

Telford Taylor Urges Inquiry On Vietnam by a National Panel

By HENRY RAYMONT

Telford Taylor, former United States prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials, called on President Nixon and Congress yesterday to appoint a national commission to investigate the origins and conduct of the war in Vietnam.

Mr. Taylor, a retired brigadier general who has taught at the Columbia University Law School, said he believed such an inquiry "is more urgently needed now than criminal prosecution of military and civilian leaders" for war crimes.

He made the proposal—which indicated a shift from some of his previous public statements—in a speech acknowledging an award from the Scribes, a society of law writers, at the annual convention of the American Bar Association at the New York Hilton Hotel. He later elaborated on the idea in an interview.

In his speech, Mr. Taylor said he had become convinced by the publication of parts of the secret Pentagon study on the war that "there is now the material available for a broad, high-level inquiry."

Later he explained that a commission ought to be created by Congress with subpoena powers "with the full concurrence of the President so that it would have access to executive files and personnel."

Essentially, he said, he had in mind "a dispassionate review" of the role of the Presidency in committing the nation to war without the full knowledge of Congress or the people.

"In Germany you had a dictatorship where the will of one man could be said to represent



The New York Times

Telford Taylor

the will of the nation," he said in his speech. "The situation is completely different in the United States."

Commenting on the Pentagon study, he deplored the fact that he had found "virtually nothing" about the consequences of the war for the people of Vietnam.

"One can read estimates of success," he went on, "or estimates of the number and scope of missions. But there's hardly a word in those documents about the effect on human lives, about the needs of the maimed and wounded, of the refugees."

Mr. Taylor, a tall, lean man of 62, is the author of "Nuremberg and Vietnam: An American Tragedy," published last year by Quadrangle Books.