

Pentagon Data Cited as Parley Of Congress War Foes Opens

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WASHINGTON, July 27—A group of 17 antiwar Congressmen made the first concerted attempt today to use the Pentagon study of the war in Vietnam to attack the Nixon Administration's policies in Indochina.

The critics opened a three-day Capitol Hill conference on the Pentagon papers, which were concerned with the actions of the Johnson, Kennedy, Eisenhower and Truman Administrations but not those of the present Administration.

The Congressmen also tried to use the study, which was first made public in The New York Times, as an issue in the continuing effort by the Congress to assume more influence in the making of American foreign policy.

The Congressional group includes such outspoken opponents of the war as Representative Robert F. Drinan of Massachusetts, Bob Eckhardt of Texas, Donald M. Fraser of Minnesota, Abner J. Mikva of Illinois and Benjamin S. Rosenthal of New York, all Democrats.

Opportunity Called Unique

Representative John G. Dow, Democrat of New York, who is chairman of the informal conference, said in an opening statement that the publication of "the Pentagon papers provides us with the unique opportunity to view the lessons of history while their consequences are still a daily experience."

He said that throughout the meeting, "we hope that full attention will be focused on the apparent failure of American Constitutional processes as disclosed by the Vietnam involvement."

Despite a plea from Representative Bradford F. Morse, Republican of Massachusetts, that the discussion be nonpartisan, many statements criticized the Nixon Administration.

Distortion Charged

Anthony J. Russo, the former Rand economist who has been sentenced to prison for refusing to answer questions before a grand jury on how the Pentagon papers were made public, asserted that "the present policy rests on as many lies and as much deceit as we see in the Pentagon papers." Mr. Russo's sentence has been stayed pending appeal.

A key participant was Melvin Gurtov, an author of the Pentagon study. Mr. Gurtov, who resigned from the Rand Corporation last month, accused the Nixon Administration of continuing "a pattern of deception in American policy."

"The truth about U.S. objec-

tives and activities in Indochina is being distorted or hidden as much now as before," Mr. Gurtov asserted "and this circumstance is as intolerable as the policies themselves."

Mr. Gurtov said that he opposed the war even before he took part in the research for the Pentagon papers and that they only confirmed his opposition to United States policies.

General Nguyen Chanh Thi, a former corps commander in the South Vietnamese Army and a political foe of President Nguyen Van Thieu, said in the packed hearing room that the United States had failed to understand the political or military situation in Vietnam.

Tran Van Dinh, a former South Vietnamese Deputy Ambassador from Vietnam to the United States, contended that the Pentagon papers showed an American "contempt" for the Vietnamese people.

The biggest applause from the audience, made up mostly of young people, including Rennie Davis, a militant radical leader, was for Ernest Gruening, former Democratic Senator from Alaska. He was one of the two Senators who voted against the Gulf of Tonkin resolution in 1964. The other was Wayne L. Morse, Democrat of Oregon.

Mr. Gruening asserted that President Nixon was elected on a promise to end the war, but that he had no intention of doing so. Mr. Gruening accused three successive administrations of having conducted a "war of aggression" with tactics similar to those of Hitler and Mussolini.

The only difference, he said was that "we do it in the name of liberation." That, he contended, resulted in "adding hypocrisy to our sins."