

(Longer version filed Pentagon Study.)

Ellsberg: 'I'm War Criminal, So Is Nixon'

By Mark Newhouse
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CAMBRIDGE (Mass.) —

Daniel Ellsberg, who revealed the massive top-secret Pentagon study on the war in Vietnam, said in an interview last month he believes he is "a war criminal."

"I'm a war criminal," he said, "because I participated in acts that violated international law, our Constitution and some of our treaty obligations like the United Nations Charter."

Misled

"There's no way around it. As our government has defied war crimes, I am guilty, and so are Nixon and Kissinger and hundreds of other people in the government."

(Ellsberg made these and other statements in an interview in May, apparently with the knowledge that the Pen-

tagon study was to be made public. On Monday after he was charged, however, Ellsberg was quoted as saying: "The simple fact is that I never felt tortured by guilt by anything I did in Vietnam.")

In the May interview Ellsberg also said that:

● Washington officials have been misled by official cables from United States leaders in Saigon because such cables are "worthless."

● He believes Dr. Henry Kissinger, top White House adviser for National Security Affairs, is "arrogant" and "has a real ignorance of Vietnamese affairs."

● As far back as 1969, Ellsberg and other "inside types" urged unilateral withdrawal by the United States, but most advisers were "unwilling to come out publicly."

"I went to San Clemente to

talk to Kissinger in September of 1969," Ellsberg said.

"I wanted to ask him if he'd read or had anyone summarize for him a 10,000-page study of the history of the Vietnam decision - making by the U.S. that I'd been working on."

(Ellsberg, indicted by a federal grand jury for his role in "leaking" the documents, formerly was an analyst with Rand Corporation, Defense Secretary Melvin Laird ordered all classified information withdrawn from the custody of Rand Friday.)

"Kissinger said he knew of the study, but hadn't had time to read it. He said 'Do you really think it would be worthwhile?' And then said that 'after all, we make decisions very differently now.'"

"When he said that, I went into a trance of despair. The main feature of that study was the repetitiveness of de-



DANIEL ELLSBERG
Assumes war guilt

cision crises for the last 20 years . . .

He dismissed the value of much of the classified material, particularly cables from Vietnam to Washington, and said:

"It's not possible for some-

one who hasn't spent some time in Vietnam, especially people in Washington, to see how reality is obscured by the process that's supposed to communicate that reality. I know. I used to write those cables from Saigon."

Ellsberg said that because the cables were "worthless," Washington decision-makers aren't sufficiently familiar with four basic areas of "extreme relevance." He listed the areas as the "concrete situation" in Vietnam, the history of U.S. decision-making, the history of Vietnam as a country, and "an understanding of our opponents."

"Reading those cables is like putting on magic spectacles that make everyone else in the world look stupid," he said. "It's a real ego trip, but it's a very misleading thing, because you're the one who becomes stupid."

"I'd rather read the New

York Times," he said. "You don't get all the details there, but on the whole you get a more balanced picture of what's going on in Vietnam than you do in the government."

Ellsberg is now a senior research associate at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and formerly a Rand Corp. analyst and special assistant in the Pentagon.

Ellsberg said Kissinger has suffered from bad information in cables and added: "Kissinger's arrogance lies in the belief that what he's getting is information so crucial that outsiders who contradict it can't be listened to."

"Outsiders become for Kissinger people to accommodate and conciliate — his mission is to keep them happy, talk to them, tell them what they want to hear. But it doesn't occur to him that they should be listened to," Ellsberg said.