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'Harmful'

Secrecy Ban on Vietnam Study

Washington

The Nixon administration has refused to grant a request from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for declassification of a committee analysis of Vietnam negotiations between 1964 and 1968.

In a letter to the committee, the State Department claimed that the committee's intended staff report, based on four never-published volumes of the 47-volume Pentagon Papers, "could harm" present diplomatic efforts in the Indochina conflict.

The title of the suppressed report clearly suggests its contents: "Negotiations, 1964-1968: The Half-Hearted Search for Peace in Vietnam."

Committee staff members are continuing negotiations with the State Department to seek partial clearance of the report. One argument they are using against the blanket refusal of clearance is that President Nixon on January 25 unilaterally declassified information on a dozen secret meetings between adviser Henry A. Kissinger and North Vietnamese negotiators in Paris.

SERIES

The committee, headed by Senator J. William Fulbright (Dem-Ark.), made public yesterday the first of a series of its staff analyses of the Pentagon Papers. This non-sensitive report, entitled "Vietnam Commitments, 1961," by staff researcher Ann L. Hollick, is a much briefer study of 12 pages, and 26 pages of documents previously available publicly. Even so, there are several security deletions.

Fulbright said the published report on 1961 commitments underscores the "unprecedented ... extent to which the executive branch misled both Congress and the public," in "policies and decisions of the first year of the Kennedy administration, which significantly deepened the U.S. military involvement in the Vietnam war."

TREATY

This staff study emphasized that "it was United States officials who first broached the subject of a bilateral treaty (with South Vietnam), and United States officials who pressed for a direct military involvement in Vietnam.

"Although news of the administration's consideration of combat troops did reach the public by means of leaks to the press, neither Congress nor the public was made aware of the intergovernmental discussions regarding a bilateral treaty."

The report also focuses attention on a 1961 recommendation by General Maxwell Taylor, then President Kennedy's military adviser, to send a 6000 to 8000-man U.S. military task force into South Vietnam "under the guise of performing flood relief work." That was first disclosed in press accounts last summer.

The treaty never materialized, nor did the Kennedy administration send combat troops which Taylor recommended. "Had one or both of these measures been carried out at that time," the report notes in retrospect, "a greatly increased national commitment to Vietnam would have resulted" much earlier. During the Johnson administration U.S. troops reached over a half million men.

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