

SF Examiner How LBJ Rejected

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A Buildup in 1968

Examiner News Services

Former President Lyndon Johnson decided against a national mobilization to win the Vietnam war in early 1968 despite advice from top military advisers, the New York Times reported in its Sunday editions in a story based on the secret Pentagon study of the Indochina war.

In the eighth of its series on the secret Pentagon Papers, the Times said the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Gen. William C. Westmoreland sought to force Johnson a long way toward a major military buildup in retaliation

for the 1968 Tet offensive by Hanoi.

For the first time, the Times says the Pentagon Papers show. Johnson squarely faced the prospect that he had sought adamantly to avoid during three years of steadily widening war; namely, "a full-scale callup of reserves" and "putting the country economically on a semiwar footing."

This major policy reconsideration came at a period of sharp domestic dissent and dissatisfaction over Johnson's war policy.

Two months after the Tet

offensive began, Johnson showed his rejection of the military advice by announcing on March 31, 1968, a reduction of the bombing of North Vietnam and his decision not to seek reelection.

In other developments relating to the Pentagon Papers, The Boston Sunday Globe reported Daniel Ellsberg's admitted decision to leak the papers to the press may have been triggered by an exchange between Ellsberg and presidential adviser Henry Kissinger last January in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Ellsberg, under federal indictment charging him with illegal possession of the documents, is a senior research associate at MIT.

The Globe said Ellsberg was in an audience listening to Kissinger. During a question and answer period, he asked Kissinger if the Nixon Administration had "tried to calculate the number of Asian lives that might be lost in the process of 'Vietnamizing' the war."

Kissinger "back-peddled smartly" the newspaper said, and "skirted the issue."

The Globe said Ellsberg's self-admitted decision "to go to the public with certain of the classified information

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that he possessed was taking place at this time."

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported in today's editions that Ellsworth C. Bunker, United States Ambassador in Saigon, as long ago as 1967 urged secret military action against Laos of the kind ordered this year by President Nixon.

In its latest publication of secret Pentagon documents on the Vietnam war, the Post-Dispatch said American military leaders and South Vietnam's then President, Nguyen Cao Ky, also advocated at the same time an attack on Cambodia. The newspaper said the documents

"most complete" information on secret United States plans, within hours of their formulation.

Moreover, the Cleveland business leader said he was told during a visit to Hanoi in December of 1969 of the Communists' superior intelligence information, but was rebuffed when he told U.S. officials about it.

The Journal reached Eaton for a phone interview from his Nova Scotia farm.

Eaton visited Hanoi for 10 days in 1969 as a guest of the North Vietnamese government. He said he was told by Premier Pham Van Dong and Head of State Ton Doc Thang that the U.S. was planning to invade Cambodia.

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