

# Daniel Ellsberg: U.S. not

By Carol Pogash

Daniel Ellsberg, the man who became as enmeshed in the Vietnam war as Lyndon Baines Johnson and Ho Chi Minh, doesn't believe the United States was defeated in Vietnam.

"This is a success for the American people who constitutionally forced an end to the war on an unwilling administration. It's a success of democratic process against the policies of six successive administrations," he said during a lengthy interview with the Examiner.

"The American administration has been defeated. When people say Congress and the public defeated it, it's true. And that's the success."

"The collapse of the (Saigon) regime we supported would not have come about if B52s were free to carpet and terror bomb.

"I think the military, Thieu, Kissinger and Ford were right. The war could have been prolonged for years despite the desire of the American and Vietnamese people to end it.

"The question is 'Who stopped the B52s from flying?' Not Nixon. Not Ford. Not the change of administrations because there was no indication of their having learned anything. Their views are no different from the views I held 10 years ago, seven and a half million tons of bombs ago. They haven't changed.

"But Congress forbade the executive to send bombs to Indochina . . . It took the American public to get Congress to use the blunt instrument of cutting off funds. That was the only way to deflect the policy.



**DANIEL ELLSBERG**  
Pentagon Papers man

"If it had been left to the administration the war would still be going on. It would be incomparably worse."

A late convert to the peace movement, Ellsberg had been a top level Pentagon researcher in the 60s. He later came to believe that "the war was not going to end with success for the United States, because such a large percentage of the (Vietnamese) people were so dedicated to removing foreign influence from their country."

There was no way to destroy the Vietnamese independence movement "without destroying the Vietnamese and every piece of the country," he said during his Pentagon Papers trial in the spring of 1973.

In 1969 Ellsberg copied the top secret Pentagon Papers in what he called a "desperate" effort to tell Congress the truth about the war.

He had determined, he explained two years ago, that the war "would not end until Congress shared responsibility with the President for

ending it."

His perceptions played themselves out.

"I feel great pride in the way the system finally did perform. Most other systems couldn't do it without a revolution," he said this week from his Marin County house where he continues to research the war and speak to groups about his position.

He is as versed on the war as on American history, to which he constantly refers.

"The image we had of ourselves 200 years ago, the belief in self-determination and independence, has just been confirmed. Most American leaders believed then, that involving ourselves in foreign affairs would cause us to lose our democracy. They were right."

In fact Ellsberg hopes the Vietnam debacle "will be followed by other defeats in the areas where we have followed similar policies of creating and assisting police states.

"I hope we're tending toward a policy of zero military subversive intervention in the affairs of other countries."

But Ellsberg believes there is plenty of room for the U.S. to work without providing weapons and soldiers.

"The American Revolution was the first colonial war of independence. Why did Ho Chi Minh start his Declaration of Independence with our Declaration of Independence? He began (in 1945) with the words 'All men are created equal. They are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights. Among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happi-

ness.' The analogy was very close."

Ellsberg returns to the U.S. Constitution in his analysis of how far the nation

# *a loser in Vietnam . . .*

had strayed from its roots.

"We have prevented self determination in many parts of the globe for 30 years. That's not what we were

about 200 years ago. And that's a dangerous goal to acquire. It's led us into monstrous things . . .

"I think this administra-

tion will go right on doing it, supporting autocratic regimes of assassins as in Iran, Brazil, Guatemala, Chile and late of Greece and

Portugal.

"South Korea and Taiwan are two of the most tortu-

— Turn to Page 29, Col. 2

— From Page 28

rous politically autocratic states we could support. I'm clear I don't want my country imposing police states in other countries.

"I would expect that without our support South Korea would fall apart as fast as the Thieu regime did."

"It's a tradition we have to draw on. It's a benchmark to see how we've come.

"The checks and balances had been eroded almost completely. Almost unchecked and unchallenged the executive had become more powerful than the monarchical executive we had

under King George III.

"It turns out that the executive did not go unchallenged. But it took a long time. We had lost democratic control over foreign policy almost completely.

"The American people had no more control over the December '72 bombing of Hanoi than the Soviet public had over the invasion of Czechoslovakia (in 1968).

"However it turned out the democratic potential we had was greater than any the Soviet Union had to draw on. Over three years we regained control.

"It shows the differences

and how we must hold onto and enlarge them.

"The extreme anti-Communists who were determining foreign policy have been reducing those differences."

The Vietnam War and its fallout effects Ellsberg believes, have taught the U.S. the danger of conducting foreign affairs shrouded in secrecys, the rarely tapped power of Congress and the people to right executive wrongs, and the value of questioning a President's motives and sincerity.

"The American people recognize we've been continually lied to," said Ellsberg who said the result is "a generation of realists."