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Korea and Vietnam: Limited War and the American
Political System

By

Larry Elowitz

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE COUNCIL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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To Sharon

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KOREA AND VIETNAM: LIMITED WAR AND THE
AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

By

Larry Elowitz

August, 1972

Chairman: John W. Spanier
Major Department: Political Science

Traditionally, studies of limited war have focussed upon the strategic requirement of the United States to maintain a flexible response when confronting external aggression. Stress has been placed upon the American need to adopt policies conducive to the preservation of the balance of power and capable of defusing tensions which might lead to nuclear war. The decision to opt for such a style of warfare may minimize risk factors on the battlefield, but political costs will be greatly accelerated, especially within a democracy. Two limited wars by the United States in Asia during the past two decades have been trying experiences for American decision-makers, particularly for the President. These two conflicts--the Korean War and the Vietnam War--engendered bitter dissensus and frustration domestically, and were responsible in large measure for the defeat of the incumbent Administrations (Truman and Johnson).

Previous limited war literature has devoted only cursory attention to these key domestic developments. This

neglect of the domestic side of limited war means that a crucial question--forgotten in the wake of Korea, but surely one that cannot be neglected in the wake of Vietnam--has been overlooked. This question is whether the American political system can in fact fight a limited war? Both of the wars the United States has fought on the Asian continent show a remarkable similar pattern of behavior: an initially high degree of support for the President's decision to stop what he called Communist aggression (even when high casualties are suffered initially), a drop of that support as the war procrastinates, the prospects of victory decline and the price of further fighting--in terms of casualties, taxation, inflation, postponement of domestic reform, the stifling of intellectual dissent, etc.--increasingly appears disproportionate to any possible benefits to be achieved on the battlefield. Thus, the support for the President's continued conduct of hostilities erodes and bifurcates into "hawks" and "doves," both of whom want to get the war over with quickly, one through escalation and military victory, the other through withdrawal from the war; in the end, the President and his party go down to defeat in the next Presidential election.

Our thesis follows from this scenario: the American political system during limited war "locks in" after an initial period of support; the President therefore, has only a limited period in which to use force to gain a politically satisfactory settlement. For once the "lock-in" point is reached, all of his maneuvering--be it appeals to patriotism, escalations

or deescalations, offers to negotiate with the enemy or condemnations of his critics as "nervous nellys"--will do him little good in stemming the erosion of support. Furthermore, and strikingly, this scenario is repeated regardless of the different internal and external circumstances attending the war: whether the war had a clear-cut beginning which could be labelled aggression or started with a more gradual, imperceptible escalation; whether the resulting hostilities were relatively short or long; whether most of the limitations were observed or not; whether the President was popular or not at the outset of the conflict or domestic anti-Communism was intensive or not; or, lastly, whether the war was generally considered legitimate or not. Even under optimum conditions, the system locks in.

Thus the American political system exacts its own retribution--in terms of party politics, the ultimate retribution. Under these conditions, a future President confronted with a situation in which he feels military intervention may be necessary has the choice of either fighting a short war, presumably ignoring most restraints, or abstaining. The former alternative is too risky internationally, the latter is, in domestic terms, politically wiser even if the Chief Executive should be a Cold War warrior.

CHAPTER 1

THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM AND LIMITED WAR

INTRODUCTION

The only way I know, when a nation wars on you, is to beat her by force. I do not know of any argument that will bring an end to this thing . . . Now, there are only three ways that I can see . . . Either to pursue it to victory; to surrender to an enemy and end it on his terms; or, what I think is the worst of all choices, to go on indefinitely and indefinitely, neither to win nor lose, in that stalemate, because what we are doing is sacrificing thousands of men while we are doing it. (Douglas MacArthur, MacArthur Hearings, 1951: 39-40).

Traditionally, studies of limited war have focussed upon the strategic requirement of the United States to maintain a flexible response when confronting external aggression. For an effective containment policy required both a total war strategy to deter nuclear war while possessing a limited war capability to meet "perceived" challenges effectively and successfully. Consequently, the case for a major limited war has rested upon the dual need to avoid the horrors of nuclear war while still implementing the general policy of containment.

What is a limited war? It is a military encounter which seeks the limited political objectives of compromise and negotiations, rather than the complete destruction of

the enemy. Accordingly, the adversaries will restrict themselves to conventional force alternatives and attempt to terminate the war without further escalation. But in this study, it is the duration of hostilities that is paramount. A conflict may employ limited force but not be classified as a "limited war," such as the Dominican Republic incident of 1965. It is when the war becomes protracted over a considerable period of time and each side realizes that a stalemate is evident that the political ramifications of a limited war become readily apparent. Thus, protracted limited war is the kind of conflict that is considered in this study. In this sense, it stands roughly in the center of the force spectrum, between the speedily terminated uprising (Dominican Republic) and the total war (World War II) extreme.

However, the problem of waging a major protracted limited war within the confines of a democracy involves far more than merely limiting the force levels on the battlefield. Equally important are the domestic ramifications and pressures which have taxed the ingenuity of American statesmen. The original decision to conduct an overseas conflict under prescribed limitations may minimize risk factors in the international arena, but domestic political costs will be greatly accelerated when the conflict shows little promise of victory or early termination. Indeed, America's two land wars in Asia engendered bitter dissension and frustration at home, undermined the

credibility of the nation's leadership resulting in the defeat of the two incumbent Administrations, strained the social and economic bases which buttress the political system, and ultimately fragmented and polarized the American people's reservoir of political support. Paradoxically, the domestic repercussions of a "limited war" are not limited. The question remains as to whether the American political system can in fact fight a limited war, particularly one which does not symbolize to the mass and attentive publics a serious threat to American security.

What happens to the American political system during the time of a limited war? Conversely, what is the cumulative impact of domestic pressures upon limited war strategy and policy as formulated by the President and his advisors? Despite obvious differences between the Korean and Vietnam Wars (nature of the initial aggression, duration of the war, questions of legitimacy, etc.), both of the wars the United States has fought in Asia show a similar pattern of behavior resulting in virtually identical ends--Truman and Johnson's failure to run again for President and the subsequent defeat of the Democratic party in the 1952 and 1968 elections.

It seems to make little difference whether the United States enters a limited war under conditions of clear-cut aggression (Korea) or amidst a gradual, almost imperceptible build-up (Vietnam), an adversary climate (Korea) or following a period of detente internationally (Vietnam) or

even if the President is already in trouble domestically (Truman) or has just received an overwhelming mandate from a recent Presidential election (Johnson). Furthermore, it does not appear important if the war was originally considered legitimate or not. With an apparent life of its own, a limited war activates initially a high degree of support as a response to the President's decision to stop what he defines as Communist aggression. Eventually, as the war procrastinates and the prospects of victory decline, the President's support drops and he is "locked in" between a rising level of public criticism and declining curve of Congressional support. Intensifying the lock-in point is the gradual bifurcation of opinion into hawks and doves, with middle-ground Administration supporters dwindling in numbers. Once the lock-in point is reached, attempts to escape its constraints by Presidential appeals to patriotism, escalation or deescalation, reemphasizing the importance of the original commitment, offers to negotiate with the enemy, or even condemning critics as "nervous nellys" will, in the long run, be largely ineffective. The system, in short, "locks in" no matter how the President maneuvers.

Thus the purpose of this study is to delve more deeply into this scenario and to ascertain the dynamics and phases of its evolution as it occurred in both wars. It is felt that such an inquiry will help to fill a void since earlier writings on limited war have devoted only cursory attention to the behavior of the American political system during this

kind of conflict. These earlier studies have really emphasized only half the problem by concentrating upon methods which would (1) enable American decision-makers to possess a flexible strategy capable of carving a policy path between demoralizing retreat and nuclear overreaction; (2) promote the deterrent credibility of American commitments in one limited area of the world without weakening the entire global balance; (3) contain Communist expansion by maintaining the territorial status-quo and simultaneously avoiding a big-power confrontation; (4) ensure a coordination between battlefield force levels and political objectives so as to forestall misperception on the part of the enemy and facilitate the task of negotiations. While this listing is by no means exhaustive, it does typify the neglect of those domestic patterns of support and dissent which invariably intrude upon, limit or expand the operational effect of limited war aims. In short, little attention was given to the subtle linkages between political leadership, public opinion, and competitive party relationships and the interplay of these three variables with the conduct of a limited war.

Thus the concern of this undertaking is not to construct a general plea for or against the strategic utility of limited war, per se, but rather to concentrate on its domestic underpinnings by comparing similar time periods of both wars. Naturally, a comprehensive study of both wars with the impact of every domestic variable being analyzed would approach the ideal, but such a study would go beyond the intended

theoretical scope. Some selectivity of variables must be imposed upon the conceptual framework. The most that will be attempted is to trace the origins, growth, and inter-relationships of three salient domestic factors--public opinion, Congressional support/dissent dimensions, and Presidential war policies. Two time periods in each war will be emphasized for comparative purposes: (1) the Korean and Vietnam interventions and relevant aftermath and (2) the Chinese intervention--MacArthur firing time period (November, 1950--April, 1951) in the Korean War contrasted with the Tet offensive of early 1968 in Vietnam. Before explaining the reasons for adopting this analytical structure, some final commentary must be given on a topic which is fundamental to the limited war-American political system relationship: American attitudes toward limited war, power and the use of force.

American Attitudes

In all fairness, it must be mentioned that earlier limited war studies did touch upon a crucial conditioning factor which had decided utility in an explanation of American behavior during Korea and Vietnam. This factor related to the psychological and normative implications that the concept of limited war generated vis-a-vis the American approach to total war. Briefly, the argument went as follows. Historically, Americans had demonstrated an open hostility to limiting the use of force in wartime.

Because war was construed not as a continuation of policy but as a failure of diplomacy, the military conduct of war was given first priority. Only in this way could the aggressor be punished and the war quickly ended. Once committed, Americans would fight with a common devotion to the goal of total victory.

Furthermore, Americans felt guilty about the use of power to further selfish national ends in the international system.

As a nation we have used power almost shamefacedly, as if it were inherently wicked. We have wanted to be liked for our own sakes and we have wished to succeed because of the persuasiveness of our principles rather than through our strength. Our feeling of guilt with respect to power has caused us to transform all wars into crusades and then to apply our power in the most absolute terms. We have rarely found intermediary ways to use our power and in those cases we have done so reluctantly (Kissinger, 1957: 243).

As Kissinger has stated, war became equivalent to a holy crusade, a moral event in America, with which the nation identified its cause. The use of power was legitimated by transforming it into "righteous power" for purposes of transcending national interests and attaining universal ideals. In these circumstances, the full mobilization of material and human resources became accepted as necessary for the achievement of the ultimate victory. Thus, in the American perspective, war and peace were viewed as polar opposites with no "intermediary position" being tolerated for long.

Kissinger's comment on American reluctance to employ a moderate threshold of power not only has an important bearing on the difficulty of fighting a limited war, but is especially significant when contrasted with Osgood's observation that the cause of war is attributed by Americans to "criminal states" or the "exceptional wickedness of a few statesmen" (Osgood, 1957: 37). In essence, how does one reconcile the defeat of evil with half-measures of force which allows that evil a continuity of existence?

(Defenders of a limited war become entangled in a difficult position of advocating, simultaneously, the realist doctrine of limited war and the idealist one of punishing the aggressor.) In the Korean War, the national distaste for restraining American power was evident. This was the first example of a deliberate hobbling of American power. In the "old" unlimited kind of conflict (World War I and World War II), the patterns of political and military objectives were greatly simplified and clearly communicated to the mass public due to an understandable aim of victory and a recognizable enemy. The war was put outside the sphere of extreme partisan criticism.

By contrast, America's two limited wars in Asia have reflected an inordinate complexity which in itself represented a drastic divergence from the traditional style of prosecuting a war. There was no formal declaration of war by Congress. A "no-victory" war policy violated the central tenet of destroying the enemy and his capacity to

resist, and limited war's stalemate invited political exploitation. Even more fundamental was the fact that President Truman and Johnson tried to maintain American domestic life on a normal peace-time basis, thereby keeping war costs low and controlling pressures which could expand the war. Yet, to many Americans, the feeling was that either we were totally at war or totally at peace, and we could not exist in this strange "half-way" state. Therefore, the eventual hawk-dove bifurcation was motivated by a public desire to defeat the enemy completely by going all out, or withdrawing and bringing total peace. In effect, the American political system was "straining toward consistency."

In essence, then, American attitudes directly clash with the essential truth that limited wars are, in MacArthur's words, "half-wars." These conflicts will simply not translate into the accustomed war, force and power images.

As Bernard Brodie has phrased it, "It is our major dilemma in thinking about war and peace today that we do so within an intellectual and emotional framework largely molded in the past" (Brodie, 1959: 391). Despite the fact that most Americans concede the necessity of limiting force in a nuclear world, the curtailment of the need for unequivocal victory is still a bitter pill to swallow. What made the pill even more bitter was that in both wars traditional expectations of victory seemed probable due to Administration actions and promises. In the Korean War, the unification of

Korea after the Inchon landing seemed imminent and with it victory. The prospects of Chinese intervention were belittled. In Vietnam, glowing reports about the war's conduct served the same function. In short, national memories of past successes were not easily eradicated from either elite or public perceptions.

This attitudinal climate, then, provides the essential dilemma for decision-makers when they attempt to conduct a limited war that gradually lengthens into stalemate. As Kissinger asserts, the United States must enter a limited war "prepared to negotiate and to settle for something less than our traditional notion of complete victory" (1962: 64). The question is whether Americans will have confidence in and patience with such a strategem. In any event, given a profile of this dilemma, we may now turn to a more complete explanation of the analytical focus to be employed in this study, the variables to be studied, and the hypothetical scenario which is implied by such a framework.

Analytical Framework

Two basic assumptions will guide this study. The first is the cost-time equation. A limited war policy does not begin to create severe domestic penalties upon Presidential conduct of the war until the demands or costs imposed by the war become perceived as burdensome and unnecessary by both the mass and attentive publics.

This level of perceptual awareness is a function of a point in time when battlefield events belie the Administration promise of victory and dramatically heighten public fears of protracted and needless self-sacrifice of men and supplies. The populace has now had sufficient time to question the rationale of the war. In short, the war is no longer seen as vital to the nation's security or national interest and public tolerance for its continuation reaches a new low point. Earlier criticisms from the mass media and from influential members of Congress now attain increased momentum and stature. It will be argued that for Korea the above-mentioned crucial "point in time" occurred after the Chinese intervention in November of 1950 culminating in the firing of MacArthur. In Vietnam, the Tet Offensive of February, 1968, symbolized the capstone to the long process of dissent. In effect, these two periods can be construed as crisis points, moments of high threat to Administration credibility translatable into electoral ammunition in the subsequent Presidential election. The war is fully politicized with the two-party system channeling Administration war policy into a for and against division. The opposition, using the war issue as a political weapon, will hold the President accountable for failures that may, in fact, be beyond his power to control.

The second guiding assumption of this study is closely related to the first. It may be labeled the policy-dichotomization thesis. Because a limited war eventually

becomes a strategy of indeterminacy, it lends itself more readily to a withdrawal-escalation syndrome. Samuel Lubell points this fact out by stating the following:

What divided the American nation in both these wars was the special trickiness that lies concealed in a limited war . . . The sheer scale of an all-out war serves as its own unifying force. Hardly anyone escapes the sacrifices required. The goal is always clear and sharp: to win as soon as possible.

In a limited war the objective cannot be as clear, since our strategic interest is limited. But what really splits the public is the uneven impact that a limited war has on the public, plus the uncertainty over how long the war will drag on.

It is these two factors that prompt the emergence of two forms of impatience, each seeking to end the war quickly, one by prompt withdrawal, the other by escalating the war to 'get it over with' (Lubell, 1971: 255).

Even at the time of the Korean and Vietnam interventions when all the various support indicators were high, latent channels for dissent existed and were eventually activated by the cost-time equation. Furthermore, no matter what the President does, he cannot permanently satisfy both "hawks" and "doves." In essence, limited war polarizes public and Congressional opinion, eroding the intervention consensus with the passage of time.

The fact that domestic pressures push for either expansion or termination of the war further affects the President's attempt to reconcile these internal pressures with those from the international system. A precipitant withdrawal undermines international credibility; further

escalation runs the danger of "explosion" into a world war. Domestically, the former course is open to the charge of "selling out" and demonstrating weakness and timidity; the latter path invited a charge of "recklessness" and endangering the nation's survival for a worthless objective. Additionally, an expansion of previous force levels may satisfy some segments of domestic political opinion, but it is very likely that such an action will prompt the enemy to counterpose his own escalation surge. As examples, the United Nations drive across the thirty-eighth parallel resulted in Chinese intervention. Increasing the bombing pressure on North Vietnam prompted Hanoi to redouble its effort to infiltrate the South with men and supplies. A President may attempt to reconcile these diverse pressures by tempering dramatic displays of force with overtures of peace, thereby holding his consensus together for a while longer. President Johnson's increased bombing of North Vietnam punctuated by various peace offensives and bombing halts are good examples of this practice. But time works against the ability of the President to contain the two extremist positions while maintaining a strong moderate center.

Before discussing the relevant variables in the light of our two major assumptions, it would be well to note the relationship between the cost-time equation and the policy-dichotomization thesis. In the first place, the concept of costs refers to stimuli (perceived by the individual as

war-caused) which place personal stress upon the individual's life style. Costs can be composed of economic, social, political, or even intellectual foundations. Thus costs may take the form of war-induced inflation rates, unemployment, personally threatening (for family and self) draft calls or some reserve call-ups, increased casualties, the defeat of Administration supporters at mid-term and Presidential elections, charges that the conduct of the war appeases Communism, decreased ability to achieve other foreign policy objectives or simply intellectual doubts regarding the rationale for the war itself or the presumed threat from the enemy. Such costs are deepened over time, and become increasingly viewed as onerous given the stalemated condition of the war. Influential critics picking up cues from the rising level of public disenchantment (as well as reinforcing public dissent) join the groundswell demanding that the war end along with its concomitant costs, a demand that is stressed with an intensity that is proportional to the proximity of election day. All agree that the war should end, but the means of accomplishing this splits along withdrawal-escalation choices. Eventually "hawks" and "doves" form an alliance, based upon a "win or get out" sentiment. In the final analysis, the President is pressured to end the war by any means available to him. Unfortunately, the enemy will seldom cooperate, particularly when it realizes that American domestic opinion is weakening in its support for the war.

Variables and Their Implications

What are the variables to be considered in understanding the processes by which support for each war was eroded? In this study, three major variables are considered. They are, respectively, Public Opinion, its support and formulation (particularly its relationship to the costs of the war), Congressional Support/Dissent dimensions, and Presidential War-Direction. Both public opinion and Congressional activity are seen, in the first sense, as dependent variables reacting to the President's conduct of the war and policy rationale as well as the degree of success or failure of the policy and its costs. This is especially true during the intervention period of both wars. The Presidential rationale, i.e., his justifications for the commitment, transcends any dissension, affirming that in a time of crisis the President has the initiative in foreign policy decision-making and the power to manipulate public opinion.

However, in later stages of the war, the subsequent feedback effect of public opinion and Congressional criticism upon Presidential conduct makes them, in turn, independent variables as well, "causing" the President to consider the net effects of such pressures. How or to what extent the President perceives the decline in support as politically dangerous or requiring drastic modification of policies cannot be answered precisely. President

Johnson at least publicly proclaimed the fact that a President, to be a President, had to stick to his decision regardless of domestic circumstances:

The important thing for every man who occupies this place is to search as best he can to get the right answer; to try to find out what is right; and then to do it without regard to polls and without regard to criticism (Washington Post, November 18, 1967).

Nevertheless, it is true that both the Johnson and Truman Administrations used every available resource at their disposal to counter adverse criticism of the wars, tacitly acknowledging the importance of the opinion climate. It must be remembered that this study will not attempt to prove which sector of the domestic system exercised the greater influence upon war policy or which particular constellation of pressures were operating upon the President at the time of a particular decision. The assumption is that these pressures did exist, the President was aware of them, and that their accumulation over time heightened the probability of electoral defeat.

One should note that the three variables tend to intersect and parallel each other. The drop in public opinion, as measured by poll percentages, generally converged with a demonstration of Presidential failure in attempting to end the war plus an awareness that war costs were no longer justified. Additionally, the hawk-dove bifurcation in the public roughly paralleled the growing bifurcation in Congress, particularly the Senate.

Congressional opinion, particularly hearings such as the televised Fulbright Hearings of early 1966 legitimated and strengthened nascent public disillusionment. Conversely, the dimensions and characteristics of public debate lent political tone and meaning to Congressional discussion, illustrating the function of mirroring the public will. In short, a "circularity of influence" prevailed, with each opinion sphere reinforcing the other.

There are some additional contributing factors which directly relate to the above-described framework. They include casualty rates, economic impact of the war (consumer price indexes), organized dissent (especially in Vietnam), draft calls, and four elections--the 1950 and 1966 midterm elections and the 1952 and 1968 Presidential elections. While the first four categories qualify as costs, the four elections are important summary indicators of the extent to which the war is being felt within the domestic system. It will be argued that midterm elections serve as early signs of the country's mood, augers for the trend exhibited in each Presidential election two years later.

The variable of casualties is probably the first significant visible cost that confronts the public, Congress, and the President after the initial intervention. In the early days of Korea, casualty rates, while significant, were still viewed as necessary and legitimate given the fact that victory prospects seemed imminent.

During the Vietnam intervention, American casualties remained at a comparably low level, and consequently mass support for President Johnson was virtually unimpaired. However, once it became clear that victory would not be achieved, the rising number of casualties would be deeply resented. The casualty rates are not only crucial to the cost-time equation but also directly affect families with draft-age sons, amplifying fears that they will go overseas and die in a useless war (Lubell, 1971: 255). In Congress, representatives receiving mail illuminating the mood of their constituents soon find speeches and circulars enunciating a need to end the war highly popular. By the time a major crisis point arrives, dissociation from the Administration policy may prove politically advantageous.

A similar scenario may be derived from the impact of economic-societal variables. Again these variables relate to visible costs of the war. More importantly, any economic or social distress, whether directly attributed to the war or not, can be so construed by artful political persuasion. Congressional critics can add further electoral potency to normal partisan arguments. Thus Democratic liberals echoed the traditional American preoccupation with domestic affairs (similar to the Taft Republicans of Korea) by arguing that while the Vietnam War might prevent Communist subversion of South Vietnamese society, the war was more importantly contributing to the moral and spiritual subversion of American society.

Economic issues are, as scholarly studies have shown, of greater salience to the voter than foreign policy issues (Miller and Stokes, 1963: 45-46). This is borne out by the Vietnam situation when the Gallup Poll indicated a few months before the 1968 election that Republicans had succeeded in fusing economic issues with the Democratic handling of the war.

Republicans and not Democrats were viewed by a majority of the American people as the party best able to handle the nation's overall prosperity as well as the war and peace issue. A similar phenomena occurred two months before the 1952 Presidential election. In short, during a limited war failures at home become linked with failures abroad.

Economic variables were instrumental in enlarging the scope of dissent. The dissent variable again contributes to the dichotomization thesis in that it initially publicizes the need to withdraw and, given the pluralistic basis of American society, prompts rival groups to respond by urging the need to stay in or even escalate. However, while protest was evident during Korea, it did not match the intensity demonstrated over Vietnam.

At the heart of the Vietnam protest were serious moral, intellectual, and emotional overtones that did not have the opportunity to be expressed during the Korean War. One reason was the crucial time factor and manner of

intervention in Korea. The North Korean aggression had created the image of a war of self-defense, conforming to the national expectation that conflicts are always begun by others. Anti-Communism was an important force, even more so with the advent of McCarthyism, and any anti-war movement would have been quickly squelched and branded an agent of the world-wide Communist conspiracy. In contrast to the clarity of the Korean intervention, the origins of the Vietnam War were elusive, the rationale for intervention suspect, and the nature of aggression against South Vietnam uncertain.

In essence, there is simply no precedent in the American political system which will adapt it successfully to a stalemated limited war. The key for successful adaptation would seem to lie with the capacity of American leadership, particularly the President, to withdraw from a limited war while preserving the appearance that this action constitutes a victory!

Herman Kahn once wrote in 1960 "that if there is another unpopular limited war followed by the loss of the ensuing national election by the party in power, the ability of the United States to fight limited war will be sadly impaired" (1960: 418). Therefore, the current slogan "no more Vietnams" may portend serious decision-making difficulties for a future American President confronting a new piecemeal aggression overseas. Subsequent analysis will delineate the kind of domestic retribution awaiting

him, retribution which could conceivably dissuade him from plunging the nation into another limited war.

CHAPTER 2

PROLOGUE--A COMPARISON OF THE STAKES IN THE KOREAN AND VIETNAM WARS

The External Stakes

America's two limited wars in Asia were initiated in accordance with a fundamental American foreign policy premise of the post World War II era--preserving the global balance of power by containing the perceived aggressive and expansionist tendencies of international Communism and thus minimizing the probability of a third World War. In effect, the two wars were seen by American statesmen as symbolizing the highest stake possible--the very survival of the nation itself.¹ Because an imbalance of the international distribution of power was viewed as having disastrous consequences, American military power had to be arrayed quickly against aggression in Asia. To both the Truman and Johnson Administrations, the lessons of the nineteen-thirties clearly demonstrated the frightening results if such action were not taken. Hitler's expansion in Europe, unchecked and appeased by the French and British had shown that an aggressor who absorbs minor powers must be eventually stopped or his ever-increasing territorial appetite will lead to irrevocable total

conflict. To President Truman, therefore, acceptance of a Korean anschluss would be followed by other Communist advances that would end in another world war. Similarly, the essentials of Vietnam were clear to President Johnson fifteen years later: whether by supplies, infiltration, or regular troops, North Vietnam--with Red China behind it--was an aggressor, and the aggression was succeeding. The United States could either stop the new aggression with armed force or step aside and watch all of Asia fall. Like President Truman before him, President Johnson would not permit a foreign policy "Rhineland" to occur during his reign in office.²

Leaders, like all men, are products both of their life-experiences and generation's particular traumas. Therefore, the impact and meaning of contemporary world events are invariably catalogued against comparisons from the past. President Johnson stated this in his memoirs:

When a President makes a decision he seeks all the information he can get. At the same time he cannot separate himself from his own experiences and memory. This is especially true when his decisions involve the lives of men and the safety of the nation. It was natural, as I faced critical problems during those first few months in office, that I should recall crises of the past and how we had met them or failed to meet them. No one who had served in the House or Senate during the momentous years of the nineteen-thirties, nineteen-forties and nineteen-fifties, as I had, could fail to recall the many highs and lows of our performance as a nation. Like most men and women of my generation, I felt strongly that World War II might have been avoided if the United States in the nineteen-thirties had not given such an uncertain signal of its likely response to aggression in Europe and Asia (Johnson, 1971: 46).

A comparison with a passage from President Truman's Memoirs demonstrates an interesting similarity. (The passage refers to Truman's thoughts as he flies back to Washington after learning of the North Korean invasion of South Korea.)

In my generation, this was not the first occasion when the strong had attacked the weak. I recalled some earlier instances: Manchuria, Ethiopia, Austria. I remembered how each time that the democracies failed to act it had encouraged the aggressors to go ahead. Communism in Korea had acted just as Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese ten, fifteen, twenty years earlier (Truman, 1956: 332).

Thus, the lessons of World War II were well remembered by American leaders. To reward aggression was to court disaster. The Communist international conspiracy had replaced the Nazi and Fascist totalitarian drives for conquest. As Dean Rusk asserted in mid-April of 1965, when heavy criticisms were being directed at the American involvement in Vietnam: "Once again we hear expressed the views that cost the men of my generation a terrible price in World War II. We are told that Southeast Asia is far away--but so were Manchuria and Ethiopia" (Gettleman, 1965: 336).

These lessons which history had presumably taught were particularly suitable in the bipolar distribution of power which emerged after World War II. For bipolarity compelled leaders on both sides to draw "lines" between the respective spheres of influence of the two superpowers. When one power attempted to push beyond the tacitly recognized boundary of its influence or prestige, the

other great power, in a pendulum response, was required to push back in order to maintain the territorial status-quo (Waltz, 1964: 881-909). From the American standpoint in 1947, a failure to "push back" would be the precursor for a gradual accumulation of free territory losses, a "domino effect," which would ultimately jeopardize the security and survival of the United States itself. In essence, every gain by the Communist enemy was equated with a total loss for the free world. The scales of the balance of power would be tipped even further toward Moscow's advantage in the cold-war struggle. Accordingly, commitments to other nations through treaty or pledges of support became tests of American will to preserve the global balance.³ It was within this kind of international system that the external stakes of both wars were perceived.

The Two Wars: The Specific Stakes

One of the first manifestations of the new American role in maintaining world order was the Truman Doctrine which proclaimed in 1947 "that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure." The Doctrine, while originally referring to Greece and Turkey, was a conceptual premise which would largely be applied to the Korean and Vietnam Wars. A good example of this was the opening testimony of Secretary of State Dean Rusk during the Vietnam Hearings of early 1966.

Rusk's statement clearly identified the Truman Doctrine as "the policy we are applying in Vietnam in connection with specific commitments which we have taken in connection with that country. . . . The integrity of our commitments is absolutely essential to the preservation of peace around the globe" (Fulbright, 1966: 3-4). Dean Acheson, Secretary of State during the Korean War, voiced similar sentiments when he described the Korean attack as ". . . an open, undisguised challenge to our internationally accepted position as the protector of South Korea. . . . To back away from this challenge . . . would be highly destructive of the power and prestige of the United States" (Acheson, 1970: 527-528). Fundamentally, Korea and Vietnam were perceived as tests of the American will to keep a commitment; failure to do so would relegate two American-sponsored countries to ultimate destruction by either overt or covert aggression.

More specifically, how were these generalizations represented in American perceptions of both wars? In 1950, the North Korean invasion was construed as a "proxy" style aggression controlled by the Soviets, whose motivation consisted of "probing" for a soft spot in the American defense structure, testing our resolution (similar to Hitler's occupation of the Rhineland before World War II), and demonstrating its strength to the world while simultaneously pointing to American weakness. A successful Communist takeover of Korea would have decided repercussions

for the newly emerging nations of Asia, particularly Japan. Japan would have a strategic "dagger" aimed at her from a Communist Korea, and her ability to withstand further Communist pressures would be greatly diminished.

An American failure to respond to the invasion would have security implications for Europe as well. European disillusionment with and distrust in American pledges of support would be amplified, her susceptibility to pressures from indigenous Communist parties was likely to increase, and the influence of European politicians who advocated disentanglement from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization would probably expand. The loss of Europe would be an incalculable disaster for American security and the global balance of power, as Truman consistently maintained: "I knew that in our age, Europe, with its millions of skilled workmen, with its factories and transportation network, is still the key to world peace" (Truman, 1956: 380). In the final analysis, a weakened Asia would strengthen Soviet determination to increase the pressure upon Europe.

If circumstances had changed somewhat by the time of the Vietnam intervention, the outlines of policy as inherited from the Truman Administration had not. Hanoi's aggression against South Vietnam through the "proxy" Viet Cong (Both Hanoi and the Viet Cong were perceived as instruments of Chinese expansion.) was regarded as a "test case" of the war of "national liberation," a guerilla war employing indigenous Communist rebels. In

1965, the Johnson Administration considered Europe to be relatively secure from Soviet attack, with the likelihood of a Soviet-style invasion to be minimal. Conversely, an aggressive and militant Communist China was now perceived as the enemy to be curbed, with the Soviet Union ironically being considered the more "responsible" member of world Communism. China was now threatening the balance of power in Asia. Therefore, the American response was to check this new kind of aggression in Asia, in a manner similar to policy moves made in Europe in the early days of the Cold War. William Bundy describes the Administration's rationale:

. . . surely there is, to a high degree, a vivid parallel between the situation we continue to face vis-a-vis Communist China and that we faced with the Soviet Union after the war. We have dealt with the Soviet Union fundamentally by assisting in the restoration of the power and strength of Europe so that Soviet ambitions were successfully checked. Since 1955, although Soviet ambitions remain, we have seen a trend toward moderation in Soviet policy and a turning inward by the Soviets to their domestic problems.

There are, of course, myriad differences between the situation in Asia and that in Europe in terms of sophistication of economic and political bases, the stability of the societies, and the unity of national cultures. But basic to our policy in respect to Communist China, as in the case of our policy toward the Soviet Union, must be our determination to meet with firmness the external pressure of the Communist Chinese. . . .

. . . We are Peking's great enemy because our power is a crucial element in the total balance of power and in the resistance by Asian states to Chinese Communist expansionist designs in Asia. . . . In sum, I repeat that the problem must be considered basically in the same way we did that of the Soviet Union. We must, on the one hand, seek to

curtail Peking's ambitions and build up the free nations of Asia and of contiguous areas; on the other hand, while maintaining firm resistance to their expansionist ambitions, we can, over time, open the possibility of increased contacts with Communist China, weighing very carefully any steps we take in these general areas. . . . It is unlikely that the present leaders, who have become doctrinaire and dogmatic, can be expected to change, but they in due course will be replaced with a new generation of leaders (Bundy, 1968: 81-82).⁴

The Korean War had directly influenced the perceived stakes in the Vietnam War. Communism had passed from traditional military invasion to indirect aggression through guerilla warfare. The United States had contained the former in the Korean War. It was now being challenged to develop an effective strategy for the latter.

The Domino Theory

Vietnam, like Korea, had world-wide ramifications. Neither was interpreted as a civil war between two divided forces on a remote peninsula. Neither of the two Asian countries were thought to be areas devoid of strategic implications. It was in this context that an attendant supposition--the domino theory--further justified the two commitments.

In essence, the domino theory's fundamental assumption in the Indochina area was spelled out as early as February of 1950 in a policy statement by the National Security Council. The Council declared that it was vital to United States security

'that all practicable measures be taken to prevent further Communist expansion in Southeast Asia. Indochina is a key area and is under immediate threat.

The neighboring countries of Thailand and Burma could be expected to fall under Communist domination if Indochina is controlled by a Communist government. The balance of Southeast Asia would then be in grave hazard' (Sheehan et al., 1971: 6).

The fall of one domino would lead to the collapse of the other dominoes.⁵ The theory gained additional credence with the outbreak of the Korean War, for as General Bradley phrased it, Korea was the first step on a "timetable of aggressions the final destination of which was World War III" (MacArthur Hearings, 1971: 896). Accordingly, the fall of Korea would be the precursor to the fall of Indochina. Therefore, President Truman ordered additional military assistance to the French forces in Indochina at the time of the Korean attack. The French campaign against Ho Chi Minh was thus construed as another free world defensive front in the global struggle against a monolithic Communist world.⁶ After the withdrawal of the French in 1954, the United States saw the need to step into the power vacuum. It was President Eisenhower who first used the term "domino" in a press conference (April 7, 1954):

You had a row of dominoes set up, and you knocked over the first one, and what would happen to the last one was the certainty that it would fall over very quickly . . . So you could have a beginning of a disintegration that would have the most profound influence . . . the possible sequence of events, the loss of Indochina, of Burma, of Thailand, of . . . Indonesia . . . the so-called island defensive chain of Japan, Formosa, of the

Philippines and to the southward . . . to threaten Australia and New Zealand (New York Times, April 8, 1954).

The theory embraced a persistence and continuity in American foreign policy that was remarkable. In September of 1963, President Kennedy was asked: "Mr. President, have you had any reason to doubt this so-called domino theory, that if South Vietnam falls, the rest of Southeast Asia will go behind it?"

No, I believe it. I believe it. I think that the struggle is close enough. China is so large, looms so high just beyond the frontiers, that if South Vietnam went, it would not only give them an improved geographic position for a guerilla assault on Malaya but would also give the impression that the wave of the future in Southeast Asia was China and the Communists. So I believe it (New York Times, September 10, 1963).

Lyndon Johnson, who at the time was still Vice-President, had apparently absorbed the theory's tenets. After visiting Southeast Asia in May of 1961, he reported back the following observations to President Kennedy:

The battle against Communism must be joined in Southeast Asia with strength and determination to achieve success there--or the United States, inevitably, must surrender the Pacific and take up our defenses on our own shores. Asian Communism is compromised and contained by the maintenance of free nations on the subcontinent. Without this inhibitory influence, the island outposts--Philippines, Japan, Taiwan--have no security and the vast Pacific becomes a Red Sea (Sheehan et al., 1971: 128).

What accounts for the longevity of the domino theory? As previously implied, the theory was logically related to the imperatives of resisting aggression and maintaining commitments first enunciated in the Truman Doctrine.

Furthermore, it warned even more clearly of the risks involved in allowing an imbalance of power to occur within the international system. Finally, it gained additional plausibility for American leaders by fitting into their historical images of what appeasement signified, i.e., the renewal of more conflict which would eventually spiral into a third World War.

We must now turn to the reverse side of the "stakes" coin, the internal or domestic values at stake in both wars. In particular, the analysis will focus on the "loss of China" issue, an issue which affected both Truman and Johnson.

The Internal Stakes

The Loss of China Syndrome: The Domestic Legacy for the Korean and Vietnam Wars

By late 1949, it seemed as if the United States and its allies had been successful in containing the Soviet Union in Western Europe only to see Communist China achieve a breakthrough in Asia. The defeat of Chiang Kai-shek on the mainland was a complex affair, attributable to Soviet and Chinese Communist cooperation and duplicity, American errors of omission and commission and, most importantly, Chiang's corrupt and ineffective regime. This latter point formed the basis of the Truman Administration's official position on why China fell--Chiang alone was to blame for the tragedy. Chiang had failed to

undertake the needed social and political reforms which would have increased his popularity among the Chinese people. The view of the Administration was summarized by a State Department White Paper on China issued in July of 1949. As quoted by Acheson, the Paper contended the following:

The unfortunate but inescapable fact is that the ominous result of the civil war in China was beyond the control of the government of the United States. Nothing that this country did or could have done within the reasonable limits of its capabilities could have changed that result; nothing that was left undone by this country contributed to it. It was the product of internal Chinese forces, forces which this country tried to influence but could not. A decision was arrived at within China, if only a decision by default (Acheson, 1970: 398).

The key phrase was "reasonable limits of its capabilities." These "limits" were largely domestic--i.e., the political conditions of American demobilization, a climate of opinion which would have prevented American armed intervention, and the investment of large scale resources in Europe where the Administration felt its aid could be used most effectively. Nevertheless, the Administration was still being criticized, chiefly by Republican senators. On August 21, 1949, a bitter memorandum signed by Senators Bridges, Knowland, Wherry, and McCarran called the White Paper "a 1,054-page whitewash of a wishful, do-nothing policy which has succeeded only in placing Asia in danger of Soviet conquest" (New York Times, August 22, 1949).

These Republican charges of a "sell out" in China had been building for a number of reasons. Many had professed

to see the beginning of an evil design to "betray" China in the Yalta Agreement giving certain concessions to the Russians in exchange for their joining the war against Japan. Another prominent theme argued that Truman had "sold Chiang down the river" by demanding that he take the Communists into a coalition government, and by shutting off the flow of American dollars when he did not. Since the Administration had not consulted the Republicans in the formulation of a policy on China, it was vulnerable to this assault. The collapse of China ended the bipartisanship which had characterized policy toward Europe, witnessed the emergence of the Conservative-Nationalist-Taft wing of the Republican party whose policy was Asia first and whose interpretation of the collapse of China was conspiratorial. It was the infiltration of the State Department by Communists which had facilitated the loss of China. As Senator McCarthy phrased it, "How else can we account for our present situation, unless we believed that men high in the government are concerting to deliver us to disaster? This must be the product of a great conspiracy on a scale so immense as to dwarf any previous venture in this history of man" (Graeber, 1961: 282).

The salient point is that the allegations of McCarthy and others that the Administration was "soft" on Communism created pressures upon the Administration to demonstrate that these allegations were unfounded.

This was particularly true in regard to the Formosa issue. While contesting the validity of the Administration's explanation of the fall of Nationalist China, the Republicans demanded that Chiang's sanctuary on Formosa be preserved. This demand ran directly counter to Administration policy, for early in August of 1949 Acheson sent members of the State Department a memo predicting the fall of Formosa. When the Chinese Nationalist government abandoned mainland China in the second week of December, the State Department once again voiced its intention of steering clear of Chiang. Acheson had indicated that the "loss of the island is widely anticipated and the manner in which civil and military conditions there have deteriorated under the Nationalists adds weight to this expectation" (New York Times, January 4, 1950). The China bloc was furious at this revelation, and Senator Knowland demanded that the directive be examined at a public Congressional hearing. To critics of the Administration, the writing off of "free" Asian territory without any effort to prevent such a loss seemed incredulous.

Two other events intensified the growing hysteria over the "red menace." The first of these was the detection of the Soviet Union's explosion of an atomic bomb, almost three years before the schedule assigned them by the American government. Another prop to the security of the United States had vanished, lending additional credence to the prevalence of treasonable activities within the

Administration. Secondly, McCarthy's charges seemed confirmed by the perjury conviction of Alger Hiss, who had falsely declared under oath that he had never been a member of the Communist party and had never known his accuser, Whittaker Chambers. Hiss, who had been a high-ranking member of the State Department and was at the time of his trial the director of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, was accused by Chambers of passing government secrets to Communist agents. In January of 1950 the second trial came to an end. The verdict: Hiss was guilty on both counts of perjury. This seemed to be evidence substantiating McCarthy's charges of "twenty years of treason."

The climate of opinion preceding the outbreak of the Korean War was permeated by challenges to the effectiveness of the Truman Administration in foreign policy. Senator Taft, early in March of 1950, stressed that the impending fall election would center on the "softness toward Communism" theme (New York Times, March 5, 1950). The conspiratorial charges of McCarthy had apparently made sufficient headway among the public as well. In May of 1950, a Gallup Poll revealed that 86 percent of the public had heard of the McCarthy charges. Of those stating an opinion, 39 percent thought them beneficial, 29 percent harmful. A further breakdown revealed that 50 percent of Republican voters considered them good for the country. By a narrow margin, a plurality

of Democratic voters (35 percent) concurred, as opposed to 33 percent who considered them a disadvantage. Finally, a Gallup Poll in early June indicated that the American people considered the Democrats as primarily responsible for the loss of China (51 percent). The Chinese intervention in November would reinforce this public image of the Democratic party.

The Internal Stakes and the Eruption of the Korean War

In one of his first acts to aid South Korea, Truman had ordered the Seventh Fleet to protect the island of Formosa, the new home of Nationalist China. There were military justifications for protecting Formosa, but not strong ones. More important was the political significance of the action, since it effectively committed the United States to the continued existence of Nationalist China. Furthermore, the Formosa order did help to soften the domestic recriminations over past Administration treatment of Chiang's government. Indeed, the Korean War had made it absolutely vital to defend Chiang; it was the price President Truman had to pay if he wished to unite the country at a time of war. Republicans had urged a tougher policy in Asia and now the President had adopted their policy. By protecting Chiang, Truman had restored a semblance of bipartisanship which had been lacking since Senator Vandenberg's removal from the Senate in 1949 through illness. It was a fleeting unity, however, in the sense

that the Administration would eventually show its unwillingness to give an all-out commitment to Chiang. But for the moment, Truman's hard-line actions in Asia refuted the "twenty years of treason" charge.

Republican pressures upon the Administration to maintain a strong anti-Communist image persisted throughout the early months of the Korean War. In the two weeks after the Inchon landing and the apparent rout of the North Koreans, Republicans urged the President to authorize the crossing of the thirty-eighth parallel, thereby uniting all of Korea. Given the impending Congressional elections in November, the fact that public and private soundings of the enemy in an effort to make peace were conducted without success, and finally firm Allied support for such a venture, the result was the ultimate decision to drive north to the Yalu. There was also an obvious military consideration. Stopping at the thirty-eighth parallel would allow a still dangerous enemy the opportunity to regroup and eventually strike back over the parallel, precipitating the conflict anew. Senator Knowland had expressed this view nearly a month before the Inchon invasion.

. . . for the invaders merely to move north of the thirty-eighth parallel will not mean a great deal in the final analysis. If the Republic of Korea, the United States, and the Western world are to be living under a gun, in that aggression of the same type might take place three months from now or six months from now, a peace achieved under those circumstances would be a very uneasy one (Congressional Record, August 16, 1950: 12577).

Therefore, domestic considerations merged with international pressures in the final decision to cross the parallel. Whichever pressure exerted more influence upon the Administration is not the point. It is still likely that the Administration considered a victory in Korea as being an effective counter against the long series of charges that it was "soft on Communism."

The fundamental lesson to be learned from the experiences of the Truman Administration was that a future Administration which appeared vulnerable to the "softness on Communism" charge would be subjected to severe domestic pressures. In particular, the close identification of the Democratic party with the "loss of China" left a lasting legacy for the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations. Recalling the political divisiveness and bitterness of the Korean years, both Truman and Johnson's willingness to avoid the charge of "softness" was understandable. Aggression could be deterred only with frequent demonstrations of American resolve and firm readiness to honor promises to friends and back up threats to adversaries. In short, the perception was that the "loss of Vietnam" would usher in an ugly national reaction similar to the China furor of 1949-1950.⁷ President Johnson was apparently aware of this danger:

. . . if we walked away from Vietnam and let Southeast Asia fall, there would follow a divisive and destructive debate in our country. This had happened when the Communists took

power in China. . . . A divisive debate about 'who lost Vietnam' would be, in my judgment, even more destructive to our national life than the argument over China had been. It would inevitably increase isolationist pressures from the right and the left . . . (Johnson, 1971: 151-152).

Ironically, it was Eisenhower, a Republican President who was largely immune to domestic charges of being soft on Communism. It had been necessary for Eisenhower to win the peace in Korea, and his military background precluded the kind of attacks directed at Truman. When the first crisis in Indochina seemingly required American intervention, Eisenhower was able to sidestep the problem due to careful diplomacy. Nevertheless, the historical interlude between the Truman and Johnson Administrations was still deeply imprinted by the American perception that all of Indochina should not be lost to the forces of international Communism.

Vietnam Shall Not be Lost: The China Legacy Lingers

As indicated earlier, the United States had become deeply involved in Indochina even while the Korean War was being prosecuted. While not overly sympathetic to French colonialism in that area of the world, the Truman Administration had given greater priority to the containment of Asian Communism than the possible moral overtones of aiding the French. Consequently, American aid had been stepped up during Korea, but the growing military conflict between the French and the Vietminh did not become critical

until after the signing of the Korean armistice. In July of 1953, Secretary of State Dulles admonished the French against seeking a negotiated end to the war. In September the United States agreed to give the French a special grant of 385 million to implement the Navarre Plan, a scheme to build French and puppet troops to a level permitting them to destroy the regular Vietminh forces by the end of 1955. But American help was of no avail.

With the impending defeat of the French at Dien Bien Phu (it fell on May 7, 1954), President Eisenhower was pressured to intervene and save the French. As Kalb and Abel assert, "There were so many anti-Communist crusaders in the upper echelons of the Administration that Eisenhower was hard pressed to assert his own conviction that the United States needed peace, not dubious new battlefields in Asia" (Kalb and Abel, 1971: 73). Dulles was a consistent advocate of toughness toward Communist China. He warned that if "Peiping's tentacles" were allowed to stretch though Asia, tyranny and oppression would follow. Vice-President Nixon, echoing Republican hardliners, warned that "the United States as a leader of the Free World cannot afford further retreat in Asia. It is hoped the United States will not have to send troops there, but if this government cannot avoid it, the Administration must face up to the situation and dispatch forces" (New York Times, April 14, 1954).

However, Eisenhower, who had received credit for having ended the Korean War less than a year before and who still conveyed the image of the peacemaker, was in no position to start another limited war. In addition, public weariness after the Korean War still persisted (a May Gallup Poll showed the public overwhelmingly opposed to sending troops to Indochina) and opposition to the use of even American air power at Dien Bien Phu from Congress and the Joint Chiefs of Staff contributed to the decision not to intervene (Note: Senator Lyndon Johnson vehemently opposed the air strike.).

Despite the fact that Eisenhower refused to intervene, he still was determined that American prestige, power, and financial aid be placed behind the fledgling South Vietnamese regime. To preserve a non-Communist South Vietnam would first require a less than strict adherence to the final Geneva accords. This was especially true in regard to the proposed elections which were to take place in July of 1956 for the purpose of Vietnamese reunification. According to the Pentagon Papers, Eisenhower wished to postpone the elections as long as possible, because it was very likely that Ho Chi Minh would win (See Sheehan et al., 1971: 22).

Accordingly, American support was given to Ngo Dinh Diem, one of the few nationalist leaders who could be considered "untainted." He had not, as many non-Communists, joined the Vietminh, nor had he participated

in the French-Bao Dai government, considered by many Vietnamese to be appeasers of colonialism (Scigliano, 1963: 16-17). On October 23, 1954, President Eisenhower addressed his now famous letter to Diem proffering United States' aid, an act which would later be used by the Johnson Administration to justify subsequent American involvement. However, as President Eisenhower would reiterate in a 1965 news conference, there was no military commitment implied in the letter, and the aid was conditioned on "performance on the part of the Government in Vietnam in undertaking needed reforms" (New York Times, August 18, 1965).

China had fallen in part because of a corrupt Chiang Kai-shek regime, a regime which had not possessed a broad social base of support. If American diplomacy were to avoid another China, it had to have some assurances that the regime being supported would have the will and the skill to defeat any internal threats to its existence. Vietnam was practically the only place in the world where the Administration faced a well-developed Communist effort to topple a pro-Western government with an externally-aided pro-Communist insurgency. It would become, at least within this context, a textbook case for containment. Because of this determination to build South Vietnam into an anti-Communist fortress, the United States actively supported Diem's regime. As State Department officials stressed, the United States was "likely to recognize any

constitutional arrangement, as long as it was representative, legally established, and genuinely anti-Communist" (New York Times, May 7, 1955).

The Kennedy and Johnson Administrations: The Internal Stakes Persist

President Kennedy was to deepen American involvement as he perceived the United States to be confronted by a Communist test of will, not just in Vietnam, but all around the globe. The new President viewed the Cold War as still essentially a bipolar struggle. Like his predecessors, he too felt it necessary to protect himself from Republican charges of "coddling Communism" and "appeasement." Furthermore, a tough domestic anti-Communism coincided with the pressures Kennedy faced within the international system. Cuba had fallen to Castro. The leftist Pathet Lao was on the attack in Laos. The Viet Cong were increasing their terrorism in South Vietnam. Soviet Premier Khrushchev's speech of January 6, 1961, in which the Soviet leader sanctioned "wars of national liberation" reinforced Kennedy's sensitivity to what he saw as Khrushchev's challenges of his will and determination. Khrushchev's speech had specifically mentioned Cuba, Algeria, and Vietnam as examples of the new, approved style of guerilla warfare. Of the three testing grounds, Algeria was outside American influence and Cuba was already lost. That left Vietnam, an area of steadily deepening American concern. The United States had for fifteen

years funnelled increasing amounts of military assistance and economic aid into South Vietnam. Kennedy could not easily break the grip of the past nor could he ignore the exigencies, both domestic and international, of the present. With his party already saddled with the loss of China, Kennedy may have felt the need to prevent the "loss of Vietnam" and, should the domino theory prove valid, the loss of all Southeast Asia.⁹ In an increasingly serious, but not yet catastrophic situation, he thus began to send in advisors, hopefully to rectify the situation, but in any case to stave off a disaster which would compel him to decide between defeat or intervention with American military forces.

Kennedy, in brief, extended Eisenhower's limited risk policy to a broader land commitment, and paved the way for the full American intervention under President Johnson. In November of 1961, General Taylor and Walt Rostow, after a fact-finding mission to Vietnam, delivered a report to the President which had three basic assumptions: (1) South Vietnam needed American military help in order to hold off a Communist military victory. Accordingly, the report recommended sending in a combat task force of 8,000-10,000 men (ostensibly posed as an engineer task force to control flooding in the Mekong Delta) which would boost the morale of the battered South Vietnamese army. (2) If Hanoi persisted in waging clandestine warfare across the frontiers of South Vietnam, a policy of American

bombing of North Vietnam might serve as a suitable deterrent and punishment for that country's support of the Viet Cong. As General Taylor wrote:

It is my judgment and that of my colleagues that the United States must decide how it will cope with Khrushchev's "wars of liberation" which are really para-wars of guerilla aggression. This is a new and dangerous Communist technique which bypasses our traditional political and military responses. While the final answer lies beyond the scope of this report, it is clear to me that the time may come in our relations with Southeast Asia when we must declare our intention to attack the source of guerilla aggression in North Vietnam and impose on the Hanoi government a price for participating in the current war which is commensurate with the damage being inflicted on its neighbors to the South (Johnson, 1971: 58).

Earlier in June, Rostow, in a commencement address at the United States Army Special Warfare Unit at Fort Bragg, had similarly argued that the external direction of a guerilla war still constituted aggression and that the international community had to recognize this fact. Those aiding and abetting guerilla wars would have to face the distinct possibility of retaliation (Kalb and Abel, 1971: 130-131). Thus both Rostow and Taylor, four years before sustained air attacks against North Vietnam began, were already advocating striking at the "source" of aggression. (3) Finally, it was assumed that no more than 205,000 American troops would be needed if a full-scale land commitment were made to South Vietnam. Interestingly enough, Sorenson states that "all" of Kennedy's principal advisers on Vietnam favored the eventual commitment of American

combat troops¹⁰ (Sorenson, 1965: 653). Lyndon Johnson would inherit the Kennedy advisers and their views on the South Vietnamese conflict.

Ambassador Lodge on November 24, two days after Kennedy's assassination, visited the new President and told him that conditions in South Vietnam were chaotic. The Communists were on the offensive. The South Vietnamese army was still intact, but Lodge feared it would splinter under heavy Communist pressure. Diem's generals, who had engineered the coup, all seemed more interested in politics than in the war. (Diem had been overthrown on November 1 and subsequently killed in the coup, a development largely encouraged by Washington's belief that Diem no longer had the support of the population.) If Vietnam were to be saved, hard decisions would have to be made. Supposedly, President Johnson replied to Lodge by asserting:

I am not going to lose Vietnam, . . .
I am not going to be the President who saw
Southeast Asia go the way China went.

What kind of political support will you have?
Lodge, . . . asked

I don't think Congress wants us to let the
Communists take over South Vietnam . . .
(Wicker, 1968: 205).

In short, the Johnson response echoed the gut-reaction American premises that have been spelled out earlier--no appeasement, no "softness on Communism," no withdrawal, no repetition of another China.

Prophetically, David Halberstam would write one month later that there remained but two courses for the United States: "One is a neutralist settlement. The other is the use of American combat troops to prop up the government" (New York Times, December 23, 1963). President Johnson quickly eliminated the former course in his New Year's message to the new Minh regime by asserting that neutralization¹¹ of South Vietnam would be tantamount to a Communist takeover, and that such an eventuality would be prevented by continued American assistance (Committee on Foreign Relations, 1965: 106-107).

In December of 1963, Secretary of Defense McNamara had already recommended ". . . that a committee of specialists be designated to develop a list of targets and lay the groundwork for a future decision to bomb the north" (Hilsman, 1967: 534). The Joint Chiefs were also recommending that aerial bombings of North Vietnam be conducted as advocated in a January 22 memo (Sheehan et al., 1971: 275-277). The emphasis would now turn to a program of coercive diplomacy, a subtle mixture of force and peace gestures, designed to deter Hanoi from continuing its aggression. The year 1964, however, would merely strengthen those forces working toward full American intervention.

NOTES

1. Note President Johnson's statement: ". . . we Americans were a Pacific as well as an Atlantic people. Our national interest and our own security dictated that we help establish in Asia the sort of stable and peaceful order among nations that has been the principal goal of our foreign policy since the end of World War II" (Johnson, 1971: 53).

2. One may argue that the case for historical conditioning of subsequent policy decisions is overstated. After all, while historic events are similar in certain respects in so far as they are the typical manifestations of basic social and psychological forces, they are in other respects unique events which happened only once in that way. Unqualified analogies obliterate the unique events between historical occurrences. Thus, to compare Munich with Vietnam is to lose sight of some important differences.

3. Thus Korea and Vietnam were both fought, in the above sense, in order to establish credibility precedents while deterring, hopefully, repetitions of similar tests in the future. In Korea, the test was overt aggression. In Vietnam, the United States hope was to discourage wars of "national liberation." In deterrence parlance, "the strategic value of a particular piece of territory is the effect which its loss would have on increasing the enemy's capability to make various future moves, and on decreasing our capacity to resist further attacks. The deterrent value of defending that piece of territory is the effect of the defense on the enemy's intention to make future moves" (Snyder, 1971: 68; Author's Italics).

4. Bundy's statement, it should be noted, is also a direct expression of the containment policy which characterized American foreign policy after World War II. The "adroit and vigilant application of counter force" against Communist transgressions was designed to allow time for Communism to "mellow," i.e., to become more conciliatory and moderate. The Soviets had "mellowed" and now it was time to frustrate the revolutionary ardor of the Chinese, so that they too "would be replaced with a new generation of leaders."

5. In later years, especially during the Vietnam period, critics of the domino theory would argue that Southeast Asia was not the only place in the world where the theory was supposed to function. As one example, Castro's victory in Cuba had not caused the dominoes of Latin America to fall, indicating that the revolutionary process was far more complex than the theory asserted. Conversely, Communism stopped in Greece in 1947 had not prevented its outbreak in China by 1949.

6. Underlying this reaction was the conceptualization of a Communist world centrally controlled, ideologically unified. The American perception, which continued over two decades, was that both great Communist powers were in tacit collaboration, with China taking its cues from its Soviet masters. Even with the advent of the Sino-Soviet split in the late fifties, the premise of monolithic Communism remained. Thus, according to Dean Rusk, Washington was aware that the Communist world was no longer the same as 1950. But aggression, be it of the peaceful coexistence kind or militant, was still aggression. The tactics of the two Communist powers differed, but this did not constitute a fundamental disagreement on goals (Personal Interview, December 4, 1971).

7. One should note Secretary of State Rusk's comment that another Korea would cause "political pain" for President Johnson, yet also that withdrawal and the loss of Vietnam would be "catastrophic for American society" (Quoted in Graff, 1970: 141).

8. Under one main provision of the Geneva settlement, the rival Vietminh and French armies were to withdraw into "two regrouping zones," and subsequent reunification of the country by nation-wide election was planned. In regard to the zones provision, critics of the Vietnam War would later contend that the Geneva accords had not established "two sovereign states," but only temporary zones of the same territory. Consequently, the war was not an act of aggression by the North, but a civil war.

9. In an interview in 1963, President Kennedy specifically alluded to the "loss of China" theme in a question and answer session with Chet Huntley on September 9. In reply to a question referring to a possible lessening of our commitment in Vietnam, the President replied:

I don't think (a reduction in U.S. aid to South Vietnam) would be helpful at this time. If you reduce your aid, it is possible you could have some effect upon the governmental structure there. On the other hand, you might have a situation which could bring about a collapse. Strongly in our mind is what happened in the case of China

at the end of World War II, where China was lost-- a weak government became increasingly unable to control events. We don't want that (New York Times, September 10, 1963).

10. It is interesting to note the pro-Kennedy thesis argued by Tom Wicker. He insists that Kennedy, after the Cuban Missile Crisis and the conclusion of the Test Ban Treaty in the summer of 1963, had achieved a position of domestic strength, having "stockpiled all the diplomatic and political credit he needed to deal with the inevitable cries at home that he had 'sold out Southeast Asia' and to dispel worries abroad about other American commitments." The Test-Ban Treaty, conversely, offered an attractive possibility of a peace-theme, which could be further augmented by either a partial or even total withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam during a 1964 election year (Wicker, 1968: 194). In short, Kennedy, because he had achieved a significant degree of political credit had choices which, unlike Lyndon Johnson, may have permitted him to withdraw from Vietnam.

11. A cablegram sent by President Johnson to Ambassador Lodge on March 2, 1964, confirms Johnson's refusal to consider neutralization as a possible way out of South Vietnam. In the cablegram, Johnson told Lodge that "It ought to be possible to explain in Saigon that your mission is precisely for the purpose of knocking down the idea of neutralization wherever it rears its ugly head and on this point I think that nothing is more important than to stop neutralist talk wherever we can by whatever means we can. I have made this point myself to Mansfield and Lippmann and I expect to use every public opportunity to restate our position firmly" (Sheehan et al., 1971: 285-286).

CHAPTER 3

THE KOREAN INTERVENTION--STRAINS IN THE MIDST OF CONSENSUS

Introduction to the Intervention Periods of Both Wars

On the surface, the intervention periods of both the Korean and Vietnam Wars were characterized by high levels of support from the public, Congressional acquiescence to Presidential conduct of the war, and Presidential initiative in delineating the policy rationale for the American commitment. The overall impression is that the American domestic system "rallied around the flag." In Korea, previous dissent was temporarily silenced by the pressing threat of an international crisis. In Vietnam, criticism was, of course, different in that it was more overt and demonstrative, but it remained isolated from mass opinion. In a broader sense, both interventions elicited indicators of a policy consensus (public opinion polls, Congressional backing on war-related legislation). The indicators of doubt and dissent were to either reappear or grow in strength only when battlefield events belied the Administration's official presentation of the war's progress.

In essence, then, the intervention periods of both limited wars can be construed as political "incubation

periods." The war cannot "hatch" into a major electoral issue unless specified conditions are met. These conditions include (1) the accumulation of domestic costs as the war stalemates and (2) the bifurcation of public and Congressional support, where the choice becomes either escalation of or withdrawal from the war. Prior to these developments,¹ the appearance or promise of victory tended to activate agreement, albeit grudging, from key sectors of the domestic system. The expectation of victory justified "costs" (economic controls, casualties) during each intervention while generally preserving the President's reservoir of support.

Therefore, there were fundamental similarities in the processes of consensus-building and political behavior which occurred in both initial war periods. In accordance with the three major variables of this study--Presidential policy initiatives and maneuvers, public opinion, and Congressional support/dissent--the following generalizations and their validity will be considered in subsequent pages:

- (1) Despite differences in the two intervention periods, both Presidents attempted to consolidate support and respond to criticisms by characterizing American resistance to aggression as a patriotic function of the national interest and national ideals. Truman and Johnson's public pronouncements on the war were worded in the hope of maintaining public support while isolating vocal critics. The dangers of appeasement and the lessons of history were key ingredients in their appeals to the American people for support of war policy.

- (2) Public opinion, as measured by the polls, was generally supportive of policy during both intervention periods, as both Presidents were looked to for cues on "how" to think about the war. Critics could make little inroads on mass public support as long as victory hopes rationalized the existence of heavy costs (Korea), or costs remained at low levels due to a deliberate Presidential policy of gradualism (Vietnam).
- (3) Congress, during the intervention period, is supportive of war policy, and is generally unwilling to vote against appropriation bills for the war. Nevertheless, the intervention period cannot totally obliterate the lines of intra-(Vietnam) or inter-party division (Korea) which have the potential of fully politicizing the war when subsequent battlefield events or Presidential failures to end the war facilitate such a policy transformation. In short, while unity is the keynote of a majority of Senators and Congressmen, a significant minority opposes existing Administration policy. This minority is prone to grow in numbers, and will employ the dynamics of a competitive American party system to channel the war's origins, conduct, and ultimate objectives into attempts at gaining votes and political prestige. The rudiments of such a process existed during both intervention periods.

One further topic needs to be explored. In Korea, as in Vietnam, both Administrations attempted to deter aggression by conveying to the enemy a series of progressively stronger "signals." Truman and Johnson were naturally aware of the political costs of a possible land war in Asia, and they hoped, by the method of "coercive diplomacy," to forestall the eventual necessity of committing American troops to the battlefield. If they had succeeded, their political destinies might have been immeasurably altered. In Korea, these "signals" to the enemy were compressed into a period of only seven days, while in Vietnam they

were transmitted over a span of many months. In order to understand the eventual failure of the strategy, it is important to discern how events unfolded during the initial American response to the North Korean invasion. Following this delineation, we will return to the functioning of our three broad variables and attempt to ascertain their relationships during the Korean intervention.

The Problems of Coercive Diplomacy in
the Two Interventions

Perhaps the basic problem of conducting a limited war successfully within the confines of the American political system relates directly to the manner in which force is applied toward the enemy. Because the Korean and Vietnam Wars were fought to maintain the territorial status quo as it existed before the "outbreak" of hostilities, the levels of force permitted by the Truman and Johnson Administrations were designed to achieve such a limited political objective. To expand the force levels so as to destroy the enemy's military capability (the traditional notion of victory) was considered not worth the risk of a third World War. In both wars, the eventual goal of American power was to induce a negotiated settlement by affecting the enemy's will. Force may be threatened and used primarily as a bargaining instrument to persuade the opponent to accept settlement terms or to observe certain limitations. This force-diplomacy linkage obviated the traditional American image of war and peace as mutually

exclusive states, exacerbating the latent frustrations of the public. In effect, it was a matter of judgment (highly subject to public discussion in a democracy) whether the present level of force would accomplish the aim of negotiations. To hawks, especially in the Vietnam case, it was never enough; to doves the level was perhaps too high already; in any event, a war fought to persuade rather than render obedience (from the enemy) would place unwelcome strains upon the domestic system.

Alexander George has labelled this kind of strategy "coercive diplomacy" (1971: 18), a strategy which employs force "in an exemplary, demonstrative manner, in discrete and controlled increments, to induce the opponent to revise his calculations and agree to a mutually acceptable termination of the conflict." The central assumption is to convey to the enemy your resolve to protect the interests involved in the conflict, and "to demonstrate the credibility of one's determination to use more force if necessary."

To this end, the employment of force is coupled with--i.e., preceded, accompanied, or followed by--appropriate communications to the opponent. The coercive strategy therefore, has a signalling, bargaining, negotiating character that is built into the conceptualization and conduct of military operations, a feature that is absent in the traditional military strategy.

Coercive diplomacy seeks to make force a much more flexible, refined, psychological instrument of policy; . . . Coercive diplomacy seeks to persuade the opponent to do something, or to stop doing something, instead of bludgeoning him into doing it, or physically preventing him from doing it (1971: 18-19).

George contends that coercive diplomacy is a less costly way of achieving objectives, but he cautions that the strategy "is viable only under special conditions," and, moreover, is quite difficult to implement successfully.²

In retrospect, coercive diplomacy did not really work in either Korea or Vietnam. In Korea, the American government was presented with a loss of South Korea unless very rapid action was taken to stem the North Korean steamroller. Yet, as shall be seen in the following discussion, the Truman Administration's first actions were attempts to persuade the enemy to discontinue his aggression, chiefly by committing incremental amounts of force to the conflict. These demonstrations of resolve were "signals" to the North Koreans and the Russians, tacit forms of communication designed to deter the spread and continuation of aggression. In Vietnam, the Johnson Administration, for an entire year before the active intervention in February of 1965, also continued to communicate "signals" (although at times contradictory ones) to Hanoi both by words and limited military actions. During the February-July 1965 period, force levels were gradually escalated, from retaliatory air raids, then sustained bombings, to the commitment of two battalions of Marines for "defensive perimeter" operations, and finally the introduction of full-scale combat units. All of this was intended to make Hanoi desist in her sponsorship of and active involvement in the war against South Vietnam while creating a base of strength to facilitate negotiations which would end the war.

In order to ascertain the similarities and differences in the employment of force and deterrent patterns for both wars, an analysis of the Korean outbreak will now follow. Coercive diplomacy in Vietnam will be considered in the next chapter.

The Korean Intervention: The Failure to Deter

In the period preceding the Korean War outbreak, the United States, to paraphrase George, had transmitted highly inappropriate communications to the Communist world both by word and deed. From a wide variety of governmental and military sources the message seemed clear--in all probability, the United States would not come to the rescue of South Korea if she were attacked. The Communists must have been aware of the Joint Chiefs' view that Korea was militarily indefensible which had prompted the withdrawal of occupation troops in 1949. This had fitted the American military preoccupation with total war, for in such a war the fate of Korea would be determined elsewhere. Furthermore, the increasing reliance upon air power reflected the Congressional economy drive which had made deep inroads into America's military preparedness and considerably weakened the army and navy's strength. In short, even if the United States had possessed a limited war doctrine--which it did not--its capacity to fight a local conflict on the Korean peninsula was virtually nil from both a policy and logistic perspective.

The Acheson perimeter speech (of January 12, 1950) gave the impression of excluding Korea from America's defense perimeter. Despite Acheson's statement that in case of attack, the Korean people could rely "upon the commitments of the entire civilized world under the Charter of the United Nations," this was, in fact, a "weak reed" to rely on, for without American support, the United Nations could do little more than protest any invasion by a potential aggressor. Additionally, Acheson made reference in his speech to the fact that Congress would help in maintaining aid to Korea, yet just one week later, the Korean aid bill was defeated in the House by a vote of 192 to 191. Although the aid was later restored, the impression persisted that economic assistance to Korea did not have firm Congressional support. Finally, when Senator Tom Connally, Democratic head of the Foreign Relations Committee admitted in a May interview that "she (Russia) can overrun Korea . . . when she gets ready to do it" (Connally, 1950: 40), the image of Korean indefensibility was reinforced even further.

Then there was the military weakness of South Korea herself. Much of the proposed American military aid had not yet reached Korea at the time of the invasion due both to bureaucratic problems and Korea's low priority. The type of military hardware, moreover, which had been supplied by the United States was mainly for internal security and far inferior to North Korea's tanks and

heavy artillery. As Rhee put it on May 5 to a news conference, "May and June may be a crucial period in the life of our nation. We lack adequate defense" (King, 1961: 331).

In the final analysis, the signals sent by the United States to North Korea and the Soviet Union apparently conveyed the overall impression that an invasion could proceed with virtual impunity. There were, of course, some signals which posed a different American perspective. For example, Republican advisor Dulles had on June 19, just six days before the invasion, told the Korean National Assembly that "You are not alone. You will never be alone so long as you continue to play worthily your part in the great design of human freedom" (Dulles, 1950: 12). Yet such an admonition was probably too little and too late. As June 25 approached, American policy-makers continued to watch a plethora of other trouble spots around the world, generally believing that an invasion of South Korea was highly unlikely since the Soviets at this time were not ready to engage the United States in a total war. As Dean Acheson later admitted, subversion, rather than overt aggression in Korea, was the most anticipated course for the Soviets to follow (MacArthur Hearings, 1951: 1991). When the invasion did occur, the United States reversed almost all of its prior assumptions about Korea, and attempted to initiate a cautious strategy of coercive diplomacy.

The North Korean Aggression: Gradualism Amidst Force Limits

The initial response agreed upon by American policy-makers conformed to what has been called the "try-and-see" approach or the weak variant of coercive strategy, as opposed to the "tacit-ultimatum" approach, the strong variant.

In the try-and-see approach, the defending power in an attempt to persuade its opponent to call off or curtail its encroachment takes only one step at a time. It deliberately postpones the decision to take additional action until it becomes clear whether the steps already taken will have a sufficient coercive impact on the opponent. When employing a try-and-see approach, the coercing power may make a more or less specific demand on the opponent to stop his encroachment or to pull back altogether; but it does not create a sense of urgency for his compliance with the demand.

In contrast, in the tacit-ultimatum variant of the strategy, at the same time the defending power takes its initial actions it communicates to the opponent that other, more damaging steps will follow in short order if he does not comply with the demand made on him (George, 1971: 27).

Clearly, the "try-and-see" approach characterized the Truman Administration's decisions in the June 24-June 30 period. The first "step" involved was to bring the invasion to the attention of the United Nations. Since the United States had previously handled the problem of Korea under the auspices of the international body it was a logical decision. There was the added advantage of putting the collective "moral force" of the United Nations behind the possibility of an eventual American intervention (New York Times, June 29, 1950). On June 25, the United Nations

Security Council, under American urgings, voted unanimously (the U.S.S.R. was absent) for a resolution presented by the United States observing that the Republic of Korea was the lawful government in Korea, stating that a breach of the peace had been committed by North Korea and ordering North Korea to cease its action and withdraw north of the thirty-eighth parallel. This demand asked the North Koreans to comply to two forms of "compellance" (Schelling, 1966: 71), i.e., to both cease the aggression as well as reverse or undo any gains made prior to the request for compliance. As George points out, the first kind of demand asks less of the opponent than the latter, but when the demand combines both features, the opponent's "disinclination to yield is maximized" (1971: 23).³ It was, of course, quite unlikely that the North Koreans would heed the United Nations warning no matter how the demand was phrased.

As the military situation worsened with the inability of the South Koreans to stem the North Korean invasion, the United States took the next step in its "try-and-see" approach. This step was motivated, in large part, by Truman's desire to limit the spread of the conflict and gauge the chances of Soviet intervention or aggression elsewhere in the world. The American-sponsored Security Council resolution had purposely omitted charging the Soviets with responsibility for the aggression. Hopefully, this American tactic would lower the "temperature"

of the crisis, in that the "official" American policy version would view the contest not as a direct Soviet-American confrontation, thereby minimizing the chances that the Soviets would perceive any future American response as a preliminary step toward World War III. In effect, the Soviets would be left with a face-saving option in that they could recall the North Koreans and claim that their satellite state had acted unilaterally. (Accordingly, an American diplomatic note of June 27 to the U.S.S.R. contained a request that she "use her influence" with the North Koreans.) To summarize, the aim of American policy-makers was to induce a more or less immediate retreat or withdrawal on the part of the Communists while simultaneously deterring the Soviet Union from launching other local aggressions.

The method of achieving this goal was to demonstrate American resolution in meeting the "test" posed by the invasion, chiefly by making limited force commitments in the June 27 decision--the announcement of United States air and naval force support for the South Koreans and the protection of Formosa by the employment of the Seventh Fleet. The fleet was to repel any attack on the Chinese Nationalist stronghold and likewise prevent attacks on the mainland from Formosa (Truman, 1956: 334). Again these two actions could be construed as "signals" to the Soviets of the American intention to contain the war's spread and avoid a direct confrontation leading to a third

World War. In regard to United States air support, the limitation was that combat operations were to be restricted to operations south of the thirty-eighth parallel, again a move opposed to enlargement of the conflict. Perhaps more significantly, these force restrictions permitted tactical flexibility while conveying the distinct threat that escalation of force levels would be necessary if withdrawal did not occur. Finally, the commitment of air and naval units constituted from the domestic point of view a safer political threshold, again signalling a reluctance to enlarge the scope of the conflict. The early commitment of ground troops would have violated this incremental-force approach.

When the necessity for ground troops became apparent, this step also was characterized by a gradual approach. Truman again did not want to give the implication that the United States was planning to engage the U.S.S.R. in combat. On June 29, at a National Security Council meeting, Secretary of Defense Johnson informed the President that the Joint Chiefs were of the opinion that air activity should be extended into North Korea and that limited numbers of American combat troops should be introduced, so that at least an American foothold could be retained in Korea. The restrictions on air operations had given the Communists room to mobilize and maneuver and to move up supplies. These American troops would be specifically used for the limited purpose of protecting a port and an

airfield in the Pusan area. The recommendations said nothing about utilizing the combat troops in the battle area which was then some 200 miles north of Pusan (Smith, 1951: 86). Rather, the explicit authorization "to insure the retention of a port and air base in the general area of Pusan" appears to have been limited to the purpose of ensuring evacuation (MacArthur Hearings, 1951: 934).

Truman, while tentatively authorizing ground forces for limited rear duties, still was particularly disturbed by the thought of committing ground troops in Korea (Goldman, 1956: 166-167). However, at the June 29 National Security Council meeting, Acheson revealed that the Soviet reply to the American note of June 27 had been received, indicating that the Soviets were not going to intervene, but would most likely allow the North Koreans to do their fighting for them (Smith, 1951: 88). This estimate lessened the President's anxiety over the troop commitment. However, events were rapidly changing the nature of the commitment. On the morning of Friday, June 30, General MacArthur, after having flown to Korea to inspect the situation the day before, told Washington that the situation was desperate and the only possibility of salvaging it would be the immediate introduction of American ground combat forces into the Korean conflict. If authorized to do so, the General planned to send forward a regimental combat team and "to provide for a possible build-up to a two-division strength from the troops in Japan for an

early counteroffensive" (Whitney, 1956: 332-333). Washington apparently shared MacArthur's estimate of the force size needed because it believed that as soon as American troops were committed the North Koreans would halt (Washington Post, July 1, 1950). This assumption reflected an underestimation of the capabilities of the North Korean army. As General Bradley would later phrase it, "we did not know how good these North Koreans were" (MacArthur Hearings, 1951: 836).

While Truman approved MacArthur's recommendation, it is apparent that he still had some doubts. "I was still concerned about our ability to stand off the enemy with the small forces available to us, but after some further discussion I accepted the position taken by practically everyone else at this meeting (of June 30) . . . I then decided that General MacArthur should be given full authority to use the ground forces under his command, including all of the troops occupying Japan" (Truman, 1956: 343). Accordingly, in the terms of the Joint Chiefs of Staff directive dispatched to Tokyo, "On 30 June 1950 the limitation on the employment of Army forces imposed on 29 June 1950 was rescinded" (MacArthur Hearings, 1951: 3192). The piecemeal commitment of American troops had begun, and it is unlikely that American policy-makers were aware that increasingly larger commitments would become necessary.

Through June 29, the Truman Administration had attempted to persuade the North Koreans to withdraw, both by words and demonstrations of military resolution. Yet because they had adopted a "try-and-see" approach, or the weak variant of coercive diplomacy, it can be argued that failure to induce compliance was made inevitable. The amount of pressure exerted by American actions simply was not sufficient. The United Nations' cease-fire resolution of June 25, the announcement of air and naval support on June 27, the announcement that "certain" United States ground forces were being sent to the South Korean battle-front, the American diplomatic request of June 27--all lacked the threat levels necessary to "create a sense of urgency" for compliance to the goal of withdrawal. Furthermore the marked concern showed by President Truman in not accusing Moscow as the backer for the invasion, while aimed at permitting the Soviets a face-saving opportunity to accept the American diplomatic initiative (New York Times, June 28, 1950), may have actually have worked in reverse. It may have convinced Moscow that urging North Korean withdrawal was not necessary since the responsibility was not being laid at her doorstep. If Russia had been confronted openly with the direct threat of American power, one may wonder if coercive diplomacy would have worked. Some observers have noted that only after it became apparent that total withdrawal would not be necessary, did Gromyko introduce the theme of civil war

in Korea, a decided shift from the June 27 explanation that hostilities had broken out due to South Korea attacking first and then being pursued by North Korean forces. This shift in the Soviet line reflected a totally different justification for the North Korean behavior, with the "civil war" thesis connoting a much lower probability of the Soviet's initiating a North Korean withdrawal (New York Times, July 4, 1950).

In spite of the fact that events in Korea were compressed into such a short period of time, the desire to deter the enemy by "action-signals" and gradually build up the range of force levels were points of strategy not unfamiliar to the Vietnam experience. There were some striking similarities. In both wars, the failure to persuade was inevitably followed by direct military pressure as a means of inducing withdrawal by the enemy. Air power was chosen before combat units, both for domestic and international reasons. In both wars, coercive strategies failed to accurately assess the corresponding will of the enemy to resist, as well as those related increments of force necessary to achieve the objectives desired. Perhaps the Truman Administration could be excused for such failures, for at that time in American strategic development the analysis of deterrence was new and undeveloped. Conversely, the Johnson Administration inherited a full-blown model of flexible response and counter-insurgency theories. Where Korea occurred against a background

essentially of total war thinking, Vietnam would be seen as an experiment in controlled dosages of force and be imbued with a conviction that American power, properly managed, could effectively break the enemy's will.

The Rally Point: The Intervention
Consensus is Formulated

The Korean War had begun in an atmosphere of a true crisis, i.e., one of high threat, high surprise, and little planning time for the Truman Administration in deciding how to respond. The rapid sequence of events leading to the President's decision to commit American troops to the Korean fighting on June 30 had been beneficial in one respect, however. The compression of the rally point into such a short time span did not permit the political opposition to develop a counter-strategy at odds with Administration direction.⁴ The crisis-nature of the Korean decision increased the President's traditional role as a key reference figure, an interpreter of the meaning and significance of a foreign policy event. Furthermore, Taft conservatives were forced to back the Truman action, for how could a "softness on Communism" charge stick to an Administration that was sending American forces to direct combat against Communist forces? After all, Asia was now the focus of the national effort, the Seventh Fleet shielded the island of Formosa, and a line had been drawn against the advance of world Communism. Additionally, the commitment of American troops under United Nations

auspices elevated the "police action" to the level of an idealistic moral crusade which appealed to liberals and which also fitted the traditional American rationale for war. In short, as Eric Goldman put it later, "the reckless plunge of the North Korean Communists and the bold response of Harry Truman had united America, united it as it had not been since that distant confetti evening of V-J" (1956: 172).

Immeasurably aiding Truman in gaining support from the public and Congress was the nature of the North Korean aggression itself. Unlike Vietnam, the aggression was readily translatable in terms of the traditional-style aggressions of the past. There was little question that the Soviet Union was behind the aggression, nor was the legitimacy of employing American power to stop the Communist advance questioned. A nation frustrated with the indecisiveness of containment and embroiled with a purported Communist menace internally was likely to look with favor upon a forceful anti-Communist action overseas.

Therefore, the North Korean aggression coincided with a public opinion climate highly receptive to a vigorous anti-Communist action. While public opinion can be construed as permissive and malleable in the hands of a skillful President, it still may be viewed as forming dikes "which channel public action or which fix a range of discretion within which government may act or within which debate at official levels may proceed" (Key, 1964:

552). This opinion climate creates for the policy-maker an impression of a public attitude and by becoming part of the environment and culture helps to shape his own thinking and perceptions on foreign policy. The policy-maker violates these broad perimeters at his risk. But a congruence of opinion perimeters and policy will conversely enhance the dimensions of public support. Thus in the Korean intervention (and to a lesser degree for the Vietnam experience) polls clearly indicated the truth of the above statement. One year before the Korean invasion, 60 percent of the public saw Russia as not wanting peace, with war being the inevitable result of her aggressive intent and hostile actions. In May of 1950, 40 percent of the population listed international Communism as a major issue facing the country along with the probable occurrence of war. Internally, McCarthyism had stirred up a virulent anti-Communist sentiment. A July poll revealed that of those who had heard of McCarthy, 41 percent approved of him. Consequently, when asked what should be done about Communist party members during a war with Russia, 81 percent replied with answers ranging from shooting them to exile or imprisonment. Only 5 percent felt they were entitled to freedom of thought and social activity (Public Opinion Quarterly, 1950: 802). Considering this climate of opinion, President Truman had little trouble in rallying support for the Korean intervention. Not only did the commitment of American troops

conform to the public's previous sentiments that Communism was a menace and must be resisted, but it facilitated the processes of internal mobilization. Sacrifices would be willingly made against an enemy viewed as a threat both externally and internally.

The Specific Nature of the Support Dimension

The immediate reaction of the American people to the Korean intervention was one of firm support. Gallup found 81 percent in favor of the troop commitment, only 13 percent opposed, and 6 percent with no opinion. A National Opinion Research Center (hereafter NORC) survey found comparable results. In answer to the question, "Do you approve or disapprove of the decision to send American troops to stop the Communist invasion of South Korea?" 75 percent approved, 20.5 percent disapproved, with the remainder having no opinion. A further breakdown of the July, 1950 NORC poll cogently points to the ability of a true crisis situation to activate support across educational lines.

TABLE 1

NORC POLL--JULY 1950 ON APPROVAL OF TROOPS TO KOREA

	College	High School	Grammar School
Approve Troops to Korea	80%	80%	67%
Disapprove	17	17	27
No Opinion	3	3	6

TABLE 1 (continued)

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Independents</u>
Approve Troops to Korea	78%	74%	74%
Disapprove	18	23	21
No Opinion	4	3	5

These poll percentages⁵ are an indication of the type of mandate a President may enjoy during a period of crisis. Bipartisan unity is not only evident in Congress, but is equally expressed among the sectors of the public as well.⁶

Accordingly, President Truman's popularity showed a similar upsurge. Prior to the Korean invasion President Truman's popularity had been moving progressively downward. For example, in July of 1949, 57 percent had approved of the way in which he was handling his job. By January of 1950, 45 percent registered approval, and by June of the same year, only 37 percent approved, with 45 percent disapproving.

The Korean crisis had a marked effect on Truman's popularity. This was clear in response to the question, "Do you approve or disapprove of the way Truman is handling his job as President?" Gallup⁷ revealed a decided shift in sentiment.

TABLE 2
GALLUP POLLS--TRUMAN'S HANDLING OF PRESIDENCY

	Before Korea (June, 1950)	After Invasion (July, 1950)	
Approve Truman	37%	46%	(+9)
Disapprove	45	37	(-8)
No Opinion	18	17	(-1)

Much of Truman's unpopularity had stemmed from antagonistic Republican voters before the outbreak of war in Korea. Now in the heat of crisis, many of these Republicans, approving the use of American power to fight Communism, shifted over to Truman's side, albeit it would be a relatively short-lived alliance. The "plus nine" boost in the post-Korea poll was largely attributed to this factor, as attested to by the accompanying breakdown of the same two Gallup Polls.

TABLE 3
PARTY APPROVAL OF TRUMAN

	Before Korea (June, 1950)	After Invasion (July, 1950)
Republicans approving Truman	22%	42%
Republicans disapproving	68	40
Democrats approving Truman	52	56
Democrats disapproving	32	29

If Republican voters in the mass public were being won over by the Korean decision, Republican senators were similarly uniting behind the President. Even Senator Taft grudgingly admitted that ". . . I approve of the general policies outlined in the President's statement" (Congressional Record, June 28, 1950: 9322). In a curious mixture of bitterness and praise, Senator McCarthy declared on July 6 that "Mr. Truman has at a dangerously late date decided to follow the advice those men (various Republican senators) have been urging upon him for years. We welcome him even at what may be a disastrously late date" (Congressional Record, July 6, 1950: 9715). However, it should be noted that Taft's approval did not mean condoning past Administration mistakes or an abandonment of political attacks upon the conduct of the war. In effect, the Republican party had a built-in advantage right from the start of hostilities. Truman's action was in keeping with the past advocacy of conservative Republicans about Asian policy. Even if the war went well, the deaths of American fighting men could be placed on the shoulders of Acheson and Truman, as Senator Wherry, Senate Minority Leader, phrased it. If the war went badly, this too could be exploited for partisan advantage. Particularly during the latter part of July, when United States troops were being driven back to the Pusan beachhead, conservative Republicans were fond of quoting Secretary of Defense Johnson's statement made in early February that American defenses were more

than adequate and that they were so designed as "to return a blow from any aggressor at a moment's notice." As American troops reeled in retreat, Republicans charged that our defense policies had been "militarily bankrupt," and American men were paying the price. As Senator Wiley would assert on August 18, "President Truman had chosen not to heed appeals which other Republicans and I made for preparedness" (New York Times, August 19, 1950).

But partisan criticisms had little public effect in the period following the American intervention. The bloc of Taft Republicans could not afford, politically, to appear disloyal and non-supportive of American troops fighting in Korea. Even minority leader Wherry was compelled to declare that "the President must have our unanimous support. Refusal to give it to him would be interpreted in the eyes of the enemy as reflecting lack of unity in the country" (Congressional Record, June 29, 1950: 9539). While other members of the Taft bloc--notably Senators Jenner, Malone, Bridges, and Knowland--complained that the bungling and inconsistent foreign policy of the Administration had brought on the Korean crisis, they similarly defended the need to resist Communism, and consequently supported nearly every major piece of war-related emergency legislation. A sample listing points this fact out clearly.

TABLE 4
KOREAN LEGISLATION--CONGRESSIONAL VOTES (1950)

	Passed	
	House	Senate
(1) Bill extending draft without controversial restrictions on President's power to call up National Guard and reserve forces	315-4 (June 27)	76-0 (June 28)
(2) \$1,222,500,000 emergency aid bill to Phillipines, Greece, Turkey, Iran, and China--200 million earmarked for Korea	361-1 (July 19)	66-0 (June 30)
(3) Bill lifting ceiling on size of armed forces; Extension of enlistment terms for 295,000 American men	Voice vote (July 25)	Voice vote (July 26)
(4) Emergency bill to increase taxes by 4.7 billion to help pay for the Korean War	328-7 (Sept. 22)	Voice vote (Sept. 22)
(5) Defense Production Act of 1950--President given power to speed defense production and impose anti-inflationary controls	Voice vote (Sept. 1)	Voice vote (Sept. 1)

As was the case with Democratic "doves" in the Vietnam intervention, GOP verbal opposition to Administration policy was not translated into roll-call behavior. While GOP leaders railed at President Truman for committing the nation to a war without Congressional approval, they nevertheless refused to give clear and unmistakable evidence that they opposed the President's actions relating to the war effort.

To have repudiated the war effort in so demonstrative a manner would have conflicted directly with the pervasive nature of support,⁸ been injurious politically to Republicans who tried it, and would likely have meant little in obstructing President Truman's authority to handle the war as he saw fit. Congressional criticism, then, would only become effective when circumstances had changed. A good indicator of the Korean rally point's ability to squelch any preliminary dissent is apparent from newspaper editorials analyzed in the June 25-July 10 time period. The following newspapers were consulted: the St. Louis Post Dispatch, the Los Angeles Times, the Atlanta Constitution, the Washington Post, and the New York Times. These particular papers were selected not only because they are considered "prestige newspapers," but also because they give an approximate, although admittedly crude, regional distribution of opinion throughout the country. (For Table 5, abbreviations are as follows: SPLD, LAT, AC, WP, and NYT.)

TABLE 5

KOREAN RALLY POINT: FREQUENCY OF THEMES FROM
PRESTIGE NEWSPAPERS (EDITORIALS)
JUNE 25 TO JULY 10, 1950^a

Theme	SPLD	LA	AC	WP	NYT
#1 Victory is possible; Tide will be turned	3 (19%)	2 (14%)	4 (23%)	3 (19%)	4 (15%)

TABLE 5 (continued)

Theme	SLPD	LA	AC	WP	NYT
#2 Truman's policy supported--Must resist aggression and call halt to appeasement (U.S. security)	3 (19%)	5 (36%)	4 (23%)	4 (25%)	7 (26%)
#3 War must be kept localized	2 (12)	--	--	2 (12)	1 (4)
#4 Nation has closed ranks, Time for unity	2 (12)	2 (14)	3 (18)	2 (12)	3 (11)
#5 Congressional criticism ill-advised	4 (25)	--	5 (30)	3 (19)	2 (7)
#6 South Korea must be kept free--A test of United Nations	1 (6)	1 (7)	--	2 (12)	9 (33)
#7 U.S.--Had made mistakes in past--Had not armed Korea properly	1 (6)	4 (28)	1 (6)	--	1 (4)
Total Number of Themes	16	14	17	16	27

^aExplanation of table: The number in each "cell" opposite a theme represents the total number of times that theme appeared in the June 25-July 10 time period. If a theme appeared in an editorial more than once, it was counted accordingly. The figures in parentheses represent the percentage derived from the division of the total theme number into the cell number. Thus under SLPD, 3 divided by 16 is equal to 18.7 percent or rounding off, 19 percent. Figures in parentheses may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding off.

An analysis of the above data shows that the concept of victory and a determination to stop aggression evoked a fairly uniform reaction in the five newspapers. Victory would be a vindication of America's ability to halt Communist aggression and at the same time insure the survival and strength of the United Nations. Little emphasis was placed on the theme of previous mistakes in American foreign policy, as the need for unity momentarily cast aside self-criticisms. Only the Los Angeles Times, a conservative, pro-Republican newspaper emphasized the "past mistake theme." Conversely, four of the prestige newspapers castigated Congressional critics in their editorials, with the St. Louis Post Dispatch and Atlanta Constitution placing greatest stress on this theme. Theme two received the most attention from the Washington Post, was second in emphasis from the New York Times, second with the Atlanta Constitution, first with the Los Angeles Times, and second with the St. Louis Post Dispatch. Clearly, the central picture which emerges is in keeping with the concept of the rally point--a nation determined to back the President in resisting Communist aggression, mindful of the unity imperative, and largely ignoring the critics.

In summary, the very foundations of the Korean intervention consensus had been fashioned by Truman taking a decisive and aggressive military action to stem the forces of international Communism, an action which temporarily won the support of Republican opponents and large sectors of

the mass and attentive publics. But the rally point could not permanently retain the unity of Truman's consensus. The costs of the intervention would soon begin to hit home, and if Truman were to sustain his consensus he would have to promise victory to the American people while legitimating the war in terms of higher ideals. To understand this function, a brief look at Truman's strategy as exemplified in his public pronouncements is necessitated.

Presidential Legitimation and the Korean Intervention

During the Korean intervention, the consensus achieved by the President generally persisted up to the Chinese intervention, despite being punctuated by sporadic and virulent bursts of protest from the Taft wing of the Republican party. This was largely due to the fact that the logical objective of victory over the enemy seemed on the verge of realization. The North Korean army, shattered after Inchon, was seen as being incapable of further resistance. The victory, which appeared imminent, was further identified with a victory for the United Nations, a fact which conformed to the American penchant for idealism and the use of power within the confines of a moral crusade. President Truman, through his speeches, press conferences, and radio addresses to the nation had succeeded in fusing American power to the ideal of making the world safe for "peace-loving nations."

As early as June 30, Truman, addressing a Boy Scout Jamboree at Valley Forge, stated that ". . . Our program for peace is not directed against the people of any land. It is designed to bring to all people the benefits of justice and freedom" (Truman, 1950: 515). On July 19 in an address to Congress on the situation in Korea, Truman again made a similar point:

It should be made perfectly clear that the action was undertaken as a matter of basic moral principle. The United States was going to the aid of a nation established and supported by the United Nations and unjustifiably attacked by an aggressor force. . . . The free world has made it clear, through the United Nations, that lawless aggression will be met with force. This is the significance of Korea.

. . . The American people, together with other free peoples, seek a new era in world affairs. We seek a world where all men may live in peace and freedom, with steadily improving living conditions under governments of their own choice. For ourselves, we seek no territory or domination over others . . . but we know that our future is inseparably joined with the future of other free peoples (Truman, 1950: 536).

That same evening, in a radio and television address to the American people, Truman clearly attempted to arouse the patriotic fervor of his audience. After stating that despite reverses on the battlefield, American troops were performing "magnificently," he expressed confidence in the American people's ability to produce the necessary war materials as quickly as possible. "This is a time for all of us to pitch in and work together. We know that the cost of freedom is high. But we are determined to preserve

our freedom, no matter what the cost. . . . I know that our fighting men can count on each and every one of you" (Truman, 1950: 541).

On September 1, 1950, in his second radio and television report to the country on the Korean situation, Truman reaffirmed earlier convictions and began to talk openly of victory. Stressing that American fighting men were with the "men of many nations fighting under a single banner to uphold the rule of law in the world," the President again stated that the Korean commitment had been absolutely necessary. In a refrain that would be echoed by Johnson's domino theory assertions some fifteen years later, Truman stated that

If the history of the 1930's teaches us anything, it is that appeasement of dictators is the sure road to world war. If aggression were allowed to succeed in Korea, it would be an open invitation to new acts of aggression elsewhere.

. . . We cannot hope to maintain our own freedom if freedom elsewhere is wiped out. That is why the American people are united in support of our part in this task.

Truman then related his military prediction:

The enemy is spending his strength recklessly in desperate attacks. We believe the invasion has reached its peak. The task remaining is to crush it. Our men are confident, the United Nations' command is confident, that it will be crushed (Truman, 1950: 610-611).

Before Inchon, Truman's public speeches and statements had attempted to convey to the American public the altruism and noble purposes behind the American commitment. The costs of such a commitment were frankly and candidly

expressed, but they were justified in the light of what ultimate victory would mean not only for the United States but for the world. To be more specific, these "costs" included the prospects of higher taxes to finance the war, the actual imposition of partial economic controls over prices and wages, large draft calls, and the reality of heavy casualties on the battlefield. By mid-October, Truman was already stating unequivocally that "the power of the Korean Communists to resist effectively will soon come to an end," and as late as November 4 that "our men have already won a tremendous military victory in Korea" (New York Times, November 5, 1950).

The Public Response

Interestingly enough, despite President Truman's speeches reflecting the traditional American aspirations of victory and calls for unity and sacrifice in the light of "lawless aggression," one might well argue that public opinion during the Korean intervention anticipated and even foreshadowed Administration actions. Before Inchon, President Truman had been asked at his August 24 news conference whether he felt that the Korean War would be over in six to eight months. He replied: "There is nothing certain on prophecies for military maneuvers" (Truman, 1950: 595). Yet a Gallup Poll released on July 29 (interviewing for the survey had been conducted during the July 10-15 time period, when American troops had been

in headlong retreat and trying to maintain a Pusan beach-head) showed a surprising optimism given the circumstances on the battlefield. In response to the question--"How long do you think the war in Korea will last?"--41 percent of the electorate responded by estimating the war's duration at one to six months. Another 26 percent saw the time period as six months to one year. Furthermore, there were no significant differences by education in the level of estimates.

TABLE 6

"JUST YOUR BEST GUESS, ABOUT HOW MUCH LONGER
DO YOU THINK THE WAR IN KOREA WILL LAST?"

	National Total	College	High School	Grade School	
One month or less	4%)	4%)	4%)	5%)	
About 1-6 months	19%)	41% 22%)	47% 21%)	46% 15%)	34%
Six months	18%)	21%)	21%)	14%)	
Six months-to 1 year	26%	26%	25%	27%	
More than 1 year	14%	13%	12%	17%	
Depends on circumstances	4%	5%	4%	5%	
No opinion	15%	9%	13%	17%	

The general expectation of a short war by the great majority of the public would be destroyed with the Chinese intervention period. The above poll does express the public's continued

belief in American omnipotence. The repudiation of that belief would have major psychological and political ramifications.

Even as late as mid-August, when American forces were still fighting to hold on to the Pusan perimeter, the public's firm resolve to see the crisis through was evident. In reply to the question, "Do you think the United States made a mistake in deciding to defend Korea?" 20 percent replied yes, 65 percent no, with 15 percent no opinion. Other polls on related questions told a similar story--strong majorities felt that stopping Communist expansion was preferable to keeping out of war (68 percent), and a price-wage freeze was an excellent idea (55 percent).

What accounts for this seemingly overwhelming American willingness to back the conduct of the war despite military reverses up to the Inchon landing? It is true that President Truman as well as other Administration officials had attempted to lead public opinion into realizing the issues at stake, the costs to be borne, the "ideals" involved. On the other hand, the public opinion-governmental policy relationship is in part reciprocal, with government officials at the very minimum obtaining cues as to how far the range of policy may extend.

Perhaps one answer lies with an August 19 Gallup Poll release in which the question was asked: "Do you think the United States is now actually in World War III--or do you

think the present fighting in Korea will stop short of another world war?" The responses were as follows: In World War III--57 percent; Stop short of war--28 percent; and No opinion--15 percent. While one poll is hardly conclusive, it does lend some credence to the view that the Korean intervention period was, rightly or wrongly, interpreted by a considerable portion of the American people as a reenactment or miniature version of World War II. There had been desperate days during the early stages of that war also, notably at Bataan and Corregidor, and yet America had prevailed. America had always prevailed. In his July 13 press conference, President Truman expressed this sentiment in reply to the following:

Q. What reassurance can we give the American people we are not getting the tar kicked out of us?

A. It has never happened to us. It won't happen this time (Truman, 1950: 523).

In the minds of many Americans, the Korean scenario, as it unfolded, was conforming to the premises of a total war mentality, which, in turn, required personal sacrifice and a mobilization of energy commensurate with the task at hand. The indecisiveness and long-term vigilance of containment had been replaced by bold action, action which was in keeping with the American past. The Los Angeles Times stated succinctly:

It seems now, in the middle of 1950, that Americans on the home front are in the heavy mood of acceptance which characterized the men on the battle-fronts of 1942-1945. . . . In some sections (of the country) the feeling

is strong that the action in Korea is merely the prelude to a global war. . . .In any case the feeling is that we have made our move and now we must back it up on the home front as well as on the battle-front (August 2, 1950. Italics mine).

The New York Times lent additional credence to the total war thesis when it published, on July 23, a survey on the state of the public mood in twelve major cities across the country. The cities included Boston, Philadelphia, Richmond, New Orleans, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, Omaha, Houston, Phoenix, and Seattle. The consensus of opinion was that the American people perceived Korea in World War III terms, justifying total mobilization to achieve victory. As the report from Cleveland typically stated, the "vast majority of men and women, even parents of boys serving in the battle area, have come to the assumption that Korea is not just an isolated incident, but the opening phase in a global war." The New Orleans report indicated that the people were way ahead of the Government and Congress "in demanding mobilization for war." To Philadelphians, "America's great task is to rally its vast power," so as to strike down Communist aggression. While support for the Korean intervention was high, it should be also noted that some regional reports stressed that Americans wondered why we were so unprepared to fight a war, indicating that "shortcomings" in the Departments of State and Defense had been exposed.

An additional verification of the "total war" premise and the above-mentioned New York Times survey is an analysis of related editorials for the pre-Inchon period, in terms of finding evidence of "total war" themes⁹ expressed in the five "prestige" newspapers alluded to previously. (The post-Inchon period up to the Chinese intervention was considered, for analytical purposes, an extension or affirmation of victory expectations, i.e., the logical end of fully mobilized American power.)

TABLE 7

"TOTAL WAR" THEME PRESENT IN PRE-INCHON EDITORIALS^a

Theme	SLPD	LA	NYT	WP	AC	Totals
Total editorials (N=22)	(N=19)	(N=31)	(N=17)	(N=24)		113
Mobilization	6	4	5	2	10	27
WW III Image	3	7	7	3	4	24
Unlimited Sacrifice	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>31</u>
Number of editorials in which theme occurs	15(68%)	16(84%)	23(74%)	10(69%)	18(75%)	82(72%)

^aThese are not the total number of all editorials dealing with any aspect of Korea. Only editorials dealing with Korean policy were included in sample. For example, an editorial dealing with the personality of Truman or MacArthur was not included. However an editorial dealing with Congress, the United Nations and Korea were considered, as an example. In addition, editorials that contained a mixture of Korean War and non-Korean War topics were excluded from the sample.

While the percentages are revealing, it is even more important to consider their relevance to public opinion. If the assumption is that "prestige newspaper" editorials represent at least one "attentive public" source, then it may follow that opinion leaders were highly exposed to the image of Korea as an all-out effort. According to the two step-flow theory, the attentive public who are generally better educated, better informed, and who rely on the mass media for their opinions, would transmit the media messages to the inattentive or mass public (Key, 1964: 359). Furthermore it seems unlikely that the inattentive public would bother with editorials in the first place, for less than 10 percent of the adult population could be regarded "as careful readers of the political news" (Cohen, 1963: 257). In short, readership of foreign affairs news increases with age, education, and economic status.

It does appear that the attentive public was fully aware of the stakes in Korea and supported the commitment. In short, there was a much closer congruence in viewpoint between attentive and mass publics, especially when compared to Vietnam. In Vietnam, newspaper editorials during the intervention period mirrored an almost negligible "victory" or "total commitment" theme (less than 5 percent), and a sampling of major mass media magazines such as Time, Newsweek, Life, Look, and U.S. News and World Report indicated support for the commitment but tempered by a concern that early victory was not likely in Vietnam. Why

then, one might ask, did attentive public "messages" of concern trickling down to the mass public not stir a decline in support, as measured by the public opinion polls during the Vietnam intervention. One explanation may be that mass opinion simply "turns off" the flow while costs emanating from the conflict seem justifiable or are not disruptive of the citizen's private life. In Korea, the perception of costs burst quickly into the mass public's consciousness, so quickly that cues had to be sought not only from Administration sources but attentive public sources as well in order to ascertain the meaning of the event. Fortunately, the resulting costs seemed to have a purpose by early October, as victory seemed assured given the pending reunification of all of Korea. In Vietnam, the conflict over the basic assumptions behind the intervention, mirrored in attentive public sources, may have been transmitted to the mass public, but low casualty rates and the relative lack of economic disruption could not activate mass dissent. Therefore, the logical response of the mass public was to trust the President's handling of the war.

Korea: Post-Inchon

After Inchon, the growing strength of the United Nations forces and the expectations of victory seemed to reaffirm that victory was close. When the question of crossing the thirty-eighth parallel and uniting all of

Korea became an issue, wide public backing followed. A NORC survey found in October that 54 percent backed going on into North Korea for the chief reason of preventing a reoccurrence, while 29 percent believed that stopping at the thirty-eighth parallel would end the suffering while avoiding a war with Russia. Educational differences were insignificant on the crossing question, with 53 percent college, 57 percent high school, and 52 percent grammar school educated approving the move.

The most important feature of the above poll is that it indicates quite convincingly how the idea of victory can unite segments of the mass public on a policy option. In addition, it indicates an optimism in American power and a failure to appraise the risks involved. An accompanying survey found that one reason for the high vote in favor of crossing the parallel was the public's relative lack of fear of a war with China. Largely discounting China's strength, the results indicated that 57 percent of the American people believed that the United States would have an excellent or good chance of defeating China in a war, while another 21 percent indicated a "fair" chance, with only 11 percent thinking our chances of victory "poor." Thus after Inchon, the definite need was seen to unite all of Korea if the task was to be finished.

If the Korean War is to serve the ends of peace, and if the United Nations is to solidify and extend the authority it has won by intervention, U.N. troops must be ordered to take North Korea preparatory to the holding of free elections under United Nations supervision. The United

Nations cannot now allow the fruit of military victory to be cast aside by timidity in dealing with the political problems it brings. It is doubtful she (Russia) would risk world war by sending her own or Chinese Communist troops to repel an action by United Nations forces (Atlanta Constitution, September 28, 1950).

Strains in the Korean Consensus

Up to this point, the analysis of the Korean intervention consensus has largely ignored the supposition posited at the beginning of this chapter, i.e., that the consensus was marked by significant strains which would deepen given the passage of time and events. Despite the fact that the public and Congress supported the objectives of victory and the anti-Communist force posture as being essential given the circumstances, the nagging question continually arose as to whether the war would have occurred if different leadership policies had been followed. Some indication that this question was prominent among members of the public was indicated by a Gallup Poll release of October 1, which revealed a tendency of voters to blame the Democratic party more than the Republican party for the nation's lack of military preparedness. In a response to the question: "Which political party--the Democratic or Republican--do you think is more responsible for the United States not being prepared for war at this time?" the public responded as follows:

Democrats responsible	24%
Republicans responsible	8%
Both parties responsible	28%
No opinion	16%

After Inchon, the lack of preparedness issue temporarily lost its political potency, only to be dredged up again when the Chinese intervened.

Additionally, the incipient costs during the intervention period--heavy casualties, economic controls, higher taxes, inflation--while rationalized as necessary and not viewed as onerous given the expectation of impending victory, would be so construed after the Chinese intervention when hopes for early termination of the war vanished. In other words, the full political ramifications of war costs are attenuated if the war appears to be going well. It is in the midst of failure that voter resentment is rekindled. Thus, the war had set into motion a spiraling rise in prices, as measured by the consumer price index. From June to November, a 5 percent increase in the cost of living occurred, representing the greatest rise in consumer prices within a comparable time span since shortly after World War II (New York Times, December 4 and December 9).

Casualties were high during the Korean intervention, but again they were seen as justified in the fight against Communist "aggression." During July, casualties averaged 500 weekly; but in August they rose from 500 to close to 1,500 per week. ("Casualties" refers to men killed, wounded, and missing.) After the Inchon landing, the casualty rate jumped to 3,500 for the week following September 15 (Department of Defense). By the time of the

Chinese intervention in late November, 5,616 Americans had been killed, 21,764 wounded, 5,062 missing for a total of 32,442. By contrast, in the 1965 Vietnam intervention period, American deaths amounted to only 353, with roughly 650 wounded. (The missing in action category was not used.) Vietnam casualties would eventually exceed those of Korea, but what is significant is that these high losses of American life must be reconciled with a meaningful war objective, most notably traditional military victory or at least an early termination of the war. In both wars, neither objective was met. If the Korean War had ended as expected, its attendant war costs might have had far less impact politically. Furthermore, the realization of victory before the impending Congressional election might have gone far in deflecting the charges levelled at the Administration by the Taft Republicans. But time and circumstances worked for the opposition, not the Administration.

Magnifying the Strains: The GOP and the Korean Intervention

Despite the surface unity accorded to Truman by the Taft Republicans, they continued to employ the war as an issue which could prove profitable in the forthcoming Congressional election. Specifically, what tactics did they use to magnify the strains in the Truman consensus?

Tactic #1: Taft Republicans attacked the Truman Administration by stressing that the Korean War had unnecessarily occurred, with all of its attendant sacrifices and costs, because the Administration's past actions had invited the aggression.

Senator Taft himself had stated on June 28, that "from the past philosophy and declarations of our leaders, it was not unreasonable for the North Koreans to suppose that they could get away with it (the invasion) and that we could do nothing about it" (Congressional Record, June 28, 1950: 9320).

Throughout the intervention period, Republican critics continuously reminded the electorate of the Administration's past "mistakes"--the loss of China by not supporting Chiang Kai-shek's regime, the Acheson "perimeter" speech before the National Press Club in January, the overconcentration of support to Europe at the expense of Asia, and the McCarthy charge that subversives in the State Department had sabotaged the aid program to Korea.

A further expression of the tactic came on August 13 from the Republican members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in what was probably the most comprehensive denunciation of Democratic foreign policy during the Korean intervention period. The basic charge from the Republican contingent was that "the major troubles of the world today" were caused by the "failure and refusal" of Presidents Roosevelt and Truman in 1945 to recognize the Soviets true aims. Accusing the Administration of "subtle betrayals of China" at Yalta and of a Far Eastern policy which consistently temporized and capitulated to the Communists

ruthless demands," GOP Senators Wiley, Smith, Hickenlooper, and Lodge asserted that such a policy had given the Kremlin "a green light to grab whatever it could in China, Korea, and Formosa." The final argument charged that these defeatist policies had never involved the collaboration of the Republican party, but were solely the product of Democratic miscalculations (New York Times, August 14, 1950). Democrats retorted that the Republicans were masters of hindsight who "seek to cut themselves in on the victories of our foreign policy and to divorce themselves from our defeat." (Washington Post, August 15, 1950).

Nevertheless, such charges could not fail to raise some doubts among the electorate. Was the war a result of gross incompetence on the part of America's leaders? A second tactic followed from this line of reasoning.

Tactic #2: In the vast majority of cases, Republicans attacked Secretary of State Acheson and Defense Secretary Johnson rather than President Truman.

Knowing that a direct attack upon the President, especially in the early stages of the war, might prove politically harmful to their political base, the GOP cleverly sidestepped this issue and attempted to create a "guilt by association" image in the public's mind. In short, the aim was to convey a simple proposition-- Acheson and Johnson had each been guilty of vacillating policies which contributed to the outbreak of war in Korea. Acheson had attempted to whitewash the loss of China, condoned the isolation of Formosa, and eliminated Korea

from the American "defense perimeter" in his January, 1950 Press Club Speech. Defense Secretary Johnson had trimmed the military budget to an extent endangering the nation's security. The obvious unsaid question was, of course, who had appointed them to the cabinet and continued to defend them? In short, the Republicans were really suggesting that the President was ultimately responsible, even though they refrained from open attacks upon him.

Tactic #3: No matter what the turn of events on the battlefield, the GOP maintained a flexible strategem in order to capitalize politically during the intervention period.

During the initial rally point in late June, the party could point to the fact that despite political differences with the Administration, they had been responsible enough to unite with the opposition when circumstances warranted it. Yet they could likewise argue that the very outbreak of war was confirmation of their past criticisms, and that President Truman had finally come around to adopt a policy they had long advocated--drawing a firm line against Communist expansion.

During the July-August period, when American retreats gradually began to be stabilized and a "holding operation" ensured, reminders of why there had been military failures traced the blame to Democratic malfeasance. As Senator Brewster phrased it in mid-July: "I want to know what happened to all that money, those billions for military preparedness . . ." (Atlanta Constitution, July 14, 1950).

Even when the military picture became brighter after Inchon, GOP critics turned to the theme that stopping at the thirty-eighth parallel would constitute appeasement. Thus, Republican congressmen charged the State Department with planning to subvert our military victory in Korea in calling for a United Nations halt at the parallel (Lichterman, 1963: 26). Finally, when victory seemed assured in early October, the Republicans returned to their initial theme, emphasizing the nation's unpreparedness at the start of the fighting. The tactic had been suggested as early as September 15 by Republican National Chairman Guy Gabrielson in reply to a question involving the effect of Inchon upon the coming November election. His reply was that "Inchon still leaves the question of why we got into it at allThe people will realize that it was the Administration's blundering and appeasement that brought it about" (New York Times, September 16, 1950).

In summary, the Republican party during the Korean intervention had gradually placed itself in an advantageous position for the coming mid-term election.¹⁰ The party had clearly perceived the extent and characteristics of Truman's consensus, used the changing battlefield events to their own partisan advantage, and as a consequence built up their political capital for the subsequent Presidential election. They had repeatedly reminded the American people that the costs of the war and the war itself might never have arisen if an alternative set of political leaders and policies had occupied the seat of government.

However, there was an additional factor, which while not classifiable as a strain in the intervention consensus, was nevertheless one to which the Republican party paid close attention. This was the noticeable dissent from the Administration position expressed by its "own" commanding general--Douglas MacArthur. Here was a factor which the Taft Republicans felt strengthened their position--indeed, it would legitimate it. The close identity of its views with those of General MacArthur forged an alliance whose impact would have even greater repercussions after the Chinese intervention in November. But even during the intervention period, MacArthur's conflicting views, particularly on the Formosa question, vis-a-vis the Truman Administration's allowed the Republican party added leverage in prosecuting the war as a major political issue. To understand the nature of this alliance, it is necessary to describe the relevant events which transpired during the intervention period.

The Taft-MacArthur Alliance:
Its Ramifications for the Truman Intervention Consensus

In retrospect, the decisions of early June had made MacArthur, for the first time, responsible for the entire Far East, including Formosa as well as Japan and Korea. Toward the end of July MacArthur informed Washington that he intended to inspect the Formosan addition to his command. His visit to the island on July 31 was construed by the world press as an effort by MacArthur, if not by the

United States, to revive the Chinese Nationalist forces as an instrument for a full-scale attack on Communist China. In fact, Chiang publicized the fact that he and MacArthur were in full accord as to further action regarding the island (New York Times, August 12, 1950). This prompted Secretary of Defense Johnson to dispatch a directive on August 5 instructing MacArthur once more that United States policy was both to protect Formosa against Communist attack and to prevent any attack upon the mainland by the Generalissimo. In addition, Averell Harriman was sent to Tokyo on August 6. He had several long sessions with MacArthur on the status of Formosa, but he subsequently reported that the General lacked "full conviction" in the Administration's Formosan policies (Higgins, 1960: 38).

On August 10, MacArthur issued a scorching declaration on his visit to Formosa:

This visit has been maliciously misrepresented to the public by those who invariably in the past have propagandized a policy of defeatism and appeasement in the Pacific. I hope the American people will not be misled by sly insinuations, brash speculations and bold misstatements invariably attributed to anonymous sources, so insidiously fed them both nationally and internationally by persons 10,000 miles away from the actual events . . . (Whitney, 1956: 375).

Though elusively worded, the statement sounded very much like an accusation of defeatism and appeasement against the Truman Administration; at the very least, it seemed to

symbolize a claim by MacArthur to comparable authority with Truman's in the development of Far Eastern Policy. Clearly, there were rifts ahead.

A second incident occurred when MacArthur was asked on August 17 to send a message to the annual Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. This message argued that, with Formosa, United States air power could "dominate" every Asiatic port from Vladivostok to Singapore." Its fall to a potential enemy would push back the defense perimeter to the Pacific coast of the United States, for the island was an unsinkable aircraft carrier and submarine tender. More to the point, since the Administration itself no longer dared to let Formosa fall, was MacArthur's often reiterated opinion that Asian psychology could only "respect and follow aggressive, resolute and dynamic leadership" in contrast with a "leadership characterized by timidity or vacillation." There was little doubt about the identity of those whom General MacArthur had in mind. The Truman Administration could hardly avoid considering this contemptuous characterization of its Asian policy, past and present, as a studied public insult. (According to Truman's accounts, he considered firing MacArthur at this point.) Moreover, even before the appearance of MacArthur's message to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Communist Chinese threats as a result of his Formosan trip had dismayed an Administration eager to avoid an extension of the conflict in the Far East (Truman, 1956:

355). Truman ordered MacArthur to withdraw the statement. The Republican reaction to Truman's order clearly demonstrates that MacArthur's views were becoming almost sacrosanct. Minority leader Wherry saw MacArthur as a martyr to Administration duplicity. The only thing buoying up America in this troubled time, Wherry declared, was faith in General MacArthur.

General MacArthur knows more about what needs to be done in the Far East to correct the mistakes of Secretary Acheson than anyone in the Truman Administration. And the American people have complete confidence in General MacArthur's judgment.

The vagueness and complete lack of direction to the Administration's policies in the Far East are intolerable at a time when our boys are fighting and dying in Korea. Only our faith in the rugged Americanism of General MacArthur buoys our hopes in that conflict. Let us hear from General MacArthur, and woe to him who dares say he shall not speak (Congressional Record, August 28, 1950, 13575).

Even the Wake Island conference between Truman and MacArthur in mid-October, where the Formosa dispute was temporarily healed, was employed as a means to cement the emerging Taft-MacArthur alliance. Harold Stassen made two nation-wide radio addresses, one on October 17, the other on November 5, both of which were paid for by the Republican National Committee. Stassen charged that the Wake Island trip was a cleverly staged "political escapade" by the President, designed to bask in the greatness of the General, and associate himself with the

victorious MacArthur. Stassen went on to state the following in his first radio address:

Any impartial observer must agree that General MacArthur is the best informed American with regard to the whole Asiatic situation Under our political system, no one person can really speak for the Republican party when it is in the minority in the National Government. But I am confident that I can speak for the Republican party in this one thing. If the President will place General MacArthur in supreme command of American military policy and interests in all of the Asiatic-Pacific area and will follow his advice, the President will have the united backing of the Republican party in this action (New York Times, October 17, 1950).

Even moderate Republican leader Thomas Dewey indicated that it was the General's philosophy he espoused--"I would hope that the President might adopt a firmer and more consistent policy as a result of an informative conference with General MacArthur" (New York Times, October 16, 1950).

These pressures from the right no doubt influenced President Truman to continue the aggressive policies in Korea symbolized by his permission to unify all of Korea by crossing the parallel. Yet in regard to Formosa, Truman had viewed the defense of that nation as a temporary expedient because the Communists had attacked South Korea, and not Formosa itself, the fall of which had been expected. America's allies wanted no part of this "neutralization" policy, which they regarded as a United States unilateral action. Washington still hoped that in the future a complete dissociation from Chiang could be effected. It was still operating under the assumption that Mao-Tse-Tung could be wooed away from Moscow if the United States

would take no action construed as interfering in China's "civil war." The new China in 1950 was still widely regarded as socially progressive and as a nation striving for independence from Western influence. The American-supported Chiang regime was still considered to be a discredited and reactionary one, even though the Korean War had required temporary American backing. American policy, by failing to recognize the nationalist and revolutionary currents sweeping Asia, was disastrous since it would drive Communist China closer into Russia's embrace. Washington's policies of non-recognition of the mainland regime, blocking it from taking its position as China's true representative in the United Nations, and helping to keep Formosa out of its hands, had thus already produced extensive criticisms from America's allies. To support MacArthur's views on Formosa (and the GOP) would have eroded support internationally. It was this risk that the Administration refused to take.

But for the GOP an alliance with Chiang and MacArthur was a basic nationalist dogma of their foreign policy for that Republican ocean, the Pacific. One of their fundamental beliefs was that Chiang must be supported and eventually returned to the mainland. With General MacArthur pushing a similar theme, a natural alliance was formed. The General was looked increasingly upon as a "Republican" general, a symbol of boldness and resolution, a man who understood the important strategic and psychological

symbols in Formosa. After Inchon, the correctness of MacArthur's views quickened demands for even more resolute action in Korea, and also made it appear that MacArthur's military genius would always be right. If he had been correct on Inchon, obviously he was correct on the Formosan situation. After victory hopes were dashed, MacArthur would no longer be only a legitimator of Republican charges--he would be a victim whose willingness to win the war was being checked by Truman's irresolution.

Thus the intervention period had seen the first formation of the Taft-MacArthur alliance. But the impending victory in Korea, assured to Truman by MacArthur at Wake, made the ultimate objectives of Truman, Taft, and MacArthur fortunately coincide--all could agree on the legitimacy of victory. But once the Chinese intervened, the question became one of whether to fight a holding action, withdraw, or escalate. By deciding not to expand the war, Truman was forced into a lengthy stalemate in Korea, assuring himself that the "lock-in" point was inevitable.

NOTES

1. The two conditions mentioned constitute key ingredients of the "lock-in" point for the President. Domestic costs become increasingly disruptive of the citizen's life, and the resultant discontent fuses with criticisms of the war. Public support declines, Congressional dissent rises, and a "win or get out" mood narrows the range of Presidential maneuverings. The bifurcation process narrows the middle ground, i.e., the Administration supporter, and further complicates the President's job of appealing to the political center in both the public and Congress.

2. In fairness, George does seem to suggest that the strategy applies mainly to crisis situations of short duration, not a protracted war of attrition, i.e., the "special conditions."

3. Ironically enough, American coercive attempts during the Vietnam intervention were also predicated upon an apparent combination of both forms--the cessation of infiltration from North Vietnam as well as a "return to the Geneva accords," a prospect that would have meant complete withdrawal by Hanoi forces and a undoing of the territorial gains made in over two decades of fighting.

4. One should note that Johnson's retaliatory bombings after Pleiku in February of 1965 was "stretched out" over the entire month of February, with sustained bombing being initiated in March. President Johnson's policy of gradualism allowed Senate critics and columnists time to question the merits of the bombings. (See Chapter 4.)

5. All NORC polls quoted were provided by the National Opinion Research Center in Chicago, Illinois.

6. One should note the lower support, by comparison, of the grammar school sector of the electorate for sending troops to Korea. This fact does seem to correlate with a similar finding in the case of Vietnam, i.e., that those of higher educational and socio-economic status are more prone to favor war policies initially, and that lower-class individuals were more likely to support dovish or "conciliatory" policies (Hamilton, 1968: 439-445). One

may speculate as to the reasons for this parallel in the two wars--the greater percentage of draftees drawn from the non-college sectors of the population and the likelihood that young men from high income families are less likely to be drafted than low-status males (Davis and Dolbeare, 1968: 83-121).

7. Unless otherwise specified, copies of original Gallup polls on Korea and Vietnam were provided by the American Institute of Public Opinion at Princeton, New Jersey.

8. Newsweek, Life, Look, Time, U.S. News and World Report applauded the decision of Truman to defend Korea. Columnists such as Walter Lippmann, the Alsop Brothers, Hanson Baldwin, Gladstone Williams, and Marquis Childs likewise saw the necessity of American intervention. In terms of national organizations, the American Federation of Labor, National Association of Manufacturers, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, National Council of Churches, and American Farm Bureau all issued declarations of support for the war effort. In essence, both mass and attentive publics were clearly on Truman's side, so partisan advantage would be difficult to gain in such a national atmosphere.

9. Some clarification of the procedure used is in order. A "total war" theme, the recording unit (the specific segment of content that is characterized by placing it in a given category), was considered "present" if it appeared within an editorial, the context unit, "the largest body of content that may be searched to characterize a recording unit" (Holsti, 1969: 117-118). It made little difference if the total war theme appeared once or a dozen times within the editorial. It received the same score, i.e., "present." The findings were then summarized by tabulating the number of editorials in which a "total war" theme was present.

A "total war" theme was considered present if the editorial made a distinct reference to (1) the need for all out mobilization in the form of total wage and price controls; (2) Korea being the first of a series of targets aimed at by the Kremlin, a forerunner of a total world conflict; (3) the American people must be united to sacrifice whatever is necessary to achieve victory.

10. Even before Inchon, the Republican National Committee had given the word to party candidates and workers to attack the Administration on its Far Eastern policy. The themes to be exploited were familiar ones-- (1) the loss of China would be blamed upon the Administration; (2) the Korean fighting was the result of President Truman's approval of the decision in 1945 to permit the Soviet Army to accept the Japanese surrender on the

peninsula north of the thirty-eighth parallel; (3) Truman's neutralization of Formosa had been first suggested by Taft and Knowland in January of 1950 (Atlanta Constitution, August 29, 1950).

CHAPTER 4

THE VIETNAM INTERVENTION--THE BIFURCATED CONSENSUS

Introduction

There were some striking differences between the Korean and Vietnam intervention periods. The surprise North Korean invasion had been perceived as an example of flagrant Communist aggression by the United States and most of the non-Communist world. Truman's decision to commit American combat troops had forged a national consensus which even included his most vociferous Republican critics. However, Vietnam, unlike Korea, had begun almost imperceptibly. It posed no clear-cut case of aggression across an officially recognized frontier like the thirty-eighth parallel. To the contrary, there were strong differences of opinion over whether the war in South Vietnam constituted aggression or civil war. Guerilla forces in Vietnam gave the Vietnam War the appearance of being a "domestic conflict," thus inhibiting the arousal of domestic and foreign opinion on behalf of the "victim of aggression."¹

Indeed, the visible absence of external aggression focussed attention on the authoritarian and conservative nature of the Diem regime, its repressive policies and

Diem's alleged responsibility for creating the insurgency by blocking unification. Diem, in effect, was responsible for the conflict, for he had denied the Communists what would have normally been theirs. Furthermore, the United States was backing a reactionary regime, a regime not representative of the South Vietnamese people or in any way constituting a democracy. In short, from the beginning the Vietnam War would lack the legitimacy of either being construed as a defense against aggression or advancing the cause of a people who were already free.

Finally, there was the question of the rally point itself. The Pleiku retaliatory bombings in early February of 1965 produced extensive criticism and actually proved to be politically counterproductive. The bombing made the United States look like a bully and North Vietnam like the underdog. It provided Hanoi with international sympathy and support, and it stirred many an American conscience. It made Hanoi and Vietcong propaganda that their cause was just, and that Saigon was morally and politically unjustified to rule, seem more credible to millions throughout the world. The bombing turned many people out for anti-American demonstrations in various countries, and these demonstrations were just as much part of the war as the actual battles--and seemingly more decisive. Townsend Hoopes, a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Under Secretary of the Air Force, and critic of the bombing campaign over

North Vietnam, has said that the bombing raised the emotional temperature of the war and made it more difficult to handle the war "politically at home and diplomatically abroad" (Hoopes, 1969: 82). It shifted the moral onus of the war from Hanoi to Washington. Had there been no bombing of the North and had the campaign been confined to the South, Hoopes contends, the dissent against the war might not have become so bitter, widespread, and unmanageable. In addition, Pleiku was a "non-rally" point.

However, there are some qualifications to the foregoing. The fact that there was no rally point was largely due to a deliberate maneuver on the part of the Administration in order to dampen a national martial fervor. Furthermore, limited retaliatory bombings were in keeping with the general gradualism of force characteristic of the intervention period. But in the final analysis, the lack of a rally point created doubt and dissent much sooner than normal.

Despite the greater level of dissent, the mass public generally looked to the Administration for cues during the Tonkin to July, 1965 period. Largely permissive and supportive, it followed and trusted Presidential discretion. The support level for President Johnson did not really begin to seriously falter until early 1966. While the faint strains of a hawk-dove bifurcation were present, such divisions could not seriously erode President Johnson's consensus because (1) Administration supporters

were still in the majority, both in Congress and the public; (2) War costs, relatively low, had not linked themselves to "elite" criticisms of the war and were therefore still seen as legitimate; (3) Presidential failures involving ending the war were not yet apparent; and (4) Presidential domestic strategy, as exemplified by the John Hopkins speech, held appeals for both hawks and doves. Furthermore, the patterns of coercive diplomacy employed by the Johnson Administration, i.e., a means of influencing Hanoi's will by a process of bargaining on ascending levels of violence in order to give him an incentive to agree to acceptable terms was suited to healing the initial hawk-dove strains. Each step in the coercive diplomacy pattern was taken with the hope that it would constitute the appropriate amount of pressure necessary to end the war. (This is one reason why the Administration refused to make Pleiku a rally point. Why mobilize the country when the war might conceivably end with just one more dosage of force?) In this way, war costs could also be diffused over time, preventing a premature intrusion into the public's consciousness. While the more articulate segments of the domestic system voiced their doubts, the President's deliberate policy of keeping war costs low, of gradually extending the commitment so as to inhibit a war fever, and alternating the stages of escalation/deescalation all worked together to isolate the war's critics while retaining mass support.

But before analyzing the intervention period itself, we will briefly trace the public mood and hawk-dove divisions which preceded Pleiku (February 7, 1965), starting from the Gulf of Tonkin incident (August of 1964 to late January of 1965).

The Gulf of Tonkin and the 1964 Presidential Election:
The Appeals to Dove and Hawk

The events of the Tonkin incident in August of 1964 have been described in detail elsewhere (Goulden, 1969). But what is most significant about LBJ's retaliation upon North Vietnamese torpedo boat bases and their oil storage depots in return for the North's two attacks upon the American destroyers Maddox and Turner Joy is that it secured a resolution from Congress authorizing the President "to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression," a resolution so loosely worded that it later enabled the President to claim, despite Senatorial protests to the contrary, that the Congress had given him a "blank check" in Vietnam. During the active intervention period, the President would countless times state that his Vietnam policies were fully in accord with Congressional authority. Additionally, the use of military force in the bombing of Vietnam was given the image of moderation by the President's insistence that such force was in keeping with a specific act of aggression, and would not be repeated unless necessary. Fears among

the public of a "new Korea" were subsequently attenuated by a series of campaign speeches stressing the theme that the "boys of Asia" should do their own fighting, rather than having "American boys" fighting in their place. But interestingly enough, while assuring the public during the campaign that American boys would not be sent to fight in Vietnam, Johnson also asserted that he would never permit Communist expansion there. In effect, Johnson was promising that Communism could be stopped without direct costs to the American voter, i.e., direct military combat involvement. With Tonkin, the President showed that he would protect American interests by employing force against the "Communists," but he also portrayed himself as a moderate, rational user as well as a believer in peaceful remedies, especially when contrasted against Senator Goldwater.

Tonkin had one additional effect upon subsequent events--it amplified and extended the credibility gap vis-a-vis the Administration. This fact will be explored more fully in later discussion, but it can be said that 1967 testimony investigating the Tonkin Gulf incidents revealed, among other things, that: (1) American destroyers had been on a spy mission, not a normal patrol; (2) The Administration had had a draft form of the resolution ready several months before the actual attacks; (3) The American warships had been operating within North Vietnam territorial waters, and not sixty miles as officially

reported. The suspicion that the Administration had lied, the anger by some Senators at being "tricked" into supporting the resolution, the distortion of the resolution's true intent by the President--these facts and others added to the fuel of discontent which would be ignited by Tet.

The Tonkin incident in August of 1964 increased hawk sentiment sharply. From 26 percent favoring more military pressure on North Vietnam the percentage now favoring such action increased to 50 percent. Those opposing such military pressure decreased from 45 percent to 25 percent. Clearly, the Tonkin retaliatory bombings had had a definite rallying effect from both the public and Congress. In late July, before Tonkin, 58 percent had criticized the Johnson handling of the Vietnam situation; after Tonkin, 72 percent promptly approved. Gradually this support faded, and by December of 1964, a Harris poll indicated that public approval of the Administration's Vietnam policy had dipped to 44 percent. This occurred against the background of a series of coups in Saigon, the failure of the Administration to respond to Viet Cong attacks upon American personnel and bases (Bien Hoa), and a general desire for more vigorous action by the public. The trend line appears as follows:

TABLE 8

HARRIS POLL, DECEMBER 21, 1964

	Administrative Rating on Vietnam (1964)	
	Approve	Disapprove
July	42%	58%
August	72	28
September	56	44
October	52	48
November	48	52
December	44	56

By December 2, 31 percent still admitted to knowing little about the war (Harris Survey, December 2, 1964). But of those informed, about one in seven by early December were calling for a definite action by the Administration, i.e., either fight or get out sentiment. The Administration was being labelled weak and indecisive. The following breakdown is notable in that it not only indicates such sentiment, but also illustrates a hawk-dove syndrome. Among those informed, the question was asked: "What do you think the United States should do next in Vietnam?"

TABLE 9

GALLUP POLL, DECEMBER, 1964

	August	December	Net Change
Make definite move, either fight or get out	3%	15%	+12
Get tougher, more pressure	12	10	-2
Take direct military action	9	9	--
Get out, withdraw	4	9	+5
Hold on, retain status quo	27	5	-23
Negotiate	10	3	-7

The "hold on" option suffered the greatest drop in support among those informed about the war. Correspondingly, the "either fight or get out" category gained the greatest number of points. The Administration bombing of North Vietnam occurred within an opinion climate which was becoming increasingly concerned that the Administration take some kind of meaningful action in Vietnam.

Dissent in the Pre-Intervention Phase

By late December, 1964, the United States was bent on eradicating the Communist threat from South Vietnam. These were the alternatives in reaching this goal--either build up a strong and stable government in Saigon to which the public would rally and thereby intensify resistance to the Viet Cong; or apply military "pressure" on North Vietnam which would discourage the promotion of insurrection in the South by the North. A third choice--negotiations--was viewed as not being open, in that Hanoi and the Viet Cong would feel little compulsion to bargain since they were clearly winning the war. History had purportedly shown that arrangements with the Communists had not worked out unless there was a form of counter-vailing power in the presumed coalition (Austria or Finland), and Saigon's unstable government could not afford such a luxury. Negotiations might have the further effect of undermining the morale of the Saigon

government, expediting the takeover of South Vietnam (Los Angeles Times, December 18, 1964).

Lyndon Johnson had summed up the situation late in the 1964 campaign in a meeting with his aides, employing a domestic analogy when he said: "I don't have to negotiate with Goldwater." Why would the Communists want "to negotiate anything but surrender with an enemy which seemed in the process of suffering disastrous defeat" (Geyelin, 1966: 213). A stronger bargaining position (if not total victory) would be sought, and military pressure would eventually be the tactic chosen.

"Attentive public" sources in the United States were already commenting on the difficult choices facing the United States. Respective hawk-dove arguments were exemplified by two influential columnists, Joseph Alsop and Walter Lippmann. Alsop, in a firm expression of the domino theory, argued that

If defeat in Southeast Asia is accepted, it will only be the beginning of a chain reaction which will leave us nothing in the Pacific, in the end, of all that we fought for and won in World War II and in the Korean War (Los Angeles Times, December 2, 1964).

On December 24, in a similar vein, he wrote that "if stern measures are not taken pretty soon to change the course of the war, the United States is almost certainly doomed to suffer the greatest defeat in American history." The day before, Walter Lippmann had counterposed this argument:

With the fall of still another government in Saigon, the chances are poorer than ever that we shall see a national movement to suppress the Viet-Cong rebellion.

Commenting on the rumored air strikes against the North, Lippmann stressed the fact the air power alone, as the experience in North Korea attested, would not be able to interdict the movement and supply of large masses of infantry. Prophetically, he stated:

The fact is that if we make the Vietnamese struggle "our war," we shall have to fight on the ground to hold South Vietnam. There is no use fooling the American people into thinking that a war for villages in the jungles and the swamps can be a clean war in the open skies (Los Angeles Times, December 23, 1964).

Finally, Vietnam was not a matter of primary national interest to the United States. "The real stake is self-esteem and prestige, what we think of ourselves and what others think about us." (Note: In a McNaughton memo to McNamara in mid-1964, the major American aim in South Vietnam was stated as avoiding a humiliating United States defeat to "our reputation as guarantor" Sheehan et al., 1971: 255). Echoing a theme which would gain added credence in the years to follow, Lippmann stated that "we have become grossly overextended in regions where we have no primary vital interest . . . and we have not had sufficient time, money, or energy left to care for our true vital interests nearer home." The solution for the Vietnam problem, Lippmann suggested, was a diplomatic one.

There were other themes being expressed in similar fashion. The editorials of the New York Times, as one example, consistently questioned the validity of the United States commitment, especially in light of the Saigon regime. On December 21, 1964, it scored the worth of Saigon:

U.S. aid to South Vietnam is based on the premise that the government and the majority of the people of that country want to be free of the Communist oppression that a Vietcong victory would bring. It also assumes that the Vietnamese are prepared to make the necessary efforts and sacrifices to achieve victory. Increasingly, however, developments call that assumption into question.

. . . If the South Vietnamese themselves are not sufficiently aroused by the Vietcong threat to put aside their internal differences, the question must arise of why and how long American blood and treasure should be expended in the struggle.

On January 1, 1965, it questioned the sole reliance on proposed bombing without the consideration of negotiations:

It is vital that attacks on Communist supply lines outside of South Vietnam, if they are to come, be preceded by a concrete offer of peace negotiations to Hanoi. Only if a route to the conference table is opened early is escalation likely to achieve results--and to stop short of a war with the Chinese Communists.

Even after the American bombing response to the Pleiku attack, the New York Times would editorialize that "the strike at North Vietnam was understandable and justifiable as a tactical response in a war situation. It was not a substitute for a policy." Stressing the dangers of escalation, it would again reemphasize that "the only sane

way out is diplomatic . . . a solution will not be found by exchanging harder and harder blows. Surrender is out of the question and "victory" for either side is impossible" (New York Times, February 8 and 9, 1965).

Key Democratic Senators in the December-January period were expressing similar sentiments as well. The two dove stalwarts, Gruening and Morse, were urging complete withdrawal, Senator Mansfield argued for the neutralization proposals favored by De Gaulle, and Senator McGovern proposed a fourteen nation conference to seek a political settlement in South Vietnam. Senator Church of Idaho, also a Democrat, was perhaps in the vanguard of those urging a change in official Administration policy. In a December 27, 1964 front page story, Church asked for neutralization of Southeast Asia, suggested that the United Nations be used as a guarantor of national boundaries in that area, argued that American escalation of the war to the North would not save the situation in the South and might risk Chinese intervention, and that the United States must be prepared for the possibility of withdrawal. Additionally, Church emphasized the theme of overcommitment, stating that the United States had adopted the policy of maintaining all governments that were nominally anti-Communist. "This, in a sense, is an imperial attitude . . . unless we come to accept the fact that it is neither within the power nor the interest of the United States to preserve the status-quo everywhere,

our policy is doomed to failure" (New York Times, December 27, 1964). Senators Fulbright, Bartlett, Pell, Nelson joined in with Church in expressing similar sentiments.

Senior Republican spokesmen, particularly Richard Nixon, were advocating another position. Speaking before the Sales Executive Club of New York on January 26, Nixon charged that the United States was losing the war in Vietnam and that unless the United States changed its strategy "we will be thrown out in a matter of months-- certainly within the year." To Nixon "the battle for Vietnam was the battle for Asia," and the fall or neutralization of that country would only encourage further aggression. Nixon charged that "neutrality, when you agree to it, is only surrender on the installment plan" (Italics mine). It was time to "win the war" by using American air and sea power to cut supply lines and destroy staging areas in North Vietnam and Laos which now made it possible for the Viet Cong to fight. Nixon closed his speech with a classical hawk explanation of the war:

Now is the time to face up to the fact that what we are dealing with in Vietnam is Chinese Communist aggression. It is dangerous and foolhardy to try to gloss over the truth as to what the war in Vietnam really involves:

First, the war in Vietnam is not about Vietnam but about Southeast Asia.

Second, the confrontation in Vietnam is, in the final analysis, not between the Vietnamese and the Vietcong nor between the United States and the Vietcong, but between the United States and Communist China. If Communist China were not

instigating and supporting the Vietcong, there would be no war in Vietnam today.

Third, a U.S. defeat in Vietnam means a Chinese Communist victory which could decide the fate of Asia for generations to come.

In summary, the risk involved in ending the war in Vietnam by winning it is far less than the risk involved in losing it (Congressional Digest, February, 1965: 112).

Ironically, Republican thinking during the Vietnam intervention paralleled the thinking of the Administration. While during the Korean intervention, Taft Republicans had offered grudging support during the early phase of that war, in Vietnam most Republicans supported the Administration wholeheartedly during the initial phases.

Another good example was a speech given by Senator Dirksen on February 18, 1965, which was a rejoinder to Church's call for neutralization the previous day. Without extensively quoting Church, he did maintain that (1) negotiations were not possible until "the aggressors showed some evidence of good faith; (2) the feasibility and validity of the domino theory--"if we do not man the ramparts of freedom on our outer defense line from Korea to South Vietnam, we shall inevitably be facing the enemy on the inner line from Alaska to Hawaii"; (3) we could not break our word to the South Vietnamese and "run up the white flag before the world and start running away from Communism." Three Presidents had stood by the pledge and so Vietnam was an "issue of principle, of our good faith, and one, most certainly, of our own national

security." A more accurate assessment of Administration assumptions could not have been enunciated (New York Times, February 19, 1965).

The doves, chiefly Democrats, countered the hawks' victory and military "toughness" sentiments by emphasizing that (1) the United States had violated the Geneva accords and international law; (2) the war was a civil war and therefore beyond the capacity of the United States to intervene effectively; (3) the weakness in South Vietnam emanated from Saigon itself, where we, as foreigners, were powerless to unite the feuding factions; (4) the governments of Southeast Asia were not so many dominoes in a row for they differed, one from another, in popular support, and in their capacity to resist Communist subversion; (5) negotiations were a rational way of ending a war as soon as possible--the alternative would be an escalating conflict which would eventually convert the war into an American struggle on the Asian mainland, a struggle that could not be won without risking a world war; (6) the Democratic party would suffer from the effects of such a war and the Administration would become highly discredited.² Furthermore, escalation of the war would irreparably damage both the war on poverty program and attempts to build the "Great Society."

But as the bombers streamed north on February 7, the war would become for LBJ the consuming passion of his Presidency. It would become LBJ's personal war--a war that

fragmented his consensus, and alienated the liberal wing of his party. It would be a war fought without major allies, front lines, and without the goal of an easy victory. Ironically, the President's intervention in that war began with a rally point that in itself was defective, a point in time greeted by doubts and distrust, rather than confidence and faith. We will take a broad overview of the intervention period by analyzing the methods of coercive diplomacy employed. We will then backtrack and follow the intervention scenario along the lines of those domestic pressures which unfolded.

Coercive Diplomacy: The Active
Intervention Period (February-July, 1965)

The scenario which unfolded during the Vietnam intervention period conformed to the contingency plans drawn up in 1964. Force levels were gradually escalated in accordance with the interrelated premises of the period: (1) coercing Hanoi into abandoning its support of the Viet Cong; (2) demonstrating the credibility of the American commitment; (3) shoring up the South Vietnamese government; (4) creating a situation of strength for purposes of negotiating an eventual peace. To accomplish these ends, the United States gradually increased force levels from an initial use of airpower as a response to specific acts of aggression by the Hanoi-sponsored Viet Cong to a sustained bombing campaign irrespective of specific enemy acts, thus signalling the possibility of deeper bombing

raids into North Vietnam. On the ground American combat units, first committed for purely defensive purposes as protection for American air bases, were gradually given more extensive combat operations, until they reached the final point of direct offensive operations against the Viet Cong. Despite these changes in military tactics, Hanoi refused to be coerced, and was unwilling to negotiate. Furthermore, the enlarged American presence did not have the effect of substantially improving the South Vietnamese fighting capability. In short, Hanoi would not be prevented from sponsoring aggression in the South either by a more extensive bombing campaign or by the introduction of American combat troops.

The Shift from Retaliatory Raids to Sustained Bombing

President Johnson was under pressure to reaffirm the South Vietnamese commitment during the period preceding the Pleiku retaliation of February 7. On January 27, McGeorge Bundy sent Johnson a memo stating that current policy could only "lead to disastrous defeat." Bundy argued that the time had come to use more power than had previously been employed.

The Vietnamese know just as we do that the Viet Cong are gaining in the countryside. Meanwhile, they see the enormous power of the United States withheld, and they get little sense of firm and active U.S. policy. They feel that we are unwilling to take serious risks . . . Both of us (McNamara had co-authored the memo.) have fully supported your unwillingness, in earlier months,

to move out of the middle course. We both agree that every effort should still be made to improve our operations on the ground and to prop up the authorities in South Vietnam as best we can. But we are both convinced that none of this is enough, and that the time has come for harder choices (Johnson, 1971: 122-123).

By Saturday, February 6, the general shape of those "harder choices" was clear. The United States was prepared to respond quickly and sharply to any credible and clear-cut provocation by launching retaliatory strikes against North Vietnam under the contingency plan known as "Flaming Dart."

Two immediate events preceding the Pleiku retaliation may have reinforced Washington's determination to bomb. The first was the visit by Soviet Premier Kosygin to Hanoi, a visit interpreted in Washington by Administration officials as a sign that the Soviets viewed the American commitment as faltering. As LBJ put it later, his advisors "believed that Kosygin would encourage Hanoi to step up its subversion and military and guerilla warfare activity in South Vietnam," for the Soviets saw a Hanoi victory as a strong possibility (Johnson, 1971: 123). The Washington Post, sensitive to Administration thinking, expressed the following:

The new Russian leadership may already have made an assessment of President Johnson and concluded--largely from his obvious reluctance to enlarge the war in South Vietnam--that he is a very cautious man. If such a judgment has been made, there is a dangerous parallel with the assessment Khrushchev made of President Kennedy before the Cuban Missile Crisis confrontation (Washington Post, February 2, 1965).

In essence, the possible perception of American irresolution by the Soviets was encouraging them to increase their backing to Hanoi so as to deflate the Chinese charge of revisionism while demonstrating renewed support toward "wars of national liberation." In short, the unwillingness to use American power was creating a situation which could encourage Soviet "hard-liners" not only in Vietnam, but elsewhere in the world. Furthermore, Moscow would be obliged to send further military and economic aid shipments to Hanoi, thereby strengthening their bonds with the Chinese who would behave similarly. Conversely, a demonstration of American will by bombing might refute the Peking argument that the United States was a paper tiger, thereby giving increased support to "peaceful coexistence" advocates in the Communist world.

A second event occurred on February 6 with a report that China had openly named Thailand as the next target on its "war of national liberation" list. The Chinese announced that a patriotic front "had been formed in Thailand to overthrow the pro-Western government and eradicate American influence there." In Washington, an unidentified Department of State spokesman observed that "it strikes me as the logical step in Peking's policy of supporting subversion wherever possible in Southeast Asia" (Washington Post, February 6, 1965). To Administration officials, the timing of the announcement along with the Kosygin visit lent credence to the assumption that the Communist world

not only expected imminent victory in Vietnam, but that Vietnam would be the springboard to topple all of Asia in accordance with the domino theory. President Johnson also suggests a similar fear, in that Peking's bellicose mood was forging a "Djakarta-Hanoi-Peking-Pyongyang axis," a total coordinated domino effect (Johnson, 1971: 136). Just as President Truman had seen the outbreak of Korea within the confines of a coordinated Communist probe throughout all of Asia. In short, an active American response was needed before it was too late.

Such a response followed the Viet Cong attack at Pleiku on February 7. American and South Vietnamese planes bombed barracks and staging areas in the southern half of North Vietnam, "in response to provocations ordered and directed by the Hanoi regime" (New York Times, February 8, 1965). The raid was specifically geared to a tit for tat retaliation, as was the Gulf of Tonkin incident. Yet there was a crucial difference. At Tonkin the United States had retaliated for a direct attack upon its own warships. Now the North had been bombed because of an incident in South Vietnam which had been initiated by the Viet Cong, who in turn were linked to Hanoi's direction. Since incidents by the Viet Cong were an everyday occurrence, coercion based on one-to-one retaliations would inexorably broaden into a sustained bombing offensive. The White House announcement pertaining to Pleiku had strongly hinted at this next maneuver, by asserting that

". . . we seek no wider war. Whether or not this course can be maintained lies with the North Vietnamese aggressors. The key to the situation remains the cessation of infiltration from North Vietnam and the clear indication by the Hanoi regime that it is prepared to cease aggression against its neighbors" (New York Times, February 8, 1965). Not only was the threat of further retaliation clear, but later during the same day the White House issued a statement announcing the withdrawal of American dependents from South Vietnam. Again this could be construed as a tacit warning to Hanoi, for if the United States were planning a more extensive air war in the future, the Administration would want as few American citizens as possible to be potential objects of Viet Cong retaliation.

Pleiku: A "Non-Rally" Point

The reconciliation of political factions which normally accompanies an American intervention into an overseas conflict did not follow the February 7, 8, and 11 retaliatory bombings, at least to the full extent one might expect. If the Korean intervention had the effect of producing a national unity, Vietnam's active intervention phase began with an event which mirrored and reinforced prior domestic doubts and simultaneously triggered an American limited bombing response, the form of which hardly permitted the full mobilization of national support. The Viet Cong attack on the Camp Holloway airbase at

Pleiku, some 240 miles northeast of Saigon resulted in eight Americans being killed, 126 wounded, and extensive damage to helicopters and planes (New York Times, February 8, 1965). Despite its severity, the attack could not convey the political intensity of a Pearl Harbor or a North Korean invasion. The deliberate attempt by the Administration to restrict the following retaliatory raids "to individual provocations" (ordered and directed by Hanoi) while stressing that it sought "no wider war" was designed to control a premature escalation, rationalize the American action, and soothe domestic and international fears, but it likewise could do little in constructing a die-hard "rally around the flag" patriotism. (A war-time "emergency" mentality simply did not correspond to a partial and avowedly limited utilization of American power.) Polls indicated majority support for the bombings, to be sure, but significant opinion divisions regarding the ultimate consequences of the President's action remained.

In Congress, hawks generally approved the bombing, emphasizing that it would dramatically reiterate the credibility of our commitment to South Vietnam, shore up the morale of the Saigon regime, and make it more costly for Ho to sponsor aggression. This was directly in line with the statement that Undersecretary of State George W. Ball had made on February 7, 1965, when he characterized the Pleiku retaliation as a needed response to "a deliberate overt attempt by the regime in Hanoi to test

the will of the South Vietnamese government . . . and of the government of the United States." But to the hawks, the testing of the "will" of the United States demanded a fuller response than mere tit-for-tat retaliations could supply. A "fuller response implied more extensive bombing possibly on Hanoi's strategic supply depots bombing intended to achieve victory" (See New York Times, February 22, 1965). Thus, on February 17, a joint Senate-House Republican leadership statement rejected the idea of negotiations while infiltration of South Vietnam continued from the North. While expressing full support for the air strikes on North Vietnam, the statement asserted that any differences of opinion stemmed from "the belief that these measures might have been applied more frequently" (New York Times, February 18, 1965; Italics mine). Thus Joseph Alsop in the Washington Post (February 10, 1965), from the beginning a firm hawk, approved of the initial actions. Alsop claimed that the United States could not run a middle course between withdrawal and escalation, for the same policy had been tried in China in 1949 resulting in failure. Hopefully, the recent attacks were more than "just another one-shot show, . . . the adoption of a serious and sustained program of operations to persuade the North Vietnamese and Communists that aggression really does not pay after all" was the correct policy that would prevent South Vietnam from coming apart at the seams.

To the doves, the intensity or extent of the bombing was not the issue but rather the implications which flowed from the action, itself. Aside from the obvious dangers of escalation and Chinese intervention, the question arose as to how bombing Hanoi would discourage aggression in the South. Secondly, no nation would negotiate while bombs were striking its own territory. Resistance would stiffen rather than weaken. Thirdly, the public did not only accept or desire bombing as the sole remedy. There was as Church and McGovern asserted, an equal desire for a negotiated peace. (A Gallup Poll of January 31 had revealed that 81 percent of the American people favored an international conference to solve the Vietnam problem.) In essence, the bombing response was illogical both from a military and political viewpoint. Finally, in the moral sense, bombing was a symptom of American arrogance in the use of power, a perversion of the traditional American bent toward peaceful conciliation of international disputes, a tool of the Administration's globalism.

Journalists also viewed the Administration's public case for the bombings as concealing its true long-range plans, plans which had been formulated much earlier and which had merely been delayed until a suitable incident provided a chance for their implementation. At the actual time of the retaliations, there was a strong suspicion that the true objectives of bombing involved punishing Hanoi to an extent that would make the whole North Vietnamese

effort more costly and painful, induce them to negotiate and/or withdraw, and thereby allow the United States to avoid a further commitment, i.e., the employment of combat troops. Subsequent publications have confirmed the truth of this statement. But on February 10, James Reston was already hinting that the American commitment might involve increasing escalation. His article commented on the President's statement with respect to the retaliatory raids that "We seek no wider war. Whether or not this course can be maintained lies with the North Vietnamese aggressors."

Nobody should underestimate the seriousness of this remark. It is a clear threat that the war will be extended unless Hanoi withdraws, and there is absolutely no indication by Hanoi or its communist backers that withdrawal is intended. . . . The President . . . has compromised between those here who want him to go on about as before and those who want him to use his airpower on the Communist industry in the north (Washington Post, February 10, 1965).

Reston's conclusion was that of a Korean-type solution on either side of the seventeenth parallel which would probably be "the best anybody can get out of it, and the first step in this is clearly a self-imposed cease fire on both sides of the line."

Therefore, a substantial case can be made for the importance of Pleiku in setting the tone for subsequent events. Pleiku symbolized a "rally point" which could not really perform the "rally" function, for the President's intention and goal of coercing Hanoi prohibited such a use. A purposeful victory plan would probably have justified a

rally point, but the Administration had no intention of destroying North Vietnam in the traditional military sense. Where Truman could rally the country within a conventional military context, the complex nature of guerilla warfare in South Vietnam prohibited Johnson from a similar national unification. By only taking a "half-step," he prolonged the dissent level. Pleiku may have constituted a "turning point" in the American role, but it could not qualify as a rally point.

But what is important to note is that an initial rally point should be of a nature which submerges, for a moderate time-span, any doubt as to the basic legitimacy of subsequent intervention responses to events. (It must be a consensus-building event.) Secondly, the rally point, at least when comparing Korea and Vietnam, seems to best serve its function of raising support levels from the public and Congress when it rapidly intrudes into the political system at a rate which demands immediate reaction from decision-makers. A rally point which is "stretched out" over an extensive period of time loses its potency to unite domestic factions. Finally, the rally point should be clearly interpretable in terms of what basic interests are threatened and why the mobilization of resources in both men and supplies is necessitated.

The Korean War broke into public consciousness all at once with an invasion from the Communist North; the public and Congress had no more time to reflect than did

President Truman. The situation was perceived in terms of national interest--appeasement unchecked meant Communist advancement. When it became clear that South Korean forces (and American air and sea power) could not stem the tide, the introduction of troops was viewed as a logical necessity. The stakes were spelled out, the costs clearly indicated, and the necessary sacrifices explained.

Conversely, we have seen how Pleiku did not legitimate further American involvement in Vietnam. There was an additional factor, the quality of the Saigon regime. Where few Americans had knowledge of the internal complexities of Korean politics--the quality of rule under the Rhee regime, the extent of support by the South Koreans for the regime--the Diem regime had received an appreciable degree of publicity, mostly favorable until the immediate period preceding his assassination. The long series of coups, counter-coups, repressions, and general instability that followed in Saigon eroded the credibility of the Administration's contention that it was striving to maintain democracy and freedom in South Vietnam. Where the question of the South Koreans' will to oppose Communism was never in doubt, legitimating American support and involvement, such was not the case with the South Vietnamese. A significant degree of indigenous support for the Viet Cong obviated the most important part of the Administration's case for intervention--that it was opposing a clear case of aggression

from Hanoi. Indeed, the statistics offered in the 1965 White Paper, "Aggression from the North," implied that nearly all the enemy's military equipment must have been introduced into Vietnam (in disregard of the Geneva terms) by the United States.³ Finally, the Pleiku retaliations, as a rally point, did not imply a shortening of the conflict in Vietnam. As has been seen, it did not promise termination to either hawk or dove--it was a middle path as Reston pointed out--implying prolongation, equivocation, procrastination. The time which elapsed between the February 7, 8, and 11 attacks and the renewal of bombings on March 2, allowed doubts to be raised and the brief, fragile unity to crumble. Pleiku, in short, rallied not the forces of unity, but those agents of division.

Pleiku: organized dissent

Verbal dissent was not only noticeable in the halls of Congress. The Pleiku interim (February 12-March 1) saw the beginning of large-scale protest against the war. On February 10, New York Police arrested fourteen persons blocking the entrances of the United Nations building. The demonstration, organized by the Committee for Non-violent Action, opposed the American bombing and was followed by nineteen more arrests the next day. In addition, February 20 saw more than 400 students picket the White House (New York Times, February 21, 1965). Additionally, the placing

of large scale advertisements of protest by religious and academic groups in the New York Times (February 19 and 28) portended the coalition of dissent which would be manifested to an even greater extent in subsequent years--the linking up of traditional pacifism in America with the academic and religious communities; radical student groups in the so-called New Left (and later civil rights leaders) would also be included. (As early as 1964, students at Haverford College organized the first drive to collect medical supplies for the Viet Cong.)

The assumptions underlying this early protest involved the dangers of widening the war, the importance of early negotiations, the fact that the United States was maintaining a Saigon regime not supported by the bulk of the rural population, the inhumane and immoral aspects of the conflict, and the fact that American policy was having a deleterious effect on its prestige abroad. (These themes were evident in the first teach-ins in March of 1965.) What is significant is that this early protest, while not characterized by the massive confrontation tactic (the first massive demonstration, organized by the Students for a Democratic Society, would occur on April 17 with 15,000 demonstrators marching on Washington), did rely upon an academic emphasis to expose the fallacies and presumed half-truths in the Administration's prepared rationale for war policy. The academic community was instrumental in making known the history of American

involvement in Vietnam, and engaging government spokesmen in debate at organized college teach-ins.

The morality issue

If domestic pressures to negotiate and/or withdraw could not sway basic policy, it nevertheless could not be completely ignored either. If the United States were to appear as completely indifferent to prospects for peace, it would forsake its world image as a nation of peace and possibly alienate world opinion even further. This was especially true in lieu of the growing adverse moral position of the war due to the use of napalm and gas. On March 22, the State Department disclosed that the United States was using "a non-lethal" gas in Vietnam. The Department went on to state that the gas merely made the enemy incapable of fighting and "that its use in such situations is no different than the use of disabling gas in riot control" (New York Times, March 23, 1965). Additionally, the previous day it had been revealed that napalm had been used in bombing missions over North and South Vietnam. The reaction to these two disclosures was intense both domestically and internationally. Communist countries, in particular, propagandized the use of napalm and gas as just two more examples of American "barbarism."

The use of gas horrified liberals. On March 26, sixteen Democratic members of the House sent a joint letter to President Johnson asking him to inquire as to who had

ordered or authorized the use of the gas. Prior to that letter, a protest letter from five House Republicans had charged that the use of gas would increase anti-American sentiment in Asia as well as encourage the Communists to keep on fighting. (One of the Republicans was John Lindsay, later mayor of New York City.) Senators Cooper, Republican from Kentucky, and Ribicoff, Connecticut Democrat, branded the practice as both doubtful in ultimate effect and "shocking" in its implications. Senator Morse's comment: "How easy it is, once we depart from the principles of international law, to violate them" (New York Times, March 23, 1965). During this period of moral uproar, the first "teach-in" protesting the United States involvement in the war in Vietnam was held (March 24) on the campus of the University of Michigan--setting a pattern for similar teach-ins in colleges and universities from coast to coast. The "gas" issue became a major issue raised at the succession of teach-ins.

Thus, the aftermath of Pleiku was not characterized by the accustomed harmony and unity following a normal rally point. Nevertheless, the Johnson Administration felt compelled to continue its intensification of the coercive diplomacy pattern, in hopes that the war could be terminated quickly.

Coercive Diplomacy After Pleiku

The transition to a policy of sustained air reprisals (Operation Rolling Thunder) was imminent. On the

day of the air strikes, McGeorge Bundy had already suggested to President Johnson that a policy of "sustained reprisal" was necessary whereby air action against the North could be related to the Viet Cong campaign in the South. In the memo Bundy pointed out the advantages of such a policy:

We are convinced that the political values of reprisal required a continuous operation. Episodic responses geared on a one-for-one basis to "spectacular" outrages would lack the persuasive force of sustained pressure. . . . The Gulf of Tonkin affair produced a sharp upturn in morale in South Vietnam. When it remained an isolated episode, however, there was a severe relapse. . . . We emphasize that our primary target in advocating a reprisal policy is the improvement of the situation in South Vietnam. . . . We think it plausible that effective and sustained reprisals, . . . would have a substantial depressing effect upon the morale of Viet Cong cadres in South Vietnam. . . . Beyond that, a reprisal policy--to the extent it demonstrates U.S. willingness to employ this new norm in counter insurgency--will set a higher price for the future upon all adventures of guerilla warfare, . . . (Sheehan et al., 1971: 425-426).

Additionally, Bundy had outlined the steps to be taken before the implementation of such a policy--evacuation of dependents, the release of a White Paper documenting Hanoi sponsorship of Viet Cong aggression, behind-the scenes communication to Moscow, Peking, and Hanoi, and the acceptance of negotiation only if the Viet Cong lessened the pattern of violence in the South (Sheehan et al., 1971: 427). The White Paper was released on February 28 and the sustained bombing begun on March 2.

It is apparent that the press was already anticipating the next bombing phase. Hanson Baldwin in the New York Times of February 10 indicated that "although most of the military agree with the concept of retaliation adopted by President Johnson . . . after the attack on Pleiku this weekend, they would like to see the use of a comprehensive and continuous policy that would yield military results." The Los Angeles Times, in a February 9 editorial, claimed that "the idea of a limited response to a limited provocation is fine so long as the response discourages further provocations. But in Vietnam that really hasn't worked." On February 13, the day Johnson approved Operation Rolling Thunder, columnist Jack Foisie of the Los Angeles Times wrote--"Now it is understood that there will be retaliatory air strikes against North Vietnam for any major Viet Cong attack on either U.S. or South Vietnam installations."

But during the two remaining weeks of February, further bombing raids were suspended. The Administration may have hoped that the initial bombings would deter Hanoi and the Viet Cong, and therefore not require implementation of the sustained air war. However, Viet Cong activity did not subside appreciably. Jack Foisie revealed that South Vietnam had virtually been cut in half by the Viet Cong, and quoted an American officer as stating that a "strip at least twenty miles wide across central South Vietnam has come under guerilla control, and government efforts

to oust them have failed" (Los Angeles Times, February 24, 1965). Furthermore, governmental stability in South Vietnam was apparently not enhanced by the early bombing raids for an attempted coup had been carried out on February 19. In short, circumstances forced the United States into its next level of coerciveness, Operation Rolling Thunder. President Johnson explained his decision:

The decision was made because it had become clear . . . that Hanoi was moving in for the kill. Its leaders had sent in regular North Vietnamese army units. They had directly attacked not only our ships but our barracks, our airfields, our men. They had asked for and received increased aid from Moscow. They were exerting maximum pressure on the military and political situation in South Vietnam. . . . If air strikes could destroy enemy supplies and impede the flow of weapons and men coming south, our action would help save American and South Vietnamese lives. . . . I now concluded that political life in the South would soon collapse unless the people there knew that the North was paying a price in its own territory for its aggression (Johnson, 1971: 132).

On February 28, 1965, in a low-key announcement from Saigon--not Washington--United States and South Vietnamese officials signalled the next stage of American escalation by announcing that President Johnson had decided to open continuous, limited air strikes against North Vietnam for the purposes of bringing about a negotiated settlement. The announcement followed two major developments--(1) the temporary stabilization of the Saigon government, featured by the emergence of the anti-neutralist Army in Saigon over a Buddhist faction which preferred negotiations with the Communists; and (2) the release of a State

Department White Paper on February 27, which cited the findings of the International Control Commission in 1962 "that there was 'sufficient evidence to show beyond reasonable doubt' that North Vietnam had sent arms and men into South Vietnam to carry out subversion with the aim of overthrowing the legal government there" (New York Times, February 28, 1965). The former development gave the United States the assurance that the newly-installed Quat government (after Khanh had been deposed) would continue to prosecute the war in the South while air strikes continued against the North. The publication of the White Paper had the purpose of once again "documenting" the case for the imminent sustained air strikes against the North. The White Paper suggested that Hanoi had interpreted the initial bombings as indicating an American reluctance to use its military power to the fullest extent possible. Accordingly, Hanoi had not responded to negotiation offers. If the bombing campaign were to change the will of the enemy leadership, render more difficult the process of infiltration, and improve the morale of Saigon, then the nature of those bombings would have to change.

The raids of March 2 heralded this new development. The White House insisted that the new attacks represented "no real change in policy," and were in keeping with President Johnson's remarks of February 17, in which he stated ". . . that we will persist in the defense of freedom, and our continuing actions will be those which

are justified and those that are made necessary by the continuing aggression of others (Johnson, 1965: 205). But unlike Pleiku, the joint American-South Vietnam attacks on the North were not specifically related to a specific attack. Thus when Ambassador Taylor was asked in Saigon whether the new thrust was in retaliation for enemy attacks on American installations, his reply was "definitely not," prompting columnist Richard Reston to assert that Washington had now gone officially beyond the "tit for tat" stage (Los Angeles Times, March 3, 1965). A Los Angeles Times editorial commented that the new policy marked an "overdue attempt to gain the initiative" in the war by demonstrating American capabilities and will in inflicting great damage on North Vietnam. Such a message should be clearly understood by Hanoi, but "if it is not, the U.S. must be prepared to run risks of its own by a more emphatic demonstration of its military power" (Los Angeles Times, March 4, 1965).

This demonstration occurred five days later, with the landing of 3,500 Marines in Vietnam in order to protect DaNang defenses, particularly the Hawk missiles which were extremely vulnerable to ground attack and sabotage. The inauguration of continuing air raids plus the landing of troops which occurred within a very close span of time were no mere coincidences. Here was a clearly emitted signal warning Hanoi that she would face both American air and ground power, a serious diplomatic message to both

Hanoi and Peking about the future course of the war, an illustration of playing the careful game of escalation step by step. Three days later, Roger Hilsman told a House Foreign Affairs subcommittee that the United States must use ground forces in Southeast Asia "to prove to Asians we mean business." Congressman Zablocki, Wisconsin Democrat, added the assertion: "We cannot bluff. If the Communists refuse to come to the conference table we must fight on the ground as well as in the air" (Los Angeles Times, March 11, 1965).

However, there were growing signs that the Administration was beginning to question the utility of its bombing policy while correspondingly sensing the need for ground troops if the war were to be won. In a remarkably prophetic dispatch by Marquis Childs, it was revealed that at a top secret meeting at Camp David on March 10 (Rusk, Bundy, McNamara attended), an analysis by intelligence agencies had revealed the following: (1) training camps to prepare infiltrators to be sent into South Vietnam were continuing unabated; (2) staging areas, several of which were bombed, were as active as before; (3) the rate of enemy infiltration was about the same as before the retaliatory bombing had started (St. Louis Dispatch, March 11, 1965). According to Childs, the conclusion of the meeting was that sterner measures had to be taken, even though this constituted a risk of escalation.

The atmosphere at a high level here is that of a determined effort to muster courage to push forward until North Vietnam clearly signals an intention to call home its infiltrators. What this can mean is the use of massive American ground forces to wage the war in Viet-Nam directly. Looking further down the road . . . there is contingency planning for 250,000 American soldiers trained in jungle warfare. This is considered the minimum essential if the war continues to go badly in the South (St. Louis Post Dispatch, March 11, 1965).

But the war would continue to go "badly" in the South. As long as this were true, the Administration would be in no position to negotiate with the enemy, for it felt it could not negotiate from a position of weakness.⁴ Administration officials, particularly Dean Rusk, would stress that negotiation "aimed at the acceptance or the confirmation of aggression is not possible" (New York Times, March 5, 1965) and that the "missing piece" continued to be the absence of any sign "that Hanoi is prepared to stop doing what it is doing against its neighbors" (New York Times, February 26, 1965). Rusk would repeat these themes countless times, insisting that any negotiated settlement would be conditioned on Hanoi's acceptance of South Vietnam as a separate and independent state, while agreeing to pull its forces out of the South. Dovish critics considered this demand totally unreasonable, for they felt it was tantamount to asking Hanoi and the Viet Cong for unconditional surrender.

Clearly, however, the Administration was intent on avoiding the loss of South Vietnam. The purpose of Rolling Thunder strikes during March had been to underline the

seriousness of American determination not to permit Hanoi to conquer South Vietnam. The Administration felt that it would need more time to assess the impact of the bombings. As General Johnson stated in Washington in mid-March, the air raids had given Hanoi "pause to think a little" without yet affecting the course of the fighting in South Vietnam (New York Times, March 16, 1965). For the Viet Cong, it was likewise imperative to secure a position of strength. Their stepped-up activity in March was directed toward launching a quick military offensive which would seriously damage the military viability of the Saigon government.⁵

In a series of articles beginning in late March, columnist Richard Dudman confirmed that the prospect of military defeat in the South was imminent. He asserted that the new bombing measures have yet to prove "that they can turn the fast-ebbing tide of the war." Air and sea power were simply not sufficient. In major areas of South Vietnam, "the accelerating trend of defeat is unmistakable. Scores of hamlets that had been classed as 'pacified' have been lost to the VC in the last few weeks." According to Dudman, government forces were being rapidly driven back into the provincial capitals, leaving the countryside to the Viet Cong to "collect taxes, dispense its brand of justice and actually set up a rival government." Inland cities were being cut off by land routes, and could only be supplied by air travel (St.

Louis Post Dispatch, March 21, 1965). Some members of the Johnson Administration were beginning to view the situation as being alarmingly familiar to that of China in 1949--a disintegrating rural base from which the enemy could then launch a finishing blow upon the urban centers (Kalb and Abel, 1971: 188).

In essence, American attention was turning more and more to conditions in South Vietnam. Air raids on the North could not erode the vitality of the Viet Cong, nor could they destroy the large stores of ammunition and food hidden in the jungles of the South. Active confrontation both on the ground and in the air was required. Ambassador Taylor shared this view when quoted in Saigon on March 22. He stated that Americans might enter the ground fighting "directly, if necessary," since the enemy was apparently beginning an all-out drive for victory. In Taylor's words, "no limit exists to the potential escalation of the war" (St. Louis Post Dispatch, March 23, 1965).

Two nationally known columnists were also hinting at the prospects of increased numbers of American combat troops. As early as April 1, Walter Lippmann observed that there was mounting pressure in the Pentagon "for commitment of U.S. infantry." (The Pentagon Papers reveal that on March 20, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had proposed sending two American divisions to South Vietnam, indicating that Lippmann's sources were highly authoritative.) Then on April 15, Lippmann noted prophetically that according to

"all signs, the bombing is not working. In fact, there are signs that it is stiffening resistance. There is growing pressure for a commitment of a huge American army . . . to another Korea" (Washington Post, April 16, 1965). Then on April 21, Hanson Baldwin revealed that the United States planned a large buildup of American combat units, with the mission of the new troops being changed from "defensive protection" to an "active defense," i.e., extending combat patrols to offensive operations well beyond the defensive perimeter. Baldwin also claimed that air strikes would have to be intensified in conjunction with the stepped up ground war (New York Times, April 22, 1965).

In actuality, President Johnson had approved a change in the mission of combat forces in Vietnam to permit "their more active use" under rules to be approved by the Secretaries of State and Defense (Sheehan et al., 1971: 442). Johnson later contended that this order did not mean that the Marines were to have an unlimited combat role, but rather signified a more aggressive counter-insurgency combat operation (Johnson, 1971: 141). Nevertheless, he did approve an 18,000-20,000 man increase in logistic and support forces on April 2. Finally, with the rejection of the President's offer of negotiations at John Hopkins University by Hanoi and the Viet Cong and the failure of the enemy to respond to the brief bombing pause

in May, the road inevitably lay open to a massive American ground commitment.

The Announcement of July 28: From Gradualism to an Open-Ended War

By late spring of 1965 the South Vietnamese army was losing almost one infantry battalion a week to enemy action. As General Westmoreland phrased it, "the government of Vietnam could not survive this mounting enemy military and political offensive for more than six months. . . . Substantial numbers of U.S. ground combat forces were required"(Westmoreland, 1968: 98). From May 28 to May 31, the enemy launched major attacks against government forces in five northern provinces. Before being forced to withdraw, they had inflicted an estimated 400 casualties upon the South Vietnamese. On June 10-13, a fierce battle erupted at Dongxoi, sixty miles southeast of Saigon. An estimated 800-900 government troops were killed or reported missing in the four day struggle (New York Times, June 15, 1965). To complicate matters even further, General Ky assumed power in Saigon and informed Ambassador Taylor that additional American ground combat forces would be required to cope with the expected monsoon offensive period (Johnson, 1971: 143-144).

Westmoreland had in the meantime cabled Washington that the military situation was indeed grave for the South Vietnamese. Accordingly, he had requested a total of forty-four battalions. This force would be enough to

establish a favorable balance of power by the end of 1965, although more forces might be needed later (Sheehan et al., 1971: 412-413). Westmoreland further advocated a search and destroy strategy rather than a passive enclave strategem. In effect, the proposals would commit American troops to offensive actions and create an "Americanization" of the land war.

To adopt such a policy would involve a major departure from the gradual escalation that the Administration had followed throughout the intervention period. The escalation of the war by the Administration had been purposely carried out on an incremental basis, with each stage a logical outgrowth of the previous step. The initial landing of Marines on March 8-9 at Danang had been downplayed by a State Department spokesman who explained that the Marines had been requested by the South Vietnamese government and would have a limited mission. The mission would consist of "defensive perimeter" operations only, and offensive operations would be left to South Vietnamese troops. However, a little-noted statement by an American military spokesman in Saigon had provided for the fact that the Marines would fight back if fired upon and that any further duties contingent upon events might be forthcoming. President Johnson had allayed fears by stating that the troop landing did not represent a significant departure from policy, but only a change in "tactics" or "strategy" (Johnson, 1965: 535). In essence,

the United States was widening the war while denying that anything fundamental had changed.

Three months later, on June 8, State Department spokesman Robert McCloskey made the disclosure that American military commanders had advised the Saigon government that "American forces would be available for combat support with Vietnamese forces when and if necessary" (New York Times, June 9, 1965). The next day, Presidential Press Secretary George Reedy attempted to counter the impression that the United States had embarked on a new policy. The statement, in part, read as follows:

There has been no change in the mission of the United States ground combat units in Vietnam in recent days or weeks. The President has issued no order of any kind in this regard. . . . The primary mission of these troops is to secure and safeguard important military installations like the air base at Danang. They have the associated mission of active patrolling and securing action in and near the areas thus safeguarded.

If help is requested by the appropriate Vietnamese commander, General Westmoreland also has authority within the assigned mission to employ these troops in support of Vietnamese forces. . . . This discretionary authority does not change the primary mission of United States troops in South Vietnam (New York Times, 1965; *Italics mine*).

Despite such a disclaimer, it became rapidly recognized that active and increased combat roles for American troops were an increasing possibility in lieu of the Communist offensive and the failure of the bombings. The eventual policy promulgated by President Johnson on July 28 could have been predicted from

McNamara's press conference on June 16. For the first time, McNamara fully and without equivocation conceded that American air strikes against North Vietnam had not stopped the infiltration of arms and men from the North.

The options Washington saw were either withdrawal or a further commitment of additional troops to save the situation. By July 8, the first battalion-sized attacks by United States Marines were already being launched. The build-up of troops continued with their offensive operations increasing in number. Baldwin noted that the American ground forces were originally designed as a "stabilizing or equalizing force in the monsoon season. They would assume many of the duties of Vietnamese troops in defending air bases--thus freeing government troops for active combat operations. However, it is now clear, officers believe, that the situation so far has not worked out as originally envisaged" (St. Louis Post Dispatch, July 11, 1965). Another clue to the possible commitment of more troops came when Henry Cabot Lodge replaced Taylor as ambassador to South Vietnam, a move widely construed as being made necessary by Taylor's opposition to the extensive use of American combat troops in Vietnam (Ibid.).

The Administration apparently tried to send some final "signals" to Hanoi, as a last gasp effort to compel the enemy to desist. On July 11, Secretary of State Rusk asserted that no part of North Vietnam would be safe from

attack so long as North Vietnamese forces were fighting in the south. In short, the idea of sanctuary was "dead" (New York Times, July 12, 1965). He also warned China that she could not expect to be free from United States attack if she intervened. Clearly, Rusk was letting the enemy know what was at stake, that American power would not be restrained if the war became widened. Yet negotiations were still open according to Rusk. To the very end of the intervention period Administration coercive tactics remained the same--to combine military pressure and the threat of more force with an indication of American willingness to negotiate. Unfortunately, as columnist Harold Wilson stated, "North Vietnamese prospects of victory are too imminent for it to be worth their while to forsake the battlefield for the conference table" (St. Louis Post Dispatch, July 15, 1965).

The second signal came from Secretary of Defense McNamara. Before leaving for Vietnam in mid-July in order to find out whether the situation there demanded increased troop commitments, he stated that the level of Viet Cong activity had intensified and that the conflict was becoming unmanageable. "This may require that we change the tactics by which we respond to those operations" (New York Times, July 16, 1965). During his actual visit, McNamara continued to publicize the fact that the situation was desperate, and one that might well require further American involvement. While viewing the depot complex at

Cam Ranh, he was told that facilities would be able to supply 100,000 troops (St. Louis Post Dispatch, July 19, 1965). Finally, on leaving Vietnam, he confirmed to the press that there had been "many aspects of deterioration since his last visit." He would recommend to the President that the United States "fulfill the commitment of our nation to defend Vietnam." His final statement was equally revealing--"the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces are at a strength which cannot be coped with by the present strength of South Vietnam and their American allies" (St. Louis Post Dispatch, July 20, 1965).

Under the circumstances, one can only agree with the view of Chester Cooper that the July 21-27 deliberations at the White House which began after McNamara's return did not really involve a question of whether troops should be sent, but only how many (Cooper, 1970: 285). President Johnson's memoirs suggest a similar interpretation. He notes that while Undersecretary of State George Ball's views were listened to (we should "cut our losses and pull away"), the idea of pulling out had always been repugnant and seen as dangerous to American prestige and security (Johnson, 1971: 147).

Addressing a nationwide audience from the White House on July 28, President Johnson announced that he had ordered American military forces in Vietnam increased from 75,000 to 125,000. Further measures would be forthcoming if dictated by the course of the war. Military draft calls

would be raised from 17,000 to 35,000 per month. Reserves would not be mobilized. If General Westmoreland needed more men and arms in the future, they would be supplied. The President again reiterated his desire for peace, yet at the same time he emphasized once again that America would not be driven from Vietnam. Thirty-two months later, he would deliver another speech, but at that time it would be one of resignation.

PUBLIC OPINION, CONGRESS, AND THE PRESIDENT
DURING THE VIETNAM INTERVENTION

Public Opinion: The Vietnam Intervention Period

By July of 1965, at the end of the Vietnam intervention, President Johnson was given equally high poll scores both on domestic policy and foreign policy (primarily reflecting Vietnam). By the end of July, 57 percent approved specifically of Johnson's handling of Vietnam (25 percent disapproved), 60 percent approved of his handling of foreign policy, and 63 percent approval was registered in his handling of domestic policy (Gallup Opinion Index, July, 1965: 4). Unfortunately, the polls did not provide such fine distinctions at the time for Truman and the Korean War.

President Johnson built this level of support by largely drawing on increased Republican support as Truman had done.

The Attraction of GOP Support

The retaliatory bombings in February were a repetition of the Tonkin scenario. Approval was given by 67 percent of the population, with only 15 percent disapproving. Withdrawal sentiment decreased to 18 percent. More importantly, the continuation of the bombings on a steady

basis beginning March 2 maintained President Johnson's level of support for his Vietnam policies by attracting increased support from Goldwater Republicans. This balanced out some defections from Republicans who had voted for Johnson in 1964. A Harris poll of July 19, 1965 described the following trend line.

TABLE 10

SUPPORT FOR LBJ'S HANDLING OF VIETNAM (1965)
HARRIS SURVEY

	March	July	Net Change
Total	60%	65%	+ 5%
All Republicans	53	59	+ 6
GOP for LBJ	71	57	-14
GOP for Goldwater	46	61	+15
Democrats	68	68	Even
Independents	53	62	+ 9

In the same survey, the question was asked: "How would you rate the job President Johnson is doing as President-- excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?" The breakdown of those who rated Mr. Johnson positively (good-excellent) revealed a growing Republican sentiment in favor of Johnson's policies, while some slippage was apparent again in Democratic and moderate GOP voters.

TABLE 11

LBJ JOB RATING TREND - HARRIS SURVEY

National Total	March (66%)	May (65%)	July (69%)	+3 Net Change
All Republicans	47%	52%	56%	+ 9
GOP voted LBJ	86	76	73	-13
GOP voted Goldwater	31	41	51	+20
Democrats	79	78	77	- 2
Independents	65	60	70	+ 5

The question may be asked how the above figures were specifically due to international rather than domestic affairs. Republican approval would seem to have been motivated mostly by Johnson's bombing policies in Vietnam. A Gallup breakdown corroborates the Harris findings.

TABLE 12

GALLUP POLL - QUESTION: "DO YOU APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE OF THE WAY JOHNSON IS HANDLING OUR FOREIGN POLICY--THAT IS, OUR RELATIONS WITH OTHER NATIONS?"

	February, 1965			Early July, 1965			Net Change App.
	App.	Dis- app.	No Op.	App.	Dis- app.	No Op.	
NATIONAL	50%	28%	22%	60%	25%	15%	+10
POLITICS							
Republicans	34	46	20	53	31	16	+19
Democrats	62	19	19	68	19	13	+ 6
Indepen- dents	41	30	29	53	32	15	+12

Again, the increase in GOP support is obvious (nineteen points). Such support did not extend to domestic policy, as Republican support fell off from 50 to 47 percent approval during the intervention. Logically, it follows that the action taken in Vietnam (and perhaps the Dominican Republic in April) was mainly responsible for the Republican upsurge. As Lou Harris put it, "rarely in our history has a President been able to achieve so much support from recent die-hard opposition as Mr. Johnson has" (Harris, July 19, 1965).

If the Vietnam intervention was marked by the same Republican shift as earlier during the Korean intervention (Truman's Republican support, it should be recalled, was far more transitory given the rapid compression of events; after the Chinese intervention, Gallup showed only 19 percent of all Republicans supporting Truman's handling of the war.), it also pointed to two further similarities-- blue collar dovishness and the tapping of the anti-Communist dimension to justify the commitment. Without belaboring the point, responses to a May 18, 1965, question from Gallup indicate the former characteristic: Question-- "Some people think we should not have become involved with our military forces in Southeast Asia, while others think we should have. What is your opinion?" While 52 percent agreed we "should" have become involved, with 25 percent stating the "should not" alternative, what is more significant is a breakdown by education and income categories.

TABLE 13

INVOLVEMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA - GALLUP POLL^a

	Should Not	Should	No Opinion
EDUCATION			
College	20%	68%	12%
High School	25	55	20
Grade School	31	36	33
INCOME			
\$7,000 and over	24	62	14
\$5,000-\$6,999	23	54	23
\$3,000-\$4,999	30	45	25
Under \$3,000	29	40	31

^aSource: (Gallup Opinion Index, June, 1965: 7)

We see that as income and educational levels decrease, the percentage of those approving the commitment in Vietnam decreases as well. This category is composed largely of blacks, poor whites, and other national minorities whose education is largely equivalent to grade school level and who may be relatively uninformed on the commitment in comparison to other segments of the population. This fact is demonstrated by the sizable "no opinion" percentages in both education and income categories.

The data during the intervention period foreshadowed later surveys which were also to find race and social position key predictors of negative attitudes toward the Vietnam War (Verba *et al.*, 1967: 325). This discontent manifested by lower socioeconomic groups had the potential

of being one of the "feeds" into the protest movement against the war. The nation's blacks, for example, experiencing a civil rights revolution superimposed over an Asian war, would protest the disproportionate number of blacks being killed in relation to white soldiers (the more militant blacks saw the war as a white man's conflict against the non-white races of Asia), and the diversion of the nation's energies and resources from the needs of the black man at home. If the nation could fight for the freedom of the South Vietnamese, why could not an equally strong domestic commitment be made to insure black freedom and equality?⁶

Regarding the anti-Communist dimension, the climate of public opinion was similar to the Korean intervention. In August of 1950, when asked for reasons behind approval of sending troops, 53 percent of the public gave as the major reason "having to stop Russian Communism now" (NORC). While the Vietnam intervention was not characterized by a McCarthy-like internal Communist menace, it was nevertheless true that a tough anti-Communist posture mobilized public support for the American presence in Vietnam, as well as facilitating public willingness to accept the Administration explanations for the commitment. Thus, on December 2, 1964, 49 percent of the informed public revealed that "stopping the spread of Communism" was the most important reason for being in Vietnam (Gallup). Even earlier, a Harris survey revealed that the Tonkin air strikes had

been supported largely due to the public impression that Communist aggression had to be punished. A Gallup Poll of January 31, 1965, likewise revealed that a majority of the public (54 percent) held to the view that the United States had a responsibility to keep independent nations from being overrun by the Communists. On June 28, 1965, the Harris survey revealed that 80 percent of the American people subscribed to the domino theory. They believed that the Communists would take over all of Southeast Asia if the United States did not hold firm in Vietnam. By September 12, 1965, Harris again reported the continuation of the strong public belief in the domino theory. As put in the poll question, the American people were nearly seventy-thirty behind the "proposition that Vietnam should be the ground on which the United States should take its stand against Communism in Asia."

Whom did the public see as the specific enemy in Vietnam? In Korea, before the Chinese intervened, the enemy was clearly the Soviet Union. On January 11, 1950, 60 percent had replied that the Soviets did not want peace and were the principal threat to world stability, with 22 percent taking the contrary view. Even after the Chinese intervened, the public overwhelmingly saw the Soviets as the real mastermind behind the invasion. On December 30, 1950, Gallup asked the question--"Do you think the Chinese entered the fighting in Korea on orders from Russia or not?" The reply was Yes (81 percent), No

(5 percent), No Opinion (14 percent). In the case of Vietnam, the public, at least in the early period of the Vietnam War, accepted the Administration's rationale of China being the real aggressor in Vietnam. Conversely, the Soviets were seen as more conciliatory and moderate. In March of 1961, the Soviet Union by a ratio of five to three was considered a far greater menace than China. Just four years later, Red China was perceived as the greater potential threat, according to Harris, with nearly three times as many respondents naming China. Nearly 18 percent thought the Soviet Union would side with the United States against China in case of war, with another 23 percent uncertain as to which side the Soviet Union would join (59 percent saw her backing China). China was described by a majority of respondents as "uncivilized" and "war-like" (Los Angeles Times, March 29, 1965).

On balance, then, the mass public looked to the Administration for cues and policy guidance during the Vietnam intervention period. But if the mass public still largely supported the Administration, the more elite elements of the political system were already actively dissenting from the Administration over the war.

Congressional Hawk-Dove Divisions - The Politics of Consensus

The constellation of pressures acting upon the Johnson Administration in late March and early April would

lead to the John Hopkins speech. The speech would be both an answer to international peace pressures, as well as an affirmation of American firmness not to retreat from her commitment. But more importantly, the speech symbolized that the President was uncomfortably aware of the latent bifurcation in both public and Congressional sectors. It should be remembered that the Pleiku non-rally point had, in a sense, exacerbated hawk-dove divisions in the country rather than healing the breach.

President Johnson had been made uncomfortably aware of a distinct sentiment for withdrawing from Vietnam during the intervention period, or at least offering to negotiate some kind of settlement that would facilitate withdrawal. Among the more articulate critics of American policy were some prominent members of the President's own party in the Senate, including Mike Mansfield, the Senate Majority Leader (Mansfield on at least four separate occasions called for neutralization of South Vietnam-- twice in 1964, twice during the intervention period.) who predicted on July 22, 1965 (New York Times) that the rumored troop increase would mean the beginning of a ten year war in Asia, and Senator William Fulbright, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. On the other hand, there was also a chorus calling for a greater American effort (Symington, Jackson, Dirksen, Thurmond, and McGee), even an escalation of the war that might lead to a "confrontation" with China.

Congress, especially the Senate, reflected the hawk-dove nature of the Vietnam intervention period. (The House, with very few exceptions, totally supported LBJ.) If one defined a Senate "dove" as advocating negotiations immediately, neutralization of South Vietnam, the immediate withdrawal of American troops, or a demand for the United Nations to handle the Vietnam problem, and a "hawk" as demanding a greater military effort, victory, or carrying the war into the North, the following results could be obtained based on an Associated Press survey of January 6, a U.S. News and World Report poll in mid-February, and a culling of Congressional Record statements and public speeches throughout the entire intervention period.

TABLE 14

SENATE HAWK-DOVE DIVISIONS

Doves (Democrats)	- Morse, Church, Fulbright, Gruening, Clark, Young, Brewster, Nelson, Gore, Hartke, McGovern, Pell, Bartlett, Mansfield, Johnston, Ribicoff, McCarthy, Bayh. (18)
(Republicans)-	Javits, Cooper, Aiken. (3)
Hawks (Democrats)	- Dodd, R. Long, McGee, Monroney, R. Byrd, Lausche, Stennis, Smathers, Holland, Jackson, Symington. (11)
(Republicans)-	Williams, Dirksen, Hickenlooper, Miller, Kuchel, Carlson, Stennis, Eastland, Bennett, Thurmond, Saltonstall, Tower, Mundt, Scott. (14)
Totals:	(21 Doves; 18 D, 3 R) (25 Hawks; 11 D, 14 R)
Total in Senate:	68 Democrats; 32 Republicans; 53 Senators unclassifiable

A few qualifying statements are in order at this point. First of all it must be remembered that within each classification there were varying degrees of "hawkishness" or "dovishness." While Morse and Gruening, for example, were extreme doves (as Thurmond and Long were extreme hawks) consistent all along in their opposition, many of the other Senators so categorized qualified their stand to such an extent that one was forced to label them on balance. Secondly, this hawk-dove division should not be construed as having the degree of intensity experienced at a later stage in the war. In essence, this classification scheme indicated a potential for even greater dissent within the Senate. During the intervention period, the Senate, despite objecting to Administration policy, could not gain a large attentive audience, particularly in the mass public. Costs of the war had not yet been felt appreciably, and the tendency was to look to the President for guidance and direction. As far as the political ramifications went, President Johnson could make up for defections in his own party by gaining supporters among Republicans, a development that paralleled public opinion.

What is apparent from the classification scheme is that Senate Republicans were much more prone toward "hawkishness" than Senate Democrats. Dirksen would back President Johnson throughout 1965 and early 1966, until he felt that the President was not pursuing the goal of victory. Like their Korean predecessors, Senate

Republicans, for the most part, saw Vietnam policy within a MacArthur syndrome--there was no substitute for victory.

Indeed, hawkish--not dovish--pressures were initially the more influential. One important reason undoubtedly was that more of the hawks than doves were members of the Senate "Inner Club." The Armed Services Committee was decidedly hawkish. Of its twelve Democratic members, only Young of Ohio could be considered a dove. By contrast, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was more evenly divided, thus reducing its ability to influence the Johnson Administration. There were nine classifiable doves (eight Democrats, one Republican)--Mansfield, Morse, Fulbright, Gore, Church, Clark, Pell, McCarthy, and Aiken (R). The nine hawks included (five Democrats, four Republicans) Long, Lausche, Symington, Dodd, McGee, Hickenlooper (R), Carlson (R), Williams (R), and Mundt (R). Such a division had a built-in advantage and disadvantage which cancelled each other out. On the plus side, a move by the President in either a hawk or dove direction would win a degree of support; on the negative side, such an action would antagonize a particular faction. A careful juggling act was needed.

The President Maneuvers

The policy adopted by Lyndon Johnson was to emphasize the consensual approach, i.e., to conduct a war policy featuring appeals to both hawk and dove. Such a decision

was not only necessitated by divisions within Congress but by those in the public as well. In an attempt to heal the breach in public and Congressional opinion, Johnson invoked, as President Truman had done before him in Korea, the national ideals and traditional objectives at stake in the Vietnam commitment. To understand this technique further, eight speeches of President Truman given during the Korean intervention were contrasted with eight speeches of President Johnson delivered during the Vietnam period. Again no frequency of themes was tabulated. If the theme appeared in the speech it was checked as occurring (given a score of one).

TABLE 15

PRESENCE OF THEMES IN INTERVENTION SPEECHES

Theme	TRUMAN (N=8) Number of speeches in which theme occurs	JOHNSON (N=8)
We seek no wider war;	6 (75%)	7 (87%)
We seek no territory for ourselves; Conquest not our aim; Aim is to keep SV/SK free;	5 (62%)	8 (100%)
America must keep her commitment to resist aggression;	7 (87%)	7 (87%)
Time for all Americans to pitch in--Call for National unity;	7 (87%)	2 (25%)
We will achieve victory;	4 (50%)	1 (12%)

The high percentage of both Presidents to stress America's selfless aims in combatting aggression was intended to establish the most fundamental appeals to American pride and toughness. The importance of keeping American commitments had been a familiar theme from both Presidents. Interestingly enough, in keeping with the nature of the two limited wars, victory was stressed appreciably less by Johnson.

However, although stopping aggression was a grand principle, and unexceptionable, it gave no "signal" either to the Communist enemy, allies, or domestic "attentive sources" as to what, in positive terms the President wished to achieve. As has been observed, dovish sentiment, according to the public opinion polls, was stronger in the early months of the intervention, particularly before the John Hopkins speech in April and the bombing pause in May. A survey of "prestige" editorials reveals that out of seventy-six total editorials for the pre-John Hopkins period (February 7-April 6), forty-two editorials or 55 percent stressed the need to negotiate.

The John Hopkins Speech

Therefore, the John Hopkins speech offered something to both hawks and doves in Congress and the public. There was, in short, a full-scale appeal to that "consensus" Johnson often said he wished to build in support of his Administration. The President began by answering in both

general and specific terms the question: "Why are we in South Vietnam?" "We fight because we must fight if we are to live in a world where every country can shape its own destiny. And only in such a world will our own freedom be finally secure." More specifically, the United States was fighting in Vietnam because "over many years, we have made a national pledge to help South Vietnam defend its independence. I intend to keep our promise." The alternative to withdrawal had to be rejected, because "to leave Vietnam to its fate would shake the confidence of . . . people in the value of the American commitment. The result would be increased unrest and instability, or even war." The final reason the President offered was his conviction that if the struggle were given up, "the battle would be renewed in one country and then another. The central lesson of our time is that the appetite of aggression is never satisfied" (Johnson, 1965: 395).

Turning to the issue of American bombing in North Vietnam, the President spelled out his policy:

In recent months, attacks on South Vietnam were stepped up. Thus, it became necessary to increase our response and to make attacks by air. This is not a change of purpose. It is a change in what we believe that purpose requires.

We do this in order to slow down aggression. We do this to increase the confidence of the brave people of South Vietnam. . . . And we do this to convince the leaders of North Vietnam--and all who seek to share their conquest--of a simple fact: We will not be defeated. We will not grow tired. We will not withdraw . . . (Johnson, 1965: 395-396).

If this message was clear, Johnson said, "it should also be clear that the only path for reasonable men is the path of peaceful settlement." He was prepared to negotiate immediately and discussions would be "unconditional." Finally, in a statement indicative of this consensus-building speech, the President pledged that he would "use our power with restraint," (dove) and with all the wisdom we can command, but we will use it" (hawk) (Johnson, 1965: 396).

The transcendent purpose of the speech, then, had been to bridge the divisions at home by offering a careful mixture of firmness with moderation, and by so doing appeal directly to the hawk-dove dual nature of the average American. The immediate response to the speech was affirmative, from Congress and the public. Perhaps the most critical national organization of Vietnam policy--The National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy--greeted Johnson's statement enthusiastically, calling the speech "the first major step by the United States toward a peaceful settlement." Editorial comment was favorable in all five prestige newspapers cited. Congressional approval crossed party lines, although hawkish Republicans grumbled that the President was trying to "buy" peace (New York Times, April 9, 1965).

Nevertheless each side could interpret the speech in ways suited to its own viewpoint. Johnson's admonition that "we will not grow tired . . . we will not withdraw . . .

we will not be defeated" was presumed by hawks to mean that further military action and escalation would be required to prevent such eventualities from occurring. To the doves, the onus of withdrawal could be mitigated by a honorable peace. They saw the John Hopkins speech as a preliminary step that might gain added impetus for peace if followed by the next logical step--a bombing pause.

John Hopkins: Aftermath

As the bombing raids in April continued to probe deeper toward Hanoi and rumors of more troops to be sent to South Vietnam filled the air, the President again balanced out his policy options by ordering a bombing halt from May 13 to May 18, a move which affirmed his image as a dedicated peacemaker. Additionally in the post-John Hopkins period (April 7-July 28), the President conducted six live television press conferences, reaffirming in each his intention to resist aggression but to avoid a "wider war." (The "wider war" phrase had been used repeatedly by the President throughout the intervention period. It was probably designed to soothe fears that Americans might face serious costs from the war as well as promote the image of restraint befitting a great power.) Secondly, questions posed to him dealing with criticisms from Senators were answered basically in one of two ways:

- (1) Congress by an overwhelming vote had given him authority to repel Communist aggression by the Gulf of Tonkin resolution.
- (2) The Congressional critics certainly had the right to voice their opinion, as long as it was responsible.⁷

Finally, the President continued to invoke his "three Presidents" pledge, i.e., the commitment to South Vietnam had been reaffirmed by Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy. Since he had "inherited" that commitment and sacred pledge, he would not break "America's word." In essence, this appeal was bipartisan, showing that America's involvement in Vietnam had not been a unilateral, partisan initiative.

The impact of Johnson's consensus building was readily apparent: Overall support, according to the Harris survey, rose from 57 to 65 percent in the April-July period (Harris, August 21, 1965). But the major point to consider is that the President was taking decisive action on a deeply divisive issue by means of unifying tactics. What he had said was conciliatory not only to the Communist enemy but to the various kinds of opposition in his own constituency. If Johnson's tactics could not produce unanimous backing for the hard course he was taking, it nevertheless held nearly intact the consensus he had gained in the 1964 election campaign, while blunting sharp criticisms.

Despite the general success of Johnson's consensus-building, the complete obliteration of dissent was not a

possibility. Ironically, one of the drawbacks of the John Hopkins speech was that it heightened appetites for further demonstration by the President of the sincerity of his words.

The Bombing Pause and Further Administration Maneuvers

Thus it followed that bombing pause pressures commingled with pressures to escalate during the latter half of April and for most of May. On April 15, Senator Fulbright stressed that a pause in the bombing might be "worth trying." He reasoned that the bombing could be resumed at any time if there was no response (New York Times, April 16, 1965). Two days later the first massive demonstration took place in Washington against the war. Over 15,000 demonstrators assailed the American bombing, the White House was picketed, and at the rally itself Senator Gruening called for an immediate bombing pause. The Administration and its defenders immediately reacted to this demonstration. On April 18, a joint Rusk-McNamara news conference reiterated the view that a halt in the air strikes "would only encourage the aggressor and dishearten our friends who bear the brunt of battle." Then five days later, on April 23, Secretary Rusk, in an address to the American Society of International Law, hit hard at the Administration's critics, especially those within the academic community:

I continue to hear and see nonsense about the nature of the struggle there. I sometimes wonder at the gullibility of educated men and the stubborn disregard of plain facts by men who are supposed to be helping our young to learn--especially how to think. . . .

There is no evidence that the Vietcong has any significant popular following in South Vietnam. . . . Let us be clear about what is involved today in Southeast Asia. We are not involved with empty phrases or conceptions that ride upon the clouds. We are talking about the vital national interests of the United States in the peace of the Pacific. We are talking about the appetite for aggression--an appetite that grows upon feeding and that is proclaimed to be insatiable. We are talking about the safety of nations with whom we are allied--and in the integrity of the American commitment to join in meeting attack (Gettleman, 1965: 334-335).

On the same day as Rusk's speech,⁸ the State Department announced it would be sending out more aides to address colleges and private groups throughout the United States to explain the Administration's policy on Vietnam. It was obvious that the Administration was taking the critics seriously for its supporters pressed their case vigorously, but in the process the groundwork was laid for the charge that domestic dissent would be interpreted by Hanoi as implying that this country's will to persevere would be short-lived. This was clearly a tactical blunder on the part of the Administration, as it would be for any Administration in the American democratic system, particularly as the argument against too much argument was only valid if all of the other policy premises were valid. And serious critics disputed them all, i.e., the domino theory, a critical test of the

"wars of national liberation" thesis, and the logic of increasing North Vietnam's costs and concomitantly diminishing their prospects of success by applying steadily increasing levels of military pressure.

The Johnson Administration reasserted its political pattern of attempting to still domestic criticism as it began to gain in intensity. On May 4, 1965, Johnson sent a message to the Congress requesting an authorization of \$700 million solely to prosecute the war in Vietnam for the remaining month and one-half of the fiscal year, which would end on June 30, 1965. But in requesting the authorization, which the Administration admitted was not really needed at the time, the President stated that what he really wanted was an additional approval, by the Congress, of his war policy.

This is not a routine appropriation. For each member of Congress who supports this request is also voting to persist in our effort to halt Communist aggression in South Vietnam. Each is saying that the Congress and the President stand united before the world in joint determination that the independence of South Vietnam shall be preserved and Communist attack will not succeed (Congressional Quarterly, 1965: 883).

The day after the request was made to the Congress, and after a short, hasty meeting of the House Appropriations Committee, the House of Representatives debated the \$700 million appropriation, under a restriction limiting the debate on the measure to one hour. Despite the resolution passing by a vote of 408-7 (all seven opposed were Democrats), many who voted in favor of the resolution openly expressed

their doubts about the course being pursued in Vietnam. Representative John V. Lindsay expressed a typical sentiment when he warned that his vote did not constitute approval of the Administration's whole policy in Vietnam. Furthermore, it did not imply an endorsement for the spending of more millions, or the continuing commitment of more American men to the war (Gruening and Beaser, 1968: 287-288). In the Senate, many of the same doubts were heard, but the vote was still lopsided--88 to 3 in favor of the resolution. (Nelson, Gruening, and Morse opposed.) Senator Robert Kennedy echoed the sentiments that Lindsay had stressed, stating that the resolution was to back up the "present policy" of the President, not to serve as an endorsement of future escalation. The same rationale had been expressed during debate on approval of the Tonkin Gulf resolution, yet it had passed overwhelmingly just as the May, 1965 resolution would.

In the final analysis, votes turned out to be more important than words. One may blame Congress for not disputing executive will, but at the same time countering a Presidential directive at this point in time would run contrary to the traditional discretion and subservience granted by Congress once American forces and power had been already committed. American casualties were already becoming prominent (April 22 had seen the first extensive ground action of the war just nine miles from DaNang. There had been twenty-five Marine casualties.) and to

fail to rally behind the "boys in the field" seemed not only disloyal but cruel as well. As Republican Minority Leader Ford asserted, Congress' action "should convince our enemies that we, Democrats or Republicans, can stand together to do that which is right, legislatively speaking, in conjunction with the requests of the executive branch." By comparison, Senator Gruening stated that "this is not a rubber stamp Congress. We should resent being dragged around like a dog on a leash . . . Let's consider this bill on its merit." Morse charged that the H J Res. 447 gave "the President power to make undeclared war." But this sensitivity to Presidential usurpation of powers would gain added momentum with the passage of time. However, in early May, 1965, conditions did not grant such a charge priority over the value of American lives.

The second attempt to maintain the consensus by the Administration was the halting of the bombing raids from May 13 to May 18. It is interesting to note that the unannounced pause had been preceded by another flurry of political demonstrations--a May 7 protest at Columbia University, a May 11 demonstration before the White House, and a May 12 vigil before the Pentagon conducted by Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish clergymen. The latter demonstrators' spokesman confronted Defense Secretary McNamara with the contention that the "bombing was driving us further away from the negotiating table than bringing us closer to it" (Washington Post, May 13,

1965). It should not be assumed, of course, that there was a direct correspondence between the incidence of protest and the resulting pressure upon the Administration to conduct a bombing pause. (However, one is struck by the fact that on May 15-16, a long-planned national teach-in was held in Washington, a teach-in which was broadcast over a radio-television hookup to more than one-hundred campuses across the nation. One major theme was the refusal of the Administration to consider halting the bombing.) It is more likely that the pause was intended to clear the decks for a more intensive military commitment while simultaneously proving to critics that Hanoi would not respond to such a military relaxation. Furthermore, during the May 19-June 1 period, heavy fighting erupted in South Vietnam's five northern provinces, which turned out to be the start of a summer Viet Cong offensive. It can be contended that the Administration expected such an eventuality, and stopped the bombing as either a last-ditch effort toward peace or with the understanding that negotiations were not likely with an enemy poised for a major offensive. Despite charges that the pause was much too short for any significant response from Hanoi to occur, the Administration had gained the appearance of additional credibility. With the failure of the bombing pause to achieve results, the road lay open to the pressures demanding the commitment of further American troops.

Time would eventually undermine the bases of Johnson's intervention consensus. But in general, the strains of dissensus could not be amplified until there were audiences willing to listen more attentively. For the moment, the containment of the forces of dissent was more than adequate testimony to the power of a President to build a consensus in the initial stage of an American limited war.

NOTES

1. "In the conventional war, the aggressor who has prepared for it within the confines of his national territory, channeling his resources into the preparation, has much to gain by attacking suddenly with all his forces. The transition from peace to war is as abrupt as the state of the art allows; the first shock may be decisive. This is hardly possible in the revolutionary war because the aggressor--the insurgent--lacks sufficient strength at the outset. Indeed, years may sometimes pass before he has built up significant political, let alone military, power. So there is usually little or no first shock, little or no surprise, no possibility of an early decisive battle. In fact, the insurgent has no interest in producing a shock until he feels fully able to withstand the enemy's expected reaction" (Galula, 1964: 9-10).

2. On January 6, Senator Morse stated that the Johnson Administration would leave office as "the most discredited Administration in history if it continued its current South Vietnam policy" (New York Times, January 3, 1965). Senator Gruening's remarks on February 24 are also noteworthy--". . . if we become involved in a Korea-type foot war in South Vietnam . . . they (GOP) will be among the first to dub the war 'Johnson's war' and to revive the cry that the Democratic Party is the war party" (New York Times, February 25, 1965).

3. The estimate that only 2.5 percent of the captured Viet Cong weapons were Communist-manufactured was confirmed, in part, by an earlier statement of an unnamed American military adviser in Saigon that 90 percent of Viet Cong weapons came from the United States (New York Times, June 18, 1964).

4. Apparently, the mass public concurred in this view. While 75 percent favored a negotiated settlement, a clear need was recognized by those informed to bargain from a position of military strength (Harris Poll, February 22, 1965).

5. During March, Viet Cong activity, as determined by the number of attacks, reached its highest level in seven months (New York Times, March 16, 1965).

6. In this connection, one should note Dr. Martin Luther King's assertion that the United States must negotiate a settlement in Vietnam, and restore a balance among the nation's priorities. Three days later, CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) voted to call for a troop withdrawal from Vietnam, but then reversed itself under the urging of James Farmer, the organization's national director (See Atlanta Constitution, July 3 and 6, 1965).

7. LBJ's April 27 news conference: "I do sometimes wonder how some people can be so concerned with our bombing a cold bridge of steel and concrete in North Vietnam, but never open their mouth about a bomb being placed in our embassy in South Vietnam" (Johnson, 1965: 454).

8. Note: A group of faculty members from Harvard, MIT, and other institutions in the Boston area took notice of the Rusk speech. In a letter written to the New York Times on May 9, 1965, they observed that Rusk was attempting to silence Administration critics by using abusive language. They charged that Rusk was angry because the academic community had pointed out the inconsistencies of Administration policy. It was not scholars but the leaders of the Administration who had shown a "stubborn disregard of plain facts." The Administration had failed to observe the Geneva accord of reunifying elections, the massive intervention by America was incompatible with the goal of self-determination, and the use of napalm, gas, and defoliants hardly was compatible with the noble purposes implied by United States policy.

CHAPTER 5

KOREA AND THE CHINESE INTERVENTION

The Support Dimension

After the American success at Inchon, the assumption grew that the war's early termination was clearly in sight. The majority of the American people saw the war as lasting no longer than six more months:

One month or less	5%
One to six months	28
Six months	18
Six months to one year	19
More than one year	14
No opinion	16
	<u>100%</u>

(Gallup, October 4, 1950). Furthermore, only 20 percent of the American people considered that the United States had made a mistake in "deciding to defend Korea" (65 percent said it was not a mistake--Gallup), while a NORC poll (National Opinion Research Center) indicated a similar pattern of support. NORC's "mistake" question, "Do you think the United States was right or wrong in sending American troops to stop the Communist invasion of South Korea?" invariably gained higher approval scores than Gallup's counterpart due to the "cues" within the question, but it still confirmed the general surge of support which

followed Inchon. One may note the differences between the August and October polls: (By education)

TABLE 16

NORC POLLS: RIGHT TO SEND TROOPS?^a

	National Total	College	High School	Grade School
<u>August, 1950</u>				
Right to send troops	75%	80%	80%	67%
Wrong to send troops	21	17	17	27
Don't know	4	3	3	6
<u>October, 1950</u>				
Right to send troops	81	90	85	74
Wrong to send troops	13	7	11	18
Don't know	6	3	4	8

^aNote: All NORC Polls were provided by the National Opinion Research Center at Chicago.

An increase of support is evident from all three educational levels. The college sector provided the greatest degree of support and grade school least by comparison, a characteristic not dissimilar from the Vietnam experience. As an added confirmation of the support which existed during this period, one must cite NORC polls which asked "Do you approve or disapprove of the way our relations with other countries are being handled by the government officials in charge of our foreign policy?" It should be remembered that "government officials" such as Secretary of State Dean Acheson had been under constant attack by the Taft Republicans while the entire Administration's handling of foreign

policy, particularly in regard to Asia and the "loss of China," had been a subject of intense controversy. Despite the fact that support had been generated in the early months of Korea, the partisan nature of foreign policy was indicated by two NORC polls:

TABLE 17

NORC POLLS: FOREIGN AFFAIRS APPROVAL

	National Total	Breakdowns by Party	
		Democrat	Republican
<u>August, 1950</u>			
Approve handling of foreign affairs	48%	56%	35%
Disapprove handling	36	29	51
No opinion	16	15	14
<u>October, 1950</u>			
Approve handling of foreign affairs	50	60	38
Disapprove handling	35	26	50
No opinion	15	14	12

While a modest increase in support can be seen, Republicans still remained in a general state of disapproval, despite the success at Inchon. Why did Republicans not swing over into the support column as their counterparts did so willingly during the Vietnam intervention? There are a number of explanations one might offer to explain this phenomenon. In the first place, Korea had begun amidst a legacy of acrimony not present in the early days of Vietnam. Republican leaders could point to Korea as another example

of Administration weakness toward Communism, of a by-product of the loss of China, of Acheson's futile policy of "letting the dust settle" in Asia. Secondly, successes in Korea occurred relatively close to a mid-term election, which tempts a rival party to exploit the war issue for political gain to an even greater extent than normal. Thirdly, it should be recalled that Republican voters were generally of a higher socioeconomic and educational level than rank-and-file Democrats, particularly in 1950 when a smaller percentage of working class families sent children to college. It has been shown that the higher the educational level, the more attentive the citizen is to political cues and the more aware he becomes of the issues that his party raises. Therefore, it is assumed that rank-and-file Republicans were more intensely politicized and critical in keeping with their party stand than Democrats.

Despite the opposition by Republicans, the 38 percent approval score registered in October would be the highest threshold of war support that Republicans would give to President Truman's Administration. But after the Chinese intervention and the firing of General MacArthur, the "lock-in" point of both dwindling Republican and Democratic support was firmly fixed.

TABLE 18

NORC--PARTY SUPPORT ON FOREIGN
AFFAIRS HANDLING OVER TIME

Related Event:	After Intervention Jan., 1951		After MacArthur Firing May, 1951		Truce Talks June, 1951	
	D	R	D	R	D	R
Approved officials	44%	25%	34%	19%	44%	18%
Disapprove officials	39	59	51	72	41	74
No opinion	17	16	15	9	15	8
	Jan., 1952		July, 1952		1952 Election Nov., 1952 ^a	
	D	R	D	R	D	R
Approved officials	43%	16%	42%	16%	48%	16%
Disapprove officials	46	75	47	75	36	74
No opinion	11	9	12	9	16	10

^aTaken before 1952 Election.

It is interesting to note that the November, 1952 poll showed a mild return of partisan loyalty on the part of the Democrats. Nevertheless, it is true that after the Chinese intervention and the Republican anger over the MacArthur firing, there was little that President Truman could have done to restore his intervention support level.

The overall pattern of support characteristic of the intervention period thus suffered a disastrous decline after the massive Chinese intervention on November 26, 1950. Truman's popularity, which had been raised to 46 percent approval, 37 percent disapproval after his response to the invasion, plummeted drastically.

TABLE 19

GALLUP POLLS--"DO YOU APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE
OF THE WAY PRESIDENT TRUMAN IS
HANDLING HIS JOB?"

	Approve	Dis- approve	No Opinion	Related Event
July, 1950	46%	37%	17%	North Korean Invasion
August, 1950	43	32	25	
October, 1950	39	42	19	Impending Mid- Term Election
December, 1950	36	49	15	Chinese Inter- vention
January, 1951	31	55	14	United Nations Forces in Re- treat
February, 1951	26	57	17	
March, 1951	26	60	14	
April, 1951	28	57	15	Chinese Spring Offensive
May, 1951	24	63	13	After MacArthur Firing
June, 1951	24	61	15	
July, 1951	28	56	16	(Slight Rise in Popularity Due to Truce Talks)
August, 1951	29	59	12	
February, 1952	22	64	14	
April, 1952	28	60	12	(Following Tru- man's March 29 Announcement that he would be a non- candidate)

It is noteworthy that Truman's personal popularity dropped somewhat even during the intervention period. This can perhaps be attributed to the intensity of the mid-term election and the evidence of Chinese intervention before the November 7 election. In order to understand the significance of the 1950 mid-term election, we must consider it briefly at this point.

The 1950 Election

The three main issues that keynoted the 1952 Republican campaign--Korea, Communism, and corruption--were first used widely by Republican campaigners in 1950. In particular, the Korean War became a symbol of the other two themes. On November 4, Harold Stassen sounded the theme that Korea was a logical corollary of an Administration incapable of fighting Communism because of a lack of will and integrity. In his words, the war was

the direct and terrible result of five years of building up Chinese Communist strength through the blinded, blundering American-Asiatic policy under the present national Administration. It has been five years of coddling Chinese Communists, five years of undermining General MacArthur, five years of snubbing friendly freedom-loving Asiatics, and five years of appeasing the arch-Communist, Mao-Tse-Tung.

And the whole burden of redeeming the blunders in blood is thrust upon American armed forces weakened by a short-sighted, socialistically inclined national Administration (New York Times, November 5, 1950).

Stassen also cited the "grim news" that 100,000 Chinese Communists were now fighting in North Korea and that American casualties were hitting a new peak. Finally he mentioned the issue of inflation, noting that "in five years of Truman, . . . the cost of living has climbed so that the dollar will buy only 70 percent of what it would five years ago." In essence, the Administration had bungled both on the domestic and international front.

Senator Taft joined in with a similar attack, particularly emphasizing the Chinese intervention. (On

November 6, General MacArthur had officially told the United Nations that the Chinese were fighting in Korea.) Taft charged on November 5 that "the Chinese Communist power which is slaughtering American boys in Korea today was encouraged by the Truman Administration" (St. Louis Post Dispatch, November 6, 1950). Republican Party Chairman Guy Gabrielson at the same time insisted that the Democrats were attempting to hide the fact from the voters that "Chinese Communist divisions are pouring into Korea, inflicting heavy casualties on our troops" (New York Times, November 6, 1950). Finally, Republican Senators Flanders, Ives, and Smith issued a statement on November 6 which linked the Korean War to an Administration policy "dominated by a small willful group in the State Department intent upon appeasing the Chinese Communist revolution" (New York Times, November 7, 1950).

What was the effect on the late-election hour intervention by the Chinese on the American voter? As columnist Jack Bell pointed out, "the possibility that the recent adverse turn of the Korean War would affect the voters' decision was not discounted by either party" (St. Louis Post Dispatch, November 6, 1950). There is no precise answer to the question as polls did not tap the significance of the event, but one may speculate that the possibility of prolonged fighting given the Chinese intervention did not sit well with the average voter. It may have reinforced the Republican charges of Administration mismanagement in international affairs.

In any event, the Republicans won an additional twenty-eight seats net in the House, along with five additional Senate seats from the Democrats. By numbers alone, this was not a particularly impressive Republican gain, especially when contrasted with the GOP gains in 1946, when fifty-five seats in the House and twelve seats in the Senate were won from the Democrats. At his news conference, President Truman on November 16 called the election the "smallest loss for the party in power since 1916, with the exception of 1934" (Truman, 1950: 713). But the quality of Republican victories, particularly in the Senate, was impressive. In Illinois, Everett Dirksen defeated Senator Scott Lucas, the Senate Majority Leader and key Administration supporter of its Korean policy. In California, Richard Nixon, charging the theme of "softness toward Communism," defeated Mrs. Douglas, another Administration supporter. Senator Tydings (Chairman of the Armed Service Committee) of Maryland fell before John Butler, in a campaign which centered on McCarthyism and Korea. Tydings had investigated McCarthy's charges in Congress and branded them as "lies." Senate Democratic Whip Francis J. Myers was defeated by Governor James H. Duff. Duff attributed his victory mainly to the "Korean situation . . . the average citizen that thought about the problem felt that our Asiatic policy had been badly mishandled" (U.S. News and World Report, November 17, 1950: 28).

In the final analysis, if Korea were not the only issue affecting the campaign, it certainly was responsible

for building a general atmosphere of resentment which hurt the Democratic party. In a U.S. News and World Report survey after the election, 200 candidates for office, both winners and losers, were asked as to why they thought they won or lost. The results were as follows:

- (1) One out of every two candidates found the coddling of Communists as a major issue, aiding Republicans, hurting Democrats.
- (2) Policy abroad ran a close second to Communism. About one candidate in three found voter resentment at loss of China, or foreign aid, or failure to stop the Russians from more gains.
- (3) War and its irritations, at the same time, cost more votes for Democrats. Nearly one candidate in three found people unhappy about failure of U.S. to be strong, about losses in war, and the draft.
- (4) Spending and taxes came next. One candidate in four found voters unhappy about high government spending and taxes (November 17, 1950: 26).

Syndicated columnists seemed to interpret the election in a similar way. Raymond Brandt of the St. Louis Post Dispatch saw the Republican gains as being attributed primarily to McCarthyism. The vicious and irresponsible attack on the Administration's handling of Communists and fellow-travelers, the military situation in Korea, and high prices had been important. Brandt saw the Republican victories as enhancing the stature of Taft and McCarthy, while "having an important bearing on the 1952 Presidential race." Marquis Child concurred, stating that in "every contest where it was a major factor McCarthyism won. This can be counted as reinforcing the General MacArthur get-

tough-in-Asia approach." David Lawrence linked the Democratic defeat to an insufficient defense effort in the Far East and on high taxes at home. According to his analysis, organized labor, a traditional Democratic stronghold, had failed to heed Administration appeals because of protest over the war, a vacillating foreign policy, and high taxes (St. Louis Post Dispatch, November 24, 1950).

In reference to labor, an unidentified Democratic analyst in a post-election poll found that labor's vote did not "turn out" as well as expected. He noted that "the returns in many areas represented a temporary triumph for the smear campaign of character assassination." People were worried about the terrible complexity of the international situation, and it was convenient to accept the scapegoat suggested by McCarthy and crew. This was the simple-minded answer to all the troubles of war in Korea, the draft, rising prices, and uncertainty about the future. "The Chinese Communists intervention several days before the election made World War III a terrible certainty." The analyst also noted that McCarthy's charges had done particularly well in the urban areas (high labor concentration) where "hysteria seemed to grip the city population like a strange disease" (St. Louis Post Dispatch, November 24, 1950). McCarthyism seemed to possess special attraction for the lower-class working man. In this sense

it was a dual threat to the Administration. It was a rally point for Republicans and a corresponding loss in a traditional Democratic stronghold.

In summary, the 1950 election was a critical election in a period of political change. It not only strengthened the Republican party, but it could also be construed as an indictment of the Truman Administration for failing to prevent the Korean conflict in the first place. As Arthur Krock stated on November 8, the State Department was the loser in the election (New York Times, November 9, 1950). It foreshadowed trends which would emerge in a Republican victory in 1952, i.e., those massive Democratic defections to the Republican Presidential candidate in 1952 and 1956. Finally, it increased the strength of Republican pressures upon Truman to allow General MacArthur discretion in conducting the war, for they interpreted the election results as a mandate to oppose Democratic weakness in foreign policy. Reactions on November 8 lend credence to the above.

Stassen saw the voters as having "repudiated the Truman Administration's foreign policy" and also backing Republican charges that Acheson should resign. Senator Brewster, Maryland Republican, insisted that "General MacArthur should be given full authority to go across the Manchurian border if he is attacked." GOP National Chairman Gabrielson insisted that "our people have made it plain that they are opposed to appeasement of Communists whether at

home or abroad." Even Jacob M. Arvey, a Chicago Democratic Chairman admitted that "the war has made people nervous and unhappy. They're afraid their boys are going to war, and they took it out on us" (New York Times, November 8, 1950). With the advent of the massive Chinese intervention on November 26, 1950, the strains that had emanated from the mid-term election were intensified.

The Chinese Intervention--The Consolidation
of the Lock-In Point

The evidence of Chinese intervention in late October had prompted the Administration to try and assess the implications of such an action. The Central Intelligence Agency told the President that the Soviets would like to see the United States become so heavily involved in Asia that they could have a free hand in Europe. The CIA judged that there might be as many as 200,000 Chinese Communist troops in Manchuria, who could stop our advance and even force a retreat (New York Times, October 22, 1950). While Chinese intentions were uncertain, the CIA believed that the Chinese knew that their intervention put their prestige at stake, and were willing to risk the full consequences.

The Joint Chiefs felt that it was important to try and convince the Chinese that United Nations' aims were limited, and during the second and third weeks of November it seemed that such assurances might be working. After their initial attacks the Chinese broke off action,

appearing to have withdrawn from combat. On November 16, President Truman in his weekly news conference made a formal statement, assuring the Chinese that the United States would "take every honorable step to prevent any extension of the hostilities in the Far East," and that there was no "intention to carry hostilities into China" (Truman, 1950: 712). One day earlier, Acheson had assured the Chinese Communists that the United States would protect their interests in the power facilities along the Manchurian-Korean border (New York Times, November 16, 1950). In any event, the United Nations offensive proceeded to push onward toward the Yalu, and on November 21 the first American troops reached the Chinese border. No Chinese were sighted, and on November 24 MacArthur released his "end the war offensive" statement, while stating to one of his field commanders, Major John Coulter, that he wanted to make good his promise that American soldiers would eat Christmas dinner at home (St. Louis Post Dispatch, November 24, 1950).

On November 26, 200,000 Communist troops hit the American Eighth Army. The Chinese hurled the American forces back, shattering the center of the United Nations' line, and forcing a retreat that would continue throughout the month of December and halfway through January of 1951. On November 28, General MacArthur issued a communique saying the United Nations was up against "an entirely new war" with China after having demolished the North Korean

Army. Over 200,000 regular Chinese army troops had shredded the hope that the Chinese intervention was, as Peking propagandists claimed, "only of a token nature and on a volunteer and individual basis." MacArthur warned that far greater Chinese forces were concentrated in "the privileged sanctuary north of the international boundary (Manchuria)." By the third of December, General MacArthur asked Washington for new instructions in dealing with the situation. This request implied an early advocacy of an expansion of the war to China:

The directives under which I am operating based upon the North Korean forces as an enemy are completely outmoded by events. The fact must be clearly understood that our relatively small force now faces the full offensive power of the Chinese Communist nation augmented by extensive supply of Soviet material. The strategic concept suitable for operations against the North Korean Army which was so successful is not susceptible to continued application against such power. This calls for political decisions and strategic plans in implementation thereof, adequate fully to meet the realities involved (Truman, 1956: 393).

MacArthur's call for new "political decisions" and "strategic plans" were echoed by the domestic reactions to the crisis as well. The initial Administration reaction to the Chinese intervention was that it was only a part of a global Communist strategy, a point which was confirmed by Acheson's testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in which he stressed the real possibility that Russia might strike at any moment in Western Europe (New York Times, November 29, 1950). Caution and keeping the war limited were necessary prerequisites when viewing the

total international picture. Republican Senators, however, echoed the MacArthur theme that full Chinese intervention had changed the prior operating rules on the war's conduct. Democratic conduct of foreign policy had again blundered, by not preparing for a possible Chinese intervention as it had not for the June invasion. Therefore it was time to let the military under the auspices of General MacArthur end the war. Senator Cain on November 28 demanded that "General MacArthur ought immediately to be given the right to strike wherever military necessity dictates, behind the Yalu River, or anywhere else . . . We are at war in every sense of that word" (Congressional Record, November 28, 1950: 15940). In the following week, Republicans Capehart, Knowland, McCarthy, Bridges, Taft, Bricker, Wherry, Kem, and Jenner joined in to defend MacArthur and advocated an unleashing of American military strength (mostly air and sea power, not ground troops) against China itself.

The pressures to escalate the war from Republican hawks were ironically encouraged by the President himself. At his November 30 news conference, Truman revealed that the use of the atomic bomb in Korea was under active consideration and that its use would not depend on the United Nations but on the military commander in the field (Truman, 1950: 727). A later White House statement qualified the President's statement, by affirming that only the President could authorize the bomb's use and that the military commander would only have charge of the

"tactical delivery" of the bomb. Whatever the wording, Truman's statement jolted Europe and stirred division in Congress. Senator Owen Brewster (Republican, Maine), Senator Maybank (Democrat, South Carolina) and Senator Flanders (Republican, Vermont) favored using the atom bomb, while Senator Millikin (Republican, Colorado) warned against using the bomb "impetuously." Surprisingly, two liberal Democrats could be placed among the hawks. Senator Claude Pepper (Democrat, Florida) called on December 5 for an attack on China, and Senator Paul H. Douglas (Democrat, Illinois) urged immediate use of the atomic bomb on Chinese population centers (New York Times, December 6, 1950).

It should be pointed out that the impact of the Chinese intervention not only spurred hawkish sentiment in Congress but also among key national groups. Veterans groups, including the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars wrote Truman December 7 that MacArthur should be given "full authority" to fight the Korean War however he sees fit even if that means bombing Manchuria (New York Times, December 8, 1950). While opinion seemed united on resisting further Soviet aggression, there was some "dovish" sentiment for pulling American troops out of Korea and conserving American strength for an eventual showdown with Russia on more favorable ground. This course was recommended December 5 by two groups of prominent New Yorkers and Bostonians including poet Archibald MacLeish

and Christian Science Monitor editor Edwin D. Canham (New York Times, December 6, 1950).

If there was a reaction to the turn of events in Korea from the mass public it could only be described as one of deepening disillusionment. The issues of Democratic incompetence in foreign policy had had little time to die down since the November election, and now a new crisis had occurred in Korea. Taxes had already been increased in October to finance the war, and a December 16 proclamation by President Truman proclaiming a national emergency included the proviso that "still further taxes will be needed" (New York Times, December 17, 1950). On December 12, the Defense Department had announced that draft calls for January and February of 1951 had been boosted from the original estimates of 50,000 monthly to 80,000 for each month. It was quite likely that World War II veterans would be recalled to active service. On December 21, MacArthur headquarters in Tokyo announced that casualties had numbered 11,964 since the start of the ill-fated offensive November 24 through December 12 (New York Times, December 22, 1950). Finally, the worry of a third World War was uppermost in the minds of the public. On December 7, the ninth anniversary of Pearl Harbor, Gallup revealed that 55 percent of the American public thought World War III had begun.

These constellations of domestic and international pressures were hardly conducive to maintaining Administration

support, especially for an Administration that had already met defeat at the polls a month earlier. The extent of disaffection was readily apparent from public opinion polls taken in December. In August, Gallup found that only two persons in ten had thought that the United States had made a mistake in deciding to defend Korea, but the surprise entry of the Chinese into the war, with its implications of greater domestic costs, had indeed changed the complexion of American public opinion. One month after China had entered the war, almost half (49 percent) held the view that the United States had blundered. Here is the trend:

TABLE 20

GALLUP POLL: WAR A MISTAKE^a

	After China Entered War	August, 1950
Yes, we made a mistake	49%	20%
No, we did not	38	65
No opinion	13	15

^aSource: All Korean polls acquired from AIPO in Princeton, New Jersey.

The shifts in sentiment had occurred equally among Republicans as well as Democrats. This was revealed by another Gallup Poll which asked the following:

TABLE 21

GALLUP POLL: DECEMBER 19, 1950
 QUESTION: "DO YOU THINK OUR GOVERNMENT IN WASHINGTON
 HAS BEEN DOING A GOOD JOB OR A POOR JOB OF HANDLING
 OUR FOREIGN POLICY IN ASIA--THAT IS,
 IN KOREA, CHINA, ETC.?"

National Vote:

Good Job	17%
Fair Job	21
Poor Job	50
No Opinion	12

By Political Party:

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Inde- pendents</u>
Good Job	26%	10%	13%
Fair Job	24	18	21
Poor Job	39	62	51
No Opinion	11	10	15

Opinion did split along partisan lines, with Republicans more critical of Asiatic policy than Democrats were. But even among Democrats the weight of opinion was unfavorable. Clearly one of the features of the "lock-in" point is that support dwindles among voters of both political parties, and that a Democratic President's loss of support in his own party is very likely to be transferred to a political coalition, although temporary, involving the opposition. But it should be noted that this short-term shift of allegiance must be based upon reasoning which seems self-evident from the military situation. In short, the American people had tolerated the initial outbreak of hostilities and had even rallied to the Administration's defense. Now a second reversal seemed to confirm for many

Americans that the present Administration was simply incapable of handling the situation, and that sources outside the ruling party must be relied upon to find a solution for ending the war.

The Growth of Disenchantment

These "sources" or "policy alternatives" were readily available for the public to consider in the person of General MacArthur. MacArthur symbolized a means of rectifying the situation, for in his constant refrain that he could not defeat the Chinese due to Administration restrictions was implied that the war might end in an American victory if the Truman Administration would lift the restraints upon him. In a negative sense he was an ever-present reminder that the war was stalemated. To Republicans, the Administration was inherently incapable of taking forceful action. They constantly reminded the public that the President and his Secretary of State were the creators of a policy of appeasement and vacillation as contrasted to MacArthur's boldness and military prowess.² In short, the failure of American policy in Korea as represented by the Chinese military successes in December seemed unnecessary when the path of victory appeared available, if only American leadership would seize the initiative.

But Republicans continued to insist that the Administration was incapable of seizing the initiative. Because

we were at war, total mobilization was needed, and yet the Administration refused to follow this course. On December 14, Governor Dewey charged that the United States stood "almost naked before the world" and demanded that "the total resources of our nation" be mobilized to cope with Russia which wants the "whole world" (New York Times, December 15, 1950). But on the same day, testimony by Defense Secretary Marshall suggesting only limited mobilization was released. It was not only Republicans who chafed at the slow pace of defense preparedness. On December 12, Senator Lyndon B. Johnson, Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Military Preparedness, denounced the defense effort as "adolescent nonsense." He demanded full mobilization instead of a "chicken wire" defense and said that the people are "sick and tired of the double talk coming out of Washington . . . we are not getting ready for a war, but all our effort, seemingly, is directed at staying out of a war we are already in" (Washington Post, December 13, 1950). The President did order a partial mobilization on December 16 and some price and wage controls, but Republicans Wherry, Morse and Ives expressed doubt that selective price-wage controls would work. By contrast, they backed Governor Dewey's proposal for mandatory ceilings on all business.

The attack on Secretary Acheson did not abate either. House Republicans on December 15 held a conference and passed overwhelmingly by voice vote a resolution that said

Acheson had "lost the confidence of the Congress and the American people and cannot regain it. . . . We earnestly insist that Acheson be replaced and there be a thorough house-cleaning in the State Department and changes in the personnel and policies responsible for this lack of confidence" (New York Times, December 16, 1950). In the Senate, Senator Kem led a similar Senate anti-Acheson move. Lame duck Senator Scott W. Lucas called the GOP action "an invitation to Stalin to strike anywhere." Additionally, President Truman responded to the attack on his Secretary of State at his December 19 news conference.

How our position in the world would be improved by the retirement of Dean Acheson from public life is beyond me. Mr. Acheson has helped shape and carry out our policy of resistance to Communist imperialism. From the time of our sharing of arms with Greece and Turkey nearly four years ago, and coming down to the recent moment when he advised me to resist the Communist invasion of South Korea, no official in our Government has been more alive to Communism's threat to freedom or more forceful in resisting it. . . . I refuse to dismiss Secretary Acheson (Truman, 1950: 751).

Despite Truman's defense, the repeated charges that Acheson was unfit for office had registered with mass public opinion. Gallup revealed in December that a plurality of the American people had an unfavorable opinion of Acheson: Favorable--20 percent; Unfavorable--31 percent; No Opinion 15 percent; Couldn't identify--34 percent. Of the 66 percent who were able to identify Acheson correctly, Gallup asked a follow-up question: "What do you, yourself think--

should Dean Acheson stay on in his present position, or should he be replaced?" The results:

TABLE 22
ACHESON POPULARITY

	Stay On	Replaced	No Opinion	Couldn't Identify
National Total	21%	30%	15%	34%
By Politics:				
Republican	13	43	14	30
Democratic	26	19	14	41
Independent	23	31	19	27

While Republican antipathy was to be expected, the stay-on Democrats vs. the "replace Democrats" are relatively close, again a factor indicative of the extent of disillusionment present in the President's own party.

Clearly, Acheson's unpopularity was bound to have a carry-over effect upon President Truman's own support level, especially when the President repeatedly defended his Secretary of State. Furthermore, Truman's refusal to expand the war alienated Republican hawks; conversely, his failure to terminate the war in a successful fashion could only erode support among Democratic rank-and-file members. This process of erosion can be seen by comparing the President's popularity percentages over time:

TABLE 23

TRUMAN POPULARITY (GALLUP): "DO YOU APPROVE OR
DISAPPROVE OF THE WAY TRUMAN IS HANDLING HIS
JOB AS PRESIDENT?"

	Republicans	Democrats	Independent
<u>December, 1950</u>			
<u>National Total:</u>	36% approve, 49% disapprove, 15% no opin.		
Approve	19%	53%	32%
Disapprove	70	33	47
No opinion	11	14	21
<u>February, 1951^a</u>			
<u>National Total:</u>	26% approve, 57% disapprove, 15% no opin.		
Approve	13%	42%	17%
Disapprove	75	38	64
No opinion	12	20	19
<u>May, 1951 (After MacArthur firing)</u>			
<u>National Total:</u>	24% approve, 63% disapprove, 13% no opin.		
Party Breakdown:			
Approve	11%	39%	14%
Disapprove	82	42	71
No opinion	7	19	15

^aGallup had stopped interviewing before the United Nations had gone on the offensive in late January.

Between December and May, President Truman had clearly lost support not only from Republicans (which was hardly surprising), but from Democrats as well. That the war issue seems mainly responsible for this bipartisan drop (-14 for Democrats, -8 for Republicans, -18 for Independents in approval percentages) is shown by a cross-tabulation Gallup provided for the February, 1951 time period. Of that segment of the population which believed the war a mistake, 17 percent approved Truman's handling

of the Presidency, but 70 percent disapproved. Conversely, of those individuals who felt the war had not been a mistake, 37 percent approved while 46 percent disapproved of Truman's handling of the Presidency. In short, a favorable attitude toward the Korean commitment was transferred to a more favorable impression of Truman as President, while the reverse was equally true. Even more than Lyndon Johnson, Truman's popularity was intimately tied to a war that became stalemated much more quickly, and the realization of that stalemate prevented a resurgence of popularity. In short, the very rapid compression of events in Korea as opposed to Vietnam's evolutionary and incremental nature, had the effect of consolidating the "lock-in point" at a relatively early stage in the Korean War.

The above hypothesis is further borne out by several Gallup polls released in the early months of 1951 when the military situation in Korea was far from optimistic. In January, Gallup posed the following question: "Suppose Taft were running for President on the Republican ticket against Truman on the Democratic ticket, how do you think you would vote--for Taft or Truman?"

TABLE 24

TAFT-TRUMAN POPULARITY

	Taft	Truman	No Opinion
<u>National Total</u>	44%	41%	15%
<u>By Politics</u>			
Democrats	16	69	15
Republicans	84	8	8
Independents	39	37	24

A second Gallup poll asked the same question, except this time the preference was between Eisenhower and Truman.

TABLE 25

EISENHOWER-TRUMAN POPULARITY

	Eisenhower	Truman	No Opinion
<u>National Total</u>	59%	28%	13%
<u>By Politics</u>			
Democrats	32	56	12
Republicans	90	3	7
Independents	63	16	21

A third poll, taken in late March after the United Nations forces had gone back on the offensive in Korea told the same distressing story for the President. Disaffection among rank-and-file Democratic voters had apparently spread even further. The Gallup question read as follows: "A new

amendment has been passed which limits any future President from being elected to more than two terms. The law says this does not apply to Truman because he was in office when it was passed. Do you think Truman should or should not run for President in 1952?"

TABLE 26

TRUMAN REELECTION

	Should Run	Should Not	No Opinion
National Total	21%	66%	13%
Democrats only	28%	58%	14%

Thus, approximately a year before President Truman officially announced that he would not be a candidate for reelection (March 29, 1952), trial election runs showed him being defeated by both a conservative and moderate Republican candidate, with Democrats not only giving support to Republican candidates (particularly Eisenhower), but overwhelmingly expressing doubt as to whether he should run again. By contrast, one year before his own resignation speech, President Johnson was seen by 72 percent of the electorate as a probable candidate for reelection, and even as late as July, 1967, Johnson had a 51 percent to 43 percent lead over Richard Nixon, the probable Republican candidate (Gallup, March, July, 1967).

January-April, 1951:
The Victory Objective is Abandoned

The grim military picture in December and early January forced the Administration to consider a phased withdrawal from Korea. Such a consideration was in keeping with the avowed Administration's determination to keep the war localized³ and prevent a further weakening of its capacity to maintain its European commitments. In short, the advance of the Chinese Communist offensive was not solely responsible for the gloom which pervaded Washington, but an equally disturbing factor was a perception that Soviet moves in Europe or Asia were imminent.⁴ On December 19, General MacArthur had called for reinforcements, and ten days later a new directive was sent to the Far East Commander:

Chinese Communists now appear, from estimates available, capable of forcing evacuation by forces of UN. By committing substantial United States forces which would place other commitments, including safety of Japan, in serious jeopardy, or by inflicting serious losses on him, the enemy might be forced to abandon exercise of his capability. If with present UN strength successful resistance at some position in Korea without our incurring serious losses could be accomplished and apparent military and political prestige of Chinese Communists could be deflated, it would be of great importance to our national interests. In the face of increased threat of general war JCS believe commitment of additional U.S. ground forces in Korea should not be made since our view is that major war should not be fought in Korea.

. . . Your directive now is to defend in successive positions, subject to safety of your troops as your primary consideration,

inflicting as much damage to hostile forces in Korea as is possible . . . It appears here that if Chinese Communists retain force capability of forcing evacuation after having driven UN forces to rear it would be necessary to direct commencement of your withdrawal (MacArthur Hearings, 1951: 2179-2180).

The new directive, in effect, abandoned earlier military objectives of unifying the country of Korea, advocated a holding, defensive plan of action, minimized the importance of Korea vis-a-vis Japan and "other commitments," and for the moment froze the level of present American ground forces in Korea. In short, a war of attrition had replaced a war of conquest.

MacArthur replied the next day to the Joint Chiefs' directive, insisting "that United States naval and air potential were being only partly utilized and that the potential of the Chinese nationalists on Formosa and guerrilla action on the mainland were being ignored." If the Administration would only recognize that a "state of war" had been "forced upon the United States by China," appropriate retaliatory measures could be taken. These measures included: (1) blockading the coast of China; (2) destroying through naval gunfire and air bombardment China's industrial capacity to wage war; (3) secure appropriate reinforcements from the Nationalist garrison on Formosa; and (4) release existing restrictions upon the Formosa garrison for diversionary action (possibly leading to counter-invasion) against vulnerable areas of the Chinese mainland. If accepted, these measures could

regain the offensive in Korea. Evacuation from Korea would only depress the faith of Asians in America's word and in the case of Europe, accepting defeat in Asia "could not fail to insure later defeat in Europe itself." In essence, a toppling "Korean domino" in Asia would go far in toppling the "dominoes" of Europe (Whitney, 1956: 424-426).

The United Nations:
Catalyst of Further Dissent

While the Administration pondered MacArthur's proposals, the military situation worsened in the early part of January. On January 4, Seoul and the port of Inchon fell to the onrushing Chinese, and during the next seven days Communist advance units pursued the American Eighth Army to a point thirty miles below Seoul near the west coast, and some seventy miles below the thirty-eighth parallel in central Korea. A Pentagon spokesman's assertion on January 5 that there were 950,000 enemy troops in Korea, 500,000 at or near the front and 450,000 in reserve in the North (as opposed to approximately 250,000 United Nations troops) made the odds of imminent withdrawal and defeat seem even lower. At the United Nations, a cease-fire proposal was set forth, despite American objections, involving Communist Chinese representation in the United Nations as a means of furthering negotiations. A special United Nations agency, including Communist China, Russia, Britain, and

the United States would attempt to "settle outstanding Far Eastern issues, including the future of Formosa and Chinese representations in the United Nations" (New York Times, January 13, 1951). The United Nations' plan was widely interpreted as an implicit surrender to China on United Nations membership and Formosa, for on these issues the world body's position contradicted American policy; it also would hinder the attempts by the United States to brand Communist China as the aggressor. When the State Department instructed its delegate to vote for the resolution on January 13 in order to demonstrate that the United States desired peace and would go along with its Western allies, both the public and the Congress reacted critically. This time, both Democrats and Republicans joined together in denouncing the policy and more particularly Dean Acheson.

On January 15, two days before the Chinese spurned the United Nations offer, Senator James O. Eastland (Democrat, Mississippi) introduced a resolution in the Senate to (1) force the United States to withdraw from the United Nations if Red China was admitted and (2) direct President Truman to defend Formosa. Even more significant was the reaction of Senator Tom Connally (Democrat, Texas), the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The next day he rebuked Acheson and the State Department in general for not consulting with Congress before accepting the cease-fire plan (New York

Times, January 17, 1951). Senator John L. McClelland (Democrat, Arkansas) also charged that the United Nations should use "economic sanctions and a complete blockade" of Red China, and if this failed, bombing of China itself should be considered so as to "choke off" Chinese intervention in Korea (Ibid.). From President Truman's viewpoint, this was the first time he had experienced a sizable portion of discontent from Senators within his own party, and in fact it was later revealed that in closed testimony with Acheson, the seven Democratic members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee had been in virtual agreement with the six GOP members⁵ that appeasing Red China was the major intention of the United Nations resolution (New York Times, January 18, 1951).

The Republican reaction to the United Nations was more predictable. The animosity toward the United Nations had not been instigated solely by the cease-fire proposal in January. It had been building ever since the impact of the Chinese intervention and the subsequent refusal of the international body to brand that country as an aggressor and give MacArthur the necessary go-ahead to escalate the war. As early as December 20, ex-President Hoover had expressed his dissatisfaction by declaring that "It is clear that the United Nations is in a fog of debate and indecision on whether to appease or not to appease the Chinese Communists" (New York Times, December 21, 1950). Senator Taft on January 5 asserted that "the United

Nations has proved that it is not only an utterly ineffective weapon to check military aggression, but that it is actually a trap for those nations which rely upon it as an organization to secure action against aggressors . . ." (Congressional Record, January 5, 1951: 61). On January 15, in a New York speech, Taft continued to press the issue, this time specifically addressing himself to the cease-fire issue. To the Senator, the cease-fire scheme was

the most complete surrender to which the U.S. has ever agreed . . . another tragic error in our Far Eastern policy. . . . To admit that an outrageous aggression such as that of the Chinese Communists can be the basis for admission to the United Nations is not only an abject acceptance of American defeat but it destroys the whole moral basis of the UN. Since we can no longer rely upon the United Nations, it is obvious that we cannot for some years hope to resist Chinese aggression in Korea . . . We should retire (New York Times, January 16, 1951).

By relying on the United Nations,⁶ the United States was placing its trust in an institution rendered impotent by appeasement-minded nations, who, collectively had neither the will nor the military muscle to evoke a victory in Korea. As Senator Jenner (Republican, Indiana) phrased it, the United Nations had become "a debating society death trap for American G.I.'s" (New York Times, January 9, 1951). Senator Knowland's solution was typical of the Republican formula for victory, i.e., adopt MacArthur's proposals by permitting the bombing of China, blockading the China coast, and unleashing Chiang. This meant a "cutting of

the ties between the General and the United Nations" (Congressional Record, January 11, 1951: 173).

Public sentiment was apparently also reacting against the Administration on the United Nations issue. The attacks on the international body had apparently associated the failure of the United States to win the war with an identical failure on the part of that body. Two NORC polls taken during the late December-late January period confirm the assertion.

TABLE 27

UNITED NATIONS SUPPORT
NORC: "ARE YOU SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED WITH THE WAY THE UNITED NATIONS HAD HANDLED THE SITUATION IN KOREA?"

<u>January, 1951</u>		<u>February, 1951-By Party Breakdowns</u>	
		<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>
Satisfied	32%	37%	23%
Dissatisfied	50%	45%	63%
No Opinion	18%	18%	14%
<u>February, 1951</u>			
Satisfied	35%		
Dissatisfied	49%		
No Opinion	16%		

Again Republicans had demonstrated their greater hostility to Administration policy and their greater degree of partisanship by expressions of higher dissatisfaction scores on the United Nations question. But the picture of disillusionment was prevalent among Democrats as well. Here was another factor contributing to the unpopularity of the Truman Administration--its backing of an organization

which purportedly did not adhere to true American interests and was not in sympathy with achieving a victory in Korea.

The Europe Debate

The distress over United Nations' interference was but one facet of a general attack upon the entire international position of the Truman Administration. The period following the Chinese intervention had intensified the American people's disillusionment with the Cold War. The new defeat in Korea, the increasingly heavy number of deaths, the restraints placed upon MacArthur by the Administration, and the inclination of our European allies to appease Communist China in the United Nations were events which cumulatively heightened the public's receptivity to Republican appeals, chiefly those of Senator Taft, to either win or withdraw from Korea. This mood of disillusionment struck a further chord of reinforcement in an accompanying foreign policy debate over whether additional troops should be sent to defend Europe. On January 8, in his State of the Union address, Truman had reaffirmed the Administration's commitment to Europe ("if Western Europe were to fall to Soviet Russia, it would double the Soviet supply of coal and triple the Soviet supply of steel") and further stated the necessity of sending troops to Europe to strengthen NATO. To Republicans, it was incongruous that reinforcements were being sent to Europe but not Korea. Furthermore, Truman's statement at a January 4 press

conference that he had full legal power to send American troops anywhere in the world without Congressional approval invoked memories of the President's action in sending troops to Korea in June of 1950. At that time, the President had acted on his own initiative without first consulting Congress, and the President's decision had resulted in a debacle.

In short, the President had acted "illegally" in Korea in the first place, and now he was going to commit a similar constitutional violation with respect to Europe. Taft argued on January 5 in the Senate that the very sending of troops might "provoke" the Soviets into war. (Strangely enough, in the Far East Taft did not see his own policy recommendations, including the bombing of China, as provocative to the Russians.) In essence, Taft's dislike of Europe led him to assert that Europe could look after itself, that the United States should wash its hands of Europe's chronic trouble-making, and that air and sea power could take the place of huge land armies. In this sense, Taft concurred with ex-President Hoover's suggestion that the United States should concentrate on the Gibraltar of the Western Hemisphere pending West Europe's own build-up of stronger armies.

Predictably, Democrats began their rebuttal to Taft's speech on January 11, when Senator Connally stated that the President had the power to send troops abroad without Congressional approval, and he cited more than one-hundred

past occasions when this had been done. He further asserted that Taft's view of a Russia not expecting a war with the United States was a "dangerous delusion" (New York Times, January 12, 1951).

Apparently Taft's view did not have public support. After the great debate in Congress, Truman's sending of troops to Europe was generally approved. In February, Gallup revealed that 49 percent of the public felt that sending additional troops to Europe would actually prevent another world war, as opposed to 23 percent who felt that such an action would start another world-wide conflict (Taft thesis). Perhaps the reason was that the Administration's efforts to organize Europe's defense to further contain Soviet power had met with past success, while in Korea containment had encountered military reverses. In any event, there is some poll data to suggest that the trend of favorable sentiment on the Europe question may have been influenced by the adversities in Korea. One should note two Gallup polls published in early March:

TABLE 28
GALLUP POLLS: KOREA AND EUROPE

"Do you think the United States made a mistake in going into the war in Korea or not?"				
	August, 1950	January, 1951	March, 1951	Net Change
Yes, we made a mistake	20%	49%	50%	+30
No, we did not	65%	38%	39%	-26
No Opinion	15%	13%	11%	- 4

TABLE 28 (continued)

"Which do you think is MORE IMPORTANT for the United States to do:

A. Try to keep the rest of Asia from falling under Russian control, or

B. Try to stop Russia from taking over Western Europe?"

	September, 1950	March, 1951	Net Change
Stop Russia in Europe	31%	49%	+18
Stop Russia in Asia	8%	9%	+ 1
Both Equally Important	48%	28%	-20
No Opinion	13%	14%	+ 1

Clearly, the "both equally important" ranks had shifted substantially to viewing Europe as more important, because the war in Asia was increasingly perceived as a "mistake."

However, this does not mean that the public's European preference simultaneously signified an overwhelming popular preference for withdrawal from Korea. (Gallup in January had registered 66 percent as favoring a pull-out, but the wording of the question had largely contributed to this response. Once American troops regained the offensive, pull-out sentiment remained distinctly a minority sentiment for the remainder of the war.) In essence, the stabilization of the military situation on the battlefield in February and March plus the United Nations' condemnation of Communist China as an aggressor on February 1 ameliorated, to a degree, the hostility toward Administration policy in Korea.

Truman-MacArthur: The Conflict Intensifies

But the Truman-MacArthur conflict did not abate. Since early January, MacArthur continued to insist that if his forces were to be pinned down in an indefinite defensive position he could no longer guarantee the security of Japan. Unless he were given substantial reinforcements or allowed to prosecute the war along the lines he had recommended, he would be forced to evacuate from Korea. In short, a holding operation which the Joint Chiefs had urged upon him, while perhaps desirable for political reasons, would result in the destruction of his forces and involve an attendant hazard for Japan (MacArthur Hearings, 1951: 906). On January 12, the Joint Chiefs again informed MacArthur that he should hold out in Korea just as long as possible in order to "gain some further time for essential military and diplomatic consultations with allied countries participating in the Korean effort." Additionally, the President sent a message to MacArthur, emphasizing the three political goals which, it was hoped, might be reached by continuing the resistance in Korea: (1) to demonstrate that Communist aggression against a free people would not be tolerated; (2) to demonstrate that the United Nations was a viable and vigorous force that could not be brushed aside; and (3) to strengthen the will of resistance of hard-pressed governments in Europe and the Middle East.

Our course of action at this time should be such as to consolidate the great majority of the United Nations. This majority is not merely part of the organization but is also the nations whom we would desperately need to count on in the event the Soviet Union moves against us.

Further, pending the build-up of our national strength, we must act with great prudence so far as extending the area of hostilities is concerned. Steps which in themselves might be fully justified and which might lend some assistance to the campaign in Korea would not be beneficial if they thereby involved Japan or Western Europe in large-scale hostilities (MacArthur Hearings, 1951: 503).

Finally, the President stated that if the evacuation of Korea became necessary, the political objectives mentioned above could still be served by continued resistance from some of the offshore islands of Korea. "In the worst case, it would be important that, if we must withdraw from Korea, it be clear to the world that that course is forced upon us by military necessity and that we shall not accept the result politically or militarily until the aggression has been rectified." Truman ended his message by congratulating his General on his "splendid leadership" in Korea (Truman, 1956: 438-439).

However, General MacArthur's fundamental differences with Administration strategy remained unresolvable. The Administration, in essence, was for Europe, collective security, coexistence with Communist China, and limited war in Korea. The MacArthur-Taft Republican opposition was for Asia, unilateral action, the unleashing of Chiang's forces, the overthrow of the Chinese Communist regime, and "total victory" in Korea. From late January to early April a

continually improving military picture presented itself, as "Operation Killer" forced a general Chinese retreat beginning February 16. Progress was cautious and slow, but by March 15 Seoul was liberated for the second, and last time. Thus the question of crossing the thirty-eighth parallel confronted the Administration once more. Conversely, the MacArthur-Taft coalition maintained political viability by seizing upon the accumulation of "costs" engendered by the see-saw fighting and the accompanying levels of rising frustration in the mass public. Casualties, for example, prior to the Chinese offensive of November 26, had stood at 5,616 killed, 21,764 wounded, and 5,062 missing in action for a total of 32,442, making the Korean War the fourth costliest in American history. By early March, the figures had jumped tremendously. Over 4,000 more American fighting men had been killed since the Chinese intervention (total: 9,794), plus an additional 18,000 wounded and 1,000 more missing, for a total casualty figure of 55,000 during the entire war. The public was continually reminded by General MacArthur and his GOP allies that these kinds of sacrifices⁷ might be ended and the war won if their policies of escalation were adopted.

Thus the MacArthur-Taft coalition intensified and expedited the growing strains in what was left of Truman's consensus. On February 12, for example, Republican minority leader Joseph Martin delivered a speech in New York in which he said that the Administration was preventing the Chinese

Nationalists on Formosa from opening a "second front in Asia," which could go far in attaining victory in Korea. Martin stressed that "If we are not in Korea to win, then this Administration should be indicted for the murder of thousands of American boys." In Martin's opinion, "the same State Department crowd that cut off aid" to Nationalist China in 1946 was now resisting employing the Nationalists, since this would imply that they had been wrong on Chiang in the earlier period. Accordingly, he again called for the ouster of Dean Acheson (MacArthur Hearings, 1951: 3176-3178).

MacArthur was also chafing under what he considered unnecessary military restrictions. On February 13 and March 7, he again protested against these restrictions which had given the enemy "unprecedented military advantage." The type of war his troops were being forced to fight could lead to nothing better than a stalemate. On February 21, MacArthur was informed by the Joint Chiefs that he could not bomb Racin, an important Chinese Communist supply center in Korea near the Soviet border. On March 1, the request by MacArthur to bomb the generating plants on the Yalu river had similarly been disapproved (MacArthur Hearings, 1951: 3451 & 3493). Therefore, on March 7, MacArthur asserted that his forces could not expel the Communists out of Korea unless the ban was lifted on attacking Manchuria. For under combat restrictions, the Communists "supply position" would progressively improve

every time they would be driven northward and their communications with Manchuria shortened. Thus any further advance on land would involve a "savage slaughter" and would "militarily benefit the enemy more than it would ourselves" (MacArthur Hearings, 1951: 3450). MacArthur closed his argument by insisting that "Vital decisions have yet to be made--decisions far beyond the scope of the authority vested in me as the military commander, decisions which are neither solely political nor solely military, but which must provide on the highest international levels an answer to the obscurities which now becloud the unsolved problems raised by Red China's undeclared war in Korea" (MacArthur Hearings, 1951: 153). In short, MacArthur was still insisting that the unification of Korea and the expulsion of the Chinese were necessary objectives of the war.

However, on March 12, General Ridgway's statement contradicted MacArthur's. Ridgway stated that the United Nations would have gained a "tremendous victory if the Korean War were to end on the thirty-eighth parallel, because the failure of the Chinese Communists to drive the allies from Korea "would be a defeat of incalculable importance" (New York Herald Tribune, March 13, 1951). Ridgway's view was considerably closer than MacArthur's to what was evolving in Washington and at New York. In a New York Times dispatch, the following was noted:

United Nations diplomats reported today that the idea of unifying Korea by military victory throughout the country was being quietly dropped. Cautiously and without commitments the United States is said to be considering the position that the United Nations military job will end somewhere around the thirty-eighth parallel and that the second task--unification--will depend on political jockeying that may last a long time (New York Times, March 14, 1951).

In any event, by March 20, agreement had been reached between the United States and its allies that free world forces would be permitted to cross the thirty-eighth parallel for tactical reasons, but that there would be no attempt again to advance to the Manchurian border. No general advance into North Korea would take place without further consultations among the nations participating in the war. It was also agreed that another strong appeal would be made to Peiping to negotiate (New York Times, March 22, 1951). In effect, Washington had lost any interest in driving its forces back to the Yalu.

Thus President Truman promptly prepared a statement which was to be released once aggression had been quelled in South Korea, an event which had a high probability of occurring in the near future. The statement was a call to negotiate along the lines of a restoration of North and South Korea as they existed before June of 1950. But before Truman could publicly announce the offer, MacArthur, who had been told of the impending Presidential statement on March 20, promptly issued a declaration of his own, which, as Truman later stated, "was so entirely at cross

purposes with the announcement I was to have delivered that it would only have confused the world if my carefully prepared statement had been made" (Truman, 1956: 437).

On March 24, entirely on his own authority and with no warning to Washington, MacArthur made his own offer to negotiate. He pointed out that in spite of the "inhibitions and restrictions" under which his command labored, it had thoroughly frustrated the enemy's aggressive design. Red China's military weaknesses had been clearly demonstrated. Unless China negotiated, MacArthur would expand the war into China itself.

This statement by MacArthur (1) ran counter to the strategy of limiting the war by threatening its extension, (2) violated a Joint Chiefs' directive of December 6 which had stated that all but the most routine statements from the Far Eastern Commander should first be cleared by officials in Washington and (3) most important, it cut the ground from under President Truman in the midst of diplomatic maneuvers to end the war.⁸ The State Department, in order to soothe the allies, immediately issued a statement of reassurance, indicating that "the political issues, which General MacArthur has stated are beyond his responsibility as a field commander" (New York Times, March 25, 1951). Besides being a direct threat to Presidential direction of the war, the MacArthur statement had an additional dangerous overtone for the Administration's policy. Since Communist China would obviously not accept

a ultimatum which admitted defeat, the only possible cease-fire which could be arranged was one in which neither side claimed victory. But, if such a settlement of the war could be prevented, it was quite probable that the accumulation of domestic frustration and dissent would compel the Truman Administration to end the war through escalating it. In short, the President could be coerced against his will in the absence of a viable policy alternative.

The final blow came on April 5, 1951, when the Republican House Minority Leader, Joseph Martin, released a letter MacArthur had written on March 19. The letter stated that limited war in Korea was wrong because it denied victory. The emphasis on Europe at the expense of Asia was wrong because only firm action in Korea would prevent further Communist expansion elsewhere. Finally, the exclusion of Nationalist Chinese troops was wrong because it was hindering the war effort. MacArthur would later insist that the letter dealt exclusively with the military situation and was within the area of his constitutional authority to speak. However, the fact that the letter was sent to a powerful Republican figure who was one of the most implacable political foes of the Administration's conduct of the war could not help but maximize the obvious political ramifications of the statement. President Truman was now convinced that he could no longer ignore

the threat to his constitutional authority in the field of foreign affairs and civilian control of the military.

In essence, the United States could not allow itself to speak with two voices in the international arena. MacArthur's policy views had presumably weakened and eroded allied support; the statement of March 24 had prevented the execution of Presidential policy. In short, a new commander was needed who would be more responsive to the control of Washington, a commander that would not serve as a "rallying point" for the domestic sources of opposition. The New York Times had perhaps echoed the Administration's sentiment in an editorial four days before the removal.

General MacArthur is clearly wrong in taking his case to the public over the heads of the civilian authorities and in violation of the orders of his own superiors. The public of this and any free nation is easily aroused by even a faint suggestion of military usurpation. Even if MacArthur were completely right it would still be his duty to present his views and to press his claims through military channels, without making himself the rallying point of a political opposition opposing the government's policy. MacArthur is equally wrong in letting the exigencies of his immediate situation blind him to the larger world picture of which Korea is only a part, and in ignoring the fact that he represents the UN as well as the United States (New York Times, April 7, 1951).

The MacArthur Firing: Public Opinion and
the "Lock-In" Point

MacArthur returned to a hero's welcome. At a joint session of Congress, he eloquently presented his strong views and beliefs regarding Korea and Asia. It was a

memorable speech for its high drama and dramatic delivery. ("Why, my soldiers asked of me, surrender military advantages to an enemy in the field? I could not answer!") MacArthur's basic appeal was evident in the following:

You cannot appease or otherwise surrender to Communism in Asia without undermining our efforts to halt its advance in Europe. . . . Under no circumstances must Formosa fall under Communist control. . . . Once war is forced upon us, there is no other alternative than to apply every available means to bring it to a swift end. War's very object is victory--not prolonged indecision. In war, indeed, there can be no substitute for victory (MacArthur, 1964: 404).

Thus to Americans irritated and frustrated with the indecisiveness of limited war, MacArthur symbolized the traditional conception of quick victory and the American political belief in the nation's invincibility. MacArthur saw an America strong enough to accomplish anything she wanted to do. Limiting military capability was tantamount to appeasement. Total defeat of the enemy by the total and unhindered use of force was the remedy.

Accordingly, it was not surprising that polls showed a sizable opposition to Truman over the General's dismissal. A NORC poll in May of 1951 revealed the pervasiveness of the opposition:

TABLE 29

MACARTHUR FIRING (NORC)
 "WAS PRESIDENT TRUMAN RIGHT OR WRONG IN
 FIRING MACARTHUR?"

	Total	College	High School	Grade School
Truman Right in firing MacArthur	28%	39%	28%	24%
Truman Wrong in firing MacArthur	58	50	59	59
Don't Know	14	11	13	17
<u>By Party Breakdown</u>				
		<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	
Truman Right		36%		17%
Truman Wrong		53		72
Don't Know		11		11

Like NORC, Gallup found that the college-trained portion of the "general population" opposed MacArthur's removal, but that greater disapproval was registered among the less-educated.

TABLE 30

MACARTHUR'S REMOVAL (GALLUP, MAY 16, 1951)

	College Trained	High School	Grade School
Approve	41%	24%	23%
Disapprove	53	68	64
No Opinion	6	8	13

In short, the educational elite had apparently shown the greatest commitment to the democratic norm of civilian supremacy over the military. Thus, while President Truman

retained the support of those Americans at the very highest levels of the educational system, the great bulk of the population could not accept the firing of a person who had become identified with a way out of the Korean War.

The dismissal of MacArthur did more than merely add to the unpopularity of a President whose popularity had already been in a state of decline. It clearly forced Americans to adopt a constellation of attitudes which automatically followed either approval or disapproval of the dismissal. Clearly, those who thought the dismissal was wrong were much more likely to back an escalation of the war. Consequently those who thought Truman had acted wisely were again more likely to back the Administration's conduct of the war, i.e., a negotiated truce and keeping the conflict limited. Poll data supports this assumption.

TABLE 31
NORC POLLS (MAY, 1951):
CROSS TABULATIONS ON MACARTHUR FIRING

<u>National Totals</u>			
	Truman right in firing MacArthur		28%
	Truman wrong in firing MacArthur		58
		<u>Truman Dismissal of MacArthur Was</u>	
		<u>Right</u>	<u>Wrong</u>
		28%	58%
<u>Cross-Tabulated Questions</u>			
(1) UN should stop			(Explanation: Of the
at 38th			28% total who felt
parallel	54	41	Truman was right, 54%
Should keep			of that 28% believed
fighting	37	48	fighting should stop
Don't know	9	11	at 38th parallel, an
			Administration posi- tion.

TABLE 31 (continued)

<u>Cross-Tabulated Questions</u>	<u>Truman Dismissal of MacArthur Was</u>		
	<u>Right</u>	<u>Wrong</u>	
(2) U.S. should bomb China			(Of the total 58% who felt Truman was wrong, 68% of that total favored bombing.)
Supply bases	39%	68%	
Should Not	44	19	
Don't know	17	13	
(3) Help Chiang invade	41	71	(Again those who felt Truman was wrong were much more likely to favor MacArthur's strategy.)
Disapprove	45	16	
Don't know	14	13	
(4) Would risk war with China	16	35	(The greater acceptance of a war with China clearly ties in with backing of MacArthur.)
Try to stay out of war	80	57	
Don't know	4	8	

In essence, the firing of MacArthur by Truman had created two large blocs of public opinion, with each bloc being roughly analagous to the hawk-dove division of the Vietnam War. We find the population becoming polarized over the war. A phenomena of the "middle-Administration supporters" dropping out, a definite characteristic of the Vietnam War, was present to a degree in Korea as well. Unfortunately, unlike the polls available for Vietnam (see Chapter 6) where the respondents were asked to choose policy options clearly identifiable with hawk-dove-Administration support positions, polls taken by NORC and Gallup during the Korean War were more open-ended and less clear-cut.

It was not until the beginning of 1952 that NORC began asking poll questions which broke down policy preferences (to the fullest extent). The following table encapsulates, however, the total trend line:

TABLE 32
OPINIONS ABOUT WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS FROM KOREA
(NORC)

	Feb. 1951	April 1951	May 1951	June 1951	Jan. 1952	March 1952	July 1952	Oct. 1952	Dec. 1952
What should U.S. do in Korea?									
Pull Troops Out	20%	18%	21%	18%	16%	24%	21%	30%	23%
Keep Troops There	67	71	68	73	*	*	*	*	*
Hold Present Line	*	*	*	*	36	37	28	30	27
"Attack Chinese Communists" *	*	*	*	*	43	30	44	29	39
Don't Know	13	11	11	9	5	9	7	11	11

*Category not used in poll.

Thus, beginning in 1952, the "holding the present line" option was outnumbered by an incipient hawk-dove division. Hawkish sentiment reached a zenith in July of 1952; the October poll, before the 1952 election, shows a near three way split among hawk-dove-Administration choices. In terms of educational and political party breakdowns, the college sector remained the most hawkish during the war, the grade school sector the most "dovish." In keeping with this

trend, Republicans expressed a higher percentage of approval for attacking the Chinese than Democrats, while the latter favored a holding operation primarily. In short, the MacArthur firing had truly politicized the war, and irretrievably shattered the Truman consensus.

The President may have had one major opportunity to escape the "lock-in" point after the MacArthur dismissal. On June 23, after two Communist spring offensives had failed (April 22 to April 27; May 16 to May 21), Jacob Malik, the chief of the Soviet delegation to the United Nations, proposed a cease-fire and a beginning of negotiations to bring peace to Korea. The Administration ordered General Ridgeway on June 29 to communicate with the Communist high command and to arrange armistice talks. On July 10, 1951, more than a year after the commencement of hostilities in Korea, truce talks commenced at Kaesong, a little town just one mile south of the thirty-eighth parallel. If the President could have succeeded in transforming the cease-fire into an end of the war, he might have emerged as a viable candidate for reelection in 1952. In early July, for example, Gallup asked the following question: "It has been suggested that the United Nations call for a truce at the 38th parallel in Korea, with peace terms to be worked out later. Would you approve or disapprove of this?"

TABLE 33

KOREAN TRUCE OPINIONS (GALLUP)

<u>National Total</u>	
Approve of Truce	51%
Disapprove of Truce	37
No Opinion	12
<u>Party Breakdowns</u>	
Republicans	
Approved	51
Disapproved	39
Democrats	
Approved	54
Disapproved	34

Despite the widely divergent views of Republican and Democratic leaders in Congress that had been brought out in the MacArthur hearings,⁹ the rank and file of both parties favored a truce at the thirty-eighth parallel. But it would take two years, two weeks, and three days and hundreds of thousands more casualties¹⁰ in some of the most desperate fighting of the war, before an armistice could be finally signed at Panmunjom on July 27, 1953. The failure of negotiations in addition to the failure to attain victory benefitted the Republican party in the 1952 Presidential election. By the end of 1951, 56 percent of the American people agreed with Senator Taft's observation that the Korean War was an utterly "useless war" (Gallup, November 3, 1951). The repeated failure of truce talks to get anywhere also had a major effect upon Truman's personal

popularity as it dipped to an all-time low of 23 percent approval. By October, 1952, a NORC survey revealed that the extent of American disillusionment over the war had not appreciably diminished with the time--56 percent of the population felt that the war had not been "worth fighting." The Democrats would lose the Presidential election. Ironically it would be another military man who would heal the strains in the American political system and end the war just as a previous general had fomented those strains originally.

Postscript: The Role of the Korean War
in the 1952 Election

The cease-fire talks which had begun in July continued to meet with little success, although hopes had risen in April of 1952 when the prisoner-of-war question had seemed on the verge of settlement. Nevertheless, the talks continued to drag on through the summer of 1952. Although the military stalemate had by then persisted for over nine months, the impending Presidential election again refurbished the political ramifications of the war. Furthermore, heavy, inconclusive fighting which broke out in the final weeks of the Presidential campaign (late October) did little to help the Democrats. In short, as Elmo Roper analyzed the situation, "The Korean War was the most compelling issue of 1952, and it worked in a strictly Republican direction" (Roper, 1957: 222).

The war issue apparently grew in importance in the minds of the voters as the Presidential campaign continued. A series of Roper Surveys points this out:

Roper Surveys: Percentage of Public Naming Korean War as one of the most important problems facing the Country:

January, 1952	25%
March, 1952	29
June, 1952	30
September	33
Mid-October	39
Late-October	52
(Harris, 1954: 25).	

Even more interesting was the fact that of those "people who said they were most concerned about the Korean fighting," the Republican party was chosen by over a three-to-one margin as the party able to end the war "most quickly" (Harris, 1954: 26). Among those who had voted Democratic in 1948, the displeasure over the war also accounted for a sizable defection. According to V. O. Key:

Dissatisfaction with the conduct of foreign affairs damaged the Democratic cause in 1952. Anxieties about the Korean War and about "Communism" both domestic and global reinforced each other to produce defections from the Democratic ranks. Those 1948 Republicans who saw our entry into the Korean War as a mistake were strengthened in their adherence to the Republican party . . . those 1948 Republicans who concurred with Democratic actions rarely were sufficiently moved to desert their customary voting position. The most notable impact of the Korean issue appeared among the many 1948 Democrats who regarded our entry into the Korean War as a mistake. About four out of ten of such persons preferred Eisenhower in 1952, a rate of defection about twice as great as among those who thought we had not erred in getting into the war (Key, 1968: 74. *Italics mine*).

In summary, roughly 25 percent of those voters who supported Truman in 1948 voted for Eisenhower in 1952. Shifts in the opposite direction from Dewey to Stevenson were negligible by comparison (Campbell et al., 1954: 16). Korea, according to most analysts, was clearly the most significant issue in 1952. In Lubell's opinion, "the frustrations over Korea were the most important single propellant behind Eisenhower's sweep" (Lubell, 1956: 265). Backing up Lubell's contention were University of Michigan surveys, which confirmed the fact that foreign policy issues, chiefly Korea, worked almost entirely for the benefit of the Republican party. For example, 12 percent of self-declared Democrats criticized the handling of foreign affairs, particularly the Korean War, 22 percent of the respondents mentioned being favorably impressed with Eisenhower, as compared to a corresponding figure for Stevenson of only 2 percent (Campbell et al., 1954: 57). For Democratic defectors, Eisenhower was seen as the man best able to handle Korea, a man who could end the war on honorable terms. In short, Eisenhower was seen as a rallying point, a unifying force in a time of frustration and crisis. Therefore, one must agree that "for a great many voters, it was a happy combination of the man and the hour" (Campbell et al., 1954: 176).

While Korea was clearly the most significant foreign policy issue of 1952, its impact upon voters' domestic problems was substantial. In effect, the stalemated war

showed a remarkable capacity to link up with other "trailer" issues of the campaign--corruption, internal Communism, inflation, and high taxes. Korea proved to be the well-spring out of which grew a myriad of other issues. To protest the Administration's conduct of the war was similarly correlated to protesting the conduct of domestic affairs as well. A corrupt Administration, riddled by Communist appeasers obviously could not end the war. Late in the campaign, a Roper survey revealed that by a majority of four to one the public felt that only the GOP could clean the Communists out of government. By a five to three ratio, those members of the public inclined to think immorality and corruption in government an issue were more inclined to think such activities would continue under a Stevenson Administration (Harris, 1954: 32-33). Accordingly, those who felt that the war had been a mistake were far more inclined to cite Communism and corruption as accompanying faults of a Democratic Administration.

But it was on the domestic issues relating to prosperity--taxes and inflation--that the war link-up was the most prominent. Despite the preference of many Democratic voters for continuing prosperity which they associated with their own party, "several million" persons voted against themselves "on domestic matters" in the 1952 election (Key, 1964: 173). Ironically, the higher taxes and inflation which had accompanied the Korean War eroded the traditional image of the Democratic party as the

"prosperity party," causing rank and file Democrats to switch voting allegiance. Conversely, the Republican party was increasingly seen by the electorate as being able to do a better job (by a three to two margin) in handling inflation and the general question of price increases. Furthermore, Republicans led as the party most likely to keep the country out of war by a ratio of more than two to one in 1952. (See Gallup poll, September 3, 1964.) Similar switched perceptions of each party were to prevail during the 1968 election as well.

In short, both limited wars had the ultimate effect of transferring the "prosperity image" as well as the "peace image" onto the mantle of the Republican party. While millions of Americans continued to associate the Republican party with the depression and the Democratic party with prosperity (and the outbreak of war), Eisenhower's promise to maintain prosperity and win the peace weakened the usual cogency of prior political images.

Thus the Korean war's linkup with domestic issues largely accounted for the swing in voting sentiment. According to Lou Harris, economic hardships that could be attributed to the war caused "nearly one out of every four regular Democrats in the middle income white urban population" to cast a Republican vote (Harris, 1954: 70). Women voters, far more dovish than men on Korea (identical to Vietnam), saw the GOP as capable of ending the war quickly (by a seven to three margin), and were far more likely to

blame the Democrats for the high cost of living. (By a three to two margin, women saw the GOP as better able to keep prices down than Democrats.) They were highly sensitive to casualties as well. Farmers, who had swung over to Truman in 1948, now swung back to the Republican party, citing inflation and the fact that farm families had been badly depleted by having sons drafted for the war (Harris, 1954: 175). On similar grounds, organized labor swung over to Eisenhower by a 25 percent defection rate (Harris 1954: 146). Yet, Negro voters, despite being decidedly dovish on the war, voted monolithically for the Democratic party, perceiving that their welfare on civil rights and the economy would be better served by remaining with the Democratic party.

It must be remembered that the 1952 turnout was 20 percent larger than that of 1948. This is generally seen as a reflection of heightened interest in the later campaign than in the earlier one. Millions of these new voters were probably drawn to the polls by the Korean War issue (Campbell et al., 1960: 164), and promptly registered a protest vote which undoubtedly helped the Republican party. Eisenhower certainly used the issue to the fullest extent possible during the campaign. Without going into an elaborate history, let us briefly look at the way the issue was handled.

The 1952 Campaign

In general, the Republican position on the Korean War was notable for its avoidance of specific policy prescriptions. Leading Republicans offered no solution, but rather criticized Truman's past policy more than present policy. Throughout the campaign, the Korean negotiations precluded a specific call for escalation. However, if the conditions of peace had proved to be unpopular or unacceptable, Republicans could have charged the Democrats with "appeasement." In the event of an acceptable settlement, the Republicans could still have argued that the Administration could have prevented the war in the first place.

The Republican Platform adopted July 10 accused the Democratic Administration of "appeasement of Communism at home and abroad." A tough foreign affairs plank authored by John Foster Dulles (later to be Eisenhower's Secretary of State) said that the Truman Administration had "squandered the unprecedented power and prestige" the United States had at the close of World War II, had "abandoned" friendly nations to Communist aggression, had scuttled the Nationalist Chinese regime, had caused the war in Korea through ambiguous policy statements and then "produced stalemates and ignominious bartering" after war broke out (New York Times, July 11, 1952). Earlier, General MacArthur had given the keynote speech at the convention (July 7), charging the Truman Administration with "tragic blunders" at home and abroad

and implying that the Democrats were incapable of decision on the war. They "lacked the courage to fight to a military decision," he said, "even though victory was then readily within our grasp." In conclusion, MacArthur contended that the Democratic party was "the war party of modern American politics" (New York Times, July 8, 1952).

However, Eisenhower, in his acceptance speech, made no criticism of the Democrats' foreign policy and gave no foreign policy example of an Administration failing (New York Times, July 12, 1952). Constrained by the fact that he had participated in the decision to withdraw troops from Korea and ruling out a wider war on principle, Eisenhower's only solution offered for Korea before his promise to go there was to employ the Taft argument that American troops be replaced with newly trained South Korean forces. After Labor Day, however, Eisenhower began to make much more hard-hitting and critical speeches on the war.

For the Democrats, the situation was indeed bleak. They could only appeal to patriotism, to fighting Communist aggression without having plunged the world in World War III. But such appeals could not remove the frustration brought on by the many months of indecisive negotiations. Neither Truman nor Stevenson could offer any alternative to the existing policy, nor could they control the course of negotiations. There had been some optimism in April, when the war prisoner issue seemed close to solution, but

when the United States stuck to its stand against forcible repatriation of captured enemy soldiers, the North Koreans also grew stubborn. Studies of these negotiations suggest that the North Koreans would not tolerate admitting that over 60,000 of the 132,000 prisoners refused to return to North Korea or China. In any event, the talks had become deadlocked by early October. It should be noted that the Truman Administration, cognizant of the forthcoming election, did make an attempt to force North Korean cooperation by resuming strategic bombing of industrial areas in June of 1952. Within two weeks over 90 percent of North Korea's power capacity was destroyed. Further raids in July and August hit the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, and other industrial centers. But the bombing's objective of hastening the conclusion of the truce negotiations failed (Halperin, 1963: 53).

Stevenson's problem was how to deal with the record of the Truman Administration. During the campaign he tried to disassociate himself from the less popular aspects of the Truman Administration while still retaining the loyalties of those majorities which had kept the Democrats in power for twenty years. It was an impossible task. On the issue of Korea, Stevenson merely praised Truman's decisions and raised the hopes for a settlement. Additionally, Truman lashed out at the Republicans during his travels in October, echoing Stevenson's charge that the Republicans were playing politics with the war issue.

Meanwhile, on September 4, Eisenhower charged in a major address at Philadelphia that the war in Korea had occurred because the Truman Administration had abandoned China to the Communists, had failed to build up South Korea's defenses, and then had "announced to all the world that it had written off most of the Far East as beyond our direct concern" (New York Times, September 5, 1952). He attacked Acheson's defense perimeter speech in subsequent speeches and continued to dwell on the Administration's failure to strengthen South Korea. Eisenhower now began to dwell more extensively on how his Administration would end the war, reiterating his earlier calls for more South Korean troops to be trained to fight in place of American troops and asserting, that "I do not believe that Korea must forever be a part of our American daily life" (New York Times, October 9, 1952).

However, Eisenhower had not yet made a speech solely on Korea. In Detroit, on October 24, Eisenhower promised "to forego the diversion of politics" after the election and "concentrate on the job of ending the Korean War . . . That requires a personal trip to Korea . . . I shall make that trip . . . I shall go to Korea." Eisenhower's pledge was belittled by his Democratic adversaries, but most observers believed he had found a "paydirt" issue in a nation deeply disturbed over the Korean War, its mounting casualties and the stalemate in truce negotiations (New York Times, October 25, 1952).

Stevenson, who had earlier in the campaign considered and rejected making a similar pledge, never had an effective reply. His statement that the root of the problem lay in Moscow rather than Korea lacked dramatic appeal. In his final speech of the campaign, Stevenson attempted to win back some votes on the Korean issue by promising to seek an immediate truce if elected (New York Times, November 4, 1952). In reference to the Eisenhower pledge, it is true that voter studies indicate that last minute events usually have little effect on the outcome of elections. In 1952, over two-thirds of the electorate had made up their minds by or before the conventions in the summer. Yet it is significant to note that Eisenhower voters who had not voted in 1948 or who had voted for Truman were more likely to have made up their minds in the last two weeks of the campaign than other categories of voters (Campbell et al., 1960: 75). Perhaps these voters were swayed by the Eisenhower pledge.

In any event, the election results showed Eisenhower winning the popular vote by a 33.8 million to 27.3 million majority, with the electoral vote count totalling 442 for Eisenhower, 89 for Stevenson. Seeking explanation for the Eisenhower landslide, observers found a multitude of reasons. The doubts, fears and frustrations stemming from the stalemated Korean War, the Communist spy trials, revelations of corruption in the government, rising prices and high taxes--all these contributed to a strong desire for a

change in executive leadership. However, by any standard, the Korean War was a primary issue, a foreign policy issue which reinforced the various other domestic issues. In a NORC survey taken after the election, the connection between the voter's view of the war and his voting preference was clearly indicated.

TABLE 34

NORC SURVEY - JANUARY, 1953: ELECTION PREFERENCE

	Voted Eisenhower	Voted Stevenson
Korea worth fighting	37%	49%
Korea not worth fighting	58	43
Don't Know	5	8

Those voters who felt the war had not been worth fighting were much more inclined to vote for Eisenhower than Stevenson. In short, the Korean War had been a major factor in shaping voters' preferences during the 1952 Presidential election.

NOTES

1. European newspapers were denouncing MacArthur for "going too far" in Korea by initiating his November 24 offensive. Perhaps in response to this criticism, Republicans Wherry, Bricker, and McCarthy accused Acheson of trying to oust the General as UN Commander. They blamed the Administration for the crisis as well as the United Nations for tying MacArthur's hands (New York Times, November 29, 1950).

2. After the Truman-Attlee meeting in early December, the communique December 8 revealed that the two countries had agreed that there would be no attacks on China. This infuriated Republican hawks, who used the statement for further political gain.

3. At the December 7 meeting of British Prime Minister Attlee and President Truman, the two men had apparently agreed that the war should remain limited and that the United Nations ought to hold out in Korea--even on beachheads--as long as possible. Attlee also suggested that in negotiating with the Chinese, the thirty-eighth parallel should be restored as the truce line, i.e., in effect dropping the idea of the October 7 resolution to restore the unity of Korea by force. However, Attlee was not adverse to the idea of eventual withdrawal, believing "that withdrawal from Korea and Formosa and the Chinese seat in the United Nations for the Communists would not be too high a price" to attain a cease fire (Acheson, 1970: 622).

4. The nervousness of the United States in December on this point was evidenced by the story of an air alert which reached Washington during the Truman-Attlee conference. Radar had picked up "blips" of large numbers of unidentified planes, indicating a possible sneak attack by the Russians over the North Pole. The blips were caused by atmospheric conditions, not planes, and tension abated (Truman, 1956: 405).

5. Democrats on Senate Foreign Relations Committee: Connally (Texas), George, (Georgia), Green (Rhode Island), McMahon (Connecticut), Fulbright (Arkansas), Sparkman (Alabama), Gillette (Iowa). Republicans: Wiley (Wisconsin), Smith (New Jersey), Hickenlooper (Iowa), Lodge (Massachusetts), Tobey (New Hampshire), Brewster (Maine).

6. President Truman repeatedly affirmed the Administration's loyalty to the United Nations during this period. In a January 4 press conference, when asked if the nation was formally at war, the President replied in the negative, stating "we are carrying an obligation of the United Nations." Furthermore, he agreed that the United States would not bomb China "without checking it with the United Nations." By implication, American aims for victory were being blocked by proclaiming subservience to the international body (Truman, 1951: 2-3).

7. A NORC poll in early April of 1951 revealed that 40 percent of the American people thought they were making "too many sacrifices" to support the war in Korea. After Inchon only 13 percent of the population had thought they were sacrificing too much (NORC, October 10, 1950).

8. Later, MacArthur denied that his March 24 statement had exceeded his authority as field commander. At the hearings, he told Senator Morse: "The notice I put out was merely that which every commander at any time can put out; that he would confer with the opposing commander-in-chief in an endeavor to bring hostilities to an end. . . . There is nothing unusual or unorthodox or improper that I can possibly read into the statement that I made on March 24 (MacArthur Hearings, 1951: 69-70).

9. According to Gallup, the public largely saw the MacArthur hearings as "a waste of time," although a plurality felt they had aided the Republicans more than the Democrats (July 2, 1951).

10. Before cease-fire negotiations began, 20,929 Americans had been killed, 53,784 wounded. After July 10, 1951--to the signing of the armistice--12,700 more Americans were killed, and another 49,500 wounded (Department of Defense).

CHAPTER 6

THE TET OFFENSIVE--TURNING POINT IN VIETNAM

July, 1965-July, 1967 The Deepening Involvement

During the two years that followed President Johnson's announcement of July 28, the intensity of the air war and the strength of American troops increased substantially. In terms of the air war, the total number of American "sorties" (individual flights) had risen from 55,000 in 1965 to 173,000 by July of 1967. Bombing tonnages exceeded the total tonnage dropped on Germany, Italy, and Japan in World War II. Yet, in the words of a CIA analysis produced in January of 1967, the bombing of 1966 had "accomplished little more than in 1965" (Sheehan et al., 1971: 523). There was little evidence of the bombing affecting Hanoi's will to negotiate an end to the war; nor had it stopped the essential flow of supplies to enemy forces in South Vietnam. In August of 1967, Secretary of Defense McNamara testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that despite heavy concentration on infiltration routes near the demilitarized zone, only 2 percent of the North Vietnamese soldiers going South had been killed and that

trucks carrying supplies were still getting through (Air War Against North Vietnam, 1967: 277-283).

The steadily increasing American presence on the ground was self-evident. By October 23, 1965, there were 148,300 American troops in South Vietnam; by March 2, 1966 there were 215,000; by December 31, 1966, 389,000; by June 22, 1967, 463,000. Then on August 3, President Johnson announced that he had fixed a maximum limit of 524,000 United States troops for early 1968 (New York Times, August 4, 1967). Despite this huge influx of troops, North Vietnam matched the American troop escalation by increasing infiltration and greater recruitment in the South. On June 22, 1967, the Defense Department announced that there were 294,000 Communist troops in South Vietnam including 50,000 North Vietnamese regulars (New York Times, June 23, 1967). Allied strength was placed at over one million (600,000 South Vietnamese, 463,000 American troops), a numerical superiority, but the nature of guerilla warfare obviated the American buildup to a considerable extent. Communist losses were constantly being replaced by new recruits, forcing McNamara to conclude that the enemy morale had not been broken and thus seeing "no reasonable way to bring the war to an end soon" (Sheehan et al., 1971: 542).

McNamara's¹ disillusionment, which grew with the passage of time, had been shared by his Assistant Secretary McNaughton as early as January of 1966. In a memo written at that time, McNaughton conceded that the United States

was in an "escalating military stalemate." The Vietnam situation had all the "ingredients of an enormous miscalculation," and

There is an honest difference of judgment as to the success of the present military efforts in the South. There is no question that the U.S. deployments thwarted the VC hope to achieve a quick victory in 1965. But there is a serious question whether we are now defeating the VC/PAVN main forces and whether planned U.S. deployments will more than hold our position in the country. Population and area control have not changed significantly in the past year; . . . we will probably be faced in early 1967 with a continued stalemate at a higher level of forces and casualties (Sheehan et al., 1971: 492).

When the South Vietnamese regime experienced a governmental crisis in early March of 1966, doubters in the Administration could again point to the future dangers of such a stalemate, especially in view of domestic costs. William P. Bundy, while remaining a supporter of basic policy, warned that "As we look a year or two ahead, with a military program that would require major further budget costs--with all their implications for taxes and domestic programs--and with steady or probably rising casualties, the war could well become an albatross around the Administration's neck at least equal to what Korea was for President Truman in 1952" (Sheehan et al., 1971: 473-474).

If such doubts existed, why did the commitment inexorably deepen? In the first place, Administration hawks and pressures from the Joint Chiefs largely overruled any doubts from their dovish counterparts. In their view, victory (demonstrating to the Viet Cong that they could

not win) was attainable given the proper mobilization of American power. It was simply a matter of bombing on a much more extensive scale and attacking key industrial targets heretofore forbidden. In other words, the military would repeatedly insist that the bombing campaign was not working because of the self-imposed restraints. A "sharp knock" rather than a "slow squeeze" was preferable. Despite the fact that the Central Intelligence Agency repudiated the value of the bombing, the argument could always be made that an intensification would bring results. A second factor flowed naturally from the need to maintain American credibility, or as McNaughton put it, our reputation as "guarantor."

Why we have not withdrawn from Vietnam is, by all odds, one reason: (1) to preserve our reputation as a guarantor, and thus to preserve our effectiveness in the rest of the world. We have not hung on (2) to save a friend, or (3) to deny the Communists the added acres and heads (because the dominoes don't fall for that reason in this case), or even (4) to prove that "wars of national liberation" won't work (except as our reputation is involved). At each decision point we have gambled; at each point, to avoid the damage to our effectiveness of defaulting on our commitment, we have upped the ante. We have not defaulted, and the ante (and commitment) is now very high. It is important that we behave so as to protect our reputation (Sheehan et al., 1971: 492).

Since a withdrawal was excluded as a viable option, the emphasis was again placed on an increase of force in order to attain a negotiated settlement. Stopping the bombing could be employed as a trump card at the negotiating table. As in the intervention period, the Administration

would mix patterns of escalation with diplomatic offensives, trying to find the proper combination that would yield a solution. Major bombing pauses involving complete cessation of all bombing were tried in December of 1965, 1966, and February of 1967 lasting thirty-six days, four days, and five days respectively. In each case Hanoi failed to respond. In addition, there were numerous limited pauses as well, where no American bombs fell within a ten mile radius of Hanoi (for example, a sixty day pause from August 24-October 23, 1967). The failure of diplomacy, in short, only heightened the reliance on a military solution.

The failure of coercive diplomacy during the 1965-1967 period had a decided effect upon public support for the war. Both Harris and Gallup clearly indicate a gradual decline in Presidential support and for the Vietnam commitment itself. In August of 1965, 57 percent approved (26 percent disapproved) of the way President Johnson was handling the situation in Vietnam. By December of 1967, the Gallup poll registered 40 percent approval, 48 percent disapproval. Harris recorded a similar phenomenon--66 percent approval of the handling of the war in July of 1965 to 34 percent approval recorded in December of 1967.² In terms of Vietnam, Gallup in the August, 1965-December, 1967 period asked the following question ten times: "In view of the developments since we entered the fighting in Vietnam, do you think the U.S. made a mistake sending

troops to fight in Vietnam?" In August, 1965, 25 percent answered yes while 59 percent replied in the negative. By December of 1967, the split in the public was evident with 56 percent stating yes as opposed to 46 percent no (See New York Times, October 19, 1969).

The "mistake" polls along with the increased criticism of President Johnson's handling of Vietnam indicates a collective disenchantment with both the alleged necessity of the war and the President who is identified with its prosecution. Invariably, the war issue and its conduct intrudes upon a President's overall popularity. While President Johnson's basic popularity ("Do you approve or disapprove of the way Johnson is handling his job as President?") remained consistently higher than the Vietnam handling percentage, the total percentage of decline from the August, 1965 to March, 1968 period (including Tet) for both questions was remarkably similar:

TABLE 35

GALLUP POLL: VIETNAM MISTAKE-
POPULARITY RELATIONSHIP^a

Percent who said they approved of the way President Johnson is handling the situation in Vietnam.

	<u>Aug.</u> <u>1965</u>	<u>Jan.</u> <u>1966</u>	<u>Aug.</u> <u>1966</u>	<u>Dec.</u> <u>1966</u>	<u>July</u> <u>1967</u>	<u>Dec.</u> <u>1967</u>	<u>Feb.</u> ^b <u>1968</u>	<u>March</u> <u>1968</u> ^c
National	57%	56%	43%	43%	33%	40%	35%	26%

TABLE 35 (continued)

Percent approving President Johnson's handling of the Presidency.

	<u>Aug.</u> <u>1965</u>	<u>Jan.</u> <u>1966</u>	<u>Aug.</u> <u>1966</u>	<u>Dec.</u> <u>1966</u>	<u>July</u> <u>1967</u>	<u>Dec.</u> <u>1967</u>	<u>Feb.</u> <u>1968^b</u>	<u>March</u> <u>1968^c</u>
National	69%	63%	51%	46%	39%	46%	48%	36%

Net Change: From August, 1965 to March, 1968.

For Vietnam handling	31%
For Johnson popularity	33%

^aSource: Gallup Opinion Index, March, 1968: 2-3.

^bConducted February 3-7 following Tet.

^cConducted prior to LBJ's decision not to run.

The above trend lines do not imply that disapproval over Vietnam was the sole agent eroding the President's popularity. Domestic variables intrude as well. But it is relatively clear that the public's perception of Presidential "handling" of the war became linked to its perception of the Administration's handling of domestic affairs as well, thereby contributing greatly to a decline in overall popularity. In short, failure to terminate the war successfully eventually enmeshed with those presumed failures in race relations and the war against poverty. In essence, the war in Vietnam, like the Korean predecessor, became a politically manipulated symbol for all the conceivable ills in American society.

This portrait of decline in the polls must be qualified. spurts upward and downward along the opinion continuum were common. Throughout the remainder of the Johnson Administration, the public would rally in support

for the President regardless of whether the dramatic action was one of deescalation or escalation. In short, a President's support increases no matter what he does as long as he does something. However, these recurrent surges of support were of short duration, and a decline set in once it became apparent that the bombing pause or intensified bombing was not going to bring an end to the war itself. The public mood would vacillate, accordingly, between alternate phases of the dove-hawk continuum,³ depending upon the pattern of policy cues emanating from Administration sources. But the Administration's failure to attain results along with the prospect of an endless stalemate depleted the public's reservoir of support, polarized the incipient hawk-dove opinion split present during the intervention period, and set the stage for the political explosion following the Tet offensive of early 1968.

Stage One: August, 1965-December, 1965--
Solid Public Support Amidst Increasing Hawkishness

After the announcement of July 28, the remaining five months of 1965 were characterized by full public support for the commitment coupled with a militant posture. Approval of President Johnson and his handling of the war stayed close to the 60 percent level according to Gallup, and Harris reported high scores also in the two departments.

TABLE 36

HARRIS POLLS (STAGE I): WAR HANDLING AND JOB RATING

	LBJ Handling of War (1965)		LBJ Job Rating	
	<u>excellent- good</u>	<u>fair- poor</u>	<u>excellent- good</u>	<u>fair- poor</u>
May	57%	43%	65%	35%
July	65	35	69	31
September	66	34	67	33
December	66	34	67	33

Interestingly enough, this support from the mass public evolved against a growing awareness of the Vietnam problem. On August 11, Gallup reported that the Vietnam situation had moved into the forefront of the public's consciousness as a source of worry, far overshadowing even the civil rights issue. By December, when asked what was the most important problem facing the country today, 33 percent specifically mentioned Vietnam, compared to 19 percent citing civil rights as an issue. (In June, 1965, Gallup reported 23 percent for both Vietnam and civil rights.)

This period was probably the only time that the American public felt that there might be some chance of victory. While majorities repeatedly responded by stating that the war would likely be a long one or end in a negotiated peace, a Gallup report in November of 1965 was revealing:

TABLE 37

GALLUP: HOW VIETNAM WOULD END^a

	August, 1965	November, 1965	Net Change
"What is your best guess as to how the war in Vietnam will end?"			
Stalemate, "like Korea"	28	30	+ 2
A U.S. victory	14	29	+15
Long conflict	6	10	- 4
A Communist victory	2	--	- 2
We will pull out	3	--	- 3
Miscellaneous others	1	1	0
No opinion	38	26	-12

^aSource: Gallup Opinion Index, November, 1965: 10

The increase in victory sentiment does lend some credence to the observation that "Stage one" was tinged by an undercurrent of faith and optimism in American power and will. Consider the following trend table published by Harris in December of 1965, in which three options were presented-- hold the line in Vietnam to prevent a Communist takeover (Administration position), carry the ground war into North Vietnam at the risk of bringing Red China into the fighting (Hawk position), or withdraw our support and troops from South Vietnam and negotiate (Dove position).

TABLE 38

LOU HARRIS POLL--DECEMBER 6, 1965: OPTIONS IN VIETNAM

		May	June	July	Sept.	Oct.	Dec.	Net Change
Hold the line	(Adminis- tration)	42%	36%	45%	49%	59%	65%	+23
Withdraw support and ne- gotiate	(Dove)	36	24	30	25	11	7	-31
Carry the war North	(Hawk)	22	20	25	26	30	28	+ 6

The "hold the line" faction had clearly gained substantial support, but what is equally significant is the sharp decline in dovish sentiment with the concomitant modest rise in hawkish views. In short, the Administration had temporarily convinced the public that Vietnam should be the ground which the United States should defend against Communism in Asia. Militancy as a means of winning the war would require a greater commitment in both men and resources.

In essence, "Stage one" could be construed as a "moderate" rally around the flag phase. With American men in combat, casualties increasing, costs rising--abrupt negotiations or withdrawal made little sense. Thus, when Gallup asked in November--"If a candidate for Congress in your district advocated sending a great many more men to Vietnam, would you be more inclined, or less inclined to

vote for him?"--the shift toward hawkish sentiment was again evident. Where in early September 33 percent registered "more inclined" against 38 percent "less inclined," the November poll showed 46 percent now "more inclined" as against 31 percent for the "less inclined" groups (Gallup Opinion Index, November, 1965: 11).

It may be significant to note that Administration "cues" during this period repeatedly stressed the need for a strong military posture in Vietnam. Secondly, the presence of large scale demonstrations against the war which occurred on October 15-16 and November 27 triggered a negative reaction from the public and Administration spokesmen. The mass public largely saw the demonstrations as Communist-inspired. A question posed by Gallup in November indicated a widespread antipathy toward the demonstrations:

TABLE 39

GALLUP, NOVEMBER, 1965: COMMUNISM IN DEMONSTRATIONS^a

	A Lot	Some	Minor	Not at all	Don't Know
To what extent, if any, have the Communists been involved in the demonstrations over Vietnam?					
<u>National</u>	58%	21%	7%	4%	10%
College	50	30	12	3	5
High School	61	21	7	3	8
Grade School	59	13	6	5	17
Republican	61	22	6	2	9
Democrat	55	21	9	4	11
Independent	62	18	6	5	9

^aSource: Gallup Opinion Index, November, 1965:17.

As demonstrated by the data, the belief of Communist infiltration in the demonstrations was held by a sizeable majority of the population, including even the college sector from which the sponsors for the October demonstrations had been recruited. In essence, organized dissent at this stage in the Vietnam War was largely perceived as an alien, unlawful, and even treasonable activity. Aside from the actual participants, there was little sympathy for the protest movement among most national opinion leaders and more specifically from Administration sources.⁴ Most importantly, the fall and winter protests had the effect of producing a counter-response of patriotic loyalty for Administration policy which contributed to the pattern of support. America was at war, and minority extremists who were openly sympathetic to the Viet Cong and openly hostile to the United States were aiding the enemy and attacking American morale. Ironically, the protester's desire to end the war in Vietnam only encouraged the consolidation of support necessary to sustain it.

Presidential-Congressional Relations

In congruence with the mass public, Congress supported Presidential policy during "Stage one." In keeping with the general policy of supporting American combat units in the field, an emergency \$1.7 billion appropriation for military operations in Vietnam (requested on August 4) was passed by a 381-9 House vote September 17 and Senate voice

vote September 21. President Johnson continued to play the role of "dawk," i.e., a middle of the road policy designed to placate both hawks and doves. On August 3, he reiterated that the United States would neither escalate the war nor withdraw American troops from South Vietnam, promptly calling advocates of either policy misguided and insensitive (New York Times, August 4, 1965). However, Republican hawks in the House, such as Gerald Ford and Melvin Laird (Chairman of the House Republican Conference), along with Senators Burke Hickenlooper and Dirksen continued to caution the President that he must not yield to Democrats in Congress who would "abandon the free people of South Vietnam." On July 29, both Ford and Laird urged cutbacks in domestic programs in order "to marshal the nation's strength for the military effort" (New York Times, July 30, 1965). Conversely, Democratic doves, while somewhat muted during this period, pointed to the necessity for negotiations.

Again the President turned to personal suasion in briefings with Congress on August 9 and 10. This same pattern of behavior had followed the beginning of the sustained bombing raids in March of 1965. Apparently, one lesson President Johnson had learned from Truman's problems with Congress was that legislators must be consulted regarding major policy changes. After meeting with legislators on August 9, the President told newsmen that "there is no substantial division in this country, in my

judgment, and no substantial division in the Congress" on his Administration's actions in Vietnam. He warned "any would-be hopeful enemy of the United States" against the "miscalculation . . . that this country is divided and that the course of action that has been established by three Presidents is going to be affected by dissent here and there." After the briefing, Senator Gruening, the long-time critic of the Administration's Vietnam policy, announced that he was convinced that the President "was making a greater effort than ever before to bring the issue to the conference table." Predictably, Senator Morse called the Senate briefing another White House effort "to disguise the war in Vietnam to make it palatable to members of Congress" (New York Times, August 10, 1965).

Nevertheless, the House Republican leadership (Ford and Laird) was becoming increasingly irritated by Johnson's stress on negotiations⁵ and his apparent willingness, as indicated in his July 28 announcement, of discarding the independence of South Vietnam by allowing elections which might result in a Communist takeover. On August 24, the Republicans in the House released a thirty-three page White Paper indicting Johnson's conduct of the war by charging the Administration with conducting "an uncertain policy" in Vietnam, of a "lack of candor" and of making "misleading statements" about the progress of the war. In summary, the Johnson Administration had increased American involvement while watering down its overall objectives

from unconditional victory to any settlement assuring South Vietnam's independence. The purpose of the document, as Tom Wicker observed, was

to lay the groundwork, both in research and in tactics, for those Republicans who want to attack the Administration in the political campaign of 1966. The attack could be made either on the conduct of the war so far, or on the Administration's attitudes toward a possible settlement, or both (New York Times, August 25, 1965).

The immediate effect of the White Paper (in undercutting Congressional support) was not significant, as Wicker implied. It did not have the support of the entire Republican party, nor even the party's Senate leadership. President Johnson dismissed it the next day by stating that "we welcome expressions of viewpoint from the leadership in both parties . . ." but that such expressions did not alter the fundamental unity of the country in backing the war (Congressional Quarterly, 1965: 1755). However, the White Paper still constituted a portent of politicization of the war, a signal of impending political storms on the policy horizon.

From the perspective of the Administration, support was evident from both the polls and Congressional indicators. The House, in an almost monolithic fashion backed Administration war policies, and the Senate hawk-dove-moderate profile did not change appreciably during "Stage one." However, potential strains still existed. Political costs stemming from the war were likely to rise. The Defense Department had ordered a military draft call of 45,224 men

for (later reduced to 40,200) December, the largest since the Korean War (53,000 were called in May, 1953), and a Johnson order of August 26 had placed childless married men in the same draft classification as single men. The personal impact of the war was inexorably spreading. Casualty rates by monthly totals were ascending throughout this period: July, 76 deaths; August, 88; September, 97; October, 169; November, 469; December, 254 (lower total due to Christmas truce). In mid-November, American troops had suffered heavy casualties in battles against North Vietnamese troops in the Iadrang Valley in the Central Highlands. For the week ending November 20, 240 American troops had been killed, another 470 wounded, a record total (New York Times, November 24, 1965). Despite record enemy losses (2,262), General Westmoreland revealed that "a continued build-up of North Vietnamese regular troops" could be expected resulting in "a long conflict" (New York Times, November 25, 1965). Secretary of Defense McNamara confirmed Westmoreland's conclusion in Saigon on November 29, observing that North Vietnam had elected to "raise the level of conflict" which meant a "long war," thereby requiring that the United States send whatever forces needed (New York Times, November 30, 1965).

But if support were to be maintained for a "long war" with accelerating political costs as an inevitable concomitant, the Administration would have to place itself in a position which justified such sacrifice. Spiralling

casualties against the background of stalemate would very likely increase hawk pressures to expand the war. After the record casualty rates of November, this kind of demand was demonstrated by charges from Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, L. Mendel Rivers, that it was "folly to continue to let the port of Haiphong and military targets at Hanoi remain untouched and unscathed while war supplies being used against our troops are pouring into that port." Rivers asserted that although American troops in South Vietnam were "inflicting heavy losses on the enemy we were doing so at a heavy cost to ourselves." One day earlier, Richard Nixon had advocated a similar widening of the bombing, predicting that the conflict would be a major issue in the 1968 Presidential election if the Administration failed to take measures "to win the war in Vietnam and to end it" (New York Times, November 22, 1965). Democratic hawks, like Senator John Stennis, also advocated victory. Returning from an inspection trip to Pacific Command headquarters in Hawaii, he insisted that "We are going to win the war. We must. I am more convinced now than before that it is going to take a long time . . . I think that we are going to have to be more effective and do more in cutting off the supplies of the Viet Cong" (Congressional Quarterly, 1965: 2442).

The Administration was apparently receptive to the need for intensifying the military effort in order to achieve an end to the war. While the prospects of a

military collapse had largely disappeared in South Vietnam due to the massive influx of American men and airpower, more men and greater pressure in the air were obviously needed (Johnson, 1971: 234). Upon his return to Washington, McNamara recommended a total deployment of approximately 400,000 American troops by the end of 1966. American bombing should be enlarged to include the Hanoi-Haiphong area. However, McNamara warned that "deployments of the kind I have recommended will not guarantee success. . . . the odds are even that we will be faced in early 1967 with a 'no-decision' at an even higher level" (Sheehan *et al.*, 1971: 489). His contention was largely disputed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who still collectively felt American air and ground power would convince Hanoi's leaders that they could not win.

If McNamara's military qualifications were largely disputed, his proposal to seek a bombing pause before the war was escalated fell on far more receptive ears, particularly those of the President.

It is my belief that there should be a three or four week bombing pause in the program of bombing the North before we either greatly increase our troop deployments to VN or intensify our strikes against the North. (My recommendation for a "pause" is not concurred in by Lodge, Wheeler or Sharp.) The reasons for this belief are, first, that we must lay a foundation in the minds of the American public and in world opinion for such an enlarged phase of the war and second, we should give NVN a face-saving chance to stop the aggression. . . . I am seriously concerned about embarking on a markedly higher level

of war in VN without having tried, through a pause, to end the war or at least having made it clear to our people that we did our best to end it (Sheehan et al., 1971: 489).

The President, according to his memoirs, was at first reluctant to consider such a step, fearing that it would convey weakness to Hanoi and jeopardize the safety of American fighting men. Secretary of State Rusk, however, insisted that such a pause would convince the American people that further commitments of American men and planes were legitimate given the expectation that Hanoi would not negotiate. In effect, the onus for the war's continuance would be placed upon Hanoi, and this recognized obduracy from the enemy would further convince the American people of the necessity to use greater force in Vietnam (Johnson, 1971: 236).

Continued support by the mass public would not be the only by-product of a bombing pause. Dovish critics among Congress and protest groups might be stilled. Senator Fulbright, for example, had insisted that the May 13-18 bombing pause had "not been a very long time to allow any kind of negotiations to get under way" and if Hanoi did not respond to a new bombing pause "then you could always resume it and there would be no commitment never to resume it" (New York Times, October 25, 1965). Furthermore, a common thread running through the almost continuous series of protests in November and December was a plea to stop the bombing thus permitting the immediate start of peace talks. As one political activist observed

of his march on Washington in late November, the demonstration was "not a protest march. It is in support of a negotiated settlement and not a pullout" (New York Times, November 28, 1965). Even groups which generally supported Administration policy were urging some new initiatives for peace. On December 9, the National Council of Churches declared its overall support, but asserted that the Administration should "remove any uncertainty about official policy relating to the termination of military action. Such reaffirmation might be strategically expressed by the cessation of all bombing of North Vietnam long enough to create more favorable circumstances for negotiations to begin . . ." (New York Times, December 10, 1965). In the final analysis, a bombing pause would meet these demands.

Military considerations seemed to favor a bombing pause trial as well. On December 9, Rusk publicly acknowledged that the air strikes against North Vietnam had failed to bring an end to the struggle or to the infiltration of men and supplies into South Vietnam. On December 10, the New York Times reported that after ten months of American air attacks against North Vietnam, the country's economic and military machine remained essentially intact. The raids had failed to halt appreciably the flow of North Vietnamese troop infiltrators into South Vietnam. Economic life had been disrupted by the air strikes but not enough to impede North Vietnam's will to

continue the struggle. To compensate for the severance of road and rail traffic in many parts of the country, the North Vietnamese concealed bridges under water, employed boats and other types of vehicles as a substitute for truck traffic. This factor heightened the Administration's receptivity to a bombing pause, in that a pause could be used as a signal to Hanoi that more extensive bombing would be undertaken by the United States, if Hanoi did not respond. On December 15, United States planes bombed and destroyed a North Vietnamese thermal power plant at Uongbi, fourteen miles north of the country's chief port of Haiphong. This was the first American air raid on a major North Vietnamese industrial target. Interestingly enough, McNamara's comment on the Uongbi raids carried a less-than-subtle warning, when he stated that the raid was "representative of the type of attacks we . . . will continue to carry out" (New York Times, December 16, 1965). Hanoi would have the option of preventing these attacks by complying with any American peace overtures. (To reinforce the signal, the Uongbi power plant was struck for the second time on December 20.)

Consequently, beginning on December 24, the Administration ceased all bombing raids over the North. The pause would continue until January 31, 1966, when President Johnson would announce the resumption of the bombing. But Hanoi did not respond to this peace offensive.⁶

1966: The Bombing Pause--
The Consensus Begins to Crumble

If the bombing pause was intended as a consensus-building tactic, the accompanying dissension during the pause and immediately after its termination was hardly in keeping with that objective. In Congress, doves seized upon the pause as a necessary step for negotiations, insisting upon a lengthy termination coupled with a new rationale as to why Hanoi was not responding--the United States had refused to allow the Viet Cong the role of direct participation in the peace talks. Senator John Sherman Cooper, Kentucky Republican, summed up the dove argument on January 10 by arguing that "Negotiations, not escalation, should be the dominant theme of our activity now," and the President should "make clear, without reservation, that negotiations could include the Viet Cong, because it is obvious that neither negotiations nor a settlement are possible without their inclusion" (New York Times, January 11, 1966). (McGovern, Church, Ribicoff, and Robert Kennedy were other prominent Democrats who echoed this theme.) Conversely, hawks saw the pause as a demonstration of weakness. Significantly, Senator Dirksen, in his first break from the Johnson Administration, insisted that the United States should achieve a complete military victory before entering peace negotiations." For the first time, Dirksen had questioned the President's call for "unconditional negotiations," (first put forward at John Hopkins

University) by asserting "How much negotiations are you going to get unless the Viet Cong are beaten. When MacArthur said, 'there is no substitute for victory' he planted a phrase that is never to be forgotten." Dirksen went on to advocate a blockade of North Vietnam, the bombing of Haiphong, and an intensified air campaign (at the time of the Republican White Paper in August of 1965, Dirksen had refused to go along with Laird and Ford's call for a greater stepped up air war)--calls for policy changes which prompted speculation that the Republicans "were getting ready to make Vietnam a campaign issue in the forthcoming Congressional election" (New York Times, January 8, 1966: 1 & 3). While Dirksen's "break" was temporary, his eventual defection would not come as a total surprise.

If Johnson was facing the prospect of erosion in support from a major Republican leader, the same process was manifesting itself with the Senate Majority Leader, Mike Mansfield. On January 8, Mansfield expressed the view that "a rapid solution to the conflict in Vietnam is not in immediate prospect," either through military victory or through negotiations. This observation was made in a report Mansfield and four other Senators filed with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, a report based on Mansfield's trip to South Vietnam and other countries during November 18-December 18, 1965. The report further challenged the policy of the Administration

by stating that (1) American troops had "blunted but not turned back the drive of the Vietcong" and that "there is no assurance as to what ultimate increase in American military commitment will be required before the conflict is terminated." In essence, the American commitment had become "open-ended." Secondly, the government of South Vietnam could not carry an increased war burden without significant increases in American men and aid. Finally, the report expanded on the two choices--negotiations vs. expansion of the war--in a less than optimistic manner:

Negotiations at this time, moreover, if they do come about, and if they are accompanied by a cease-fire and standfast, would serve to stabilize a situation in which the majority of the population remains under nominal government control but in which dominance of the countryside rests largely in the hands of the Vietcong. What might eventually materialize through negotiation from this situation cannot be foreseen at this time with any degree of certainty.

That is not, to say the least, a very satisfactory prospect. What needs also to be borne in mind, however, is that the visible alternative at this time and under present terms of reference is the indefinite expansion of the war which will require the continuous introduction of additional U.S. forces. The end of that course cannot be foreseen, either, and there are not grounds for optimism that the end is likely to be reached within the confines of South Vietnam or within the very near future (New York Times, January 9, 1966).

The assumptions listed in the Mansfield report became a rallying point for Senators who opposed the escalation of the war outright as well as for those who had expressed fears that the United States would become bogged down in an endless war on the Asian mainland. While, on balance, it

avored negotiations, it likewise provided political ammunition for hawks. Because it said little about air power, the hawks could argue that intensified bombings rather than more troops would terminate the war. Republican critics had in their August, 1965 White Paper opposed a massive land war and instead emphasized that bombings could win the war. In short, the Mansfield report's overriding impression was that the war was stalemated and that the Administration "dawk" policy would not end the war. In essence, the report was disquieting to both hawks and doves, albeit for different reasons, and it sharpened the tenor of debate on Vietnam which ensued in subsequent months.

The bombing pause had, in effect, posed a severe dilemma for President Johnson. The termination of the bombing symbolized a defeat for the hawks; its renewal represented a dashing of peace hopes for the doves. Heretofore the President could steer a course between the two extremes, but the very dual simplification of policy--a renewal or continued cessation--tended to erode the majority pro-Administration segment of Congress, by forcing them to back either alternative. The point is that more members of the Senate were gradually being forced to take a war stand. This dissent within the Senate was paralleling splits in the public. These were developments that were to erode the consensus. Additionally, the House of Representatives, while still remaining hawkish,

nevertheless was also experiencing some dovish sentiment. On January 22, President Johnson replied to seventy-three House legislators who had urged him to continue his peace offensive despite a lack of encouraging response from Hanoi. He stated that there would be "no abandonment of our peace efforts" despite "continuing hostility and aggressiveness in Hanoi and an insistence on the abandonment of South Vietnam to Communist take-over . . . the infiltration of the aggressors' forces has continued, and so have his attacks on our allies and on our own men" (New York Times, January 23, 1966).

This hint that the bombing lull was nearing an end was confirmed by Tom Wicker on January 27 in the New York Times. Wicker contended that although the Administration was divided on the resumption of bombing (Joint Chiefs of Staff, Lodge, Taylor for resumption with George Ball and Goldberg against), the proponents of bombing were gaining the upper hand. Their arguments were that (1) North Vietnam was taking advantage of the pause by resupplying the guerillas in the South; (2) North Vietnam must be punished for its aggression; (3) The United States had to reassert the principle of "no sanctuary" if it was to cope with Communist wars of liberation. Wicker concluded by stating that "Mr. Johnson is said to add a personal element to the proponent's argument: his fear of an American military reversal that could be directly attributed to the pause in the bombing and the Communist build-up." Opponents

of resuming the bombing contended that the military value of bombing was slight, bombing would only harden North Vietnamese resistance, and any hope for a peace offensive would be lost. They further contended that the sentiment of the country was more nearly behind every possible effort toward negotiated settlement of the war.

The President had apparently been cognizant of public opinion in relation to the bombing pause. It was revealed on January 28, that private White House polls had shown that before the onset of the bombing pause 44 percent of the American people had felt that the President had been doing all he could to bring about peace. After the pause had been in effect for ten days, the percentage had risen to 57 percent. Before giving the order, Johnson had been "impressed by a poll showing 73 percent in favor of a bombing pause" (New York Times, January 28). Obviously, the pause had given the President added support among dovish sectors of the populace, but this support was only of a temporary nature. Furthermore, the failure of the pause to bring an end to the fighting would cost the President support in the long run. In Congress, the pause had intensified hawk-dove divisions, and the President's resumption of the bombing on January 31 bred even further resentment, particularly over the issue of executive control of foreign policy. When fifteen Democratic Senators sent Johnson a letter urging suspension of the bombing, the President replied curtly that he continued "to be guided

in these matters by the resolution of the Congress approved on August 10, 1964." The use of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution as a broad mandate by the President infuriated Senator Morse and several other Senators, who insisted that, by voting for the resolution in August of 1964, they had not been endorsing a blank check. The irritation at this Presidential tactic prompted Morse to offer a resolution rescinding the Tonkin statement (New York Times, January 30, 1966). Although defeated,⁷ Morse's resolution did lead to the televised Fulbright Hearings, which in turn cast further doubt on the Administration's policies.

The resumption of bombing on February 1 and the doubts cast upon Administration policy by the Fulbright Hearings (held from January 28 to February 18) had a cumulative impact on public opinion. In terms of dissent, the incidence of large scale demonstrations increased dramatically over the remaining months of 1966. This increase among the doves gained added impetus from the instability of the Saigon government, as evidenced by the Buddhist crisis of April and May, and the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong in late June. Casualties jumped from 282 deaths in the month of January to 435 in February, a record 507 in March, 316 in April, 464 in May, and 507 again in June. For the remainder of 1966, casualty figures averaged well over 400 (Department of Defense, 1971). Despite this sacrifice of human life and the great increase in American power, there was still no end of the war in

sight. If the President could find a way to end the war, this would have meant large-scale approval, regardless of whether negotiations or military victory was the specific war-terminating tactic. His failure to do so was reflected in Gallup surveys: In January, 1966, 56 percent had approved, 26 percent disapproved his handling of Vietnam; By December of 1966, 47 percent disapproved, 41 percent approved. By July of 1967, 52 percent, a majority, were voicing disapproval.

The mechanism of this process was first demonstrated in a Harris survey of February 28, 1966. Harris noted that "President Johnson's support for his handling of the Vietnam War has dwindled sharply in the last six weeks-- from 63 percent to 49 percent of the public--as a result of policies that fail to satisfy completely any of the rival positions." What groups constituted the 14 percent drop-off recorded by Harris from January to February? Extreme "hawks" and extreme "doves" had remained overwhelmingly negative toward the President's handling of the war. The major shifts had occurred in the "two middle groups," which while supporting Administration policy in principle, disagreed on the negotiation-escalation question. Here were the four positions as described by Harris, and their percentages of approval in January and February:

TABLE 40

BASIC STAND ON U.S. POLICY--PERCENTAGE OF POSITIVE
RATING ON JOHNSON'S HANDLING OF VIETNAM--
HARRIS POLL, FEBRUARY 28, 1966

Basic Stand on Policy	Percentage of each group approving Johnson's handling of war		
	January	February	Net Change
(1) I disagree with present policy; we are not going far enough. We should go further, such as carrying the war more into North Vietnam. (PURE HAWK POSITION)	39%	35%	- 4
(2) I agree with what we are doing but we should increase our military effort to win a clear military victory. (ADMINISTRATION SUPPORTER--BUT LEANING TOWARD HAWKISH VIEW)	73	58	-15
(3) I agree with what we are doing, but we should do more to bring about negotiations, such as a cease fire. (ADMINISTRATION SUPPORTER--BUT LEANING TOWARD DOVISH VIEW)	69	55	-14
(4) I disagree with present policy; we shouldn't be there. We shouldn't be bombing North Vietnam and should pull our troops out now. (PURE DOVE POSITION)	16	16	Even

In effect, the failure of the bombing pause plus the impact of the Fulbright Hearings had polarized public opinion just as it intensified the split in Congress.

Former "Administration supporters" were now qualifying their position, and becoming more critical of Administration policy. In short, the danger of a limited war (particularly once it becomes stalemated) is that it conditions the public mood toward considering either of two extreme alternatives (escalate or withdrawal) to the detriment of those centrist policies promulgated by the Administration. A President adopting a middle course cannot sustain a bifurcated consensus, although he may temporarily slow the erosion of support from his moderate supporters by skillfully mixing peace overtures and acts of escalation. A President knows that in order to retain the support of the public for a war they will eventually wish they had never been involved in, he must continually put his "best peace foot" forward--he continually talks and offers peace, so that he may have public endorsement for war. While the President has a relatively free hand in the actual decision-making to escalate or to deescalate the war, he is more restricted when considering the issues of action or inaction. He must give the appearance of a man who is certain of what he is doing, i.e., that the anticipated consequences of the particular action, be it a bombing pause or intensified bombing, do in fact come about. Repeated failures to attain such results are highly destructive to a President's prestige. In the case of the February poll described above, the pause had failed to bring results, and had subsequently alienated additional

proportions of Johnson's middle base. This "dwindling of the middle base" was a phenomena which continued into mid-1967, although the proportion becoming moderate doves or moderate hawks was not equally split. Overall, the total percentage of hawks prevailed over doves, especially during the first half of 1967.

A closer examination of shifts in groups for the March-June period substantiates even further the assumption that the events of the period were producing a disenchantment irrespective of party or educational criteria.

TABLE 41
GALLUP--VIETNAM APPROVAL^a

	March, 1966		June, 1966	
	Approval	Dis-approval	Approval	Dis-approval
College	58%	32%	46%	46%
High School	58	26	42	41
Grade School	53	22	34	40
Republicans	42	36	24	57
Democrats	66	18	49	32
Independents	51	32	36	47
The net changes in:				
Approval scores	(College (-12); High School (-16); Grade School (-19); Republicans (-18); Democrats (-17); Independents (-15)			
Disapproval scores	College (+14); High School (+15); Grade School (+18); Republicans (+21); Democrats (+14); Independents (+15)			

^aSource: Gallup Opinion Index, June, 1966: 4.

While Republican and grade school categories had experienced the greatest degree of change, it is apparent, in

keeping with the contention that disillusionment over the war is a pervasive force at all levels of society, that the patience and normal optimism of the American public were now beginning to dissipate. A sense of "travail without end" had apparently begun to set in. Thus on March 2, McNamara had announced there were over 215,000 American troops in Vietnam, and another 20,000 were on the way. Despite the increase in troops and intensified bombing throughout the spring (the area of attack inched northward toward the cities of Haiphong and Hanoi), the movement of men and supplies to the South steadily increased along with American casualties. By the end of April, American officials were estimating that infiltration of North Vietnamese troops into South Vietnam had reached 5,500 a month, and McNamara again warned that the United States would have to deploy additional forces to keep pace with the increased infiltration. The numbers game went on and on: the United States attacked North Vietnam with more and more sorties every month; the North Vietnamese continued to increase their flow of men and supplies into the South; the fighting intensified; American forces had to be expanded; Congress was obliged to provide additional funds. And so it went.

The growing sense of futility during this January-June period is more than an impression. The Gallup "mistake" question was one indicator of growing disenchantment. Harris, in a June, 1966 survey, asked a question paralleling or tapping this same dimension.

TABLE 42

LENGTH OF WAR (HARRIS)

	Long War	Settle Soon	Not Sure
"Do you feel the war in Vietnam will be settled soon, within a matter of months, or do you feel it will go on a long time, for several years?"			
October, 1965	54%	24%	22%
May, 1966	73	8	19
June, 1966	75	9	16

The increasing expectation that the war would be a long one correlates quite well with the decline in Johnson's "popularity" and "handling of the war" polls. (By May, 1967, Harris reported 81 percent feeling the Vietnam War would be a "long one," and only 9 percent choosing the "settle soon" opinion.) Furthermore, one may make the assumption that the pervasive feeling of growing stalemate intensified the search for alternatives other than a mere "holding the line" operation, a policy course which offered nothing more than endless sacrifice. The antipathy toward excessive costs was a theme which could unite both hawks and doves.

January-June, 1966: The Birth of the "Lock-In" Point

This period is illustrative of the problems first faced by President Johnson in maintaining his support levels. He had the misfortune of a bombing pause failure

being immediately followed by the televised Fulbright Hearings, which cast additional doubt upon the credibility of his Vietnam policies. Furthermore, Congressional dissent during this period was important in giving form and direction to the uneasiness and discontent which was affecting the mass public. But the public apparently became attentive to Congressional critics only when this elite dissent began to roughly coincide with an appreciable rise in war costs plus an awareness of Presidential failure and/or battlefield stalemate. This confluence of the three variables during the January-June period resulted in a seventeen point drop in the Gallup Vietnam approval question (57 percent approval to 40 percent by late June), and, for the first time, a plurality of the public disapproved of Johnson's war handling, 42 percent in late June (Gallup Opinion Index, December, 1967: 2).

In brief, the three components of the "lock-in" point-- Presidential failure, elite dissent, and the surge in war costs--were present. This basic configuration eroded and bifurcated public support, initiating the erosion of the middle ground, i.e., Administration supporters, and portended the ultimate maturation of the lock-in point with the Tet offensive in 1968. During this period, the increased costs of the war began to "tune in" Americans to a full realization of just what the war meant to them. In short, this process constitutes the "birth" of the "lock-in" point, the initial breakthrough when mass public response begins to question

Presidential discretion in the conduct of the war, and begins to turn to alternatives paralleling an eventual deeper and more divisive hawk-dove split. Subsequent events in the war will continue to reinforce these first doubts, even if the actual costs may decline. Thus, American casualties continued to rise, but draft calls, for example, actually dropped below the 15,000 level in the early months of 1967.

President Johnson attempted to renew his lease on support by escalating the air war in late June. The bombing of oil installations in the Hanoi-Haiphong area (June 29) came as a welcome step to a public seeking some indication that the war might be shortened. Approval was overwhelming--70 percent approving, 11 percent disapproving, 19 percent no opinion (Gallup Opinion Index, July, 1966: 5). The intensified bombing was initially applauded as decisive action capable of ending the war. Gallup revealed that in June, before the bombing of the oil dumps, nearly seven persons in ten had predicted a war lasting two years or more. After the bombing, the ratio dropped to five in ten (Gallup Opinion Index, December, 1967: 29). The optimism was largely shaped by the description of the raids as being extremely successful. According to President Johnson, the attacks had hit 86 percent of North Vietnam's known oil storage capacity and destroyed 57 percent (Johnson, 1966: 706). Undersecretary of State George Ball told the Senate Foreign Relations

Committee that the decision to attack the oil storage areas reflected a sense of "real encouragement" about military progress in South Vietnam and "weakening morale" in the North (New York Times, July 1, 1966). Yet Hanoi, through improvisation and rationing, continued to meet its civilian needs.

The public claims of success over the raids did not square with the final results. Hanoi showed neither an inclination to discuss peace nor a significant diminution in its ability to wage war. Accordingly, the President's popularity, after being boosted because of the raids, dropped five percentage points. Additional President's failures would only strengthen the constraints imposed by the "lock-in" point.

September, 1966-July, 1967:
A Shifting Public Mood Between Escalation-Deescalation

The Administration again switched tactics after the Hanoi-Haiphong bombings. In the fall of 1966, a series of peace offers and deescalation possibilities emanated from Administration sources. On September 22, American Ambassador Arthur Goldberg, in a speech before the United Nations General Assembly, proposed a step-by-step deescalation of the war by both sides. He indicated that the United States would halt the bombing of North Vietnam when it was assured that North Vietnam would deescalate its military effort as well. President Johnson elaborated on the deescalation theme one month later at the Manila Conference in October.

Aware of the need to assure the American public that the flow of Americans to Vietnam would someday be halted and then reversed, and also cognizant that his constant calls for more troops and more money were placing many Democratic Congressmen, especially from Northern urban areas, in jeopardy as the November elections approached, Johnson made a dramatic offer of withdrawal:

. . . Allied forces are in the Republic of Vietnam because that country is the object of aggression and its government requested support in the resistance of its people to aggression. They shall be withdrawn as the other side withdraws its forces to the North, ceases infiltration, and the level of violence thus subsides. These forces will be withdrawn as soon as possible and not later than six months after the above conditions have been fulfilled (New York Times, October 27, 1966).

The idea of withdrawal was appealing, especially since it was tied to the concept of reciprocity between the two sides. Withdrawal under these circumstances would meet the justifications which dominated "grass roots" public acceptance of the war, i.e., containment of Communism and success in meeting our commitment to Vietnam. The aggressor would have been repulsed, our sacrifices of men and money would not have been in vain, and the maintenance of our international prestige as a defender of freedom would have been unimpaired.

Once again the public was receptive to these cues. Surveys during this period clearly delineated the new trend of public opinion toward deescalation. This surge however did not imply an abandonment of the war effort, but

a desire to see the war come to an honorable end as rapidly as possible. Accordingly, in reply to a question, "Do you favor an escalation or deescalation of the war?" the trend line appeared as follows:

TABLE 43
HARRIS SURVEY (1966 TREND LINE):
ESCALATION OR DEESCALATION

	Favor Escalation	Favor Deescalation	Related Event
January	48%	52%	Bombing Pause
March	53	47	
May	47	53	South Vietnam Coup
July	60	40	
September	52	48	Hanoi Bombings
Mid-October	44	56	Manila Conference
November	43	57	

In keeping with this public mood, Harris revealed that 48 percent chose a United Nations sponsored withdrawal of troops as the most favored option in Vietnam (Harris survey, October 25, 1966).

However, the rejection of the American peace offers by Hanoi plus the aftermath of the November elections swung the Administration and the public toward an emphasis upon military escalation and victory once more during the first half of 1967. In reference to the 1966 mid-term election, Republicans gained three seats in the Senate, and forty-seven additional House seats. According to the Congressional Quarterly, thirty of the new House members were clearly

hawks, three doves, and the remainder unclassifiable. (They adhered to the existing line.) In the Senate two of the newly elected Republicans (Percy and Hatfield) were classified as doves, defeating two Administration supporters. In essence, the Republicans had scored above-average gains for an out-of-power party in the 1966 midterm elections, winning their highest total House membership (187) since 1956, when Eisenhower was reelected (Congressional Quarterly, 1966: 2773-2778).

While the Congressional Quarterly did not view the election as indicating a specific mandate one way or the other on Vietnam, the election did reinforce the hawkish views in the House, by increasing the power of the conservative coalition. If Johnson were to get his needed support on crucial domestic appropriations in the House, he would have to be sensitive to his conduct of the war. Furthermore, the results of the election, whether directly attributable to the Vietnam War or not, could nevertheless be used by the Republican leadership for the purposes of political profit. Thus, former Vice-President Nixon on November 9 claimed that the Democratic loss in the House constituted "the sharpest rebuff of a President in a generation" and was a "rebuke to the President's lack of credibility and lack of direction abroad." He further stated that the size of Republican advances gave President Johnson "a mandate to open his mind to new solutions, to accept constructive criticism and to reinstate the tradition

of a bipartisan foreign policy." He promptly suggested that President Johnson call the newly elected Republicans to the White House in order to ascertain their ideas on the war's conduct. This was a Republican idea not without precedent. Sixteen years earlier, Senators Knowland and Taft had, after the 1950 election, insisted that President Truman invite Republicans into the cabinet and higher policy councils in order to create a bipartisan approach to Korean War policy (Congressional Quarterly, 1966: 2775).

The pendulum swung back for the first half of 1967 toward a firm reliance on bombing and intensification of the fighting. In February there was a brief six day bombing pause, but President Johnson announced the bombing resumption on February 14, citing Hanoi's major resupply efforts during the break as justification for this action. Gallup revealed that seven in ten favored continuing the bombing of North Vietnam, with the most common view asserting that "it's the only way to end the war" (Gallup, February 26, 1967). A Harris survey showed clearly the trend in hawkish sentiment in a May, 1967 poll:

TABLE 44
HARRIS SURVEY--MAY 16, 1967:
TREND TOWARD ESCALATION

	Nov., 1966	Feb., 1967	May, 1967	Net Change
<u>Agreement with Administration policy</u>				
Disagree, escalate more	11%	18%	16%	+ 5
Agree, but escalate	32	37	43	+11
Agree, negotiate more	45	33	29	-16
Disagree, pull out	12	12	12	--

TABLE 44 (continued)

	Nov., 1966	Feb., 1967	May, 1967	Net Change
<u>Do you prefer escalation or deescalation?</u>				
Escalate	43%	55%	59%	+16
Deescalate	57	45	41	-16

Thus the point had been reached of a full cycle in American public opinion. The 1965-67 period had been characterized by successive stages of optimism vs. pessimism, deescalation vs. escalation. The overall pattern had been one of decline in the levels of support for the war. But in late June of 1967, President Johnson still retained a base of support for the war. Gallup registered 43 percent approving, 43 percent disapproving of his handling of the war, 48 percent believing the war was not a mistake to 41 percent who believed it was, and 52 percent approving of his handling of the Presidency as opposed to 35 percent disapproving, a level reflecting his conference with Kosygin at Glassboro (Gallup Opinion Index, August, 1967: 2-4). Congress still supported the President. On March 20, the House and Senate had passed a \$12.2 billion supplemental (fiscal 1967) defense money bill for Vietnam (Congressional Quarterly, 1967: 493). The Senate vote was 77-3; the House vote 385-11. While the numerical totals expressed overwhelming support for the war, the policy statement accompanying the bill connoted another meaning. In the first such Congressional statement since the 1964

Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, the declaration supported American fighting men but also all "efforts being made by the President of the United States and other men of good will throughout the world to prevent an expansion of the war in Vietnam and to bring that conflict to an end through a negotiated settlement." The fact that the Senate approved the declaration (the product of Mike Mansfield) by a vote of seventy-two to nineteen indicated that the Senate's acceptance of Administration policy was now subject to some kind of policy qualification (See Congressional Quarterly, 1967: 337). At the time of Tet, Westmoreland's demand for 206,000 more troops would clash directly with that preference against further escalation.

August, 1967--January, 1968: Prelude to Tet

On August 3, President Johnson asked Congress to impose a 10 percent surcharge on income taxes in order to avert "an unsafe and unmanageable deficit" in the federal budget. The surcharge was intended to cool an overheated economy stemming from the inflationary pressures attributed to the war. At the same time, he also announced plans to increase the number of American troops "by at least 45,000," a figure which was a compromise between the 70,000 urged by General Westmoreland and the 15,000-30,000 suggested by Defense Secretary McNamara (New York Times, August 4, 1967). This dual increase in taxes and men was a catalyst which

speeded up the process of decline alluded to previously. Five days later, Senator Fulbright delivered a speech before the American Bar Association enunciating a theme that would be taken up by other critics as well. Fulbright charged that "The Great Society has become a sick society because the unnecessary and immoral war in Vietnam was causing aggravation of grave problems and the corrosion of values in our own society." The United States was playing an "imperial role" in Vietnam. Its "savage and unsuccessful war against poor people in a small and backward nation" was stimulating violence at home. "We are truly fighting a two-front war and doing badly in both. Each war feeds on the other, and, although the President assures us that we have the resources to win both wars, in fact we are not winning either of them." Fulbright went on to note that since 1946, the United States had spent \$904 billion (57.29 percent of the national budget) on military power but only \$96 billion (6.08 percent) on social programs. In short, the combination of allocating both manpower and economic power to a futile overseas undertaking was shortchanging the need to build a better society at home, an aberration of priorities (New York Times, August 9, 1967).

While this argument may have had greater impact for the attentive public, the mass public nevertheless reacted to the surcharge with an equally strong reaction. In July, 1967, Gallup had asked the public if it would favor or

oppose an income tax increase for the purpose of paying for the war in Vietnam. Seventy percent had gone on record as opposing such a measure, with only 25 percent favoring the idea. Furthermore, breakdowns of groups by educational or income criteria revealed that opposition was pervasive at all levels. Thus the \$10,000 and over income group consisted of 70 percent opposition, the under \$3,000 income group was 66 percent opposed (Gallup Opinion Index, August, 1967: 7). Gallup in July had also questioned the public on the issue of sending more troops. At that time, the rumor was that 100,000 more men might be sent to Vietnam. Forty-nine percent were opposed to the idea, with only 40 percent in favor (Gallup Opinion Index, August, 1967: 6). Also, the highest total yet thinking that the United States had made a mistake to send troops to Vietnam was recorded--41 percent. In October, when the question was asked again (after the August 3 announcement), the "yes" vote for the first time was greater than the "no" vote--47 percent yes, 44 percent no (Gallup Opinion Index, October, 1967: 4).

Yet it was probably in terms of Johnson's popularity that the effect of the surcharge announcement was most clearly demonstrated:

TABLE 45

JOHNSON'S POPULARITY--1967^a
 GALLUP POLLS--"DO YOU APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE OF THE
 WAY JOHNSON IS HANDLING HIS JOB AS PRESIDENT."

	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion
July, 1967	52%	35%	13%
August, 1967	39	47	14
September, 1967	39	47	14
October, 1967	38	50	12
November, 1967	41	49	10
December, 1967	46	41	13

^aGallup Opinion Index, December, 1967: 2.

As shall be seen, the upswing from November to December reflected a series of optimistic reports about the war, particularly from General Westmoreland and Ambassador Bunker who indicated that the war was being won. In short, as Gallup phrased it on August 12, there seemed to be four major factors behind the decline in Presidential popularity:

- (1) discouragement over the Vietnam War;
- (2) the President's proposal to increase the number of troops;
- (3) the President's proposal to increase taxes to help pay for the war in Vietnam;
- (4) general discouragement over domestic events, and specifically riots and race relations

(Gallup Opinion Index, December, 1967: 36). In regard to the latter, Vietnam, in accordance with the Fulbright thesis, was seen as directly responsible by having deprived the urban ghettos of needed resources and attention.

There were additional political implications arising from the growing American disillusionment with the war.

In early October, 1967, Gallup asked a politically sensitive question--"The Presidential election comes next year. Which do you think would be in a better position to bring an end to the war in Vietnam--a Democratic President or a Republican President?"

TABLE 46
PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE (1967)^a

	Republican	Democrat	No Difference	No Opinion
National Totals	31%	21%	35%	13%
By Politics:				
Republicans	57	4	27	12
Democrats	16	41	30	13

^aGallup Opinion Index, October, 1967: 13.

What is interesting is the greater degree of dissension among Democrats than Republicans. Where only 4 percent of Republicans would choose a Democratic President, 16 percent of all Democrats would vote for a Republican President to end the war, an indication of anti-Johnson sentiment.

This rapid decline in public confidence was a natural concomitant of the "dwindling of the middle road" process. In November (before the Westmoreland and Bunker assertions) a Harris survey revealed the growing polarization away from the Administration's middle ground policy of fighting on to attain a negotiated peace. In July, before the surcharge

announcement, 51 percent had backed this policy. By late October, the percentage was 26 percent approval, with the "win total military victory" and "get out as quickly as possible" alternative acquiring together 65 percent of the populations' allegiance. Harris commented that "both those who want total victory and those who want to get out say they will vote for any Republican nominee against Mr. Johnson" (Harris Survey, November 13, 1967). In a similar vein, Gallup revealed even more clearly the dilemma faced by President Johnson. The hawk-dove polarization of public opinion extended throughout the entire populace.

TABLE 47

HAWK-DOVE POLARIZATION (1967)^a
 GALLUP, OCTOBER, 1967: "JUST FROM WHAT YOU HAVE HEARD OR READ, WHICH OF THESE STATEMENTS COMES CLOSEST TO THE WAY YOU, YOURSELF, FEEL ABOUT THE WAR IN VIETNAM: (A) THE U.S. SHOULD BEGIN TO WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS, (B) THE U.S. SHOULD CARRY ON ITS PRESENT LEVEL OF FIGHTING, OR (C) THE U.S. SHOULD INCREASE THE STRENGTH OF ITS ATTACKS AGAINST NORTH VIETNAM?"

	(Dove) ^b Withdraw Troops	(Administration Supporter) Present Level	(Hawk) Increase Attacks	No Opinion
NATIONAL	31%	10%	53%	6%
EDUCATION				
College	26	13	56	5
High School	30	9	56	5
Grade School	40	11	42	7
POLITICS				
Republican	31	6	58	5
Democrat	30	13	51	6
REGION				
East	38	11	45	6
Midwest	24	11	60	5
South	31	9	54	6
West	28	12	55	5

TABLE 47 (continued)

	(Dove) ^b Withdraw Troops	(Administration Supporter) Present Level	(Hawk) Increase Attacks	No Opinion
INCOME				
\$10,000 & Over	30%	12%	52%	6%
\$7,000 & Over	28	11	56	5
\$5,000 - \$6,999	33	6	56	5
\$3,000 - \$4,999	35	11	48	6
Under \$3,000	34	13	45	8

^aGallup Opinion Index, November, 1967: 11.

^bMy classification.

In not one category does the middle position (Present level) claim a plurality. Dovish sentiment is most significant among the grade school and three lowest income categories. Conversely, hawkish sentiment commands a plurality in all categories, but is particularly prominent among the college educated, Republican, and higher income levels. The Eastern region remained the most dovish in keeping with its role as springboard for major protest demonstrations against the war. In short, the Johnson consensus had been thoroughly polarized, and pressures to escalate the war had again gained preeminence. Appropriately, Gallup found in December that 52 percent of the population considered itself as hawks, 35 percent as doves. This proportion would not drastically shift until the aftermath of Tet, when the hawk-dove dichotomy split almost evenly, with 41 percent considering themselves

a hawk, 42 percent a dove (Gallup Opinion Index, April, 1968: 15 & October, 1968: 25).

The Congressional Sector and Increasing Doubt

As in the public sector, Johnson's middle of the road was eroding in Congress. Godfrey Sperley, in the Christian Science Monitor (September 26, 1967) revealed that the intensity of the hawk-dove split was mounting in the House of Representatives, with "the President's middle ground becoming more isolated in the process." Of 205 House members who were asked their position on the war, 43 who had previously backed Presidential strategy now saw more of a need "on finding a way out." If victory was not the Administration goal, then withdrawal should be considered. While there was no comparable switching in the opposite direction (from dove to hawk), the hawks in the House had become even more hawkish. According to Sperley, they were more militant in demanding a war-ending escalation policy. The "new dove" position was typified by Representative C. B. Morton:

Time is against us. It is making the cost-benefit ratio of our effort in Vietnam incompatible with our national interest . . . Our best fight against Communism lies in the dynamics of our own social, political, and economic growth. Get out (with honor) and forge ahead at home.

The "more militant hawk" position was evident from Representative William G. Bray:

For reasons that are not clear, the Administration seems adverse to winning this war. It apparently feels that there is something "evil" in the word "win" . . . There has been too much pleading for a conference and not enough firmness toward winning. As soon as the enemy is certain that we mean to win there will be a conference.

The danger facing the President was the potential conversion of the hawks over to the dove side. The hawks were no longer merely saying "win the war," but "win it or get out." If the prospects of victory were destroyed, then a hawk-dove coalition would be a distinct possibility (Christian Science Monitor, September 26, 1967).

An October 8 survey by the New York Times in which fifty Governors and members of Congress were asked about changing sentiment on the war indicated further the extent of mounting public criticism. Of the nearly 250 interviewed, only forty said they had switched on Vietnam policy, with thirty of them moving toward a stronger peace position and ten to insistence on further intensification of the war. Most prominent among the switchers was Senator Thurston B. Morton, Republican of Kentucky, who had moved from support to advocating disengagement. What is probably most important is that "a significant number of those interviewed reported a discernible polarization of Vietnam sentiment, with the large middle group that formerly accepted the war tending to split into two vocal critical factions, one advocating every possible peace effort and the other an all-out offensive for victory." The survey cited two factors most responsible for the shift of opinion. They were the growing

casualty list⁸ and President Johnson's request for a tax increase. Representative William F. Ryan (Democrat, New York) summed up the frustration complaint as follows:

Everyone is frustrated. The "why not win" group is frustrated by failure to achieve an easy and immediate victory. Those who have generally tended to support the Administration's policy are frustrated by the complicated nature of the war and its seeming endlessness.

Those who have consistently opposed the war, frustrated and angry, now feel that protests and demonstrations have had little or no effect and see the only recourse to be the defeat of President Johnson (New York Times, October 8, 1967).

Sandwiched in between the two policy extremes, the President attempted during this period to repeat his favorite tactic--concurrent actions designed to give both hawk and dove some degree of satisfaction. In August he had escalated the air war as a concession to the hawks,⁹ allowing American planes to bomb targets in the Hanoi-Haiphong area that had previously been declared off-limits by the Administration. In his San Antonio speech of September 29, he again offered to stop the bombing if this action would lead to "productive discussion" if North Vietnam would not use the pause for its military advantage. Hanoi quickly rejected the offer. But in regard to the air war, the resulting furor produced in Congress did little to soothe the split between hawks and doves. The authorization of air attacks near the Chinese border (On August 13 planes had bombed the 360 foot Langson rail and highway bridge spanning the Kikung River, ten miles from

the Chinese border.) was roundly deplored August 14 by Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield who called it "a very dangerous extension of the war" that "brings us that much closer to the brink of a possible confrontation with China which could be made probable through a miscalculation, an error or otherwise." Fulbright called the extension "dangerous and stupid." Senator Charles H. Percy (Republican, Illinois), questioned what the United States reaction would be "if the Chinese bombed Mexico within ten miles of the Rio Grande." Senator Stephen M. Young (Democrat, Ohio) deplored the "increasingly larger role" of the military "in formulating national policy" (New York Times, August 15, 1967).

Even before the bombing near China, Senator John C. Stennis (Democrat, Mississippi) had said August 9 that suspension or restriction of the bombing would be a "tragic and perhaps fatal mistake." His statement, issued prior to the opening of hearings on the air war by his subcommittee, was supported by other Senate members of the group--Symington (Democrat, Missouri), Jackson, (Democrat, Washington), Cannon (Democrat, Nevada), Miller (Republican, Iowa) and Thurmond (Republican, South Carolina). At those Hearings, members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff had testified to the effectiveness of the bombings. Admiral Sharp, on August 15, had maintained that the "enemy is hurting" from increased war pressure, and therefore "we should increase our pressures." North Vietnam faced "mounting

logistic, management and morale problems" because of the air attacks. General Earle G. Wheeler, Joint Chiefs Chairman, had told the subcommittee August 16 that he did not "see any shortage of worthwhile military targets in North Vietnam." A halt in bombing "would be, in my opinion, extending the war indefinitely." Finally General John P. McConnell, Air Force Chief of Staff, said in August 22 testimony, released later, that when the bombing of the North had been authorized in 1965, the Joint Chiefs had recommended "a very severe application of air power." This was a plan to destroy ninety-four targets in sixteen days. Instead of this sharp, "sudden blow," the Administration had adopted a plan of "applying pressure gradually." "I believe," he said, "that if we had gone in 1965 and really pounded them when they didn't have any defenses, that we would have been better off today" (New York Times, October 4 & 5, 1967).

In contrast to the generals, Defense Secretary McNamara's testimony painted a far bleaker picture. McNamara on August 25 had told the subcommittee that intensified air attacks would "not materially shorten the war" and that there was no indication that North Vietnam "can be bombed to the negotiating table." Furthermore, he did not think the bombing of North Vietnam "has in any significant way affected their war-making capability." In short, "There was no direct relationship between the level of bombing in the North and the United States forces

required in the South." Bombing or mining Haiphong port on the grounds that such action would cause "significant reduction" in supplies to the enemy was illusory.

(Testimony released October 10, New York Times, 1967.)

The subcommittee members almost wholly disagreed with McNamara. Symington (Democrat, Missouri) stated on August 25 that if McNamara was right and the military chiefs wrong, "there would be no chance for any true success in this long war." Senator Jack Miller (Republican, Iowa) told reporters that if intensified bombing "might shorten the war, even by one day, then we ought to take the risks" (New York Times, August 26, 1967). In the final analysis, the subcommittee called unanimously on August 31 for an intensification of bombing attacks against North Vietnam and a closing of the port of Haiphong. The port closing and the bombing-- "striking all meaningful targets with a military significance"--should be ordered, or "we cannot, in good conscience, ask our ground forces to continue their fight in Vietnam." In essence, the military had promised that the war might be won if the wraps on targets were removed.

A second theme which emerged in the Congressional debate during this period was the extent of American commitments and the misuse of Presidential power. During August 16-23, the Johnson Administration's broad interpretation of the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin resolution came under

fire from the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The Administration's position was that the resolution was Congress' authorization of the measures being taken by the United States in fighting the war in Vietnam.

Chairman Fulbright informed Undersecretary of State Katzenbach, who was testifying, that the Administration had not sought and did not have a declaration of war for the Vietnamese conflict. Katzenbach considered the Tonkin Gulf resolution a functional equivalent of a declaration of war. More specifically, Katzenbach stated that Congressional approval of the SEATO treaty in 1955 and of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution "fully fulfills the obligation of the Executive in a situation of this kind to participate with the Congress, to give the Congress a full and effective voice, the functional equivalent . . . of the constitutional obligation, with respect to declaring war." Senator John Sherman Cooper (Republican, Kentucky) replied that the inherent danger was in the use of Presidential power to send troops in situations "where we are not engaged in war" and "progressively we are brought into this war." Fulbright's contention was that the President had misused the war power, ignoring the traditional right of Congress to actively share in the formulation of foreign policy, and that it was therefore necessary to "try to develop just what are the limits, if any, of the authority--not the power--the authority of the

President to do what he will, whatever he wishes with the armed forces." To Fulbright, the gist of Katzenbach's testimony was that "the President has inherently the right to do about anything he likes so long as the Congress supplies an Army and a Navy and an Air Force" (New York Times, August 21, 1967). Critics of the war and President Johnson therefore could seize on another theme as a focal point for dissent.

A third theme which emanated from the post-surcharge August period dealt with charges that the South Vietnamese ruling military junta would try to rig the forthcoming national elections. Critics indicated a belief that corrupt elections would be proof of American failure in Vietnam and would justify steps toward withdrawal. Thus, Senator Robert Kennedy charged that South Vietnam's ruling military junta was "making the election a fraud and a farce." Senator Javits called for "an examination of our commitment" in Vietnam. "If free elections are not possible there, then the President and our government must have another moral basis for the commitment. As I know of none, we have every right, once the elections take place, to begin to consider phasing out our commitment." Senators Pastore (Democrat, Rhode Island) agreed with Javits, and was joined by Church, Clark, Case, Fulbright, Young, McGovern, Cooper, and Morse (New York Times, August 12, 1967). In essence, the United States was trying to foster democracy in South Vietnam. Corrupt elections would repudiate that purpose and obviate the commitment's rationale.

The "Victory" Offensive

Amidst a declining curve of public support and rising volume of Congressional criticism, the Administration unleashed its victory offensive, an offensive designed to convince the public and Congress that the end of the war was in sight, an objective to which both hawks and doves could find agreement. The first step was a series of optimistic reports, mainly statistical, which attempted to show that the war was being won by every conceivable quantitative indicator.¹⁰ In summary, the statistics showed the following:

- (1) Enemy initiated attacks of battalion size or larger and enemy-initiated incidents of sabotage, terrorism, and harassment have been trending downward since the winter of 1966 (from 9.0 to 4.5 per month).
- (2) The ratio of VC/NVA killed to friendly forces killed had risen from 2.4 in February, 1965 to 4.0 by summer of 1967.
- (3) The rate of South Vietnamese army desertions from a 1966 high of 22 per thousand to under 10 by mid-1967.
- (4) Defection of both enemy military personnel and civilians has been moving significantly upward as a result of the Chieu Hoi or "open arms" program and stepped-up psychological warfare (From a low of under 1000 per three months in 1965 to over 3500 every three months by late 1967.) (Business Week, August 12, 1967: 83).

During the November 13-16 period, first hand reports on the war were given to President Johnson by General Westmoreland and Ambassador to South Vietnam Ellsworth Bunker. Bunker continued the picture of optimism when

he stated on November 13 that "steady progress" had been made on the military and political fronts in Vietnam. "There is every prospect, too, that the progress will accelerate," he asserted. Bunker predicted the pacification of 1,500-2,000 hamlets in 1968, compared to 1,000 in 1967. While not predicting an end to the war, Bunker cited these other developments as indicating a turn for the better--the reinstatement of local government, the holding of five elections in the past fourteen months, Saigon government moves against corruption, an improvement in the fighting capacity of the South Vietnamese Army, a 50 percent decline in Viet Cong recruitment in the past year, Viet Cong alienation of the Vietnamese under their control because of their demands for higher taxes and the interdiction of guerilla food supplies (New York Times, November 14, 1967).

Westmoreland arrived in Washington on November 15. According to his view, the situation in Vietnam was "very, very encouraging." On November 19, Westmoreland and Bunker made a joint appearance on "Meet the Press," where Westmoreland was quoted as saying that "U.S. and South Vietnamese troops were winning a war of attrition." It was "conceivable that within two years or less the enemy will be so weakened that the Vietnamese will be able to cope with a greater share of the war burden. We will be able to phase down the level of our military effort, withdraw some troops . . ." Bunker stated: "We are

making steady, not spectacular progress" in Vietnam. "We are at the point now not only of being able to continue, but to accelerate the rate of progress" (New York Times, November 20, 1967). On November 21, speaking at the National Press Club, Westmoreland again issued an optimistic analysis: "I am certain that whereas in 1965 the enemy was winning, today he is certainly losing; the enemy has not won a major battle in more than a year . . . his Viet Cong military units can no longer fill their ranks from the South but must depend increasingly on replacements from North Vietnam; his guerilla force is declining at a steady rate" (New York Times, November 22, 1967).

The impact of these predictions upon public opinion was clearly noticeable. According to a December 4, 1967 Harris survey, "the downward trend in President Johnson's popularity has reversed . . . following assurances by General William Westmoreland and Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker that the 'war of attrition' in Vietnam would eventually go our way." Harris recorded a jump of eleven points--from 23 percent to 34 percent on the President's handling of the war. What was even more significant was the reversal in the trend of the public's thinking about the war itself. The optimistic predictions had had a definite result. For the first time since July, the number who "want to get out as quickly as possible"

declined, with a concomitant increase in the middle position of Johnson's consensus, i.e., fight to get a negotiated settlement.

TABLE 48

HARRIS SURVEY, DECEMBER 4, 1967: POLICY IN VIETNAM

		Late Nov.	Early Nov.	August	July
Win total victory	(Hawk)	26%	21%	24%	21%
Fight to get settlement	(Pro-Admin- istration)	33	26	37	51
Get out as quickly as possible	(Dove)	34	44	34	24
Not Sure		7	9	5	4

From early November to late November, victory expectations had increased by five percentage points; the Administration position had gained by seven. In short, by promising an end to the war, the President was buying time and having his popularity boosted with a temporary injection of support. Gallup polls, measuring the President's popularity, were a clear demonstration of this boost:

TABLE 49

BOOST IN PRESIDENTIAL POPULARITY (1967)^a

	Approval	Disapproval
November, 1967	41%	49%
December, 1967	46	41
January, 1968	48	39

^aGallup Opinion Index, March, 1968: 2.

Still the President was skating on the proverbial "thin ice." The Westmoreland and Bunker visits plus the plethora of optimistic reports had not stilled Congressional criticism by any means, nor the incidence of protest demonstrations over the war, or the growing trend by the Republican party to promote the war for its own political ends. As late as December 7, Republican leaders had charged that the Administration had not fully exploited opportunities to settle the war. Both Dirksen and Ford expressed their joint opinions that more success in this area might be possible under a Republican President. It was not just Republicans that the President was concerned over. On November 30, Senator Eugene McCarthy had announced that he would enter five or six Democratic Presidential primaries in 1968 in order to further a negotiated settlement of the war in Vietnam. McCarthy declared "that the Administration seems to have set no limits to the price which it is willing to pay for a military victory" (New York Times, December 1, 1967).

Two months later, the reality of American limits (in Vietnam) would be impressed upon the American people. The Tet Offensive would be initially reacted to by a wave of hawkishness only to be followed by a wave of pessimism. For the first time, doves would outnumber hawks as nearly one person in five would switch positions. The illusion of victory was irrevocably broken, and with it the prestige and power of a President.

TABLE 50

GALLUP POLLS:
PERCENTAGE CALLING THEMSELVES HAWKS OR DOVES^a

	Hawk	Dove	No Opinion
December, 1967	52%	35%	13%
January, 1968	56	28	16
February, 1968 (early)	61	23	16
February, 1968 (late)	58	26	16
March, 1968	41	42	17
April, 1968	41	41	18

^aGallup Opinion Index, October, 1968: 25.

The Tet Offensive:
The Final Crisis in Vietnam

The year 1968 began in a spirit of optimism, partly as reaction to the November predictions of impending victory, partly as a reaction to new signs that Hanoi was seeking to negotiate rather than continue the war indefinitely. On January 1, the North Vietnamese Foreign Minister, Nguyen Duy Trinh, stated that "after the United States has ended unconditionally the bombing and all other acts of war, North Vietnam will hold talks with the United States on questions of concern" (New York Times, January 3, 1968). Previously, Hanoi's position was much more vague-- that there "could" be talks if the United States would cease all bombing and "other acts of war." Administration sources reportedly saw the Trinh statement as "marking a definite shift in North Vietnam's position," and in fact

"narrowing" the gap between the Trinh position and President Johnson's San Antonio Formula of September 29, 1967. (San Antonio Formula: The United States was willing to "stop all aerial and naval bombardment of North Vietnam when this will lead promptly to productive discussion.") The next day at his news conference, Secretary Rusk indicated that Trinh's offer was under serious consideration, but cautioned that Hanoi might be trying to lure Washington into lengthy, inconclusive talks similar to those that had occurred in the Korean War (New York Times, January 5, 1968).

Trinh's statement prompted appeals from Congress to halt the bombing to test Hanoi's sincerity. On January 4, Senator Robert Kennedy, in a speech at San Francisco, insisted that the United States must take such a "first step," and Senator Cooper (Republican, Kentucky) chimed in the next day with a similar plea to halt the bombing. Hawks, on the other hand, continued to tie the idea of negotiations to the concept of reciprocity on the part of Hanoi, i.e., that Hanoi, in accordance with the San Antonio Formula of the President, "would not take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation" while negotiations were underway. The President again reaffirmed this qualification in his State of the Union Message, insisting that North Vietnam "must not take advantage of our restraint as they have (during bombing pauses) in the past" (New York Times, January 18, 1968).

However, the Secretary of Defense designate Clark Clifford took a major step toward injecting additional flexibility into the "formula," when he testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee January 25 during the nomination proceedings. While Clifford did go on record as opposing cessation of bombing without reciprocity, he also offered a modification of the formula designed to ease its rigidity. In essence, Clifford suggested that a total halt in the flow of men and supplies in South Vietnam was not a reasonable expectation. Reciprocity, or not taking advantage of the pause really meant that this "flow" would not exceed "normal" current levels (New York Times, January 26, 1968).

The possibility of negotiations in the immediate pre-Tet period soothed the doves, for they could see very few remaining differences standing in the way of early talks with Hanoi. To the hawks, it was reasonable to believe that Trinh's change of tense signified a recognition by Hanoi that the odds were heavily stacked against a Communist military victory. Accordingly, they stressed the need to stall negotiations while American forces continued to improve the military position in South Vietnam. The President also emphasized that the war's outlook was promising. In his State of the Union speech, he asserted that "the enemy has been defeated in battle after battle and that "The number of South Vietnamese living in areas under Government protection, tonight has

grown by more than a million since January of last year. These are all marks of progress" (Johnson, 1968: 25). Two weeks later, this official optimism clashed with the reality of the Tet Offensive.

The Tet Offensive:
Administration Credibility Questioned

On January 31 (Vietnam time), Communist troops unleashed a coordinated offensive on major cities, towns, and military bases throughout South Vietnam. While intelligence sources had anticipated that an enemy offensive would occur, the scale and intensity of the attacks surprised both the Administration and the American military command in Saigon. According to General Westmoreland,

Even though by mid-January we were certain that a major offensive action was planned by the enemy at Tet, we did not surmise the true nature or the scope of the countrywide attack. . . . It did not occur to us that the enemy would undertake suicidal attacks in the face of our power. But he did just that. . . .

Several days before Tet, U.S. troops were placed on full alert. Owing to an apparent mixup in coordination, the enemy attack was launched in I and II corps 24 hours ahead of the attack in the remainder of the country. This gave us additional warning, but still did not reveal the nature of his plans in the Saigon area. The enemy main attack was launched late on the 30th and in early morning of the 31st of January, employing about 84,000 Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops. In addition to Saigon, initial assaults were mounted against 36 of the 44 provincial capitals, 5 of the 6 autonomous cities, 64 of 242 district capitals, and 50 hamlets (Westmoreland, 1968: 158).

The enemy had stealthily infiltrated into the main cities of South Vietnam, notably Hue and Saigon, and the

population's preoccupation with the Tet holiday and inherent apathy had provided maximum cover for the build-up operation necessary to launch the offensive.

The professed aim of the offensive, according to Hanoi, was to overthrow the Saigon government.¹¹ In a Hanoi radio broadcast of February 2, it was announced that "the long-awaited general offensive against the Thieu-Ky puppet administration has come. The revolutionary armed forces, representing the will of the entire people, have opened fire at our arch-enemy" (New York Times, February 2, 1968). Additionally, the radio broadcast called on the people of South Vietnam to rise up and aid the Viet Cong. Neither goal according to American officials was met. The American military command noted that "Although the enemy raided numerous cities and towns throughout the republic and achieved some temporary successes, they have failed to take and hold any major installations or localities" (New York Times, February 3, 1968). Furthermore, no significant defections of the ARVN troops or SV populace occurred. In Westmoreland's view, the Viet Cong "suicidal" offensive was primarily "a last desperate push," and there were signs that it "was about to run out of steam" (New York Times, February 2, 1968). However, significant fighting continued in Saigon, and more particularly in the city of Hue, into the end of February.

President Johnson echoed this assessment of the offensive at a February 2 news conference. Pointing out that "We have known for several months, now, that the Communists planned a massive winter-spring offensive," the President minimized the losses suffered in both men and supplies. (The United States had lost 249 men compared to 10,000 killed on the Communist side.) He went on to state the following:

The biggest fact is that the stated purposes of the general uprising have failed. Communist leaders counted on popular support in the cities for their effort. They found little or none. . . .

I am confident in the light of the information given to me that our men and the South Vietnamese will be giving a good account of themselves (Johnson, 1968: 155-156).

While the enemy's attempt at a "military success" had been a "complete failure," the President appeared to be less sure of the chances of the enemy gaining a "psychological victory" by deluding "some of our unknowing people here at home."

We have to realize that in moments of tenseness and trial--as we will have today and as we have had in the past days--that there will be a great effort to exploit that and let that substitute for military victory they have not achieved.

I do not believe when the American people know the facts, when the world knows the facts, and when the results are laid out for them to examine, I do not believe that they will achieve a psychological victory (Johnson, 1968: 157).

In short, the President's initial reaction¹² to the early days of Tet was to insist, critics notwithstanding, that

the Communist offensive had already met defeat and was more of a "last gasp" effort rather than a means of permanently changing the balance of power in Saigon.

Despite such public assurances by the President, the "facts" were leading to a "psychological victory" in terms of public opinion. A Harris survey of February 12 revealed that by a 44 to 35 percent margin, the public rejected the idea of a Viet Cong last-gasp effort. Tet was showing that despite official statistics and speeches to the contrary, no part of South Vietnam was secure, either from terrorist bombs or organized military operations. The Communist enemy had shown its forceful presence in the ostensibly secure "pacified" areas, and that, even more importantly, after years of fighting and tens of thousands of casualties, Ho's forces could still find thousands of men who were ready to face death unswervingly for a cause. As James Reston stated, the Viet Cong's raids on "Saigon and elsewhere show little evidence of the 'low morale' General Westmoreland talked about when he was home last November" (New York Times, February 2, 1968). By contrast, the South Vietnamese armed forces had acted lethargically in repelling the armed attacks in the cities, again renewing the charge that Hanoi's determination to win far exceeded that of the South Vietnamese. As Charles Mohr wrote, "the crisis has not apparently been met by any high degree of patriotic fervor or commitment by the urban population. The people of South Vietnam

appear to be cynical and tired of this war . . . to protect their own lives and those of their children, they will bend with the winds of war" (New York Times, February 3, 1968). This factor indirectly related to a further criticism of the wisdom of American military policy (particularly identified with Westmoreland). This was the sending of the most effective American combat units into the empty border regions to hunt for North Vietnamese units while leaving the defense of the populated areas to the South Vietnamese army, militia, and police.

In essence, Tet had unleashed a whole host of charges that could be levelled both at the Administration's credibility¹³ and ability to mobilize support. If the cities were no longer secure, then what assurances were there that the South Vietnamese countryside had really been pacified? Additionally, the resurgence of the Viet Cong in the urban areas conveyed the impression of the stalemate that had so vigorously been denied by the Administration. Implied in such an analysis was a heightened vulnerability of President Johnson's restrained policies. Both doves and hawks could charge that the President could neither end the war nor win it. The prospects of negotiations had vanished with the offensive, and the current force levels had been unable to prevent the offensive or repel it quickly. As the fighting continued in the following weeks, this impression became more firmly fixed. There was simply no way out for the President, unless he wished to escalate the war.

Henry Kissinger, writing later in Foreign Affairs, expanded on the psychological overtones stemming from

Tet:

The Tet offensive brought to a head the compounded weaknesses . . . of the American position. To be sure, from a strictly military point of view, Tet was an American victory. Viet Cong casualties were very high; in many provinces, the Viet Cong infrastructure of guerillas and shadow administrators surfaced and could be severely mauled by American forces. But in a guerilla war, purely military considerations are not decisive: psychological and political factors loom at least as large.

On that level the Tet offensive was a political defeat in the countryside for Saigon and the United States. Two claims had been pressed on the villages. The United States and Saigon had promised that they would be able to protect an ever larger number of villages. The Viet Cong had never made such a claim; they merely asserted that they were the real power and presence in the villages and they threatened retribution upon those who collaborated with Saigon or the United States.

As happened so often in the past, the Viet Cong made their claim stick. . . . The words "secure area" never had the same significance for Vietnamese civilians as for Americans, but, if the term had any meaning, it applied to the provincial and district capitals. This was precisely where the Tet offensive took its most severe toll. The Viet Cong had made a point which far transcended military considerations in importance: there are no secure areas for Vietnamese civilians (Foreign Affairs, 1969: 215-216).

In short, the only real meaning of "victory" in a guerilla war was the ability of the Saigon government to consolidate its authority, and that ability had been called into serious question by the turn of events.

Congressional critics were quick to point out the deficiencies of Vietnam policy. As early as February 2, Senator Young chastised the Saigon regime as having "failed miserably" in the fighting. On February 5, Senator Edward Kennedy called upon the Administration to have a "serious confrontation with Saigon to determine if the South Vietnamese government intended to assume a proper share of the responsibility in the war." If the South Vietnamese leaders were "unwilling to accept their responsibilities, then the American people with great justification, may well consider their responsibilities fulfilled." Senator Javits concurred, but went further by insisting that "the Administration has learned little from the events of the past week in Vietnam." In essence, Javits claimed that the "situation in Vietnam is in a stalemate, despite our apparent victories, which seem to evaporate so soon." Both men called upon the Administration to negotiate rather than continue a fruitless military solution (New York Times, February 6, 1968).

This outburst had been preceded by a number of attacks from political challengers of the President. On February 1, Richard Nixon had officially declared himself a candidate for the Republican Presidential nomination. Stressing that America needed "new leadership," Nixon emphasized the Vietnam crisis, criticizing the Administration for failing to "explain the war" to the public and attacking President Johnson for not "telling the truth" in his claims that the

war was progressing and that "peace was around the corner" (New York Times, February 6 & 11, 1968). George Romney, Nixon's Republican challenger, asserted that the "Republican party will not win in 1968 without an alternative to the Johnson policy in Vietnam . . . and that the recent Communist offensive in Vietnam had "shown that the real strength of the enemy is the extra support being given them by the people of South Vietnam" (New York Times, February 6, 1968). Finally, Eugene McCarthy,¹⁴ the President's Democratic challenger charged that "the Administration's reports of progress in the war are the products of it's own self-deception." Referring to an Administration assessment that the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese had suffered a "complete failure" in their Tet offensive, McCarthy said: "If taking over a section of the American embassy, a good part of Hue, Dalat and major cities of the Fourth Corps area constitutes complete failure, I suppose by this logic that if the Viet Cong captured the entire country, the Administration would be claiming their total collapse" (New York Times, February 4, 1968).

Tet had made two important political contributions which further legitimated the war as a political issue. Its psychological effects had registered deeply with the public by providing dramatic evidence that the credibility of the Johnson Administration on the conduct of the war was to be seriously questioned. What the public saw on their television sets (there were ninety million in

service in 1968, compared to only ten million in 1950 during Korea) was the burning and destruction of South Vietnamese cities and the furious battle at Hue. These scenes seemed to conform to the charges being made by Lyndon Johnson's opponents. Secondly, the fact that the country had apparently been lied to was an admission equally repugnant to both hawks and doves. The political alternatives being propounded by opponents were finding a greater level of attention precisely because Administration assertions were increasingly seen as fallacious. When Robert Kennedy, in a February 8 speech at Chicago, declared that Viet Cong offensive had "finally shattered the mask of official illusion" about the war because it had demonstrated that "no part or person of South Vietnam" was secure against attack, his views were widely publicized.¹⁵ To Kennedy, the idea of military victory was a "delusion," and the belief that we could win a war which the South Vietnamese cannot win for themselves was an accompanying "illusion." In short, the war was not essential to our national interest, the escalation policy of the Johnson Administration was disastrous, negotiation was the only way out, and the nation had to be "told the truth about this war" in order to rally public confidence (New York Times, February 9, 1968).

It was unfortunate for the President that the Tet Communist offensive had occurred in an election year,¹⁶ particularly during the campaigning in the New Hampshire

primary. For in an election year, political charges are greatly intensified, and the electorate will be far more sensitive to alternatives offered by opposing factions within the system. It was logical, therefore, that Gallup reported the public as "confused, cynical and wanting desperately to find a way to resolve international problems . . . but sensing the inadequacy of the leadership of our country" (New York Times, February 9, 1968). Appropriately, a Gallup release of February 17 (the survey was conducted February 3-7) showed that President Johnson's popularity had dropped from 48 percent approval to 41 percent approval, on the Vietnam handling question from 39 percent to 35 percent approval. However, on the hawk-dove question, the proportion of hawks grew from 56 percent to 61 percent, indicating that sentiment for ending the war was initially through escalation. Dove sentiment decreased from 28 to 24 percent (Gallup Opinion Index, March, 1968: 2, 3 & 8). Harris revealed a similar phenomena, particularly on the dove shrinkage, finding that "the number of Americans who would like to see outright withdrawal had shrunk from 16 percent to 10 percent" in the December-February time span (Harris survey, February 15, 1968). Both polls, however, had sampled opinion during the hard stages of preliminary fighting, and the public had apparently responded, at least initially, in the form of a normal patriotic response to a war crisis. Hawkish

sentiment, as suggested by Harris, had apparently been helped by the close proximity of the Pueblo Incident, in effect reinforcing the need to take a tough stand against Communist aggression, be it in Korea or Vietnam. Apparently, the impact of the offensive and the true significance of its extensiveness needed more time to fully register with the public. Thus, subsequent polls taken in late February indicated a major shift in sentiment,¹⁷ i.e., a dovish counter-reaction to the early hawkishness.

The Administration: Its Counter-Reaction

The Administration continued to insist that the Viet Cong offensive had failed to gain its maximum objectives of overthrowing the South Vietnamese government and establishing control in many of the major cities. President Johnson, in particular, stressed that the United States could not waver in its determination to see the Vietnam commitment through. He even resorted to historical analogies to buttress his contention. On February 12, at a ceremony commemorating the birthday of Lincoln, Johnson compared the agonies of the civil war to that of Vietnam:

. . . we must stick it out--just as Lincoln did. For we live in a time that Lincoln would have well understood.
 --He heard the charges the war was long and wrong;
 --he saw Americans die--600,000 of them--and he brooded;
 --he saw dissent, riot, and rebellion;
 --he saw heavy taxes and inflation;

. . . Sad, but steady--always convinced of his cause--Lincoln stuck it out. Sad, but steady, so will we (Johnson, 1968: 219).

In short, the Tet offensive had been perceived by top Administration officials as a justification for renewed determination to see the war through. As Richard Dudman of the St. Louis Post Dispatch pointed out, "the Johnson Administration actually believes its optimistic appraisal of the two weeks of violence . . . As a result, the dominant view of the Administration appears to be that nothing has changed fundamentally in Vietnam and that the U.S. policy and strategy there need not be questioned or reappraised" (February 15, 1968). Dudman also pointed out the contrast existing in terms of the perspective of many "middle-level" officials who believed that Tet had shown the cities to be insecure, halted the progress of pacification,¹⁸ and indicated that the people of South Vietnam had been unwilling to inform the authorities on Viet Cong infiltration in the cities. As Townsend Hoopes would later phrase it, the "Tet offensive performed the curious service of fully revealing the doubters and dissenters to each other, as in a lightning flash"¹⁹ (Hoopes, 1969: 145).

In the latter half of February, the Administration continued to try and state its case for determination and optimism. Unfortunately, its credibility was challenged by a number of sources, as well as by its own actions. On February 13, the President had authorized that an

additional force package of 10,500 men be sent to Vietnam, an indication that Tet's military implications were being taken seriously by Administration planners. Under the previous troop schedule, 25,000 more men were to have been sent to the war area by July to raise the total number of troops there to the authorized level of 525,000. But it had been planned originally to send support troops, not combat troops. This first addition to combat troop strength was but a preliminary indication that the Joint Chiefs, particularly General Wheeler, had been shaken by Tet more than their public proclamations indicated. A reported Westmoreland message to Wheeler on February 12 admitted that "our overall campaign plan for 1968 had been disrupted." Apparently, an earlier message (February 9) also showed that there was a great concern for the effect of Tet upon the South Vietnamese army:

. . . it is going to take some time to build ARVN back to strength. I have emphasized this to President Thieu and urged that he proceed immediately to draft 19-year-olds to be followed as needed by the drafting of youths of 18 . . . From a realistic point of view, we must accept the fact that the enemy has dealt the GVN (Government of South Vietnam) a severe blow. He has brought the war to the towns and the cities and has inflicted damage and casualties on the population . . . and the economy has been disrupted (Quoted in Kalb and Abel, 1971: 211).

This level of pessimism was not, however, revealed to the public. Nevertheless, Westmoreland himself was becoming an object of criticism for his conduct of the war, especially in terms of his "search and destroy" strategy. Thus, on February 15, Senator Young (Democrat,

Ohio) asserted that "President Johnson has every justification to relieve him of his command and appoint a more competent general." The President defended his general at a February 16 press conference, but this did not cause a significant slackening of criticism. The critics of Westmoreland not only attacked his "outmoded tactics" but also his credibility, especially his November and December prophecies of "victory" and the "low morale" of the enemy. Ironically, a general in the midst of a limited war crisis had once again become a symbol of disaffection, even though Westmoreland, unlike MacArthur, had been in accord with Administration strategy.

With General Westmoreland under attack (and by inference himself), President Johnson again attempted a favorite tactic--the shoring up of bipartisan support for the war by consulting ex-President Eisenhower in California. At that meeting, General Lewis W. Walt (Commander of the Marine Corp) and Walt Rostow, the President's special assistant, again reassured newsmen that another attack upon the cities was unlikely, and that the enemy, in Walt's phraseology, had been "worn down" in the recent fighting. According to Walt, the enemy had "committed" his blue chips, losing 40,000 men out of a initial attacking force of 60,000. The enemy had gambled and lost, and it was doubtful that replacements could be obtained quickly²⁰ (New York Times, February 19, 1968). Like the general, Johnson had

also tended to view Tet as an "all-out Kamikaze attack" (Washington Post, February 17, 1968).

The perception of the Administration that Tet had been a "go for broke" gamble on the part of the Communists fitted well into the Joint Chiefs' view that an opportunity presented itself for full mobilization. It was acknowledged that the additional deployment of the emergency 10,500 men had dangerously thinned the strategic reserves in the United States and compromised the nation's global commitments. Calling up the reserves seemed a logical move, in that with the enemy temporarily weakened by heavy casualties, a new counter-offensive plus an escalation of the bombing might result in victory. To regain the initiative through offensive operations would require more men. But the approval of additional manpower would run into heavy Congressional opposition, and Senate hawks, such as Senator Russell, made it abundantly clear that a troop increase must be matched by a "drastic increase in the weight of the bombing effort against North Vietnam" (Hoopes, 1969: 149). Politically, the calling up of reserves was extremely explosive, and such a move would directly contradict the Administration "line" that Tet had really been a defeat for the enemy. How could such a drastic step be rationalized?

Furthermore, the reserve issue was complicated by another credibility-destroying event--the reopening of the Gulf of Tonkin resolution by war critics in the Senate.

What resulted during February 20-26 was a "credibility gap" dispute between the Administration and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The dispute involved questions as to whether (a) there was provocation on the part of the destroyers, (b) sufficient proof of the second attack to warrant retaliation and (c) whether the Administration had given Congress enough or truthful data about the Tonkin incidents prior to the approval of the resolution. Secretary of Defense McNamara had testified February 20 that intelligence reports of a "highly classified and unimpeachable nature" (mainly radio communications monitored between the North Vietnam patrol boats and their shore commands) had clearly established that attacks had occurred against the Maddox on August 2, and against the Turner Joy and Maddox on August 4, the latter the attack most open to doubt. However, what infuriated the committee was the apparent reluctance of McNamara to release information that raised questions about the detection of torpedoes by sonar on the Maddox and task force messages that indicated doubts about the second attack. Secondly, McNamara now testified that the Maddox had not been "on routine patrol" as he had stated in August, 1964 testimony, but was actually engaged in electronic surveillance which had as its main intention the stimulation of "Chicom-North Vietnamese electronic reaction" (New York Times, February 29, 1968). Both destroyers had clearly violated the twelve mile territorial limit of North Vietnam and had

given tacit assistance to South Vietnamese patrol boats in their shelling of two North Vietnamese islands. Finally, in reference to the August 4 attack, Admiral Sharp had frantically cabled the commander of the patrol: "Can you confirm absolutely that you were attacked? Can you confirm sinking of PT boats? Desire reply directly supporting evidence." Commander Herrick cabled back: "Review of action makes many reported contacts and torpedoes fired appear doubtful. Freak weather effects and overeager sonarmen may have accounted for many reports. No actual visual sightings by Maddox. Suggest complete evaluation before any further action" (New York Times, February 22, 1968).

Although Herrick had reversed himself in testimony during the Hearings, questions remained unanswered. Senator Fulbright argued that the Administration's decision to bomb was based on inadequate evidence and it had acted precipitately in sending planes on their bombing missions over North Vietnam. In short, the Administration response had not been commensurate with the provocation, and the Tonkin resolution had been passed by a Congress acting on the basis of incomplete evidence and conflicting reports. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee concluded--

Therefore, Secretary McNamara misled the committee by not telling the committee (on August 6, 1964) how increasingly ambiguous the reports on the second incident became as the hours wore on. What he described in positive terms was actually a highly confused event.

On the basis of the evidence from the communications traffic it would seem that the facts increasingly demanded caution--but the operational requirements of the retaliatory raid and the bureaucratic and press momentum that developed after the first reports came in were just too strong (New York Times, February 22, 1968).

President Johnson on February 26 stated that he felt that Congress had been given the full facts before it approved the resolution and that there was no doubt that the attacks on the destroyers were unprovoked (New York Times, February 27, 1968). But the damage to the Administration's credibility had suffered another blow.

The feeling persisted that Tonkin had been used as a pretext for an open-ended grant of the war power to the President. The legitimacy of the Tonkin action was now clouded, and so was the faith in the men who had ordered the retaliation. The Administration's credibility had been shaken by Tet. Now questions surrounding the war's origin had fueled even greater dissension. It had also heightened the suspicion and hostility between the executive and legislative branches. The President, in a Dallas speech, continued to insist that Americans must "persevere in Vietnam" and that "There must be no breaking of America's given word or America's commitments" (Johnson, 1968: 286-287). But the perseverance and patience of the American people, like a rubber band stretched beyond its endurance, was about to snap under pressure of events in March.²¹

The Ides of March: Political Disaster for
the President

The end of February could not have come too soon for a beleaguered President Johnson. It was replete with incidents that boded ill for the future. Both attentive public and mass public sources were showing that the surge of support manifested in early February was being succeeded by a wave of pessimism by late February. On February 29, ex-Ambassador to the USSR George Kennan called the Administration's policy in Vietnam a "massive miscalculation and error . . . , an error for which it is hard to find any parallels in history." He further charged a familiar refrain--the South Vietnamese government "was at the outset, and has remained, too weak, too timid, too selfish, too uninspiring to form a suitable or promising object of our support" (New York Times, March 1, 1968). The Wall Street Journal, which had taken a moderate position on the war, came out unequivocally against the Administration's assumptions, particularly on backing the South Vietnamese regime, a regime which was "collapsing from within" (February 23, 1968). All five of the "prestige newspapers" (New York Times, Atlanta Constitution, Washington Post, St. Louis Post Dispatch, Los Angeles Times) pointed to the futility of expecting victory in Vietnam--the war had become a definite stalemate. From the television networks came a similar story. On February 27, Walter Cronkite, in his CBS newscast expressed a nearly identical sentiment:

To say that we are closer to victory today is to believe, in the face of the evidence, the optimists who have been wrong in the past. To suggest we are on the edge of defeat is to yield to unreasonable pessimism. To say that we are mired in stalemate seems the only realistic, yet unsatisfactory, conclusion. . . . it is increasingly clear to this reporter that the only rational way out then will be to negotiate, not as victors but as an honorable people who lived up to their pledge to defend democracy, and did the best they could (Oberdorfer, 1971: 251).

Finally, in the last ten days of February, hawks again insisted that greater force be used to break the military stalemate, with the doves vehemently stressing the need for negotiations. But both hawks and doves had found a common ground for agreement, regardless of differences over tactics.

The mass public had also indicated its disenchantment. During December, Gallup had asked the public, "Just your impression, do you think the U.S. and its allies are losing ground in Vietnam, standing still, or making progress?" The same question was asked during the last week in February and early March, with marked results:

TABLE 51
(GALLUP) PROGRESS IN WAR^a

	December, 1967	March, 1968
Losing Ground	10%	20%
Standing Still	46	42
Making Progress	34	31
Don't Know	10	7

^aGallup Opinion Index, April, 1968: 12.

Record death totals had accompanied the heavy fighting. The month of February would account for the largest total of the war--2,124 Americans killed. Record weekly totals had been recorded in the second half of February--543 dead in the week ending February 17 (highest weekly total to date), 470 in the week of February 24, and 542 for the week ending March 2. By March 8 casualties suffered by the United States totaled 136,951, exceeding the total of the three year Korean War, in which 136,914 had been killed or wounded (Department of Defense, 1971). This great loss of life and heavy casualties clearly did not square with American conceptions of "progress," nor did the prospects of having more troops sent to Vietnam, especially since it might entail a call-up of the reserves. Amidst rumors of additional troops being sent, the public became increasingly receptive to the Nixon pledge that a Republican Administration would end the war in Vietnam.

The Westmoreland-Wheeler Request:
Catalyst for Deescalation

On February 28, General Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, reported to the President directly on the manpower needs made necessary by Tet. He had conferred with Westmoreland from February 23-25, and both men had agreed that while the enemy had suffered substantial losses, he still retained the capacity to strike at the cities of South Vietnam. While the South Vietnamese army had not collapsed, they still required a backup of

American troops, but there simply were not enough Americans to protect both the cities and outlying rural areas. In the countryside the Viet Cong were recruiting with great vigor, because the pacification program had been shattered by the enemy.

Therefore, more American troops were needed because the allied forces were off balance and vulnerable to another offensive. The agreed request was for three divisions of ground troops with support elements (171,000), fifteen Air Force and Marine fighter squadrons (22,000 men), and additional Navy support (13,000 men). These forces would be employed in three increments--107,000 men almost immediately (by May 1), 43,000 more by September 1, and the remaining 56,000 to be prepared for deployment by the end of 1968. The total was 206,756 men (Hoopes, 1969: 161). With such an added increment, Wheeler contended, the United States could go on the offensive in South Vietnam, seek out and destroy the guerilla and main-force units on the ground, step up the bombing campaign in the North, including air strikes on the port of Haiphong, and in effect end the war sooner. The military chiefs, in essence, were asking that the Administration go all out, mobilize its reserves, and erase the limitations on force imposed previously. This viewpoint echoed Senator John C. Stennis' views who, on the same day as Wheeler made his report to the President, called for a change in the current strategy in Vietnam. "It is clear to me, that we are now compelled to choose

between a hard-hitting war or no war at all." The Senator clamored, like the military, for the closing of Haiphong, and "an increase in the effectiveness and selection of key targets" in the bombing of North Vietnam (New York Times, February 29, 1968).

Clearly, the hawks had lost their patience with only imperceptible increases in air and ground power followed by spasms of deescalation. On February 26, Senator Russell B. Long had asserted that "the American people are getting disgusted of this talk of a pause, or pulling your punches when the enemy is slugging you. I for one hope General Westmoreland will be provided with all the troops he requests." Senator Miller called for the removal of restraints on air and sea attacks before increasing troop strength. Senator George Murphy stressed that the "the time has not only come, but passed, that the military decisions should be left to the military." In actuality, the Johnson Administration had reached the point where little could be offered to the hawks except total mobilization with a concomitant escalation of the air war involving no restrictions on targets whatsoever.

Nevertheless, the scope of the request staggered the President and his advisers. The sheer size of the request-- a 40 percent increase in the 535,000 man force committed to Vietnam--was enough to make the President wary about a massive new commitment. President Johnson had gone to extraordinary lengths to send half a million men to Vietnam

without calling up the reserves or imposing economic controls. His ability to do this had been largely responsible for keeping costs acceptable. To comply now with the Westmoreland-Wheeler request would add an additional ten billion dollars to the cost of a war that was already running at some thirty billion a year. Inflation at home and a gold rush abroad were battering the American dollar.²² It was a Presidential election year and Senator McCarthy's campaign in New Hampshire was drawing increasing support, while the President's popularity was on a distinct downslide. The military had obviously been emboldened by the resignation of McNamara and his replacement by Clark Clifford, reputed to be a hawk on the war. In short, under the pressure from adamant hawks who would tolerate no compromises in the use of conventional force as well as by implacable doves who would revolt over any further escalation, the President temporized by assigning Clifford the task of heading a panel which would eventually advise him on the troop request as well as its domestic ramifications.

On March 1, Clifford's task force gathered to discuss the troop request. It was soon apparent that two broad coalitions were emerging in the course of discussing war strategy and the possibilities of victory. One coalition favored the Westmoreland strategy and accepted the assumption that the Tet offensive was more of an opportunity than a setback. By boldly seizing the initiative, the

allies could decimate and demoralize the enemy and open the way to a favorable settlement (New York Times, March 6, 1969). The other group attacked a continuation of more of the same, and urged a less aggressive ground war, new attempts to negotiate with the enemy, and the necessity for political compromise.

The exponents of continuity included Rostow, Generals Wheeler and Taylor, and Secretary of the Treasury Fowler, who all advocated intensified bombing and no letup in military pressure. Secretary of Defense Clifford, a reputed hawk, nevertheless adopted the role of an impartial listener. The advocates of deescalation included Paul H. Nitze, Deputy Secretary of Defense, Under Secretary of State Nicholas Katzenbach, Paul C. Warnke, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, and Philip G. Goulding, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs. Smith and Beecher (New York Times, March 7, 1969) reveal that other Pentagon doves emerged, including Alain C. Enthoven, head of the Office of Systems Analysis; the Under-Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force--David E. McGiffert, Charles F. Baird and, of course, Townsend Hoopes; Finally a score of young civilians brought in by McNamara, principally Morton H. Halperin, and Richard C. Steadman could also be included in the "deescalation" coalition. The position of the dissenters was aided by a CIA report which disputed the idea that more troops could attain victory, for "over a 10-month period the Communists would probably be able to

introduce sufficient new units into the South to offset the U.S. maneuver battalion increments of the various force levels given above." Furthermore, if the United States ceased the bombing of North Vietnam in the near future, Hanoi might respond by negotiating, although fighting would continue (Sheehan et al., 1971: 599). An added (Dove) contention was that an end of the bombing would not necessarily increase American casualties on the ground, which was the heart of the hawk argument. In the final analysis, Tet had shown that neither side could attain a victory, and it was therefore necessary to retrench on the military effort and demonstrate a staying power leading to negotiations.

After several days of inconclusive in-fighting, the task force completed a draft Presidential memorandum on March 4. It recommended an immediate deployment of 22,000 more troops, deferred the question of the additional 185,000 requested by Westmoreland in accordance with a week-by-week examination, approved a reserve call-up of 262,000 more men with increased draft calls, and admitted divisions over the course of the air war. Nothing was said about a partial bombing halt in the memo, nor was the validity of political objectives considered.²³

However, on March 4, Rusk²⁴ suggested the possibility of a bombing halt to the President, which would have the effect of renewing the faith of world opinion in the United States while militarily risking little, since North Vietnam

would be facing the rainy season (Johnson, 1971: 399). The bombing halt would not be total, in that the nineteenth parallel would be the cutoff point. Clifford gave endorsement to the idea, and the whole question of a partial bombing halt eventually became the alternative to an escalation of the air war. While the Administration pondered the policy options open to it, a series of political shocks jolted any remaining vestiges of optimism.

Congress, McCarthy, New York Times, Kennedy--
Disaffection Spreads

On March 7, Senate critics, apparently aware that the Administration was considering a troop increase, demanded that Congress be consulted before such an action was taken. More significantly, for the first time, supporters of Administration policy expressed doubt publicly as to whether the Administration should commit more forces to Vietnam, particularly without first consulting Congress. Senator Fulbright had touched off the debate:

I am quite certain from the news . . . that very significant decisions are being considered by the executive branch of our Government. Decisions involving a major new build-up of American forces in Vietnam in the wake of our recent defeats and difficulties in Vietnam-- not only a build-up of troops, but also there is the possibility of the extension of the war beyond the geographical limit of Vietnam.

I believe these pending decisions raise a basic and most important constitutional issue which must concern every member of this body regardless of whether he supports or disagrees with the Administration's war policy. This issue is the authority of the Administration to

expand the war without the consent of Congress and without any debate or consideration by Congress (New York Times, March 8, 1968).

Fulbright again referred to the Tonkin resolution, insisting that because of the admitted duplicity by the Administration as revealed in the Tonkin hearings, that resolution was "null and void." Fulbright concluded that the Senate "be given the opportunity to debate any prospective widening of commitments."

Fulbright was joined by other war critics, most significantly Senator Robert F. Kennedy and Mike Mansfield, the Senate Majority Leader. Kennedy likewise urged consultation, and punctured the belief that more troops would bring victory. "The fact is that victory is not just ahead of us. . . . It seems to me if we have learned anything over the period of the last seven years, it is the fact that just continuing to send more troops, or increasing the bombing, is not the answer to Vietnam. . . . I do know that what we have been doing is not the answer, that it is not suitable, that it is immoral and intolerable to continue it." Mansfield cautioned that "escalation only begets escalation," and promptly paraphrased General Bradley's comment on the Korean War, when he stated that "we are in the wrong place and we are fighting the wrong kind of war." Mansfield went further by cautioning that "if we confess diplomatic failure--and I do not--then we face only a continuance of a grim escalation upon escalation on both sides."

During the debate, hawks expressed their dissatisfaction as well. Senator Jack Miller asserted that he would not have voted for the Tonkin Gulf Resolution if he had known the Administration would adopt a "prolonged war strategy." Senator Tower, although chiding Fulbright for considering the Tet offensive a defeat for the United States, reiterated that the rumored request for 200,000 troops was a symptom of the Administration's continuing propensity to fight a half-war:

. . . the Administration is doing what a number of us have been saying for 2 1/2 years--that you cannot win a war by a gradual response of gradualism; that the only way to achieve military victory is through military power, massive air and sea superiority, to achieve the objective at the earliest possible time, with the maximum of impact.

We are confronted with a situation in which a very patient enemy has been led to believe that we are sorely divided, and that if he will only fight long enough and make clever plans for offenses from time to time, we will become weary of the war and that we will give over the country in a veil of surrender or under some face-saving method and get out. I believe that is what this protracted debate has been accomplishing.

I think the major achievement of the enemy has been to frighten so many people in this country into wanting to get out, into negotiating, into believing that we are losing and we have to just withdraw unilaterally (New York Times, March 8, 1968).

In essence, to both hawks and doves the war was being conducted in a manner that could no longer be tolerated, and any change in that conduct would encounter fierce resistance from either faction.

Up to this point, the question of a 200,000 troop increase had only been rumored. On March 10, the New York Times published the first report, from Washington, specifying General Westmoreland's request for 206,000 troops. The publication of the troop figure, stemming from a leak in the Pentagon, provided a central issue for political debate and amplified the scope of public dissent. The dispatch revealed that the troop request had touched off an "internal divisive" debate within high levels of the Administration. It also laid bare the conflicting strategies, i.e., Westmoreland's proposed expansion of ground action or those senior Pentagon civilians' espousal of a close-in-defense of South Vietnam's populated areas, limited ground actions, and a political compromise with the Viet Cong. Furthermore, by revealing the degree of divisiveness, it pierced the facade of the Administration's case that Tet had been unanimously seen as a victory for the allies. Publicized doubts within the Administration only fanned the fires of discord, and President Johnson at the time was reported to be furious over the disclosure. According to the President's memoirs:

It was obvious that the sources for the story did not know or understand what was going on in my mind, . . . A few people with strongly held opinions were trying to put pressure on me through the press to see things their way. I also felt that there was more than a little political motivation behind their action, since the article appeared two days before the New Hampshire primary. I was convinced that this story, and others like it that would inevitably follow, would create controversy and solve nothing.

Such reports would further arouse congressional critics and give Hanoi an impression of increased divisiveness in our country. It might help prolong the war. The fact was that I had firmly decided against sending anything approaching 206,000 additional men to Vietnam and already had so informed my senior advisers (Johnson, 1971: 402).

Interestingly enough, the New York Times dispatch seems to confirm the President's contention, at least in part, for it quoted senior civilian officials as believing the President would not grant Westmoreland's "unrealistic" request, although such a qualification to the headline did not come until at the very end of the story.

On the same day two other events illustrated the widening dissent. First, a Gallup release revealed that 49 percent of the public now felt that the United States had made a mistake in sending troops to Vietnam, as opposed to 41 percent who felt it was not a mistake. This was the highest total ever recorded. Even more significant was Gallup's finding that seven of every ten doves (those who favored reducing United States military efforts) thought the country had been wrong in becoming involved in Vietnam. Concurrently, and perhaps even more surprising, was that four out of every ten hawks felt the same way (Gallup Opinion Index, April, 1968: 14). The second event was the acknowledgment of NBC that the war was "being lost" in the form of a Frank McGhee documentary. At the end of the program, he turned to the question of the 206,000 troop request:

It is a new war in Vietnam, . . . The enemy now has the initiative; he has dramatically enlarged the area of combat ; . . . The grand objective--the building of a free nation--is not nearer, but further from realization. In short, the war, as the Administration has defined it, is being lost, . . .

Today, if published reports are correct, the President has before him a request for another two hundred thousand men to help restore the situation to what it was. This has brought warnings the enemy will match any new force we put into the field. All that would be changed would be the capacity for destruction. . . . Laying aside all other arguments, the time is at hand when we must decide whether it is futile to destroy Vietnam in the effort to save it, . . . (Oberdorfer, 1971: 273).

The pattern of political pressure upon the Administration continued. First, there was an important development in public opinion. Newsweek magazine published an edition which declared that the Tet offensive had exposed "the utter inadequacy" of the Johnson Administration's war policies. There was one grim truth--"the war cannot be won by military means without tearing apart the whole fabric of national life and international relations." Newsweek recommended that the United States should stop its large-scale search and destroy operations, withdraw its major forces to the more populated areas, and work for a political settlement of the war. In the final analysis, the magazine declared, a "strategy of more of the same is no longer tolerable" (Newsweek, March 18, 1968: 39).

In Congress, the Administration was again being challenged, as the Senate Foreign Relations Committee pressed Secretary of State Dean Rusk on whether the

Administration was planning to expand the war. While the confrontation appeared to be inconclusive, the significant factor to emerge from the Administration-committee conflict was the decided swing in opinion within the committee against the Administration's Vietnam policy. The hearings of March, 1966, had also been hostile toward Rusk, but a committee majority had been unwilling to come out in open opposition to the policy being implemented at that time. Thus, for example, Senators Symington (Democrat, Mississippi) and Case (Republican, New Jersey) had questioned, but did not oppose American policy. Even Senator Mundt (Republican, South Dakota), long a supporter of Administration policy, now voiced reservations. Protesting that the Administration was failing to give sufficient priority to the war or to present a convincing case for it, Senator Mundt asked at one point: "Is it a war or a W.P.A. project?" The lineup of the Committee was fairly clear, and the only Senators who backed Rusk were Lausche of Ohio, Dodd of Connecticut and Hickenlooper of Iowa.

TABLE 52

SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

	<u>Democrats</u>
Senators Opposed:	Fulbright (Arkansas), Mansfield (Montana), Morse (Oregon), Gore (Tennessee), Church (Idaho), Clark, (Pennsylvania), Pell (Rhode Island), Symington (Mississippi)
	<u>Republicans</u>
	Aiken (Vermont), Case (New Jersey), Cooper (Kentucky), Williams (Delaware), Mundt (South Dakota), Carlson (Kansas)

TABLE 52 (continued)

	<u>Democrats</u>
Senators Supporting:	Lausche (Ohio), Dodd (Connecticut)
	<u>Republicans</u>
	Hickenlooper (Iowa)

Senator McCarthy was campaigning in New Hampshire.

Despite the overwhelming number of those hostile to Rusk, the Secretary of State continued to present his case, namely, that the (1) allied side was regaining the initiative; (2) Congress would be consulted on any decisions made in regard to escalation or deescalation of the war; (3) an American withdrawal from South Vietnam would be "catastrophic" in that it would demonstrate to "Asian Communism" that it could expand through wars of national liberation; (4) it was directly in the interest of the national security of the United States to stop the threat of militant Communism in Southeast Asia. For if it were not stopped, the result would be to "change the world balance of power against us"; (5) the entire situation was under consideration from A to Z, with all alternatives being considered. Conversely, hostile Senators again (1) questioned the validity of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, (2) stressed the need for more consultation between the executive and legislative branches (New York Times, March 12, 1968).

To these charges Rusk responded by stating that the Tonkin resolution had endorsed all subsequent actions taken

by the Administration. On the second issue, Rusk suggested that advance consultations with Congress about specific military plans might provide valuable information to the enemy. Finally, Rusk turned to the argument that if Congress disagreed with the Administration's decision, it could repeal the Tonkin resolution or refuse to vote appropriations to send additional troops to Vietnam. Fulbright admitted that neither course, at this stage of the war, would pass the full Senate. Mansfield summed up the frustration of the Committee when he told Rusk that "we realize the final responsibility lies with the President, but we would like to be in on some of this discussion" (New York Times, March 12, 1968).

Despite the standoff in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, it was becoming obvious that the Administration was in deep trouble. It did not have the resources of men and money to meet the objectives it had proclaimed for Vietnam abroad and the cities at home. It had not been able to convince the country that the war in Vietnam was going as well as it said, or that the war was essential to the security of the nation. Its prestige had been repeatedly challenged, and with the results of the New Hampshire primary, the loss of prestige became even more apparent in terms of actual political retribution. In a democracy, the ultimate jury is represented by the electoral process, and the results of the New Hampshire primary were rapidly indicating the public's adverse verdict on the conduct of the war.

The New Hampshire primary is traditionally the first test of voter sentiment in a Presidential election year, and the results are keenly watched by politicians, press and the politically-minded segment of the American electorate. In the 1952 New Hampshire primary, Senator Estes Kefauver had defeated Harry S. Truman with 54.6 percent of the Democratic vote in the state. Truman eighteen days later announced he would not seek reelection. Now, in 1968, Senator Eugene McCarthy was using Vietnam as his vote getting issue. In January of 1968, private polls taken by the Johnson-controlled Democratic National Committee had estimated McCarthy's strength at 8 to 11 percent of the Democratic primary vote; a month later, after the Tet offensive, McCarthy had climbed to 18 percent in the same polls. The pro-Johnson Democrats were becoming increasingly worried. This was indicated by the final week of the New Hampshire campaign, when there was a noticeable shift into a "hard-sell" approach against McCarthy. On March 6, radio announcements claimed, that "the Communists in Vietnam are watching the New Hampshire primary. Don't vote for fuzzy thinking and surrender. Support our fighting men. Give them the encouragement they need by voting for their Commander-in-Chief" (St. Louis Post Dispatch, March 7, 1968). When McCarthy had come out for partial amnesty for those who had fled to Canada to avoid the draft, last minute attacks were made upon him, accusing him of "fuzzy thinking about principles that have made our nation great" (New York Times, March 12, 1968).

Before the actual primary election, a CBS News poll showed that concern about Vietnam was the most important single factor motivating McCarthy voters to cast their ballots for him, though a minority of McCarthy backers were actually in favor of increased rather than decreased United States military activity in Vietnam. Later analysis revealed, however, that the McCarthy vote was not primarily a peace vote as the mass media portrayed it.

. . . the available data suggest that this was not the case. Those who voted for McCarthy in the New Hampshire primary were much more dissatisfied with Johnson's policies on Vietnam than were those who voted for Johnson. But among the McCarthy voters, those who were dissatisfied with Johnson for not pursuing a harder line in Vietnam outnumbered those who wanted a withdrawal by a margin of nearly three to two (Rosenberg *et al.*, 1970: 49).

Whether it was dissatisfied hawks or doves that accounted for the McCarthy vote, the common denominator remained a deep dissatisfaction with the Johnson Administration.

Thus on March 12, Senator McCarthy won an impressive 42 percent of the Democratic Presidential preference vote, while President Johnson preference vote totalled 48.5 percent based exclusively on write-ins. However, complete returns from New Hampshire, including Republican write-ins, eventually revealed that McCarthy had received only 300 votes fewer than President Johnson. The totals were for Johnson 29,021 (1,778 GOP write-ins) and for McCarthy 28,721 (5,511 GOP write-ins). McCarthy's impressive vote could be attributed to a number of factors--the Tet

offensive, the dedication of college students working in his campaign, the report of 206,000 additional troops, the President's reliance on write-in votes, and the overall disenchantment with the war. Whatever the precise reason, there was almost a unanimous interpretation in the press that McCarthy's showing had cast a shadow over LBJ's political future with consequences not only for the August nominating conventions but for the November election as well.²⁵ As the St. Louis Post Dispatch put it in an editorial--"The meaning of New Hampshire is that there is a large and probably growing body of Democratic voters which is determined to repudiate the Johnson war policy. Thirty to 40 percent of the electorate is a dissenting body of voters that neither party can afford to ignore, in August or November" (March 13, 1968). In short, just as the Tet had been a severe blow to the prestige and credibility of the President's Vietnam policies, so the New Hampshire primary can be construed as an equally severe shock to the vitality of his political prestige as well. Neither his Vietnam policy nor his political power would ever recover from its impact.

The Policy Reversal: The President Withdraws

The New Hampshire primary had encouraged Senator Robert F. Kennedy to enter the Presidential race, and on March 16 he announced his candidacy for the Democratic Presidential race, asserting that "this country is

on a perilous course, . . . I run because it is now unmistakably clear that we can change these disastrous, divisive policies only by changing the men who are now making them" (New York Times, March 17, 1968). Kennedy asserted that the results of New Hampshire had removed a major barrier to his candidacy--the possibility of a charge that "a personal struggle" between himself and President Johnson would be divisive. The primary had demonstrated to him that the division in the country and in the Democratic party had been caused by President Johnson's policies. In short, President Johnson now had two serious Democratic contenders opposing him, two men who would serve as a constant reminder to the electorate that the President's policies were being repudiated by increasing numbers of Americans in government and in the public as a whole. The Republican challenger, Richard Nixon, had already reminded the public of an historical truth--that "Eisenhower diplomacy" was needed, i.e., the Eisenhower Administration had "ended the Korean War and kept the nation out of other wars for eight years." The inference was plain--a Republican Administration under Nixon's leadership could perform a similar feat in the case of Vietnam (New York Times, March 15, 1968).

Under these intense political pressures, the President tried a last-ditch measure to escape the "lock-in" point by rallying support for the war. On March 12, at a dinner for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, LBJ lashed out at the "new

fashioned kind (of isolationism) that grows from weariness and impatience," and insisted that "we shall never retreat" from American responsibilities (Johnson, 1968: 382). On March 16, he spoke to a meeting of the National Alliance of Businessmen, insisting that "We must meet our commitments in the world and in Vietnam. We shall and we are going to win" (Johnson, 1968: 404). Alluding to the economic position of the country, he stated "I believe that Americans will resolutely bear their share of the burden in helping to meet their needs at home, . . ." (Johnson, 1968: 405). On March 18, the President spoke to the National Farmers Union Convention in Minneapolis. Again he called for "courage, patience, and determination in seeing the war to its end." This tide (of Communist aggression) threatens . . . to affect the safety of every American home. It threatens our own security and it threatens the security of every nation allied with us." The President then made his most fervent plea for unity:

But the time has come this morning when your President has come here to ask you people, and all the other people of this Nation, to join us in a total national effort to win the war, to win the peace, and to complete the job that must be done here at home. I ask all of you to join in a program of national austerity to insure that our economy will prosper and that our fiscal position will be sound. . . . I ask you to bear this burden (of higher taxes) in the interest of a stronger Nation. . . . Most of all, I ask your help, and I come here to plead for your patriotic support, for our men, our sons, who are bearing the terrible burden of battle in Vietnam (Johnson, 1968: 410).

Johnson again placed the blame for the prolongation of the war on the enemy's refusal to negotiate; until negotiations did occur, aggression would have to be blunted on the battlefield. In perhaps an indirect attack upon the de-escalators in his Administration, he stated that "Those of you who think that you can save lives by moving the battlefield in from the mountains to the cities where the people live have another think coming" (Johnson, 1968: 412).

If austerity and commitment were two themes the President stressed, a third one was that Tet had been a deliberate attack on the perseverance and will of the American people. On March 19, before a Conference on Foreign Policy for Leaders of National Nongovernmental Organizations, the President declared that

the enemy has reached out to fight in the hearts and minds of the American people. He has mounted a heavy and a calculated attack on our character as a people, on our confidence and will as a nation, . . . Let no single American mistake the enemy's major offensive now. That offensive is aimed squarely at the citizens of America. It is an assault designed to crack America's will. It is designed to make some men want to surrender; it is designed to make other men want to withdraw; it is designed to trouble and worry and confuse others.

In closing, the President again warned of the dangers of appeasing aggression, using President Roosevelt's "quarantine speech" as a reminder that there was no resigning from world responsibility (Johnson, 1968: 414-415). Finally, on March 25, Johnson reiterated his basic themes before the Building and Construction Trades Department of the AFL-CIO.

It will be noticed that the President during this March 12-March 25 period made separate speeches to major groupings within American society--business, labor, farmers, etc. This was definitely a consensus-building tactic, an attempt to regain the initiative for the Administration. However, despite the fervent nature of the President's appeals, the talks, according to most newspaper accounts, met only "polite applause" from the respective audiences. There was an inherent contradiction in the President's approach as well. His call for unity, sacrifice, austerity as methods of "winning" the war could only rally support if such appeals were directly and obviously linked to a policy which promised a quick termination. Johnson offered no concrete policy, but rather a vague emphasis on staying in Vietnam and resisting aggression. Furthermore, the capacity of the American people to rally behind their President had been thoroughly exhausted, not only because the vision of stalemate had been repeatedly stressed in the post-Tet period by both the mass media and opponents of the war, but also because the President's image as a capable leader had been seriously eroded by a growing credibility gap. The McCarthy, Kennedy, and Nixon candidacies symbolized an alternative pattern of cues on how to think about the war, and this perception by the public that opposition to the President's conduct of the war was significant may well have multiplied the growth of opposition within the electorate.

The Johnson Administration had become a victim of its own rhetoric. If the President had depicted Tet as a major crisis for the United States, and particularly its fighting men, he might have been able to mobilize the population's energies into one last concerted effort to win the war. But Tet had been pictured as primarily a minor setback, a setback more for the enemy than the allies. In other words, President Johnson's November "success" offensive had compelled him to place Tet in a framework of continued success. A massive escalation would involve a major contradiction in credibility, in that it would raise questions as to why more troops were needed given past portrayals of optimism. Finally, a total escalation publicly aimed at ending the war might have appeased public opinion, but there was no guarantee it would succeed or that it might not lead to Chinese or Russian intervention. It was perhaps inevitable that a middle course--the need to encourage the prospects of negotiating while continuing the fighting--would become the most attractive policy option.

Indeed, even as the President continued his series of highly "militant" speeches, a line of attack perhaps also aimed at Hanoi for the purpose of convincing the enemy that America still had the will to persevere, he was being pressured by various sources, both inside and outside the Administration, to adopt a new course. Three days after the New Hampshire primary, on March 15, Dean Acheson had lunched with the President, and had promptly told him

that his recent Vietnam speeches were so far from reality that no one believed him, at home or abroad. Moreover, what Westmoreland was attempting to do in Vietnam could not be accomplished without unlimited resources and would take at least five years (New York Times, March 7, 1969). On the same day, Arthur Goldberg, the United Nations Ambassador, had sent the President a memo urging him to halt the bombing to get negotiations started. The memo prompted an angry outburst from the President--"Let's get one thing clear. I'm telling you now I am not going to stop the bombing. Now I don't want to hear any more about it. I'm not going to stop it" (New York Times, March 7, 1969). Yet on March 20, in a quixotic reversal of sentiment, the President met with Goldberg and expressed interest in his position. Meanwhile, Clark Clifford, according to the Hoopes version, was pressuring the President to consider a partial bombing halt and to make a peace gesture as well. In a July, 1969, article in Foreign Affairs, Clifford reveals that one reason for his growing disillusionment and the feeling that we should level off our involvement while working toward general disengagement was the highly inconclusive answers he was getting from the military. Clifford reached one firm conclusion from such answers: The war could not be won. He would proceed in this course of convincing the President that both a bombing halt and a diplomatic offensive were absolute necessities (Clifford, 1969: 610-611).

Under this matrix of renewed pressure, the President began to give some indication of change in his policy on the war. His memoirs reveal that by March 22, he had planned a call-up of "about 62,000 reserves" and had proposed about "13,500 additional troops" to be sent to Vietnam, a far cry from the original Westmoreland proposal (Johnson, 1971: 415). Significantly, on that same day, the President announced that Westmoreland was being relieved of his Vietnam command and would come back to Washington as Army Chief of Staff. While the President insisted that this change did not necessarily foreshadow a change in strategy and that the shift had been considered for weeks, it appears that Westmoreland's recall was an integral part of a gradual transition to a new policy. Finally, the meeting of a group of outside advisers of March 25, sometimes dubbed the "Wise Old Men"²⁶ may have given final impetus to the President's decision to reverse his policy. These were former Cabinet secretaries, ambassadors, and generals, some of whom had helped design the nation's policies toward Vietnam and nearly all of whom were conservative and cautious men with personal ties to their successors in the high posts of the government. In November of 1967, the "Wise Old Men" had attended a similar meeting which ended in a nearly unanimous endorsement of the government's policy. This time, by a margin of nearly two to one, the senior outside advisers told the President they no longer believed in the war as it was

being waged. According to the New York Times account, the President was "deeply shaken" by the fact that Dean Acheson, McGeorge Bundy, Goldberg and Cyrus Vance had joined George Ball, the perpetual dissenter, in opposing further military commitments and advocating some way of getting out of the war. To be sure one faction held firm in defense of a harder line--Justice Fortas, General Taylor and Robert Murphy. Murphy wanted more bombing, not less. Arthur Dean, Douglas Dillon and Generals Bradley and Ridgway were now doubters, plainly war-weary if not yet ready to shift course dramatically. To them, the waning public support of the war was a constant concern (New York Times, March 7, 1969).

According to Hoopes, "Lyndon Johnson was left in no doubt that a large majority felt the present policy was a dead end and that the U.S. strategic interest required basic change. The group did not attempt to spell out the specific elements of a new policy, but the unmistakable thrust of their thinking was toward deescalation, negotiations, and disengagement" (Hoopes, 1969: 217). The President's reaction has been described in his memoirs:

As I walked back to my office with Vice-President Humphrey, who had listened to the discussion, I was turning over in my own mind the opinions I had just heard and what these reactions meant as a reflection of broader opinion. I knew this group had not been reading the detailed reports on Vietnam each day, as I and my principal advisers had, but they were intelligent, experienced men. I had always regarded the majority of them as very steady and balanced. If they had been so deeply influenced by the

reports of the Tet offensive, what must the average citizen in the country be thinking? "Tet really set us back," Humphrey said. I had to agree (Johnson, 1971: 418).

The Tet offensive had "set" the President's back in an irrevocable manner. Deeply concerned and now fully aware of the shift in the public mood as reflected by the "Wise Old Men." sensing the irreconcilable divisions in Congress and his own party, knowing that he had become a symbol of both domestic and international ills, and disillusioned by the defections of men who were formerly staunch supporters of himself and the war, the President accepted a reversal of his planned speech to the nation on Vietnam. As late as March 28, the speech was still, in the words of one participant, a "teeth-clenched, see-it-through" harangue which said nothing about a bombing cutback (New York Times, March 7, 1969). Under Clifford's insistence and Rusk's cooperation, a new draft was prepared which eventually called for the sending of 13,500 more troops, no call-up of reserves, and a bombing halt to all areas north of the twentieth parallel, which would spare almost 90 percent of the North Vietnamese population but still provide the air force with key infiltration targets near the Demilitarized zone.

There was a final addition to the speech which had entered into the draft--the President's withdrawal from the race in 1968. The President had evidently concluded that it would be more effective if he made it clear that he was not just appealing for votes or pacifying domestic

critics or serving some other personal interest. In effect, the action depoliticized Johnson's role in the war and prompted Hanoi to respond to the American offer to negotiate. The "lock-in" point of an American limited war had exacted its final toll.

Postscript:
The Vietnam War and the 1968 Election

The withdrawal of President Johnson on March 31 from the 1968 Presidential race had the effect of boosting his own popularity temporarily,²⁷ but this rallying effect did not extend either to his own party or to his chosen successor, Hubert Humphrey. Even before the convention, the Democratic party and its standard-bearer were in trouble, both from internal dissension and a public mood receptive to the Republican theme that it was time for a change in national leadership. Disunity within the party (over the Vietnam issue) had been clearly indicated by the McCarthy vote in the New Hampshire primary, and the Kennedy candidacy additionally gave added impetus to a growing polarization between pro-and anti-Administration Democrats. When Vice-President Humphrey announced his candidacy on April 27, he was greeted by derision from disillusioned Democrats who equated his candidacy with a mere extension of the Administration's Vietnam policies. Humphrey, like Adlai Stevenson in 1952, would bear the onus of "not being

his own man," and would consequently face the problem of retaining the loyalty of anti-Johnson Democrats in the electorate.

Unfortunately for Humphrey, events in the pre-convention period seemingly conspired against the Vice-President by reinforcing the public's perception that the country, under Democratic rule, was approaching a condition of virtual anarchy. The racial crisis, after the riots of 1967, had been aggravated anew after the assassination of Martin Luther King in April, and the bloodshed that followed struck more than one-hundred American cities. Individual acts of sniping and police ambushes continued throughout the year. The "law and order" issue did not only apply to suppression of black riots. This issue, which would play a significant role in the campaign, also drew upon a mass public antipathy toward violent dissent over the Vietnam issue, particularly those destructive student outbursts on campus such as the left-wing protest at Columbia University. In terms of organized crime, the rate of crimes against people and property in the first six months of 1968 hit an all-time high, with the total number (4,589,000) being greater than all of 1967's total (U.S. News and World Report, October 7, 1968: 63). Internationally, the peace talks in Paris that had followed as a result of the President's speech had made little progress, with the war continuing to claim American lives

and resources.²⁸ In short, a political party that could neither end a war overseas nor terminate domestic conflict was in a precarious position.

Vietnam, the racial crisis, and law and order--these three issues would be dominant during the election campaign. But according to the polls, of the three, the most important problem facing the country in the public's mind was the Vietnam War. In June of 1968, before the two political conventions, 42 percent of the public named Vietnam as the key issue; even as late as mid-October, 44 percent continued to name Vietnam, indicating the persistence of the issue (Gallup Opinion Index, June, 1968: 8). Race relations and the law and order issue usually followed in terms of percentages. In addition, the press helped in keeping the war issue before the public. Subsequent content analysis of twenty major newspapers found that during the last four weeks of the campaign, the Vietnam situation was mentioned with greatest frequency of all issues, either international or domestic.²⁹ Another study (involving the nation's ten "prestige newspapers"), revealed that 57 percent of all election editorial lines devoted to specific foreign affairs issues during the 1968 Presidential campaign dealt exclusively with Vietnam (Myers, 1970: 57-64). Adding further to the public's recognition of the war was the issue of the bombing halt which became prominent during the latter stages of the campaign. In the final analysis, it would seem that the issue of Vietnam was prominently

displayed by the mass media, and that the public was sensitive to its overall significance.

Yet, one cannot automatically conclude that voters in the election were motivated primarily by the Vietnam issue. Scammon and Wattenberg contend that Americans did not vote primarily on a pro- or anti-Vietnam basis despite the issue's overwhelming importance in 1968. However, they concede that while the voter's basic voting motivation was conditioned primarily by domestic concerns, or what they termed the "Social Issue," i.e., "a set of public attitudes concerning the more personally frightening aspects of disruptive social change" (1970: 43), Vietnam still gave added impetus to domestic exigencies:

Some votes in 1968 did swing on a tangential feeling of malaise and nonaccomplishment in the field of foreign affairs generally and Vietnam specifically, but the numbers were not large. Many votes, however, did swing on the domestic side-effects of the Vietnam War: disruption, dissention, demonstrations (Scammon and Wattenberg, 1970: 39-40).

It is true that Vietnam would not become a central point of debate between the two candidates in the campaign in the sense of giving a clear policy direction on the war. Neither candidate could insist on withdrawal or all out victory. Both were essentially for "peace with honor." In the absence of a clear-cut debate on Vietnam, it could well be argued that, by default, the great issue of the election was law and order. Nevertheless, like Korea, Vietnam as an issue could be linked directly to domestic unrest, thus fusing even more cogently the failures of

the Democratic party on both the domestic and international front. Furthermore, the general malaise over the war coupled with domestic turmoil equalled an anti-Johnson response transferrable to Hubert H. Humphrey. In this perspective, one can understand Theodore White's contention that the 1968 vote, "was, to be sure, conditioned at every level by the unending war in Vietnam" (White, 1969: 398).

In essence, a stalemated limited war had once again given the Republican party the image of the party most capable of handling both the war and prosperity issues, enhancing the extent of their appeal to the electorate. The "domestic side-effects" that Wattenberg and Scammon refer to could also include the economic effects stemming from the war as well. Note the following shifts registered by Gallup:

TABLE 53

GALLUP TREND ON PARTY AND PROSPERITY^a

	February, 1966	October, 1966	May, 1968	August, 1968
Which political party can do the best job of keeping the country prosperous?				
Democratic	48%	39%	41%	36%
Republican	19%	24%	30%	36%

^aGallup Opinion Index, October, 1966: 13; September, 1968: 13.

The Republican party was now viewed by the electorate as being equal to the Democrats on the prosperity question, traditionally a province of the Democratic party. On the war question, a similar shift had been occurring:

TABLE 54

GALLUP TREND ON WAR AND PARTY HANDLING^a

	February, 1966	October, 1966	May, 1968	August, 1968
Which political party would be more likely to keep the United States out of WW III?				
Democratic	28%	27%	23%	23%
Republican	25%	27%	32%	41%

^aGallup Opinion Index, October, 1966: 11; September, 1968: 12.

After the mid-term 1966 elections, the electorate had increasingly perceived the Republican party as more capable in handling both issues. Lastly, the question as to whether Humphrey or Nixon could best handle the war clearly favored the Republican nominee:

TABLE 55

GALLUP TREND ON CANDIDATES HANDLING OF VIETNAM^a

	August, 1968	October, 1968
Which of these two candidates can do a better job of dealing with the Vietnam war?		
Nixon	54%	44%
Hubert Humphrey	27%	25%
No Opinion	19%	31%

^aGallup Opinion Index, October, 1968: 23; September, 1968: 6.

In reference to the Wallace vote, the third party factor may help to explain why the Republican party did not win a greater victory. After all, if a stalemated limited war is so damaging to the party in power, one would expect an election victory for the Republican party resembling Eisenhower's mandate of 1952. Yet Gallup, after the election, stated that the defection of Democrats was actually higher than in 1952 (Gallup Opinion Index, December, 1968: 3). In effect, traditional Democrats, as a protest against programs and policies of the incumbent Administration, went over to both Nixon and Wallace, who together had a combined vote total of approximately 57 percent to Humphrey's 43 percent. Clearly, the presence of Wallace in the race drew votes away from Nixon. For the majority of Wallace voters were Democrats who would otherwise have voted for Nixon rather than Republicans who might have given their support to Humphrey. Therefore, without Wallace, it is quite likely that Nixon would have won the election by a much greater margin over Humphrey³⁰ (Converse et al., 1969: 1083-1105).

The 1968 Campaign

For Hubert Humphrey, the early portion of his campaign was a near-disaster. The bitter floor fight over the Vietnam plank at the convention plus the accompanying riots and demonstrations on the streets of Chicago had divided his party and weakened his own image with the electorate.

His pro-Johnson position on Vietnam did not satisfy a significant dovish faction of his party, and while hinting that he might make changes on Vietnam if he became President in his acceptance address,³¹ it was not nearly enough to heal the wounds within the party. Additionally, the fiasco at Chicago had given added credence to Nixon's charge of early spring--"How can a party which cannot unite itself hope to unite America?" In his almost frantic attempt to impress the fact that he was his own man, he promptly launched his campaign on September 9 by remarking that American troops could be removed from Vietnam by the end of the year (White, 1969: 335). Secretary of State Rusk promptly repudiated such a possibility, and the next day President Johnson told the American legion that "no one" could predict when troop withdrawals could begin. The Washington Post promptly labelled Humphrey's remarks as "impulsive, uncertain, and self contradictory" (September 15, 1968).

In some respects, Humphrey's problem of disassociating himself from the incumbent Administration was far more difficult than Adlai Stevenson's in 1952. At least Stevenson had not been a member of the Truman Administration. But as Vice-President Humphrey's dilemma was acute. The New York Times suggested that Humphrey was "torn between loyalty to President Johnson's hard line and what appear to be his own more pacific instincts" (September 15, 1968). The St. Louis Post Dispatch described Humphrey's dilemma

as "a political problem of agonizing complexity," but asserted that the voters were entitled to know how his "policy differs from the Administration's, if it does" (September 20, 1968).

For Richard Nixon and the Republican party, the situation was markedly reversed. The Republican convention had mirrored unity and decisiveness, particularly in regard to Vietnam. The Republican platform had reinforced the image that the Republican party was not the party of war, but the party whose administrations had brought peace (Congressional Quarterly, 1968: 2133). Furthermore, Republicans would in the campaign, remind the voters that their party had for two decades been against committing American troops to a land war in Asia, that President Eisenhower had made only a limited commitment to the South Vietnam government, while under Democratic Administrations the commitment had become open-ended.

In his acceptance speech, Nixon pledged, in tones reminiscent of Eisenhower, that if elected the war would end.

When the strongest nation in the world can be tied down for four years in a war in Vietnam with no end in sight, . . . It's time for new leadership for the United States of America, . . . I pledge to you tonight that the first priority foreign policy objective of our next administration will be to bring an honorable end to the Vietnam War (White, 1969: 255).

The Nixon pledge was a logical outgrowth of a theme that he had begun as early as the New Hampshire primary, when he

reminded those voters how Eisenhower had brought peace to Korea--"We ended that war, we will end this one and win the peace." American power had been grossly misused by the Democrats in Vietnam. It was time for the voters to respond once again to the traditional Republican ability of ending wars begun by Democratic Administrations, the war party.

However, Nixon refused to be drawn into specifics as to how he would end the war. His basic contention was that while peace talks were going on, he would not bind himself to any policy option that would hobble him in future diplomacy once elected. This strategy was noted caustically by the press. The Atlanta Constitution asserted that Nixon was so intent on not making mistakes that he "makes no real progress in defining" what he would do (October 3, 1968). The Washington Post charged that Nixon had "skated around" the war issue (October 2, 1968). The New York Times commented that Nixon was promising that he could end the war "without explaining how he will do it" (September 30, 1968). Aside from a suggestion that South Vietnamese troops should take over more of the fighting, Nixon's basic strategy was to avoid an unpopular position, assuming that anti-Administration voters were "locked-in," that they cared little about Vietnam alternatives and would vote Republican simply because any change was better than none. The initiative on Vietnam clearly lay with the Democrats. If Nixon became a dove the Administration

might be able to manipulate events so as to make his position look foolish. If he became a super-hawk, peace overtures by the President could isolate him from an electorate that was tired of the war. The result of this reasoning led Nixon to stake out a position calculated to offend no one--the Republican party, was, of course, for an "honorable peace." However, events were beginning to erode the effectiveness of Nixon's Vietnam strategy.

The Salt Lake City Speech and the Bombing Halt

The turnabout for Humphrey on Vietnam began on September 30 in a speech at Salt Lake City. It was at this time that he regained some of the initiative previously lost on the Vietnam issue. Earlier, he had tied a bombing halt to a simultaneous act of reciprocity on the part of Hanoi. Now he stated that as President:

I would stop the bombing of North Vietnam as an acceptable risk for peace because I believe it could lead to success in the negotiations and thereby shorten the war. This would be in the best protection of our troops. . . . Now if the government of North Vietnam were to show bad faith, I would reserve the right to resume the bombing. . . . Secondly, I would take the risk that the South Vietnamese would meet the responsibilities they say they are now ready to assume in their own self-defense; I would move, in other words, towards de-Americanization of the war. . . . (White, 1969: 355).

This offer of a bombing halt not only encouraged Democratic doves to fully support their party's candidate, but it also helped in distinguishing Humphrey from the Johnson

Administration's policies. The show of good intentions and display of dovish rhetoric (we must take "risks" for peace) were contrasted with Humphrey's hawkish statements of the spring and summer. It provided a lonely peg on which many doves, increasingly apprehensive of Nixon, could hang their hopes and their votes. The public, perhaps encouraged by the proposal to de-Americanize the war and assertion of independence, began to drift back to the Democratic standard-bearer.³² Polls show that after the Salt Lake City Speech, the gap between Nixon and Humphrey began to narrow:

TABLE 56
(GALLUP) 1968 PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST^a

Period of Poll	Nixon	Humphrey	Wallace	No Opinion
<u>Before Salt Lake City</u>				
September 3-7	43%	31%	19%	7%
September 20-22	43	28	21	8
September 27-30	44	29	20	7
<u>After Salt Lake City</u>				
October 3-12	43	31	20	6
October 17-21	44	36	15	5
October 31- November 2	42	40	14	4

^aGallup Opinion Index, November, 1968: 10.

Interestingly enough, Nixon's percentage stayed remarkably stable, while Humphrey's apparently drew back some of the earlier Wallace supporters who were normally prone to vote Democratic.

After the speech, money and renewed support flowed into the Humphrey camp (White, 1969: 356). One more event helped. In Paris, secret talks were opening the way to a total bombing halt by the Administration, prompting President Johnson to tell all three candidates on October 16 to drop Vietnam from discussion so as not to jeopardize the talks. Compliance meant trouble for Nixon, who had always felt that Vietnam was the major issue in the campaign, not law and order. But the Humphrey surge could continue unabated. On October 31, President Johnson announced a total bombing halt, enhancing even further Humphrey's image as a man of peace and the Democratic party as the party of peace. But apparently, the Democratic surge had fallen a bit short as well as starting too late. Assessing the election after the Nixon victory, the St. Louis Post Dispatch reflected that "It (the election) was . . . the expression of a profound demand for peace in Vietnam and a nonbelligerent foreign policy in general. We are now convinced that Mr. Humphrey could have won had he made a cleaner and earlier break with the Administration's war policy"(November 6, 1968).

In retrospect, Vietnam immeasurably affected the election of 1968. Both candidates had been forced to confront the issue, for the public, by all accounts, was keenly aware of the issue. In a post-election interview, both the Senate Majority Leader, Mike Mansfield and Minority Leader Dirksen echoed the view that the war had

been highly significant. Mansfield, in particular, saw Vietnam as the major issue, "because so many things flowed from our Vietnam involvement affecting our domestic policy at home--the division among our people, the discontent and so forth" (U.S. News and World Report, November 18, 1968: 80). Much of the GOP attack had centered on Vietnam and the ills of American society that ostensibly stemmed from the conflict.

Of course there is a danger in placing too much emphasis on Vietnam. Any national election is a result of many factors. In 1952, corruption, Communism, McCarthyism, inflation, taxes, socialism, etc. had all been present besides the issue of a limited war. In 1968, inflation, law and order, race riots coexisted with the Vietnam issue. Nevertheless, it is true that in both elections the GOP placed considerable emphasis on exploiting the war issue and relentlessly "marketed" each war in an attempt to attract votes. The success of those appeals in terms of precise voter motivation is a matter for a different kind of study.

But in the final analysis, the election of 1968, like 1952, was indelibly imprinted by a war which could only breed unpopularity and detract from the Democratic party's potential to gather votes from traditional areas of support (labor, working middle class, etc.) in the population. In 1968, Hubert Humphrey tried valiantly to defuse the issue, and it was only by the narrowest of

margins that he failed in this task. In a time of war abroad and trouble at home, a Republican President had once again been elected. Four years of a stalemated war involving 25,000 dead Americans and 200,000 casualties had given Richard Nixon's call for new leadership a credibility instrumental to his narrow victory.

NOTES

1. McNamara had been instrumental in encouraging the December, 1965 bombing halt (See Johnson, 1971: 235).

2. Harris poll percentages differ from Gallup largely because of the manner in which approval was recorded. Harris asked respondents to approve along good-excellent lines (approval) vs. a fair-poor (disapproval) category. While exact percentages will vary from Gallup, overall trends do not.

3. Note. It must be recognized that "pure hawks" or "pure doves"--the two extreme positions at the end of the opinion spectrum--remained in a minority for the period of 1965-68.

4. Official sources had perhaps sensitized the public to the theme of Communist infiltration. On October 17, Attorney General Katzenbach announced that the Justice Department had begun an investigation of Communist influence in the anti-Vietnamese war and draft evasion demonstrations. On October 18, Senate GOP leader Dirksen stated that the demonstrations were "enough to make any person loyal to this country weep." Press Secretary Bill Moyers reported that President Johnson was concerned "that even well-meaning demonstrators can become the victims of Communist exploitation." Finally on the same day, FBI director Hoover stated in the annual FBI report that the American Communist party "has instructed its members to cooperate with all protest groups in order to intensify these activities and weaken the government's position" (New York Times, October 18 & 19, 1965).

It was not only a question of Communist infiltration that bothered those who negatively reacted to the protest demonstrations. There was also concern that these protests were encouraging the enemy. For example, on October 19, a New York Times dispatch from Hong Kong reported that the Viet Cong, North Vietnam and Communist China were interpreting the protests "as proof that the Johnson Administration will eventually be compelled to withdraw American forces from Vietnam." The report went on to indicate that because of the American buildup, "Communist hopes turn more on American withdrawal through

exhaustion or in response to the pressure of public opinion rather than on conventional military success" (New York Times, October 20, 1965).

Counter-Demonstration: The strong counter-reaction to the October protests also indicated the extent of support. On October 21, 350 students at Yale attended a pro-Administration rally. On October 16, students from sixty-three colleges had met at Lafayette, Indiana to support the war. On October 23, 15,982 Michigan State University students signed a statement supporting American policy in Vietnam. On October 27, more than 1,000 students at Rutgers University signed a similar statement. In short, these and numerous other counter-rallies from the college population were indicative that only a small vocal minority of college students, chiefly from the larger "prestige" universities such as Berkeley, were openly opposed to the war. This vocal minority created a misimpression that the majority of college students shared their dovish feelings. Conversely, the college-educated sector, taken as a whole, was actually more hawkish (See Rosenberg et al., 1970: 66-67).

Opinion Leaders-National Organizations: Major groups decried the protests. On October 18, the president of the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce stated that his organization's 6,000 local units would expose "leftist" support for peace movements. The United Church of Christ Executive Council declared that it opposed the movement to avoid the draft. On October 21, United Auto Workers' President Walter Reuther announced that the union's executive board had adopted a statement calling withdrawal from Vietnam unthinkable and "unacceptable" and protesters as "misguided." On October 22, the United Steelworkers unanimously approved a policy statement saying that critics of the Administration "either misunderstood or are intentionally misrepresenting the facts." It further stated that American military action should be pursued "vigorously and continuously" until the Communists agreed to negotiate. After the November 27 march on Washington, a similar reaction came from the AFL-CIO on December 15 when they adopted a resolution pledging "unstinting support" for "all measures the Administration might deem necessary to halt Communist aggression and secure a just and lasting peace" (New York Times, October 19, 22, 23; November 28 and December 16, 1965).

In the final analysis, one cannot ignore the fact that civil rights groups, the clergy and students did have factions supporting the dissenters. But they were met by an equal opposing reaction, which largely negated their impact, at least in terms of mass public

opinion. Dissent in the beginning stages of the war was a relatively novel experience in recent American history and while disturbing, could not at this point in time seriously undercut the Administration's consensus.

5. Richard Nixon emphasized a similar theme. On September 12 (Meet the Press), Nixon called for more extensive bombing around Hanoi and emphasized that the repeated call by President Johnson and other members of his Administration for negotiations "encourages our enemy, confuses our friends and prolongs the war" (New York Times, September 13, 1965).

6. One reported reason for Hanoi's intransigence was revealed when the New York Times quoted an unidentified member of the International Control Commission as stating that "the Hanoi regime is split between two factions--one led by President Ho Chi Minh, Prime Minister Pham Van Dong and Defense Minister Vo Nguyen, the Commander in Chief, and the other led by Truong Chinh, Chairman of the National Assembly. It is evident that President Ho Chi Minh and his immediate allies think in terms of possible negotiations which would consolidate their military and political gains in the south, even if they have to defer whatever plans they have for an eventual takeover of South Vietnam. This standpoint, however, is stoutly opposed by a powerful faction led by Truong Chinh, which insists on a relentless fight with the South Vietnamese and American troops. This faction also demands more involvement of regular North Vietnamese troops in the south and eventual takeover of the south, since it sees its military and political triumphs inevitable." Furthermore, Chinese influence was still seen as strong in influencing Ho's soft-line faction to accommodate themselves to the hard-liners (New York Times, December 30, 1965).

7. The feeling in the Senate was that rescinding the resolution would lend encouragement to North Vietnam's apparent conviction that the United States would tire of the war and withdraw (New York Times, January 30, 1966).

8. Casualties (death in battle) reached record highs in the July-December, 1967 period: July--781 deaths; August--535 deaths; September--775 deaths; October--733 deaths; November--881 deaths; and December--774 deaths. During the first four months of 1968, deaths shot up drastically: January--1,202; February--2,124; March--1,543; and April--1,410.

9. On August 12, the New York Times asserted that LBJ ordered a step-up in the air offensive against North Vietnam in response to Congressional pressure for removal of the target curbs. The President's decision was said to have been disclosed by Admiral Sharp in testimony August 9 at a Senate Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee hearing on bombing restrictions. The prior announcement that the hearings were to be held and the demand of House Republican Leader Gerald R. Ford for an end to all bombing limitations were said to have prompted the President to authorize the expanded air campaign.

10. The Christian Science Monitor (September 14, 1967: 1) revealed that the number of people under the control of Saigon had jumped from eight million in December, 1964 to twelve million in September of 1967. Viet Cong control had fallen from 6.3 million to 4.6 million.

11. On February 9, the New York Times reported that United States commanders were receiving information that many Viet Cong troops had expected the Tet offensive to "bring the war to a decisive and victorious conclusion." In the Westmoreland report it is revealed that some Viet Cong battalions had elaborate plans for victory parades in the cities (Westmoreland, 1968: 158).

12. LBJ's views did not change with the passage of time. In a February 6, 1970 television interview with Walter Cronkite, he again stated that Tet was a military "debacle" for the Communists.

13. Secretary of State McNamara was perhaps willing to be a little more candid in his assessment. In a February 4 statement, he admitted that "there's no question but that the people of the cities and towns in South Vietnam have been dealt a heavy blow" (New York Times, February 5, 1968).

14. On February 10, the national board of the ADA endorsed McCarthy for President. It was the first time in twenty years the Liberal ADA had not endorsed an incumbent Democratic president. Harry Truman had been the last (ADA--Americans for Democratic Action).

15. Kennedy's speech had apparently reflected sentiment in the Senate. The New York Times reported on February 12 that there "has been no criticism (of the speech)--a silence that in many ways seems to connote approval." Furthermore, Tet had converted a good portion of Administration supporters into hawk or dove

category. According to Senator Morton, there were now twenty-five doves, thirty-six hawks, with sixteen "leaning to the doves," twenty-three "leaning to the hawks." Tet, according to Morton, would push the "leaners" into the pure categories, of either hawk or dove (New York Times, February 13, 1968).

16. "Unfortunate" may be the wrong choice of words. Hanoi certainly was aware of the fact that an offensive during an election year in a democracy was bound to have serious repercussions, perhaps weakening the resolve of public support in the United States for the war itself.

17. The Gallup poll in January had shown President Johnson leading Richard Nixon by a 51 percent to 39 percent margin. Then, in a poll released in late February, Nixon and LBJ were found to be in a tie with each receiving 42 percent (Gallup Opinion Index, March, 1968: 10).

18. On February 24, an American official in Saigon admitted that Tet had caused a "significant setback" in the pacification effort (New York Times, February 24, 1968).

19. Hoopes identifies these doubters as including Paul Warnke, Assistant Secretary of Defense, Paul Nitze, Deputy Secretary of Defense, David McGiffert, Undersecretary of the Army, Alfred Fitt, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower, and Richard Steadman, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, among others (Hoopes, 1969: 145-146).

20. An even more amazing remark was uttered by Rostow. He asserted that the recent Communist attacks "may have left the South Vietnamese army and government institutions stronger than before the attacks." Fulbright, upon hearing of Rostow's comment, labelled him as irrational (Washington Post, February 20, 1968).

21. One event that has often been overlooked in at least encouraging dissent from the college sector was a decision on February 16 to abolish all draft deferments for graduate students, a development which educators saw as a direct result of an increasingly futile war and one which would play havoc with the entire system of higher education in the United States, or so they claimed.

22. Between March 1-14, a giant wave of speculative buying had hit the world's gold markets. The speculation had been touched off by a generally held belief that the United States could not afford to maintain the \$35.00 price for gold and thus would be forced to revalue the

metal. This difficulty was placed upon "the period of financial stress created by the Vietnam War" (See New York Times, March 19, 1968).

23. Goulding's appendix to the report charged that the "most serious deficiency of the Task force was its failure to gauge the horrendous political implications of its basic recommendation that the military manpower request be met" (Hoopes, 1969: 119).

24. It is still a matter of dispute as to who was really responsible for first suggesting a bombing halt--Rusk or Clifford. Hoopes (Limits of Intervention) credits Clifford. Johnson credits Rusk (Vantage Point).

25. LBJ's reaction to the primary attempted to dismiss its significance: "They are the only races where anybody can run and everybody can win. New Hampshire is the only place where candidates can claim 20 percent is a landslide, 40 percent is a mandate, and 60 percent is unanimous" (New York Times, March 13, 1968).

26. The advisory group was composed of former Secretary of State Dean Acheson, former Under Secretary of State George Ball, General Omar Bradley, McGeorge Bundy, Arthur Dean (who had negotiated the Korean War settlement), former Treasury Secretary Douglas Dillon, Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, retired ranking diplomat Robert Murphy, General Ridgeway and Taylor, former Deputy Secretary of Defense Cyrus Vance, who had been President Johnson's chief trouble-shooter. Also included were Abe Fortas, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, Goldberg, John J. McCloy, Commissioner in West Germany under President Truman. Senior officials of the government included Rusk, Clifford, Helms, Rostow, Katzenbach, Nitze, Harriman, Bundy (William) and General McConnell of the Air Force. Note. Clark Clifford had first suggested the meeting of the Wise Men to the President, a strategem that was probably designed to enhance the prospects of deescalation.

27. President Johnson's popularity rose from 36 percent approval in March of 1968 to 49 percent approval after his resignation speech. However, by August, his popularity score had declined to 35 percent (Gallup Opinion Index, August, 1968: 2).

28. According to Gallup, 73 percent of the public saw the Paris peace talks as making "little headway" in late August. Democrats were apparently as disillusioned as Republicans, with 70 percent of Democrats and 74 percent of Republicans sharing the same view.

29. The law and order issue ranked fourth, with race relations holding the seventh position (Graber, 1971: 178).

30. Of the 40 percent of the Nixon vote that came from those who had supported LBJ in 1964, a great many were Republicans returning home after deserting Goldwater. Even so, Democrats and independent voters who changed from LBJ to Nixon made up nearly half of all the remaining vote switches.

31. In his acceptance speech, he had tried to set himself apart from LBJ. On Vietnam, he stated that . . . if "there is any one lesson that we should have learned, it is that the policies of tomorrow need not be limited by the policies of yesterday . . . I shall apply that lesson to the search for peace in Vietnam as well as to all other areas of national policy" (White, 1968: 306-307).

32. In a post-election interview with George Gallup, the pollster affirmed that Humphrey began picking up strength after the speech in Salt Lake City. In Gallup's words, "that was when he appeared to break with LBJ--to establish a difference between himself and the President on this issue. After that, when we asked people which candidate they thought to be the greater dove, most named Humphrey. Then and there he began to pick up votes--especially among women."

CHAPTER 7

LIMITED WAR AND THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM RECONSIDERED

Conclusions

What conclusions can be drawn from the previous discussion regarding the relationship between the American political system and limited war? The following may be considered as most significant:

- (1) At the outbreak of hostilities, public opinion rallies to the President who, in turn, reinforces his support by justifying his actions to intervene in terms of certain consensual symbols--anti-Communist, patriotic--which have in the past mobilized the American people. One of the more interesting differences between Korea and Vietnam in this respect--and one contrary to what one might expect--is that the unambiguous North Korean aggression did not arouse the same level of support for Truman that Johnson was to receive later, during the more incremental United States involvement. Whether this difference may be attributed to Johnson's greater pre-war popularity, or to the more devious manner by which the President handled the gradual Vietnamese intervention, or both, is difficult to say. Nevertheless, it may be hypothesized that if a future President adopts the Johnson policy of gradualism, then he must be sure to have a huge reservoir of pre-war popularity in order to cushion the gradual drain due to the war itself. Hopefully, he will be able to end the war before the next election.
- (2) Public support for the President and his conduct of the war does not decrease significantly, despite increasing casualties and/or taxes,

while the general belief in a relatively short war and success on the battlefield--hopefully ending in victory--remains prevalent. Conversely, this support erodes as hostilities procrastinate and the continued high costs of the conflict appear increasingly pointless as the vision of military victory disappears. In Vietnam, Tet starkly pointed out how far American forces were from bringing the war to a victorious conclusion. Similarly, in Korea, the Chinese intervention aftermath indicated that the Administration had no intention of pursuing a total military victory. In essence, the situation to be avoided is a protracted stalemate following the intervention. Military intervention abroad must achieve its intended results very rapidly before costs mount, become visible, or are viewed as "illegitimate." It can be hypothesized that if a limited war continued beyond a point in time where victory prospects are invalidated by battlefield events and/or Administration edict, then mass public opinion will show an appreciable decline in support for both Presidential popularity and the war's policy objectives, along with a concomitant rise in levels of Congressional dissent. These two lines, a declining curve of public support and rising level of Congressional opposition "lock in" the President, restricting his ability to maneuver and conduct the war.

- (3) As public disenchantment grows, the middle-range support for the President narrows as hawk and dove support expand until at the "lock-in" point they represent majority sentiment. Other characteristics of the "lock-in" point include (a) a severe loss of credibility in the President's conduct of the war; (b) the direct linkage of war costs to the various social and economic ills of the domestic system; (c) a parallel dichotomization of Congress into hawks and doves; (d) in both wars, hawks and doves united on a "win or get out sentiment," a basic manifestation of weariness with the war; (e) the coexistence of three variables--elite dissent, public opinion drop and rising war costs, and perceived Presidential failure; (f) a viable political alternative exists vis-a-vis the President such as Eugene McCarthy and Robert F. Kennedy in Vietnam and Taft and Kefauver in Korea. Thus if the President cannot end a limited war

either quickly or in a satisfactory manner, then pressures to escalate (win a military victory) or deescalate (negotiate or withdraw) will bifurcate his intervention consensus, making it impossible to maintain his center.

- (4) In both wars the initially most influential pressures upon the President came from the hawks. Indeed, during the Korean War there were really no doves as such. It was the hawks who after China's intervention became increasingly militant hawks and doves: either follow MacArthur's recommendations or get out. In Vietnam, hawks and doves were distinct groups, until at least Tet, after which many hawks turned into doves; doves also, of course, gained support from the middle range. In short, both Truman and Johnson faced a dwindling in numbers of moderate, middle-ground supporters while simultaneously attempting to conduct a kind of war which demanded relative moderation in tactics and overall strategy.

This Congressional split parallels public polarization. But if the President appears successful in prosecuting the war, Congressional criticism can make little headway in finding a receptive public audience. Appropriately, Truman's support level as measured by the polls was at its zenith after the Inchon landing--thirty-eighth parallel crossing period of the war. Taft Republicans were largely muted, as Truman publicly proclaimed that victory was near. Similarly, the first significant dip in Johnson's support did not happen until his well-publicized bombing pause failed to bring Hanoi to the bargaining table. President Johnson had the misfortune of having the bombing pause failure immediately followed by the televised Fulbright Hearings, which cast additional doubt upon the credibility of his Vietnam policies. In short, if Congressional criticism is to legitimate and expand domestic dissent among various public factions, then it must be synchronized with the public image of a President unable or unwilling to end the war. While first amplifying dissent, it becomes, in the later stages of the war, a receiver of public dismay, and Congress thus becomes further bifurcated between the hawk-dove camps.

- (5) The impact of the war on the two mid-term elections is somewhat uncertain. While both the elections of 1950 and 1966 appear to have increased the number

of Republican hawks (and in 1950 resulted in the defeat of a number of prominent Administration supporters and leaders in the Senate), it is unclear, particularly in the 1966 election, how much this was due to reasons other than the war. Indeed, considering average Democratic Administration losses in mid-term and Presidential elections, neither Truman nor Johnson did that badly.

Regardless of the number lost or gained, in both mid-term elections (1950 and 1966), however, the opposition construed the incumbent Administration's losses as a mandate for change, particularly in regard to the conduct of the war. The mid-term election was therefore viewed by political opponents as a preliminary coalition of dissent directly related to the war's impact upon the domestic system. By the time of the next Presidential election, public support for the war had declined so far that both Presidential incumbents did not run again and their party--the Democratic Party--went down to defeat. In this context, if the mid-term election can perhaps best be considered as a symptom of things to come, then future Administrations may do well to consider the long-run implications, particularly for Presidential elections.

- (6) In reference to the 1952 and 1968 Presidential elections, it became apparent that the Republican Party was increasingly perceived by the electorate as the party best able to handle both the war and prosperity issues. In both limited wars, the war issue revealed a remarkable capacity to "link-up" with other "trailer" issues, be it inflation, racial strife, higher taxes, domestic reforms, or internal Communism. Because the war's lack of success is so closely identified with the Administration in power, and more specifically the President, international failures are superimposed over domestic failures as well. A limited war thus becomes an encompassing symbol for virtually every conceivable ill within American society. In other words, the traditional remoteness of a foreign policy issue is brought "home" to the average or even apathetic voter's life by the economic and social side-effects of a stalemated war.

Thus in the competition of parties for power, it remains an accepted rule of the game for opponents to capitalize on each other's errors,

despite the previous support of policies that led to those difficulties and errors. Thus, ironically, criticism of President Johnson came primarily from liberals and moderate Republicans who had supported the basic premises of the containment policy since World War II. In any event, if a limited war cannot be terminated speedily, then the resultant discontent will be fomented and exploited by the opposition, with the war issue and economic side-effects accounting for a considerable degree of vote switching.

- (7) If we draw the conclusion from this behavior pattern of the American domestic system that the United States cannot conduct lengthy limited wars--and a war which eschews the adversary's surrender as its objective and leaves him with a capability to resist cannot be short--then statesmen confront the alternative of adopting either a "quick-fix" solution with all the international dangers this course holds, or not intervening if they wish to avoid the domestic consequences of fighting a limited war.

Given these kind of conclusions, the obvious question must again be asked. Can a limited war be conducted successfully within the confines of the American political system? From the American viewpoint, the lessons of Korea and Vietnam would seemingly point to a negative answer. More specifically, the two land wars in Asia have forcefully driven home a lesson to future Presidents--a limited war aimed at attaining an eventual bargaining position with the enemy rather than traditional conceptions of victory will unleash divisive and partisan pressures even before a stalemate is reached upon the battlefield. The President loses his ability to manipulate events in a manner designed to maintain the consensus level present during the intervention period. His support erodes not only because of the spiralling political costs emanating from the war--casualties,

inflation, higher taxes--but also because of an accumulation and repetition of failures stemming from his inability to terminate the conflict either by escalating or deescalating. The failure of the President is perceived by critical factions within Congress and the public as being wholly unsatisfactory. Accordingly, proposed alternatives for ending the war become increasingly attractive.

Thus American limited wars have played key roles in determining the outcomes of two Presidential elections. In view of the defeat administered to the Democratic Party on both occasions, can any future Administration (Republican or Democratic for that matter) fail to heed the painful political lessons of the past? In other words, although the world has become safe only for limited wars, how can a political system which apparently has operated far more effectively under a total war situation¹ be adapted to the power realities of a nuclear age?

Indeed, what Korea and Vietnam demonstrate is that key elements of the American political system--the public (both elite and mass) and Congress--seemingly retain an inherent inability to tolerate indecisiveness and stalemate in a war of any kind. Perhaps one reason is that a limited war intensifies the ambiguity characteristic of the cold war, i.e., a twilight struggle between all-out war and real peace. Such ambiguity breeds impatience², and apparently this is a characteristic of the American national style which has not dissipated during the past two decades.

In 1952, a Harris poll revealed that only 26 percent of the American people were willing to fight small wars in the future (like Korea) in order to maintain world peace (Harris, 1954: 29-30). The idea of having "no more Koreas" was clearly popular, just as the "no more Vietnams" slogan became increasingly prominent after Tet in 1968.³ In essence, limited war, as the unwanted child of its parent, containment, requires long-term support if it is to serve as an effective strategic instrument. But the public's reservoir of support and patience has not been commensurate to this requirement.

If one assumes that the bulk of a democratic people are unable to support its President through a protracted conflict like Korea or Vietnam, the question remains as to whether the population can ever be educated towards an acceptance of limited war's ambiguity. Will the average citizen be able to tolerate with equanimity the fact that he has lost a son in an endless war which has as its ultimate goal the maintenance of the global balance of power and the reaffirmation of American credibility? The complexity of a limited war is that it obliterates or greatly diminishes the traditional consensual symbols of support present in earlier wars--the threat or connection to national security posed by the conflict is by no means clear and there is an absence of an obvious enemy upon which the collective hatreds of the nation can be displaced. Furthermore, the denial of the traditional victory aim legitimates dissent

from the Administration's war policies, amplifying the national level of frustration.⁴ Yet, paradoxically, while the American people have shown their abhorrence to limited wars, they have equally rejected the feasibility of nuclear warfare. Within the confines of such a dilemma, the future course of another American limited war must lie with the President's ability to somehow escape the political web which entangled two previous Presidents. Therefore, we must review the political dangers which face a President conducting a limited war and the tactics he might adopt in order to forestall the inexorable erosion of his consensus.

The President and Public Opinion: Support
and Punishment in Limited War

How can a future President forestall the unfolding of those political scenarios which engulfed Presidents Truman and Johnson? Two answers may be suggested. The first is to win a future limited war quickly by applying maximum force in the shortest period of time. This would prevent the bifurcation of his consensus and the ultimate formation of the "lock-in" point. The second method would be to minimize the domestic costs by keeping the war on the political "back-burner," thereby preventing the war from deeply intruding into the public's awareness or affecting the daily life-styles of the populace as a whole. But each option has its inherent difficulties. To choose the former is to expose the country to the very real dangers of escalation, dangers which could eventually draw other powers into

the war culminating in a third global conflict. Both Truman and Johnson refused to take this policy course. Aside from the attempt to unify Korea, they subscribed to the rationale of a limited war, i.e., the restoration of the status quo and the aim of persuading the enemy that he would be denied victory and would therefore benefit from negotiations more than from continued fighting. In keeping with their avowed intention to prevent the spread of each conflict, both Presidents refused to stir a full-scale martial spirit within the country for fear of unleashing uncontrollable pressures to win the war at any cost.

The second option--minimizing the war's political costs--could conceivably work for a President if the particular limited war remained on a smaller scale, involving under 100,000 troops (this is admittedly speculative), with low casualties, and requiring a level of expenditures which would not disrupt the level of taxation nor be connected to a higher cost of living. By conducting the war at this level, a President could blunt the domestic impact of the war upon the nation. Relying on the public's traditional trust of the President in the area of foreign policy, his aim would be to avoid the perceptual threshold whereby the war could enter into the realm of domestic politics. More specifically, he would be concerned with keeping inflation, higher taxes, and various social ills from being linked to the war, a process which occurred in both the 1952 and 1968 Presidential elections. In actuality, this was

the kind of strategy pursued during the early stages of each war. Truman refused to impose total price and wage controls, and further rationalized the high draft calls (50,000 in September and October) and increased taxes by equating such sacrifices with impending victory. If victory expectations had been fulfilled, the political repercussions stemming from a short-lived war would very likely have redounded to Truman's political credit and stature. A successful Korean action would have defused the "softness on Communism" charge stressed by Taft conservatives. Similarly, President Johnson kept the cost levels low during the first year of the Vietnam intervention, and therefore the presence of dissension among academicians and mass-media elites could not activate the mass public. The President was in little political danger as long as he retained mass support. Furthermore, apparently the President felt that the enemy could be defeated within a time span of two years, a period of time which would not permit a serious erosion of his consensus or allow a radical disruption of his Great Society program.

But the fundamental question remains as to whether a limited war can be conducted along these small-scale lines indefinitely. Aside from the natural inclination to exploit battlefield advantages by either side, the diversion of resources for even a small war may register protest with the appropriate passage of time. A future enemy may interpret such dissent (although it may be relatively small) as

signifying the origin of increasing pressure upon the President to negotiate from a weaker position. It may pin its hope on gaining concessions because of the public opinion factor inherent in a democratic political system. Accordingly, the enemy may increase the scope of violence on the battlefield resulting in greater American casualties while simultaneously offering to negotiate. This will place the President in a difficult position both internationally and domestically.

Internationally, a policy of gradualism, permitting only marginal escalations or deescalations in accordance with enemy moves, may have a reverse effect. In one sense, gradualism may only encourage the enemy to continue the conflict. One could conceivably argue that Hanoi saw President Johnson's policy of gradualism as being indicative of his political weakness domestically. The "slow squeeze" approach revealed that the President could not do all he wanted to do in order to win the war. Only by accepting the risks of using maximum force and calling for full-scale domestic sacrifices could Johnson have perhaps conveyed to Hanoi the message that the United States would cross the threshold from a policy of patient attrition to a war with no holds barred. Similarly, Truman's firing of MacArthur, while clearly establishing the fact that the Korean War would remain limited, also told the North Koreans and Chinese that the United States had no intention of escalating the war to a total victory. Both Truman and Johnson's domestic

choices signified that the war would be prolonged, a truism that promised the advantage to the side whose will to continue the fighting was stronger.

Domestically, the desire of the President to keep the war limited will result in the former low temperature of the war being transformed into a burning political fever. A recalcitrant enemy, like the North Vietnamese, will prolong a limited war, thereby defying any attempt by the President to end the conflict. Thus a limited war which endures without a sign of success or termination will eventually create a national malaise particularly suitable to rival politicians in search of power.

Whether the President escalates or deescalates in an attempt to regain national unity, he is still fundamentally placing the prestige of his office squarely on the line. Bold actions of either sort will result in a temporary surge of his popularity, but their eventual failure to coerce the enemy into a war-terminating acquiescence is disillusioning. Escalating will prove to hawks the President's firm devotion to anti-Communism and improve his position with confirmed hard-liners in Congress, the military, his own Administration and segments of the mass public. Still, his justification for increasing the level of violence is ultimately that the prospects of victory will be enhanced. But the danger of escalation is that if negotiations are the expected result of such action, the failure to achieve these very negotiations will be related to not having used enough

force in the first place. Hawks will argue that more force must be forthcoming if the limits of the enemy's endurance are to be reached. Conversely, even when an act of deescalation leads to the start of truce talks, the failure of these negotiations to end the war promptly again antagonized hawks and doves. To the doves, the Administration is not doing enough in offering proper concessions to the enemy; to hawks, the presence of continued fighting while negotiations continue to drag on and on is a decided irritant, a ploy by the enemy to deceive the United States and weaken our battlefield position. In the final analysis, the President must be a kind of prophet, predicting to the nation that a particular course of action will lead to a pre-determined result. A false prophet becomes immensely unpopular.

Congress: The Legitimater of Dissent

The process of bifurcation in the public is roughly paralleled in the Congress, particularly the Senate. In both wars, Administration supporters (those who backed current force levels) diminished, complicating the President's role as a "centrist" politician.

However, an important implication of this bifurcation process in Congress is that as the scope of support for the war drops, there will be an activation of more members of Congress in their taking stands, be it hawk or dove, on the war's progress. This development is symptomatic of the

fact that the war, as an issue, is being "felt" increasingly by both the public and Congress. Normally, House and Senate members who belong on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Senate Armed Services Committee and the House counterparts (House Foreign Affairs Committee and Armed Services) will be most concerned with foreign policy. Indeed, challenges to the President from these committees helped to legitimate dissent within the public sector. Both the Fulbright and MacArthur Hearings provided Congressional critics of the war with an opportunity to vie with the President in using the power of publicity to mobilize public support. But it can be theorized that as the intensity of the war heightens along with a growing awareness that the war is stalemated, House and Senate members who are not on these committees begin to comment on the war, indicating that the war is directly affecting their political sphere and constituency. In other words, the costs of the war are becoming linked to domestic issues.

Foreign policy issues are usually of low interest to the average American, and thus a Congressman or Senator is likely to disregard foreign policy attitudes of his constituents in comparison to those on domestic issues. In peacetime, a representative's votes on foreign policy will be potentially less damaging to his chances for reelection, than how he votes on "bread and butter" issues (Miller and Stokes, 1963: 45-46). Public attention to the war may signify that a representative's constituents, particularly

opinion leaders in the district or state, are becoming politically activated over the war while seeking identification of their representative's attitude on the war. The increased number of Congressman and Senators speaking out on the war can be construed as an index of constituent pressure, particularly when these representatives are not usually disposed to speak on a subject outside their area of expertise. In turn, additional Congressional criticism has a "reverberation effect" on public opinion, enlarging even further the realm of public interest.

The foregoing should not be construed as repudiating the earlier statement that Congressional dissent preceded the activation of mass public dissent in both wars. It is assumed that attentive public members and their corresponding Senate critics were the initial formulators of those "concealed strains" in each intervention period. While the effectiveness of the critics depended on the accumulation of costs, the resultant feedback upon the mass public did invite the growth of dissension. In any event, attempting to assign original causality in each limited war is to indulge in a fruitless "chicken and egg" dialogue, and to overlook the interaction quality of public-Congressional relationships.

No More Limited Wars?

The fundamental question remains whether a President will, if faced with another Vietnam or Korea, undertake

another limited war given the political system's retribution capacity. Apparently, the Nixon Doctrine has attempted to preclude future American land involvement in Asia. Furthermore, the Doctrine also stresses the theme of Asian self-help. In the President's phrase, "Asian hands must shape the Asian future." More specifically, pro-American Asian regimes are to be strengthened militarily so that in the suppression of future insurgencies they can shoulder a major part of the burden borne up to now by the United States. At the same time, the United States will stand by with its nuclear arsenal and tactical support, honoring its commitments and vigilant against external aggression.

Nevertheless, if the Nixon Doctrine precludes American land involvement in future Asian conflicts, does the same policy necessarily preclude a fighting of a limited war in an area of strategic interest deemed more vital, such as the Middle East? We cannot know for sure whether the Vietnam reaction foreshadows a similar reaction to interventions in areas of more traditional interest. We might intervene in a country, for example, if that country had the full support of its people. In short, to use the Robert Kennedy phrase, we would be sure not to back losers.

The United States will continue to have international interests and responsibilities. These are not likely to be thrown away at the first cry of "remember Vietnam." Yet, at the same time, pleas for help from nations in trouble are likely to be met with a higher degree of discrimination in

the future. The use of American air power or financial assistance to these nations without introducing American land troops would seem to be the most inviting option for a future President. This might keep the war costs low and remove it from the intense strife of partisan politics.

In any event, the United States is not likely to go to war again without a clear mandate from Congress, and the role of Congress in major questions of war and peace cannot be dissembled. Congress will argue that war decisions are too important for one man to bear in the American political system. There must be a collective judgment given and a collective responsibility shared. Thus the Vietnam experience has deepened the determination of Congress to reassert its authority in foreign affairs. In 1969 the Senate passed the National Commitments Resolution which called upon the President not to engage in foreign hostilities without the consent of Congress. In December of that same year, the Senate added an amendment to the pending Defense Appropriations Bill prohibiting the President from using any of the bill's funds to send ground troops to Laos and Thailand. Then on June 30, 1970, the Cooper-Church amendment was passed, representing the first time legislative restrictions on the President's capacity as Commander-In-Chief were passed during a shooting war. In addition, the Tonkin Gulf Resolution was repealed, twice in fact, in June of 1970 and May of 1971. Lastly, the Senate, in April of 1972 passed a bill limiting the President's war powers, under the

sponsorship of Senator Javits and other Congressional liberals. (As of this writing, the House had not yet passed the bill.) The bill limited the President to a thirty day emergency use of American troops to repel attack and rescue Americans.⁵ Thus, as Senator Javits once asserted, the Executive branch of the government must "adjust itself psychologically and procedurally to a new reality--the reality that the Senate will not again shrink from its responsibilities or yield its constitutional power with respect to national security and the solemn undertaking of national commitments" (Foreign Affairs, 1970: 234).

In the final analysis, one may also speculate if the problems of conducting a limited war are germane only to the American political system. It may be a problem for democracies in general, political systems which must mobilize public opinion and take whatever countermeasures are necessary to prevent it from dissipating. Perhaps every politician in a free society is aware that he is on the road to ruin if he persists in actions that cost lives and raise taxes.⁶ A British politician, writing in 1902 after another British defeat in the Boer War, was keenly aware of this problem: "I suppose no civilian can understand why 200,000 men and a million and a half a week are required to put an end to the resistance of 8,000 farmers who probably do not possess ten pounds apiece (Quoted in May, 1965: 130)." The correlation between support for external ventures and continued prosperity seems clear in a democratic system.

When dissent increasingly begins to focus on the effect of the war on the home country, the permissive, supportive character of public opinion is on the verge of alteration. Perhaps an additional study involving a comparison of various democracies fighting limited wars in the twentieth century might shed some further light on another major question--can a democracy, per se, conduct a limited war successfully?

NOTES

1. This is at least true from the standpoint of the "war is a mistake" question. In World War II, for example, the highest percentage calling the entrance into the war a mistake reached 31 percent. One may compare this to a 62 percent high in Korea, and 58 percent in Vietnam (through 1969). FDR's personal popularity rating on the war never dipped below 60 percent (Erskine, 1970: 133-135).

2. Note Sir Robert Thompson's observation: "The greatest weakness in the American character is impatience" (Thompson, 1971: 125).

3. In October, 1967, a Gallup Poll revealed that 57 percent of the American people were opposed to sending troops if a "situation like Vietnam were to develop in another part of the world." In May of 1969, Harris revealed that only a minority of Americans were willing to see United States troops used to resist overt Communist aggression against our allies: In Berlin, 26 percent; in Thailand, 25 percent; and in Japan, 27 percent.

4. Note the Republican minority report at the Mac Arthur Hearings: "We believe that a policy of victory must be announced to the American people in order to restore unity and confidence. It is too much to expect that our people will accept a limited war. Our policy must be to win" (MacArthur Hearings, 1951: 3590).

5. The Senate passed the measure by a vote of sixty-eight to eighteen. It is interesting to note the statement made after the Senate vote by Senator Barry Goldwater: "The war powers bill would not prevent another Vietnam, . . . The war powers bill might incite World War III by depriving the president of flexibility to react to unexpected threats promptly." Goldwater went on to state that only five of twenty-one hostilities in American history had ever been declared. Contrasting Goldwater's views, Senator Edward M. Kennedy asserted that "From Korea, to the invasion of the Dominican Republic and finally to Vietnam, we have seen mounting evidence of the president unilaterally assuming the power to commit the nation to war" (Gainesville Sun, April 14, 1972: 4a).

6. In economically advanced democracies, the consumer's desire for more material goods increases disproportionately to the requirements of military spending and diversion of resources for war. In the United States, the emergence of a generation that does not know the problem of economic insecurity may account for its decided hostility to overseas adventures. This "guns vs. butter" problem may become increasingly relevant for all advanced societies, regardless of political structure.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Larry Elowitz was born in Elizabeth, New Jersey, on October 5, 1942 to his parents Mr. and Mrs. Henry Elowitz. He attended the elementary and junior high schools of Linden, New Jersey, and in 1958 he moved to North Miami Beach, Florida, where he graduated from North Miami Senior High School in June of 1960. In September of that same year he entered the University of Miami, from which he graduated magna cum laude with a B.Ed. degree in June of 1964. In December of 1964 he married the former Sharon Renee Adler of North Miami Beach. After graduation, he taught over educational television in the Dade County school system.

In September of 1965, he was admitted to the Graduate School of the University of Miami. He was granted the master's degree in political science in June of 1968. His thesis dealt with the political philosophy of John F. Kennedy.


In September of 1968 he enrolled in the Graduate School of the University of Florida under an NDEA IV Fellowship. He received his Ph.D. in August of 1972.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



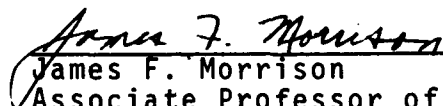
John W. Spanier, Chairman
Professor of Political Science

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.




Manning J. Dauer
Professor of Political Science

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



James F. Morrison
Associate Professor of
Political Science

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



W. A. Rosenbaum
Associate Professor of
Political Science

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


Joseph S. Vandiver
Professor of Sociology

This dissertation was submitted to the Department of Political Science in the College of Arts and Science and to the Graduate Council, and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

August, 1972


Dean, Graduate School