

Pentagon Study Prominently Reported

By HENRY GINIGER

Special to The New York Times

PARIS, June 25—"It's a great lesson for us," said a young French journalist.

"It's a public danger," said a Government official.

Both were commenting on the same events—the publication by The New York Times and other newspapers of material from the secret 1967-68 Pentagon study on American involvement in Vietnam, followed by the efforts of the Government to stop it.

Throughout Western Europe the Pentagon study has been one of the most widely reported and prominently displayed stories in recent months. European bureaus of The New York Times report a heavy flow of requests for copies of the issues containing articles on the Pentagon papers.

In Paris one reader's interest was high enough for him to steal one of the few copies the bureau had.

Admiration From Press

At luncheons, cocktail and dinner parties and in impromptu meetings, the conversation has invariably turned at one point or another to The Times articles and the Government's attempt to block further publication of secret documents.

But as the French journalist and the French official indi-

cated, there have been mixed reactions to the whole affair.

The overwhelming sentiment of the Western European press and those who work for it has been one of admiration for American newspapers that have stood up to the Government on a highly sensitive issue. The admiration stems in part from general dissatisfaction with United States policy in Indochina, in part from the assertion of the right of freedom of the press.

In countries where such freedom is difficult or impossible to exercise, the case has been greeted in press circles with some relish. Thus in Greece, Vradyni, a daily that has to be discreet about opposing the military regime there, declared that "freedom of the press hurts no one and benefits all." In Egypt, Al Gomhuriya, the organ of the Arab Socialist Union, the country's only political organization, termed the case one of the most important tests of press freedom in the 20th century.

But even in countries with a tradition of freedom, the action of The Times caused enormous excitement. In France, the journalist who saw a "great lesson" was echoing an almost universal opinion about the limitations of the French press and the pressures it undergoes from the Government.

"No important paper here

would have dared do such a thing," said one reporter.

Still rankling in his mind and in the minds of all journalists who worked during the period of the Algerian War from 1954 to 1961 were the numerous instances of Government seizures of newspapers and criminal prosecution of editors for such offenses as "hurting the morale of the army."

Comment by Le Monde

Indicating strongly that it had such things in mind, Le Monde, one of France's most independent newspapers, remarked shortly after the United States government resorted to the courts to halt publication in The New York Times of its series on the Pentagon study:

"Numerous are the Europeans—the French in particular—who, because history has accustomed them to more expeditious practices, will be astonished that the Government did not seize the New York daily. But the American papers have a tradition of independence that most of their foreign confrères can envy."

Foreign correspondents of The Times have been receiving such expressions of mixed praise and envy from their colleagues in the local press and among political figures who are either in the opposition to their own governments or in opposi-

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