Galbraith won't say anything about the study because it was a "confidential Presidential mission." Morse said Galbraith indicated something might come out "when 20 to 25 years of history sees the light of day."

Morse said he is convinced Kennedy would have kept us out of large ground and air war in Vietnam.

"The difference between Kennedy and Johnson was that Kennedy wasn't a slow learner," Morse explained.

Defeated for reelection in 1968 by 3,325 votes, Morse spent 24 years in the Senate. He is now 70 years old. Though a strong Kennedy partisan, Morse was  
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Former Sen. Wayne Morse

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## Morse Describes Viet Study

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always known for his honesty, outspokenness and straightforward manner.

Morse would provide no additional details about the alleged study which he said was shifting President Kennedy's view of the proper course for American policy in Southeast Asia.

It is generally agreed that the recent disclosure of the Pentagon papers leaves its stiffest indictment of the Kennedy administration.

Though during his administration Kennedy increased the number of American troops in Vietnam from about 2,000 to 16,000, Morse's statements suggest Kennedy was considering a change or de-escalation at the time of his death.

If correct, Morse's statements about a Galbraith study could begin to answer the nagging question about what President Kennedy might have done had he lived.

### No Answers

For example, the first New York Times story about the Pentagon study on June 13 said the papers provide "no conclusive answers to some of the most widely asked questions about the war: (including) If President Kennedy had lived, would he have led the U.S. into a full-scale ground war in South Vietnam and an air war against North Vietnam as President Johnson did."

Attempts to reach Galbraith for comment were unsuccessful. In his book, "Ambassador's Journal: A Personal Account of the Kennedy Years," Galbraith makes no mention of conducting such a study for the late President. However, the book does contain a memo dated April 4, 1962 urging that American forces be kept out of combat action in Vietnam.

Galbraith's opposition to the war is well-known and was stated early. The 1962 memo is only one example of this opposition.

The historical significance of such a study, if it exists, would rest with the influence it may have had on the late President.

Asked if he felt the course of the Vietnam war and the Pentagon papers had vindicated his long-time opposition, Morse declared, "I never talk about vindication. Nothing can vindicate the killing."

The thin 70-year-old former senator was found in his fields on a tractor cutting hay last Saturday. He was dressed in baggy jeans, cowboy boots, a light blue shirt, an old straw hat, and work gloves. Morse said his farm manager had quit without notice and he was left with close to 100 acres of standing hay that had to be cut. Morse said farm labor was impossible to find so he was doing the haying himself.

### Hired Away

It was later learned that his farm manager had been hired away by Montgomery Circuit Court Judge Kathryn Shook DuFour.

Because he can't find farm help, Morse said he is selling his 74 acre farm which he has owned since 1957. Serving cokes and oatmeal cookies, Morse said he was not leaving Maryland but would rent another farm in the area. He and his wife, Midge, have an apartment in Washington, D.C. at the Watergate and spend 60 to 70 per cent of their time at another farm in Oregon.

Besides doing the farming, Morse said he was sleeping out at the farm to keep guard at night "Imagine Wayne Morse a security guard," he said derisively.

To keep busy, Morse said he does some lecturing, law consulting, labor arbitration and the farm work. Asked if he was going to run again for any political office again, he replied, "We don't know about running again."

At the beginning of the interview

which was held in his two-room farm-hand house, he announced: "You're not talking to any flowing fountain of optimism about where this country's going. . . I'll get some ice (for the cokes) to cool you off from what I'm going to say."

Often dipping back into the 1950s, Morse talked about the time President Harry Truman offered him the job of U.S. Attorney General in 1950 when Morse was a Republican. He said he declined. Morse resigned from the Republican party in 1952 when Eisenhower was nominated and stayed in the Senate as an Independent until he joined the Democratic party in 1955.

Morse called Eisenhower "the most incompetent man who ever sat in the White House." He labeled President Nixon a "slicker . . . an evil man . . . an egomaniac." Morse said these two men "set an incubator that hatched Vietnam."

Concerning President Johnson's decisions in Vietnam, Morse said there has never been a satisfactory explanation for his "inexcusable" acts.

"We'll either repudiate the Nixon Doctrine or millions of boys will die in Asia if they will go . . . I'm one of the few who says they should refuse to go," Morse added.

Condensing his advice, he said Americans must always remember their rights guaranteed in the procedure of government are more important than any other, there are no degrees of dishonesty, the country needs a free press, and secret diplomacy has no place in a free country.

A former law professor and law school dean, Morse summarized, "I'm an old teacher and we use the degree of repetition that comes with the capacity of the class." He noted that he frequently had to "conduct a seminar for the U.S. Senate."