

HW

(AUG 26 1971)

This is the Max Frankel piece on the Pentagon Papers in which you expressed interest.

Please return when convenient.

Returned with thanks. Skimmed after guests left when too tired to edit. Perhaps the most disturbing part of all this to me ~~sixx~~ is that the truth seems never to have been understood by anyone when it had to have been obvious. I have old files on all these basic things, not the secret copies of the secret papers but the indications of all the miserable things that could not avoid getting some publication. It required no genius to understand what was going on, just the leaving of the blinders in the editorial stables. If I could understand, as my contemporaneous notes show, what meant what, as with the Gulf of Tonkin, is there any real reason every major newspaperx could not and should not? Nothing is going to change with publication of the PP save that perhaps gov't will be more careful, the think tanks may fade away (gov't can be tighter with security and inflict more severe penalties ~~xx~~ for violation. Even JFK's liquidation plans were well reported. If the Times did not say anything about the Honolulu conf., it appeared in the local papers and I had them and gave them to a young scholar, a house-painter having the perspicacity to understand

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and get them and give them to me. There is, of course, an indictment of the gov't as of the entire political system. But i think the most serious indictment ~~oifxx~~ is of the press, the NYTs, their Frankels (one of those who, as I recall, killed the second Times assassination investigation fowhwich I was responsible. NO, that was M.S.Handler, aided by Roberts, perhaps Corry. But in any event, the failure was not in the reporting, bad as it was, as much as in policy and most of all in analysis. The good analyst needed less than was published to understand what was afoot. If, in the context of today, history will record pub. of the PP as an act of bravery, in retrospect it will have to be reported as belated self-condemnation and a morality poorer than Hearst in Cuba at the turn of the century.

Thnaks, HW