

GENERALS DENOUNCE VIET WAR!

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BIG BRASS LAMBRS

by James Deakin

Each in his own way
has this to say
about the war in Vietnam:
"Nuts!"

On the morning of May 14, 1966, General David Monroe Shoup, former Commandant of the Marine Corps, a hero of the Battle of Tarawa, winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor, the Distinguished Service Medal, two Purple Hearts and a host of other decorations for gallantry and dedication to his country, stood before an audience of twenty-two hundred college students and teachers from the Los Angeles area. "I want to tell you," he said, "I don't think the whole of Southeast Asia, as related to the present and future safety and freedom of the people of this country, is worth the life or limb of a single American."

The occasion was a world affairs conference, the theme was "War and Peace," and Shoup, in a business suit, was the principal speaker. It can be conjectured that the students were expecting the general to invoke God, motherhood and Montezuma before proceeding to blast North Vietnam, verbally, back to the Stone Age. If so, they got the surprise of their lives.

Shoup continued, "I believe that if we had and would keep our dirty, bloody, dollar-crooked fingers out of the business of these nations so full of depressed, exploited people, they will arrive at a solution of their own. . . . And if unfortunately their revolution must be of the violent type because 'haves' refuse to share with the 'have-nots' by any peaceful method, at least what they get will be their own, and not the American style, which they don't want and above all don't want crammed down their throats by Americans."

"I see no strategic or other reason for not going to base in Vietnam. . . . Our anti-Communist adventures bring us no return, while social programs suffer at home and twenty million of our citizens are in such despair that there is rioting in the streets."
—Rear Admiral Arnold E. True

"Bombing [Vietnam] back to the Stone Age is not going to stop the guerrillas from operating. They will come from Cambodia, from Laos, from northern Burma. We can pour troops into Vietnam to fight conventional warfare and still have guerrillas operating there fifty years from now. . . ."
—Brigadier General Samuel B. Griffith II

"I think we should go back to the 1954 Geneva agreements and hold free elections in Vietnam. I have no doubt they would go Communist, but our own political morality demands that we abide by the results of free elections."
—Brigadier General William Wallace Ford

"I believe that if we had and would keep our dirty, bloody, dollar-crooked fingers out of the business of these nations so full of depressed, exploited people, they will arrive at a solution of their own."
—General David M. Shoup

"With no clear-cut limit to our immediate military objective, and no precise and pragmatic definition of our immediate and long-range political objectives, we commit ourselves to an upward spiraling course that may approach annihilation. . . ."
—General Matthew B. Ridgway

"I recommend that we bring hostilities in Vietnam to an end as quickly and reasonably as we can, that we devote those vast expenditures of our national resources to dealing with our domestic problems. . . ."
—Lieutenant General James M. Gavin

"I agree with U Thant that this is a war of national independence, not a case of Communist aggression. . . . I think we ought to get out the way we went in—unilaterally."
—Brigadier General Hugh B. Hester



Photographed by Duane Michals

general. "Especially so, when you realize that what is happening, no matter how carefully and slowly the military escalation has progressed, may be projecting us toward world catastrophe."

Shoup quoted from Mark Twain: "The loud little handru—as usual—will shout for the war. . . . A few fair men on the other side will argue and reason against the war with speech and pen, and at first will have a hearing and be applauded, but it will not last long; those others will outshout them, and presently the anti-war audiences will thin out and lose popularity. Before long you will see these curious things: speakers stoned from the platform, and free speech strangled by hordes of furious men. . . . And now the whole nation—pulpit and all—will take up the war cry and shout itself hoarse, and mob any honest man who ventures to open his mouth, and presently such mouths will cease to open. Next the statesmen will invent cheap lies, putting the blame upon the nation that is attacked, and every man will be glad of those conscience-soothing falsities. . . ."

Thus somberly did David Shoup, who commanded the United States Marine Corps for

four years, from January 1, 1960, to December 31, 1963, join the ranks of the dove generals with regard to Vietnam—the small group of senior military men who have publicly expressed the belief that America is on an erroneous and tragic course in that Southeast Asia country.

Shoup's speech, which went almost entirely unnoticed by the nation's newspapers, magazines and television networks, demonstrated something that Americans are only beginning to realize: the military establishment of the United States is not nearly as monolithic as it seems to civilians. Within the ranks of professional military men there are wide variations of opinion on the proper role of the U.S. in world affairs, on the changing nature of warfare and the use of military power, and on the character and intentions of the Soviet Union and Communist China and on Vietnam.

Sitting in the living room of his comfortable home in Arlington, Virginia, overlooking the Pentagon, Shoup remarks in a softly, mildly profane voice: "Vietnam has become a goddamn cliché. We are supposed to be protecting the United States from creeping

communism, but where the hell is it creeping to? It wasn't very successful in Indonesia or Africa or the Middle East. What scary, frightening timetable was shown to our government? Why haven't they shown it to the American people?"

At sixty-two, Shoup is square, solid, trim, bespectacled, and he looks more like a small-town businessman than a stereotype Marine (he was born on a farm in Indiana, near the site of the Battle of Tippecanoe). Although appointed commandant in the last year of the Eisenhower Administration, he was John F. Kennedy's favorite Marine. Kennedy, impressed by the way Shoup resisted efforts to indoctrinate the Marine Corps with right-wing teachings and the awful tactic he used to do away with the swaggor stick, pleaded unsuccessfully with Shoup to serve another term as commandant; on the general's coffee table is a silver cigar box engraved with a quote from J.F.K.: "With due respect to all the immortalized Marines who have gone before, in my time Dave Shoup is my Marine."

The danger of international communism, Shoup believes, has been vastly oversold to Americans as a threat to capitalism. "Communism carries the seeds of its own destruction," he argues. "In the underdeveloped nations, where there are a very few rich and a great many poor, communism is sometimes an easy sell. But as soon as the riches are redistributed, a middle class emerges who quickly see that they are receiving in accordance with their capability. You're on your way to capitalism, as the Russian experience has shown."

Like the other dove generals with regard to the Vietnam war, Shoup believes that it is imperative to negotiate a settlement, and he has a detailed plan that goes beyond a halt in the American bombing raids on the North. He proposes that President Johnson and Premier Nguyen Cao Ky or whoever succeeds him send a joint message to Ho Chi Minh, asking Ho, with such collaboration with the N.L.F. as he, Ho, deems advisable, to set a time and place for peace talks. The U.S. and South Vietnam would pledge to halt all ground and air fighting at the moment actual negotiations began, reserving only the right to fire in self-defense if attacked. And they would promise to withhold offensive action as long as negotiations continued.

"This would leave it up to Ho to decide how long the negotiations would go on," Shoup explains. "It would leave it up to him whether he wanted to talk or fight, since we would reply if attacked. There would be a de facto ceasefire as long as Hanoi wanted one. At the same time, it would avoid the built-in failure element that has been present in all previous U.S. peace proposals, which have insisted on de-escalation by North Vietnam as a price for negotiations. It would also avoid the built-in failure element in the Russian proposal that the U.S. stop the bombing permanently, since we would pledge to halt offensive action only so long as negotiations were going on. Moreover, if Ho turned it down, world opinion would turn against him, and the United States and international opinion generally would be quite clear about the extent of Communist China's domination of Hanoi's policy."

Under Shoup's plan, both the U.S. and South Vietnam could continue aerial and ground reconnaissance to guard against surprise attack, and could continue troop and supply buildups if they chose to. "I think one of the chief virtues of this plan is that it would give Ho the recognition he rates," says Shoup. "Up to now, we have failed to recognize that he is a national leader."

In the dreary box-step that Vietnam debate has become in this country, the military hawks—General Curtis E. LeMay, former Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and Admiral Aleigh A. Burke, former Chief of Naval Operations, and others—are ranged against the military doves, a relative term. Among the Vietnam doves are General Matthew B.

Ridgway, former Army Chief of Staff; General Shoup; Lieutenant General James M. Gavin, who was Chief of Army Research and later Ambassador to France; Brigadier General Samuel B. Griffith II, a retired Marine who is an authority on China; Rear Admiral Arnold E. True, an expert on destroyer warfare and a hero of the Battle of Midway; and Brigadier General Robert L. Hughes, who was on General Douglas MacArthur's staff in the Pacific. There is Brigadier General William W. Ford, who served in both World Wars and who believes that it is the highest patriotism to oppose further escalation of the Vietnam fighting. And there is Brigadier General Hugh B. Heston, who says that the Vietnam war is against the basic interests of the American people and "in the profit interests of only a very few."

More than anywhere else, the words "hawk" and "dove" are confusing and inadequate when applied to professional military men, a great many of whom consider themselves only trained technicians carrying out policy set by civilians. Those on active duty, however, are silent because their oath as officers binds them to "support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic," and because regulations prohibit them from criticizing official foreign policy as laid down by the President.

It is a fundamental tenet of democracy that military officers on active duty should not publicly criticize or oppose the decisions of the civilian heads of government, and only those with a liking for military coups would argue otherwise. Following out this primordial principle, President Harry S. Truman fired General MacArthur, and Abraham Lincoln threw Major John J. Key out of the Army for implying that the Administration intended to compromise with the South and preserve slavery. Experienced Pentagon reporters including Charles W. Cordry of the *Baltimore Sun* and William M. Beecher of *The New York Times* say they know of no instance in which an active-duty officer has spoken publicly against U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

The situation confronting retired officers is more complicated. It is generally understood that these men can engage in critical public discussion of policy, but the regulations are not always clear. The Army exempts retired personnel from its political regulations; the Air Force permits retired officers to engage in "free discussion regarding political issues" but prohibits them from using "contemptuous words in speech or in print against the President, the Vice-President, Congress, the Secretary of Defense" and a long list of other officials, on pain of court-martial; the Navy, in a recent unpublicized incident, threatened disciplinary action against Admiral True, a retired officer, for speaking out against the Vietnam war. But the Navy backed down when Senator J. William Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, came to the admiral's defense.

Yet there are abundant signs that a large number of American military men, on active duty and retired, have grave private doubts about the U.S. role in Vietnam. Starting with MacArthur's statement some years ago that anyone who thought America should get involved in a land war in Asia "ought to have his head examined" and Ridgway's observation in his memoirs that U.S. intervention in Indochina would be a "tragic adventure," many military authorities have warned against precisely the situation in which the U.S. now finds itself. Shoup says flatly that "in all my time, I've never known a single high-ranking officer who wasn't completely opposed to the U.S. getting involved in a land war in Asia." Gavin, who retains extensive military contacts through his lectures at the National War College, the Industrial War College and the Naval War College, remarks that "you would be surprised at the reservations that many senior

military men have about our Vietnam policy." And General Hughes, from his vantage point in the Middle West, reports that "among retired military men, I find a good deal of concern about Vietnam."

For most Americans, the first intimation that some senior retired officers, and by implication some active-duty men in the Pentagon, had serious reservations about the Vietnam war probably came when Gavin testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in a televised hearing on February 8, 1966. Gavin, who was in charge of Army Plans and Development when Kidgway was Chief of Staff, had written a letter to *Harper's* magazine. The editors of *Harper's*, in a preface, described the letter as calling for "withdrawal of American troops to defend a limited number of enclaves along the South Vietnamese coast"—an interpretation with which Gavin disagreed. Overnight, the "enclave theory" became a national rallying cry for moderate doves as an alternative to continued escalation. In the resulting furor, Gavin's real arguments were obscured.

What Gavin argued was that the United States held certain strong positions on the South Vietnamese coast, among them Camranch Bay and Danang, that it should continue to hold these enclaves with the troops it then had in Vietnam (about 250,000 men), and that it should concentrate on trying to make the South Vietnamese army a more effective fighting force while the U.S. supplied logistical support. Gavin opposed a further increase in U.S. troops, but he denies strongly that this was equivalent to advocating a withdrawal to coastal enclaves and a "backs-to-the-sea" strategy. "We must do the best we can with the forces we have deployed to Vietnam, keeping in mind the true meaning of strategy in global affairs," he told the Senators.

Nevertheless, General Earle G. Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and General Maxwell D. Taylor, former J.C.S. chairman, seized on the word "enclave" to assert that the doves were suggesting that the U.S. put its back to the sea, allow the rest of South Vietnam to be overrun by the Vietcong and expose America to a long siege and a humiliating defeat. President Johnson, scornful of the idea, privately told visitors that the enclave theory was "just slow surrender" and said that if South Vietnam fell, the Communists would be in Pearl Harbor in a week and in San Francisco not long after that.

In recent months, however, as the Vietnam war has moved closer to military stalemate despite massive infusions of U.S. troops, White House aide Walt W. Rostow, a leading hawk, has begun saying privately that the Administration has been following a "modified enclave" strategy right along. This may make Gavin a prophet, like Ridgway before him, but it is probably too late. For Gavin now considers it likely that matters have gone so far that enclave tactics and revitalization of the A.R.V.N. (the South Vietnamese army) are no longer possible.

In his office at Arthur D. Little, Inc. of Cambridge, Massachusetts (now sixty, he retired from the Army in 1958 and is board chairman of this worldwide research and engineering firm), Gavin reflects aloud on the melancholy course of the war in the two years since he issued his lonely warning that "we had better look hard at our Vietnamese commitment." The continued U.S. military escalation, he believes, may have forced Ho Chi Minh into an ever-increasing reliance on Peking, with the result that America could find itself confronted by China's resources, not Hanoi's, ruling out enclave strategy—ruling out just about everything but disaster. For China, as James Reston has observed, is down to its last 700,000,000 men.

A few months ago, as his concern over the U.S. course in Vietnam increased, Gavin resigned from the Massachusetts Democratic Advisory Council and said he "simply

cannot support President Johnson for reelection in 1968." Explaining his decision, he added: "Obviously our domestic programs are grossly underfunded, especially in the poverty area, and I look on this as a consequence of the Vietnam war, and the money we're pouring in there."

The key to Gavin's Vietnam proposals before the Senate committee was the term "strategy in global affairs." No longer, Gavin argued, is military power alone the determining factor in international relations; the economic-diplomatic-military strength that a nation can bring to bear. "In the nineteenth century and before," he said, "military power was used to seize economic resources through the colonialization and exploitation of backward nations. But in the international equations of the twentieth century, the technological standing of a nation is of the first importance, since it is technology that produces economic strength and new weapons systems."

It is from this direction that Gavin approaches the Vietnam problem. The United States' preoccupation with Vietnam, he believes, has thrown our national policy "alarmingly out of balance." At home, the war drains away resources (both money and ideas) that should be applied immediately and in force to solving imperative social problems. Abroad, the oversize Vietnam burden impairs America's ability to meet its "total spectrum of global commitments." The result, in Gavin's view, is an unbalanced foreign policy, or more properly, an unbalanced national policy. Thus his recommendation two years ago that we make do with what we have in Vietnam.

The same concern over imbalance in Vietnam emerges in a conversation with Samuel B. Griffith II, a retired Marine Corps brigadier general, an authority on China and, like Gavin, a lifelong student of world affairs. Griffith has crammed two careers into one varied life: graduating from Annapolis in 1929, he was an advisor on guerrilla warfare in Nicaragua, then went on to China in 1935 as a language student. For six months before World War II, he studied commando tactics with the British. He was wounded on Guadalcanal. He holds the Navy Cross, the Army Distinguished Service Cross and the Purple Heart. After the war, two more years in China, then the Naval War College, then various staff jobs before rethning in 1956 at which point he hurried off to Oxford to get a Ph.D. in Chinese history. Griffith, now sixty-one and a research associate at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, translated Mao Tse-tung's treatise on guerrilla warfare and the Sun Tzu, the Chinese classic on the art of war. His books include *The Battle for Guadalcanal* and *The Chinese People's Liberation Army*.

The Vietnamese situation, says Sam Griffith, "is entirely out of balance. I have serious reservations about it. The weight of our effort is seventy-five percent military and twenty-five percent political." To this soldier-historian, the Administration has failed to read several key Vietnam barometers correctly, one of them being the pacification barometer—the largely unsuccessful effort to secure the South Vietnamese countryside against guerrilla attack and reconstruct a shattered political fabric.

Griffith believes that "the largest proportion of American military men favor an all-out effort to win in Vietnam. They don't want to bomb China, but they speak of an all-out effort. When you ask them if they want to commit a million and a half men, they say no. When they say that North Vietnam should be bombed back to the Stone Age as LeMay suggests, I ask them: Well, suppose you do? What will you have accomplished? North Vietnam is essentially an agricultural society. Bombing it back to the Stone Age is not going to stop the guerrillas from operating. They will come in from Cambodia, from Laos, from northern Burma. We can pour troops into Vietnam to fight conventional warfare and still have guer-

rilla operating there fifty years from now."

Time is against the U.S. in Vietnam, Griffith believes. "As far as Vietnam is concerned, I think Mao is just as happy as a hawk, sitting there drinking tea and smoking those awful cigarettes. It took him twenty-two years, from 1927 to 1949, to get from south China to Peking. They don't look at time the way we do. So there's no substitute for negotiations, but if we are really sincere, it will have to be done through secret, private contacts. When we put on one of our big public peace offensives, Peking considers this a snowstorm."

"You know," says Griffith, "the Chinese have a proverb: *ji chih i*, meaning, 'Encourage other people to fight your enemies.' China and Indochina have been hostile for a thousand years, and the Chinese have cast us within the proverb with regard to South Vietnam." In other words, U. S. foreign policy lost another opportunity when it lined up with Saigon—Ho Chi Minh might have been an Asian Tito.

For General Matthew Bunker Ridgway, who led the nation's troops through the bitter tribulations of Korea, the Vietnam war assumes ironic proportions. It was Ridgway who warned at the outset that the game was not worth the candle and would be played under heavy handicap. The name of the game at that time was Dienbienphu.

In Spring, 1954, as the French came to the end of the road in Indochina, John Foster Dulles and Admiral Arthur Radford, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, proposed Operation Vulture, an air strike by American bombers to relieve 12,000 besieged French troops at Dienbienphu, an isolated village in North Vietnam. Key members of Congress, including the Senate Democratic leader, Lyndon B. Johnson, were highly skeptical of the idea, fearing that it would lead to massive U.S. involvement in Indochina. ("We will insist upon clear explanations of the policies in which we are asked to cooperate," said Johnson on May 6, 1954, just before the fall of Dienbienphu. "We will insist that we and the American people be treated as adults; that we have the facts without sugar coating.")

Equally skeptical was the Army Chief of Staff, Ridgway. He had sent a team of engineers, signal and communications specialists and experts on combat terrain to Vietnam. Their report bore out his belief that air power would not be decisive and that American ground forces—five divisions at the outset, ultimately ten or more—would be necessary if U.S. intervention was to be successful.

"In Korea," Ridgway said later, "we had learned that air and naval power alone cannot win a war and that inadequate ground forces cannot win one either. It was incredible to me that we had forgotten the bitter lesson so soon—that we were on the verge of making that same tragic error. That error, thank God, was not repeated." Not at Dienbienphu, that is. President Eisenhower, at Ridgway's urging, overruled the air strike.

Now Ridgway, in retirement at his Pittsburgh home and having just finished a book on the Korean conflict (it mentions Vietnam in relation to the problem of Korea), sees the United States involved in the type of open-ended war against which he warned in 1954, and he is worried. He fears that no clear-cut limit has been placed on U.S. military objectives in Vietnam, that the military effort may have outrun political policies, that, in short, the war could get out of the control of the civilian policymakers. Is victory at any cost our objective? he asks. That could only be, Ridgway says, if the United States had adopted an unqualified political objective—"the complete subjection of the outside world to American domination"—as its national policy.

At a Memorial Day observance in Madison, Wisconsin, this year, a crowd of American Legionnaires and other citizens assembled on the grounds of the state capitol to hear

some speeches suitable to the occasion. As the principal speaker, the Legion had invited Brigadier General Robert L. Hughes, a member of MacArthur's staff in World War II, who had impressed them by a talk he had given at a Legion post two months before. Hughes, who retired from the Army in 1961, was in full uniform, wearing the ribbons of the Silver Star, Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, Combat Infantry Badge and Purple Heart (he was severely wounded at Buna, on New Guinea).

The general began in the prescribed manner, with a tribute to Memorial Day as a national expression of gratitude to America's war dead and especially "to those who have suffered the loss of a loved one in the present conflict in Vietnam." The sentiments were familiar; the crowd half-listened.

"They died," Hughes continued, "in support of an unstable foreign government that is maintained only by the strength of the United States. . . . We are prosecuting an immoral war in support of a government that is a dictatorship by design. It represents nothing but a ruling clique and is composed of morally-corrupt leaders who adhere to a warped philosophy."

The crowd was awake now. Hughes went on: "We are losing the flower of American youth in a war that could stretch into perpetuity. After four years of fighting, we cannot be sure of the security of villages three miles from Saigon because we can't tell the good guys from the bad guys. This is one hell of a war to be fighting. We must disengage from this tragic war."

Hughes, who was a full colonel at the age of thirty-six and a brigadier general at forty, is another two-career man. After retiring from the Army, he became assistant dean of the college of agriculture at the University of Wisconsin. With considerable understatement, he says that his Memorial Day speech came as "something of a surprise to my military friends—they considered me a hawk."

If he ever was a hawk, he is not now. "There is not a piece of real estate over there that has any particular strategic value to the United States," says Hughes. The search-and-destroy tactics in South Vietnam, he believes, have been a failure, and so has the pacification program—"You clear out one area and a month later, you have to go back and do it again." But when he says the U.S. should disengage, he does not mean outright withdrawal without negotiations. Rather, the U.S. "should withdraw to defensible enclaves and hold on for negotiations—I agree with Gavin on enclaves."

Retired Brigadier General William Wallace Ford lives in Amherst, Massachusetts. As an artillery officer at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, he was in charge of developing the Army aviation system of spotter and supply planes that has found its fullest use in Vietnam—but he is profoundly opposed to the war. "It is an immoral business, and we shouldn't be in it," he says. "We are crucifying our souls. We are pursuing a war that has no moral or political justification."

Now sixty-nine, Ford was an enlisted man in the First World War, graduated from West Point in 1920, commanded the artillery of the Eighty-seventh Division in its march across France, Belgium and Germany in World War II. He fought "every day of these wars," a record only a few men can match, but Vietnam leaves him very cold and very worried. Like Ridgway, he fears escalation up to the nuclear Götterdammernung. He says frankly, "I think we should go back to the 1954 Geneva agreement and hold free elections in Vietnam. I have no doubt they would go Communist, but our own political morality demands that we abide by the results of free elections."

From Asheville, North Carolina, another voice: "Johnson is on a collision course. The Chinese will not stand by and watch North Vietnam destroyed. I agree with U Thant that this is a war of national inde-

pendence, not a case of Communist aggression. I go much further than Gavin. I think we ought to get out the way we went in—unilaterally. And then we should do what we can to help to rebuild their economy. That would be the way to restore the respect we had after World War II as a moral nation. We are in the wrong in Vietnam, morally and from a military standpoint. It is against the national interests of the United States.”

This is Hugh B. Hester, a retired brigadier general, a veteran of Chateau Thierry and the Argonne, served in MacArthur's command in the Pacific and, after the war, U.S. military attaché in Australia. Decorated by his country and France for gallantry on the battlefield in World War I, he is a vigorous seventy-two now, and an outspoken opponent of the Vietnam war who has crisscrossed the nation three times since 1968 to argue against U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia. Hester says he has been “pleasantly surprised at the number of officers who have written to me expressing substantial agreement with my views.” He has had no critical letters from officers, on active duty or retired, but “some very critical letters from enlisted men and, of course, a lot of criticism from civilians.”

Within the ranks of the dove generals, there are shadings of opinion on the fundamental role of the U.S. in Indochina. Shoup, Hughes and Admiral True rate Southeast Asia as having little if any strategic importance to America in an era of intercontinental nuclear missiles; Ridgway, Gavin and General Griffith, with some reservations, consider the area important to America's interests. All of them, however, agree on the most urgent, immediate need—negotiations to end the war. All of them favor a halt in the U.S. bombing raids on North Vietnam as the first step in obtaining peace talks—with the exception of Ridgway, who discusses this step in a gingerly, general fashion. And in the conversations with these military men, one salient point emerges above all others: U.S. involvement in a land war in Asia is, as General Omar Bradley once said, “the wrong war in the wrong place at the wrong time.”

Having said their piece on Vietnam, what has happened to the dove generals? The dread tattoo of court-martial drums? Midnight visitations from the F.B.I.? Sulphurous runnings from the White House? Ostracism by military colleagues? Blackballing and snubs? Not at all, says Ridgway: “I've had no reaction from the Defense Department or the White House. There's been no effort whatsoever to stop me from speaking out. The reaction from other retired military men has been overwhelmingly favorable, judging by the letters I've received.” Gavin's experience is similar: “No repercussions from Washington” on his testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee, and he is still being invited to speak at the War Colleges. General Griffith: “No repercussions from Washington.” General Hughes: “No friendships lost, no snubs, although one military friend said jokingly that perhaps I was getting senile [Hughes is forty-nine].” General Shoup: Still eating pleasant dinners at the Army-Navy Country Club near his home, and when he walked into the Army-Navy Club in downtown

Washington after his speech, “three or four retired officers made a point of coming over and shaking hands.” (One source close to top Marine brass reports ill-will toward Shoup, more so because he expressed his views publicly; not suitable for a former commandant is the feeling.)

Nevertheless, it is not quite safe to assume that the Pentagon and the White House only smile indulgently when military men of stature call the Vietnam war, in Gavin's words, “a helluva mistake.” In the case of Rear Admiral Arnold E. True, for instance, the era of good feeling fell somewhat short.

Arnold True is an active man of sixty-six who graduated from Annapolis in 1920, served in the Asiatic Fleet for seven years and commanded the destroyer U.S.S. *Hamman* at the Battle of Midway (it was sunk by Japanese torpedoes as it aided the stricken aircraft carrier *Yorktown*; the *Hamman* lost two-thirds of its crew, eleven of its thirteen officers). True, an authority on destroyer tactics—he revised the Navy's basic manual on the subject—retired from active duty in 1946; now he runs a thousand-acre cattle ranch in La Honda, California, and is professor of meteorology at San Jose State College. He is also a peaceable man, and after World War II he joined the Quakers.

In the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, True sees “an anti-Communist paranoia which has no real basis in fact” (so does General Shoup). “Our anti-Communist adventures bring us no return, while social programs suffer at home and twenty million of our citizens are in such despair that there is nothing in the streets.” The Vietnam war, True believes, is a civil war between Vietnamese factions, into which America has thrust itself; “the only way to settle it is for the Vietnamese to negotiate. We can't make peace with Hanoi from Washington.”

Three years ago, True began setting forth his views on Vietnam in talks to various groups in the San Francisco area and in letters to newspapers and magazines. He and his wife, also a Quaker, took part in a peace vigil in Palo Alto, and one of his letters, to the *Progressive* magazine, was reprinted as an ad in the *Escondido Times-Advocate*, paid for by some members of the First Congregational Church there.

For a while, nothing happened, but on December 27, 1966, Rear Admiral John E. Clark, commandant of the Twelfth Naval District in San Francisco, wrote asking True to come to his office. In the meeting, Admiral Clark told True that “Washington was getting restless and that I had better stop or the consequences would be

unpleasant.” True recalls, Clark read paragraph F-2016 of a Navy regulation dealing with public affairs. “No member of the Naval service,” it said, “will utter any public comment reflecting adversely on, or belittling the role of, any other branch of the Armed Forces, the Department of Defense or the foreign policy of the United States.” It also directed that “copies of proposed speeches . . . concerning foreign or military policy will be submitted . . . to the [Navy] chief of information for clearance.” True felt that Clark, by reading him the regulation, intimidated it had been interpreted as applying to retired Naval officers as well as those on active service.

True interpreted the “unpleasant consequences” to imply court-martial, although it wasn't referred to specifically as such. Clark recalls: “I did say to True that the next interview might not have been pleasant for me, since a potential matter of discipline was involved.”

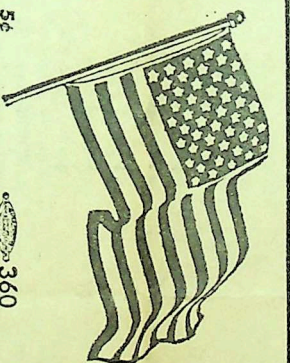
“We weren't trying to interfere with his protests at all,” the Commandant continued, “but we were concerned that he was identifying himself as an admiral. The Navy had no ax to grind; we were not trying to force our philosophy on Admiral True. It was simply a matter of a Naval regulation that was in existence and that he was violating.”

After leaving Clark's office, True

wrote to Senator Fulbright, giving him the details. The Senator, in turn, wrote to Paul H. Nitze, then Secretary of the Navy, inquiring politely but pointedly whether Regulation F-2016 was being interpreted as “preventing retired officers from criticizing the Administration's foreign policy.”

Back came a letter from Nitze, on May 10. Yes, he said, the regulation had been interpreted that way, but “subsequently . . . we have been advised by the office of the Secretary of Defense that it was not intended that the SecDef directives (which the Navy regulations implemented) should apply to retired personnel. Accordingly, we intend to adopt that interpretation as to our own regulations.” Behind the officialness was a decision by Cyrus F. Vance, then Deputy Secretary of Defense, for Admiral True and against the Navy.

As he had arrived at Admiral Clark's office on that interesting day in January, True had noticed a large poster in the lobby of the San Francisco federal building. “Let it be clear,” the poster said, “that this Administration recognizes the value of daring and dissent—that we greet healthy controversy as the hallmark of healthy change.” The signature at the bottom was “John F. Kennedy.” True asked Clark if that policy had been changed. “He told me, ‘No, it has not, but it doesn't apply to members of the Naval service.’”



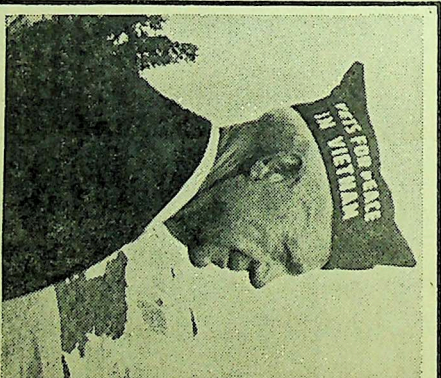
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