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'Mad Dog?' Samuel Huntington and the Vietnam War

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ABSTRACT

Harvard professor Samuel P. Huntington has frequently been considered a Vietnam War hawk. His observation that 'forced-draft urbanization' might help the United States win the war has come to define his engagement in contemporary strategic debates. This essay argues that both Huntington's academic work and his private policy advice to the U.S. Government in fact urged a political settlement to the conflict. It argues that in spite of this, Huntington refused to break publicly with the U.S. policy because of his wider concern over what he saw as a crisis of authority in the U.S. foreign policy and governing institutions in the era.

KEYWORDS Vietnam War; Samuel Huntington; counter-insurgency; Nation-building; strategy; neoconservatism; Henry Kissinger

Introduction

Of the many people whose reputations suffered from involvement in the agonies of U.S. strategic decision-making during the Vietnam War, Harvard professor and civilian strategist Samuel P. Huntington stands out. His chief contribution to the public debate over U.S. strategy in the conflict was a piece published in the U.S. establishment journal *Foreign Affairs* in 1968 in which he appeared to suggest that the forceful depopulation of the South Vietnamese countryside might be the key to victory in the conflict. In return he earned the nickname 'Mad Dog' among his students and was branded a war criminal. The radical critic Noam Chomsky wrote that Huntington's writings on the war were evidence that '[w]e have to ask ourselves whether what is needed in the United States is dissent – or denazification'.[1] Huntington's critics assumed that he was strongly in favour of the war, held a simplistic view that it could be won through a brutal policy of forced urbanisation, and was influential in policy debates. This essay takes aim at all three of these assumptions.

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[1]Noam Chomsky, *American Power and the New Mandarins* (New York: Pantheon, 1969), 17.

This essay locates the key to understanding Huntington's involvement in the Vietnam War in his attempt to juggle the demands of being simultaneously a public intellectual, policy consultant and academic. It argues that Huntington's attempt to fulfil these contradictory roles led him to take positions which were often inconsistent with one another. In his academic writings and in his private advice to U.S. government officials, Huntington took a pessimistic, dovish and accommodative approach to nation-building and counter-insurgency strategy in general and the Vietnam War in particular. But in his public remarks – to journalists, in op-eds and ultimately in *Foreign Affairs* – Huntington attempted to act as a cheerleader for the Johnson administration and its war strategy. This was not just because of his desire to maintain his status as an insider who could still be heard in the corridors of power, but also because of his wider concern over what he saw as a general crisis of confidence in U.S. foreign policy and governing institutions in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Hewing to his vision of the proper way for a patriotic, engaged civilian strategist to attempt to aid his country, he declined to join the waves of anti-war protest which swept U.S. campuses during these years. The irony was that even though Huntington's posture led to opprobrium being heaped down upon him within academia, it did nothing to enhance his influence in government. Viewed as an irredeemable hawk in Harvard Yard and an irredeemable dove in Washington D.C., Huntington's attempt to juggle his competing roles ultimately failed.

This essay places Huntington in the context of his intellectual milieu. Unlike many intellectuals in this period, ranging from the anti-war left to neoconservatives who viewed the Vietnam War as a distraction from the superpower competition, Huntington engaged deeply with the details of U.S. strategy. Like Henry Kissinger, Huntington was intensely concerned with the tactical details of how the United States would extricate itself from the war. This contrasted with neoconservative intellectuals who, Kissinger later complained, were 'bored' by tactics and 'discerned no worthy goals for American foreign policy short of total victory'.[2] As Eric Kaufmann has written, Huntington – like Kissinger – was 'too realist' to embrace neoconservatism.[3] Like Kissinger, Huntington was also deeply concerned with the collapse in the authority of American domestic institutions which he believed accompanied the anti-war movement. Both men shared an interest in a Vietnam War policy which would gradually filter the poison of the conflict out of the national bloodstream while maintaining the credibility of American commitments to its allies. For Huntington, the concern with political order, stability and authority which marked his academic work

[2]Henry Kissinger, 'Between the Old Left and the New Right', *Foreign Affairs* 78 (May/June 1999), 110.
[3]Eric Kaufmann, 'The Meaning of Huntington', *Prospect Magazine*, Feb. 2009.

gave shape to his views on both the Vietnam War and U.S. domestic politics during this period. This in turn meant he inevitably clashed with an academic anti-war movement which saw the Vietnam War overwhelmingly in moral rather than practical strategic terms and viewed with abhorrence Huntington's attempt to remain an insider in policy debates, with all the contradictions and compromises this inevitably entailed.

An understanding of Huntington's intellectual and policy-oriented response to the challenges of U.S. strategy during the Vietnam War also has broader implications for the history of and future of strategy. Huntington's critique of U.S. policy in these areas deserves greater attention than it has received in the shadow of his inflammatory comments in *Foreign Affairs*. The history of Huntington's involvement in Vietnam War debates also resonates at a time when the lines between strategist, public intellectual and consultant are being increasingly blurred in the modern media environment, as the careers and writings of individuals such as David Petraeus and David Kilcullen have demonstrated. By demonstrating the impact that the demands of these competing roles placed on Huntington, as well as highlighting the ways in which his contributions to strategic debate were shaped by his broader political and intellectual preferences, this essay seeks to contribute not only to the history of this era but also to an understanding of the role and experience of the strategist more broadly.[4]

Samuel Huntington and political order

Born in 1927 in New York City, Huntington was a product of elite American institutions of learning. He attended Yale, the University of Chicago, and finally Harvard, where he completed his doctoral dissertation in 1951. His thesis examined policymaking in the federal bureaucracy and was the beginning of Huntington's lifelong interest in the intricacies of strategy and policy. The practical details of policy continued to preoccupy him, especially in his approach to the issue of Vietnam, even as the war was seen as primarily a moral issue on college campuses. After joining the faculty at Harvard, he published his first book, *The Soldier and the State*, which ended with praise for 'the military values' of 'loyalty, duty, restraint, dedication'. The values of West Point – which he famously described as 'a bit of Sparta in the midst of Babylon' – were the values that needed

[4]Note that while the Samuel Huntington Papers in the Harvard University Archives were consulted in the course of researching this paper, there was little material there which shed any light either on Huntington's private views on the topics discussed in this essay or his academic and policy views on the Vietnam War. Huntington wrote extensively on the Vietnam War for public, academic and governmental audiences, and the archives did not contain substantive unpublished material. Instead, the folders on Vietnam mainly consist of primary and secondary sources collected in the course of Huntington's research.

emphasising during the Cold War, he argued.[5] After a spell at Columbia University, Huntington returned to Harvard in 1962 and became chairman of its Department of Government later in the decade.

It was through the academy that Huntington developed his interest in strategic issues, and the intellectual milieu in which they were considered. By the mid-1960s, Huntington's research interests shifted to focus on what he initially called the problem of 'political development' in the Third World and its implications for U.S. security policy. This was the genesis of the work that eventually became his 1968 opus *Political Order in Changing Societies*, and of themes that ran through his work for decades. This book, his report to the Trilateral Commission in 1975 on the 'crisis of democracy' in America, and his 1981 book *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony* – which was based on ideas he had conceived in the mid-1970s, and delayed because of his time serving in the Carter administration – were unified by a concern with the problem of political authority in both the developed and developing world, and particularly the maintenance of what he called 'political order'.[6]

At the time, the dominant discourse on these issues – and one which would have an influence over the development of U.S. strategy towards the developing world – was modernisation theory. Proponents of modernisation theory such as Daniel Bell, Gabriel Almond, Lucian Pye and Walt Rostow sought what historian Michael Latham calls a 'universal model of global change' that would allow for an understanding of developments in the decolonising states in Asia, Africa and Latin America in the 1950s and 1960s. Modernisation theorists provided a comforting vision in which the new states would experience social, economic and political development that would inevitably make them more like the West. All good things would go together in what Lerner called a '*consistent whole*'. Social, economic and political change – urbanisation, industrialisation, secularisation, democratisation, education and media participation – would all occur at once. Furthermore, they would be unidirectional, ushering the new states onto a higher plateau where they could bask in the glow of modernity along with the West.[7]

Although Huntington has sometimes been seen as at least a partial advocate of modernisation theory, in reality he rejected its core premises, as his writing on Vietnam would show.[8] In particular, he was opposed to its view of mutually

[5]Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge, MA, 1957), 465.
[6]Robert D. Putnam, 'Samuel P. Huntington', *PS: Political Science & Politics* 19, 4 (1986), 841; Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968); Huntington, *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), vii–viii.
[7]Michael Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 44; Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1958), 438.
[8]For more on Huntington's critique of modernization theory, see Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2003), 228–34.

reinforcing progress in the social, economic and political spheres. Instead, he staked out a claim for an autonomous political realm which could stagnate or regress as well as develop. While he did not entirely reject the dichotomy of modern versus traditional which the modernisation theorists had pioneered, he introduced new categories of analysis. Central to his analysis was the concept of a 'praetorian society', one in which social and economic change had vastly outstripped the ability of a country's political institutions to cope. Taking social and economic change in the developing countries as given, he believed that it inevitably led to the creation of new social forces which would make demands on the political system. If a country lacked political institutions capable of integrating these social forces, or failed to develop them, then a country's political order could collapse. Without institutions capable of mediating social conflict in a rational and controlled manner, then naked social forces would confront each other. Riots, coups and revolution would be the result. Political stability, he hence claimed, could actually be undermined by rapid social and economic change, hence implying that the latter were not unalloyed goods. 'Rapid modernization, in brief', he wrote, 'produces not political development, but political decay'.[9]

Huntington viewed this situation with alarm because he believed in the primacy of political order over all other goods in the process of development. 'The most important political distinction between countries concerns not their form of government but their degree of government', he wrote in the first sentence of *Political Order in Changing Societies*. While modernisation theorists had seen the process of modernisation as a liberal antidote to Marxist models of development, Huntington's own theory was ecumenical about the sources of political order. In his view, one of the striking reasons for the success of Communism in the developing countries was precisely because their Leninist heritage gave Communists a keen sense of the need to develop and maintain the authority of political institutions which mediated between social forces and channelled their energies to the state's purposes. 'Organization is the road to political power', he noted, 'but it is also the foundation of political stability and thus the precondition of political liberty'. Following in the Great Consensus tradition of Louis Hartz, whom greatly influenced him in his time at Harvard, Huntington believed that their history of limited social conflict and weak government had meant that Americans tended to lack an appreciation of the fact that authority had to be created before it could be limited. As such they could not understand 'the organizational imperative' in the developing countries, believing instead that social and economic change would naturally lead to political development and stability there too. In fact, without the cultivation of authoritative political institutions, these countries would be left in a political

[9]Huntington, 'Political Development', 386.

chaos that would leave no hope for social or economic development either.[10]

The fault Huntington detected in the modernisation theorists was what he called '"Webbism": that is, the tendency to ascribe to a political system qualities which are assumed to be its ultimate goals rather than qualities which actually characterize its processes and functions'.[11] He tried to educate his fellow citizens out of this tendency. As his activities would show, he believed there was a role for academic expertise to play in the making of specific policies in the government bureaucracy – especially when the academic in question was realistic about political power and not a Webbist. He rejected an 'adversarial role' for intellectuals and embraced a technocratic and 'policy-oriented' one.[12]

Huntington's views, like the work of the modernisation theorists, read as a heuristic to help Americans understand the developing countries after decolonisation. It was a conservative answer to what he saw as the liberal dreams of the modernisation theorists, who he castigated as filling their writings with an 'air of hopeful unreality'.[13] But beyond the academy, Huntington's writings also had a strategic message. If he was right and the modernisation theorists were wrong, then a policy based on spreading social and economic 'development' throughout the world would actually spread instability. As well as standing as a repudiation of many of the intellectual tenets of U.S. nation-building and counter-insurgency strategy more broadly, Huntington's views on 'development' and 'modernization' also had very direct implications for the most burning issue in U.S. strategy in the late 1960s. That issue was the Vietnam War.

Political order and the Vietnam War

In Spring 1967, Huntington travelled to South Vietnam for 6 weeks to carry out research for a report entitled 'Political Stability and Security in South Vietnam' at the request of the Policy Planning Council of the State Department. The report was completed in December 1967. Although the Policy Planning Council was a bureaucratic backwater, the distribution list for the report shows that copies were eventually sent to a range of top officials. These included Walt Rostow, then National Security Advisor, George Carver – who was the special assistant for Vietnam affairs to CIA director Richard Helms – and the head of the State Department's East Asia section, William P. Bundy. The State Department's intelligence branch, the Bureau of

[10]Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 1, 461, 93–139, 460.
[11]Ibid., 35.
[12]Michael J. Crozier, Samuel P. Huntington and Joji Watanuki, *The Crisis of Democracy: Report on the Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission* (New York: New York University Press, 1975), 7.
[13]Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 35.

Intelligence and Research, also received a copy. Nor was distribution limited to Washington – copies were soon winging their way overseas to Ellsworth Bunker, the U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam, and Robert Komer, the head of U.S. nation-building programme in the country.[14]

Huntington delivered a report that was sharply at odds with existing U.S. strategy. He believed that the war had to have an essentially political solution, and was critical of U.S. attempts to find one. This fact has tended to be overshadowed by Huntington's subsequent article in *Foreign Affairs*. But what he wrote there was in fact sharply at variance with not only Huntington's 1967 report but also the relevant sections of *Political Order in Changing Societies* and remarks which Huntington made during a June 1968 conference of scholars and policymakers.[15]

Huntington's report 'Political Stability and Security in South Vietnam' was in fact a subtle argument for the U.S. to abandon pretentions of nation-building in South Vietnam and to cede a substantial role in the country's future to the National Liberation Front (NLF) U.S. officials recognised it as such and hence rejected it. Huntington objected to the sweeping nature of U.S. aspirations for nation-building in South Vietnam, believing instead they should focus on the narrow question of political order. As he had questioned the modernisation theorists when they claimed to discern a process of steadily increasing social, political and economic goods in the developing countries, so he likewise questioned the pretensions of American nation-builders in South Vietnam to provide that country with the same. The criticism of 'Webbism' which he had levelled at these theorists was here directed at the U.S. policymakers in Vietnam. What these policymakers needed, Huntington felt, was an appreciation of how politics actually worked in South Vietnam so that they could adapt their policy accordingly. He hence set out to provide them with such an appreciation.

Huntington made clear at the outset that while – as the title suggested – the report continued his concern with 'political stability', he did not view the contest between America's non-Communist allies and the Vietnamese Communists to establish a durable political system in South Vietnam dispassionately. The ecumenism about the sources of stability which characterised Huntington's other work on political order was hence absent here. While he noted in his report that 'a Viet Cong victory might produce a high level of political stability in South Vietnam', he added that it would 'probably not be in the interest of the United States to promote stability through this

[14]Samuel P. Huntington, 'Political Stability and Security in South Vietnam', Dec. 1967, folder 'Vietnam 1 C (2). Revolutionary Development program. 1 of 3', Box 59, National Security File, Country File: Vietnam, Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, unpaginated frontal note; Memo, 'Distribution List for Huntington Study', folder 'Sensitive documents – various subjects. [1 of 2]', Box 24, idem.

[15]The conference proceedings were published as Richard M. Pfeffer, ed., *No More Vietnams? The War and the Future of American Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968).

means'. While pointing out that the NLF had achieved a high degree of 'political stability' in areas they controlled, Huntington introduced another concept with which he would concern himself in this report: 'security'. Security was defined as 'the absence of Viet Cong political control and military activity', and was a higher good for U.S. policymakers than mere stability, which could be brought about by NLF control. The question then became how to promote a stability which was also secure, that is, existed in the absence of the NLF. Huntington seemed to suggest that the historic forces he would soon identify in his seminal work could be overcome or at least contained through U.S. action in pursuit of this goal; indeed, for the success of U.S. policy, they had to be. For this policy, Huntington made clear, was not going well at the time of his writing in 1967. 'Since the late 1950s', he wrote, 'South Vietnamese governments have attempted to promote rural security by pacification, that is, through the extension of the administrative, military, and physical presence of the government into the countryside. The pre-1965 efforts failed. The current effort is similar in concept but much larger in scope than earlier efforts. It may succeed where the others failed. But there is, as yet, little if any evidence that it is bringing about significant *and* permanent increases in rural security'.[16]

Huntington then turned his attention to critiquing the Revolutionary Development (RD) programme which the Government of Vietnam (GVN) was carrying out with U.S. support in South Vietnam. The basis of the RD programme was a 37-strong team of pro-government cadre that was dispatched into villages and hamlets to identify local needs and then bring social and economic goods to the citizens of South Vietnam on behalf of the GVN. They were supposed to displace traditional village and hamlets elders and instead introduce a dynamic presence directed by the central government. Loosely modelled on the Communist cadre system, the programme's successes paled in comparison to the NLF's work at political organisation. Often poorly trained and unwelcome in the rural areas, the RD cadre had a high attrition rate and observers frequently believed they did more harm than good. Huntington likewise believed that far from being a force for good, the RD programme undermined traditional authority structures in the Vietnamese countryside. By aiming to bring about a 'revolution' which would displace the existing village leadership while remaining within non-Communist limits, the U.S. would inevitably lose out the real revolutionaries in Vietnam: the Communists. Undermining the existing institutions of political order with no sure strategy for building a new one would play right into the hands of the NLF. Huntington believed this was an inevitable outcome of the RD programme because even had the programme worked on its own terms, 'improvements in security produced by the introduction of

[16]Huntington, 'Political Stability', i, ii, 1–2, 8–20.

a governmental presence last only so long as the presence lasts'. Noting that the United States and GVN did not have 'sufficient military forces, administrative personnel, or RD cadres to saturate the entire countryside simultaneously', Huntington concluded that '*pacification by itself cannot produce comprehensive or lasting rural security*'.[17]

Having rejected the idea that the U.S. and GVN's strategy of pacification could lead to improved security, Huntington next turned to analyse the areas of South Vietnam which were already secure. Rather than vainly trying to bring security to the whole country, Huntington suggested, the United States should look at areas where security actually existed and capitalise upon it. He suggested two such areas. The first were the cities. He claimed that the substantial rate of urbanisation which had been evident in South Vietnam since the Americanisation of the war was the single factor most responsible for increasing security in the country. The urban population of the country had doubled from 3 to 6 million between 1962 and 1965. This was mostly due to the 'push' factor of widespread destruction caused by the U.S. and GVN combat operations, and the 'pull' factor of increased economic opportunities in the cities associated with the American presence. NLF violence was also a factor. Huntington noted, as many observers did, the inability of the NLF to gain a foothold in the cities of South Vietnam. This factor had led South Vietnam's larger urban areas to be fairly free of the travails of war up until 1967, contributing to their appeal for refugees from rural areas. Yet Huntington did not believe that rapid urbanisation was a panacea for bringing political stability to South Vietnam. Noting that increased social and economic discontent in the urban areas would make them more susceptible to sympathising with the NLF, he noted also that the lack of political organisation in urban slums stored up deep problems for future stability. Although not an immediate problem, he claimed that demands from the cities for social and economic goods would explode 'with potentially disastrous consequences for the political stability of the future'. Further, the South Vietnamese political system would be unable to meet these demands unless it had already 'established reasonably effective control in the countryside'. As in *Political Order in Changing Societies*, he placed paramount importance on the rural population and their support for the incumbent government, not the population of the cities.[18]

Huntington hence did not, as critics would later assert, advocate that the U.S. military power be used to forcibly urbanise South Vietnam in a bid to control the population. The focus of his report was on the rural population of South Vietnam, not its urban population; the chapter on urbanisation comes early in the report, as a factor to be considered before moving onto

[17]Ibid., iii, 8–10.
[18]Ibid., 5–7, 21–7, 32–3, 39–43.

the meat of the analysis. When Komer said in response to the report that urbanisation was indeed part of the solution in Vietnam, Huntington expressed disagreement with Komer's comments and summarised what he held to be the four 'basic propositions' of his report, not mentioning urbanisation once. Responses to the paper written by other figures in the national security bureaucracy – including White House aide Hans Heymann, the chief of USAID's Vietnam bureau and the interagency Vietnam Working Group – likewise did not focus on urbanisation.[19]

These officials were much more exercised by what Huntington went on to say in his paper. Having dismissed the current U.S. strategy for nation-building, and similarly dismissed urbanisation as only storing up problems for later, Huntington moved on to lay out his own proposals for a U.S. political strategy in South Vietnam. His ideas were Burkean in inspiration and limited in their scope. Rather than attempting to engineer widespread change in a foreign society, Huntington proposed that the U.S. largely take South Vietnamese society as it found it and try to build a coalition out of existing elements. This meant building political power upwards from institutions which already existed in the villages rather than downwards through nationwide programmes such as RD. As these institutions included the NLF, which had by 1967 administered parts of South Vietnam for decades, the coalition would not be entirely anti-Communist. 'Through pacification and urbanization', he critiqued, 'the United States is trying to create a second revolution in South Vietnam to rival that of the Viet Cong. Instead of trying to destroy the Viet Cong by destroying traditional authority structures, the United States would do far better to promote accommodations with both'.[20]

Huntington proposed that the United States and GVN should abandon their attempt to use scant resources and unsound concepts to extend the central government's reach through RD cadre, and should instead reach agreements with existing local authorities in which the central government would largely leave them alone if they would keep the Communists out. He was particularly impressed by the rural political organisation which he found to already exist among the many ethno-religious minorities in South Vietnam, who tended to be strongly anti-Communist and produced lasting rural security in their own areas. He suggested that the United States and GVN could not expect to build national loyalties through programmes such as the RD cadre, but should instead capitalise on pre-existing communal loyalties. His passages recall Edmund Burke's statement of his own conservative philosophy: 'To be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle (the germ as it were)

[19]Memo, 'Comments by Komer on Huntington report, 3 January 1968, folder 'Vietnam 1 C (2). Revolutionary Development program. 2 of 3', Box 59, NSF Country File: Vietnam, LJBL; Memo, Huntington to Owen, 15 January 1968, ibid., 3.
[20]Huntington, 'Political Stability', 78.

of public affections. It is the first link in the series by which we proceed towards a love to our country, and to mankind'.[21] Huntington suggested more prosaically that communal loyalties could be the 'building blocks of national loyalty'.[22] Likewise, he suggested that the NLF be allowed to keep their local organisations intact in areas they had long controlled, so long as they agreed to live within the national framework set by the GVN and participate in elections. They would even be allowed to send Communist representatives to the National Assembly.[23]

The U.S. officials who read Huntington's report rightly recognised its inconsistency with their own approach. The Vietnam Working Group felt that, given time, the RD programme could work. By Huntington's own admission, some 35% of the population was not organised into ethno-religious groups who were able to provide security in their own areas – why, asked the Vietnam Working Group, abandon them to the NLF?[24] The answer was, of course, because unlike the Vietnam Working Group, Huntington had lost faith in the U.S. nation-building programmes ever successfully reaching them. Heymann and James Grant, another USAID official involved in Vietnam policy, had another critique. They pointed out that local NLF organisations would be unlikely to reach an accommodation with the GVN for so long as they retained the extensive military support of North Vietnam. How, they asked, did Huntington propose that North Vietnam be persuaded to withdraw its forces from the South?[25] In his report, Huntington had specifically opposed the further intensification of U.S. military activity in South Vietnam. He opposed sending U.S. combat units to the Mekong Delta, an area which had not yet seen a large-scale U.S. troop presence. Huntington believed that intensive U.S. military action 'contributes to future political instability' because it depopulated the rural areas, including ones which already had local political organisation based on ethno-religious groups. Refugees streaming into atomised and chaotic urban slums due to military action were part of the problem, not part of the solution, and he did not want the process repeated in the Delta. Instead, the U.S. needed to change the 'scope and nature' of its presence in Vietnam – by which he meant, demilitarise it.[26] Officials who had not yet given up on 'RD' or on militarily defeating the Communists without completely destroying the country in the process were naturally puzzled by this

[21]Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Edited by J. C. D. Clark (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 202.
[22]Huntington, 'Political Stability', 47.
[23]Huntington, 'Political Stability', 44–52, 74.
[24]Memo, 'Critique of Huntington', undated, folder 'Vietnam 1 C (2). Revolutionary Development program. 2 of 3', Box 59, NSF Country File: Vietnam, LJBL.
[25]Memo, Heymann to Leonheart, 13 January 1968, folder 'Sensitive documents – various subjects. [1 of 2]', Box 24, NSF: Komer-Leonhart File, Lyndon Baines Johnson Library; Memo, Grant to Yager, 31 January 1968, folder 'Vietnam 1 C (3)–B2. Revolutionary Development program', Box 60, ibid.
[26]Huntington, 'Political Stability', 78.

advice. At least one of them thought he knew how to resolve the puzzle. 'I'm afraid Huntington has allowed his judgment as a political scientist to be swayed by his less-than-enthusiastic emotions toward the war', remarked Heymann.[27]

Huntington's view on U.S. strategy in Vietnam was hence sharply critical. He rejected the current U.S. approach to nation-building, believed an intensification of military action futile and wanted the United States and GVN to reach an accommodation with the NLF. In contrast to Vietnam policymakers and future neoconservatives, he did not believe it was wise for the United States to attempt a sweeping reorganisation of a foreign society. Huntington amplified this point in June 1968, when he stated at an academic conference that 'few phenomena are more unsettling in their consequences than masses of energetic and high-minded Americans intent on doing good'. While officials called their approach 'revolutionary', he called his one 'accommodation'. It meant taking Vietnam as the United States found it, not as the United States might wish it would be. What many official readers no doubt found disturbing was that Huntington appeared to offer no sure path to victory; if pacification didn't work, and military action didn't work, then all there was to do was to hope a suitable accommodation could be reached. If it could not, it was clear that there might be no way to achieve the U.S. goals in Vietnam. The report was, in effect, a call for de-escalation. It is no wonder that one official who read it was reported to have remarked: 'If this study is right, then everything we're doing is wrong'.[28]

Indeed, much of what was written in Huntington's seminal 1968 book seemed to urge caution onto the pretensions of American nation-builders. The first thing that is notable about *Political Order in Changing Societies* in this context is how few direct references to Vietnam it contains. Those which do exist overwhelmingly praise the Vietnamese Communists for their organisational efforts while denigrating America's non-Communist allies. Huntington's concern with an autonomous political realm which must be understood separately to the social and economic spheres allowed him to praise the Vietnamese Communists for building a stable political system while acidly noting the failures of America's non-Communist Vietnamese allies to do the same. He included the Vietnamese Revolution among a list of the 'great revolutions', meaning that it resulted in the emergence of a party with 'deep roots' among the Vietnamese population. North Vietnam, he continued, showed the 'effectiveness of the Leninist model' in creating 'well-organized, broadly based, complex political systems'. Meanwhile, he said all that had been achieved in South Vietnam was an 'unstable, fractured, narrowly based personalistic regime'. He included South Vietnam in a

[27]Memo, Heymann to Leonheart, 13 January 1968.
[28]Pfeffer, *No More Vietnams?* 225; Putnam, 'Samuel P. Huntington', 843.

list of countries where not only different governments but also different forms of government followed each other in 'bewildering array' due to the country's lack of political maturity and the inability of its political elites to put down roots among the population. At a time when Johnson administration spokesmen were effusive in their praise of South Vietnam as a nascent democracy and ascribed Vietnamese Communist support almost entirely to coercion and terrorism, these remarks showed intellectual honesty and a commitment to the empirical study of politics. They were sharply opposed to the normative approach which Huntington accused the modernisation theorists of following – along with, he might have added but didn't, hopeful U.S. Government officials.[29]

The dissonance is even more apparent when we move from considering the comments he addressed directly towards Vietnam to consider his wider theory. The core of Huntington's argument in *Political Order in Changing Societies* is that the key to the political stability and development of the non-Western world lay in the mobilisation of the rural population into the political system. Social and economic change would inevitably lead to the emergence of new classes who made demands for political participation. Their desire for participation could be satisfied by the gradual reform of the existing political system, or through a revolution. If the country's existing political system could not reform itself, then revolution was inevitable. He noted that while it was possible for foreign military intervention to crush a revolution, it usually provoked greater mobilisation by the indigenous revolutionary movement against the foreign invader and the traditional political system which the invader was trying to defend. While the passages dealing with this issue are not specifically addressed to the Vietnam case study, their relevance is obvious. It was clear in South Vietnam that the Communists were the ones successfully mobilising the rural masses into politics, and that America's non-Communist allies were not. As if to drive the point home, Huntington closed *Political Order in Changing Societies* by quoting Lenin's views on party organisation approvingly.[30]

What Huntington was now urging on U.S. officials in his report was the abandonment of its own efforts to 'revolutionize' Vietnam and a pact with the very same traditional authority structure which had thus far failed to meet the Communist challenge. Yet any such pact was surely Faustian, purchasing temporary stability at the expense of the long-term development of a responsive non-Communist political system capable of producing political order in a changing society. Without such a system, victory was not possible. It was the very weakness and inability of this system to meet the Communist challenge which had led to U.S. intervention in the first place; it

[29]Huntington, *Political Order*, 81–2, 275, 315, 343.
[30]Ibid., 72–8, 291–308, 433–461.

surely could not now, after being weakened even further by years of war, be expected to do any better.

Huntington's seminal work on the politics of the non-Western world hence seemed on the face of it to be hostile to the American nation-building project in South Vietnam and openly solicitous towards the Communist cause. If organisation was the road to liberty and it was clear who was most successfully organising the Vietnamese population, then it should have been equally clear that in this case the road to Vietnamese liberty lay through Hanoi and not Washington. Yet Huntington declined to draw this conclusion explicitly, and declined to break openly from the administration on Vietnam War policy. Although he seemed to consider the war intractable, Huntington's commitment to realism and to practical policy led him to focus in his confidential report on minimising the harm from it and seeking the best outcome possible.

Yet all of this seems inconsistent with the fact that he never went public with his doubts, and that in fact he continued to make optimistic statements about the war which earned him the ire of anti-war activists and his fellow academics. One reason for the animus Huntington generated was that his public positions and statements often obfuscated the complex analysis of the war that he had laid out in his writings. By his own admission, he supported the administration's war strategy from 1965 to 1967. 'My view on the war shifted as a result of being out there', Huntington later recalled of his trip to Vietnam in 1967. 'It just seemed to me we weren't going to win it'.[31] The analysis of the report provided in this section bears out this recollection. It also bears out the fact that Huntington's primary concern was with the practicality of U.S. victory in Vietnam, not any underlying moral issue. At the June 1968 academic conference, he recalled that in 1965 he had seen 'good political and moral grounds for escalation in Vietnam'. What had seemed to change in the meanwhile was his view on the practicality of the intervention, as he implied when he added that the outcome was 'a useful reminder that results are all that count'.[32] Yet still Huntington declined to go into open opposition to the administration's policies. The key to understanding why lies in his concern for political order in the United States during the turmoil of the Vietnam War era.

Political order in the United States

Huntington's reticence to break publicly from the administration's policy or to provide a council of despair is remarkable. His own report did not draw the obvious conclusions from his own analysis that the war was unwinnable. A keen student of bureaucratic politics, he knew that to provide such an analysis was to follow many an internal dissenter down the path to

[31] Appy, *Patriots*, 320.
[32] Quoted in Pfeffer, *No More Vietnams?* 3.

irrelevance. Even when he returned from Vietnam in summer 1967, he remarked to a *Harvard Crimson* journalist that '[i]t's not hopeless by a long shot', and that he believed that North Vietnam could still be forced to withdraw its forces from the South without any further U.S. escalation.[33] His report, submitted 2 months after this interview, strongly suggested otherwise. The same unwillingness to be gloomy about the war also underlay the trouble he experienced as a result of his July 1968 article in *Foreign Affairs*, published only a month after Huntington stood before an academic audience and called the war 'a horrible mistake'. In this article, Huntington summarised many parts of his 1967 report. He again spoke about urbanisation and accommodation, including with the NLF. While he mentioned that urbanisation caused by U.S. firepower stored up political problems for the future, he made a much stronger claim in favour of it than he had in his confidential report. In the passage that moved Chomsky to consider the U.S. ripe for denazification, Huntington wrote:

> In an absent-minded way the United States in Viet Nam may well have stumbled upon the answer to 'wars of national liberation.' The effective response lies neither in the quest for conventional military victory nor in the esoteric doctrines and gimmicks of counter-insurgency warfare. It is instead forced draft urbanization and modernization which rapidly brings the country in question out of the phase in which a rural revolutionary movement can hope to generate sufficient strength to come to power.[34]

Huntington would later claim that the passage in *Foreign Affairs* was 'descriptive' and that he 'wasn't advocating' forced urbanisation. On the contrary, he said, he was simply pointing out that problems would be caused by urbanisation and that 'it was a fact we ought to come to terms with'.[35] Yet it is hard to read his passage referring to urbanization as the 'answer' to America's travails in Vietnam in this way. The article appeared at the very least to be making a case for an optimistic view of current events in Vietnam, based on urbanisation which had already taken place. In another article in *The Boston Globe* which prefigured the one in *Foreign Affairs*, Huntington tried to present the Tet Offensive of January 1968 in just such a positive light. The article purported to explain 'why [the] Viet Cong attacked the cities', and its answer was that they realised urbanisation was depriving them of rural support and that the cities were the new battleground. 'The United States is urbanizing the people of South Vietnam', he wrote. 'The Viet Cong must urbanize the fighting or they will lose the people and then lose the war'.[36]

[33]*The Harvard Crimson*, 17 October 1967.
[34]Samuel P. Huntington, 'The Bases of Accommodation', *Foreign Affairs*, 46 (July 1968), 652.
[35]Christopher G., Appy, *Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from all Sides* (New York: Penguin, 2004), 320.
[36]*The Boston Globe*, 17 February 1968, 6.

These views were clearly inconsistent with Huntington's own detailed writings on both the Vietnam War and his theoretical work, which was analysed in the previous section of this essay. As Huntington had argued previously, neither the bomb-scarred and depopulated village nor the urban slum could be the basis of political order. Huntington seemed to have picked up that 'same air of hopeful unreality' for which he had criticised an earlier generation of development theorists. An explanation has to be found for why Huntington continued to refuse to break publicly from administration policy and continued to refuse to draw the obvious conclusions from his own work on Vietnam. This explanation can be found in Huntington's notion of committed scholarship, and particularly how this related to the general domestic and international crisis in the Vietnam War era.

Huntington's experience of hostility towards authority during these years was not just theoretical, but personal. His public support for the Johnson administration and refusal to criticise its Vietnam policy made him a target of hostility by both his fellow academics and their students. Even before the issue became an all-consuming one in American politics, Huntington's position was marked by a support of administration policy which made him stand out in the academic milieu of the time. This support persisted despite very early doubts about the possibility of U.S. victory in the conflict. In an address to the Society of Fellows at Harvard in February 1965, he said that the United States was only 'delaying defeat' and could not win because it had not realized that the revolution in Vietnam was 'less a war than a political campaign for the support of the disaffected masses'.[37] Yet in the same talk Huntington backed the administration's current policy, which he saw as one of trying to stop the conflict escalating from a guerrilla struggle to open warfare. This was consistent with Huntington's earlier views on the U.S. military intervention in internal conflicts overseas. 'Military intervention is to domestic war what massive retaliation is to interstate war', he had written in 1961. 'A weapon of last resort, its use is a confession of political failure. When the Marines are called for, the war is lost or close to being lost'.[38] Yet when Johnson called for the Marines and dispatched them to South Vietnam in March 1965, Huntington submerged his doubts and stuck by the administration.

Many in the academic community had the opposite reaction to the process of escalation which began in mid-1965. As the war dragged on, it came under increasing attack from both academics and students on college campuses. Huntington went on the offensive against these intellectual

[37] *The Harvard Crimson*, 19 February 1965.
[38] S. P. Huntington, *Instability at the Non-Strategic Level of Conflict* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Defence Analysis, 1961), 37.

critics of the administration, warning in a petition jointly circulated with a Harvard colleague in January 1966 that their dissent boosted the confidence of China and North Vietnam. Huntington was clearly beginning to feel alienated from the academic community, and throughout the war he would continue to characterise their open dissent as irresponsible.[39]

As U.S. involvement in Vietnam deepened, Huntington not only argued that the academic community should refrain from criticising a war that many had come to regard as immoral and harmful to American interests. He also attempted to mobilise scholars to directly aid the U.S. war effort by placing their expertise at the government's disposal. Huntington's interest in political order and scepticism about a purely military solution to the conflict caused him to turn his attention to the U.S. nation-building effort in South Vietnam, and how scholarly expertise might be placed in its service. In an article in the academic journal *Asian Survey* in 1967, Huntington criticised what he called the 'shrillness and superficiality' of the public debate over American policy towards South Vietnam. He noted that America's involvement in Vietnam had 'developed in the absence of any significant familiarity with the country, its history, its people and its culture'. He accordingly felt there was a 'major national need' to develop 'scholarly study and understanding of Vietnam' and this could only be done if the analytic capabilities of American political scientists, ethnographers and economists were brought to bear on the problem. His concerns were not for the study of 'current history and the analysis of immediate policy problems', but rather for a deeper understanding of the country. As a result, Huntington felt it was unfortunate that in his estimation 'well over ninety percent of the serious social science research done on Vietnam is being conducted under the auspices of the United States Government'. Deriving their authority from superior expertise and independent objectivity, the academics who answered his call would nevertheless still be serving the purposes of the U.S. Government. He was also critical of 'the existence of a widespread feeling among many university administrators and academics that Vietnam was a "government problem" that independent scholars should avoid'. His concept of a scholarship which was independent yet attuned to the needs of America's political institutions was hence embodied thoroughly in his call.[40]

The vehicle through which Huntington attempted to mobilise the academic community to study Vietnam was the Council on Vietnamese Studies, part of the Southeast Asia Development Advisory Group (SEADAG). Huntington was the chairman of this council from 1966 to 1969. The aim

[39]Melvin Small, *Johnson, Nixon and the Doves* (New Brunswick, 1988), 25; *The Boston Globe*, 19 January 1966, 2.
[40]Samuel P. Huntington, 'Introduction: Social Science and Vietnam', *Asian Survey*, 7 (August 1967), 504, 503, 505.

of the council was to raise funds to promote the study of Vietnam. The group also organised conferences and seminars at which research on Vietnam could be discussed, including at least one of the major reports that Huntington prepared for government officials. The interests of its participants in influencing policy led Chomsky to remark of one contribution to a SEADAG seminar that 'the contents are at the level of scholarly neutrality, objectivity and insight that one would expect from a colonial administrator concerned with pacification'.[41] Huntington, though, was disappointed with the success of the Council on Vietnamese Studies, remarking in respone to Chomsky's criticism that it had been only 'moderately successful' in raising funds for research into Vietnam. He also added that far from influencing government policy in the manner that Chomsky asserted, it was 'almost a year before any Vietnam expert in the State Department could muster enough interest in the Council to show up at one of our meetings'.[42] By 1971, 2 years after Huntington's tenure at the Council on Vietnamese Studies ended, there remained only ten PhD candidates pursuing Vietnamese studies in the U.S. universities. The council seemed to have failed in its mission, and Huntington's hope that the wider academic community would marshal its resources in service of American foreign policy had not come to pass.[43]

At the same time, these activities made Huntington a target of the anti-war movement. Student activists at Harvard believed that Huntington not only had influence in the national security state but was instrumental in designing its policies, and they targeted him accordingly. In April 1969, students from the radical group students for a Democratic Society interrupted one of Huntington's lectures at Harvard and remonstrated with him, accusing the professor of 'being the architect of the U.S. pacification program in Vietnam'. Huntington refused to engage with the disruptors and called campus police to have them removed.[44] When recalling some decades later the reasons for their strong stance against the professor, one of the students involved in this action recalled that 'Huntington's political science became so shackled to the immediate needs of the national security state that many liberals found the distinction between the state and the academy obliterated'.[45] Another remembered that Huntington 'earned the sobriquet "Mad Dog" for his part in setting up the pacification program in South Vietnam'.[46] As well as class disruptions, Huntington suffered personal harassment at his home. He recalled in an oral history interview how '[s]

[41]Noam Chomsky, *For Reasons of State* (New York, 2003), 268–9, 270.
[42]Samuel Huntington, 'A Frustrating Task', *The New York Review of Books*, 26 Feb. 1970.
[43]Putnam, 'Samuel P. Huntington', 842.
[44]*The Boston Globe*, 16 April 1969, 1, 14; *The Boston Globe*, 16 April 1969, 36.
[45]John Trumpbour, 'Harvard, the Cold War, and the National Security State' in John Trumpbour, ed., *How Harvard Rules: Reason in the Service of Empire* (Boston: South End Press, 1989), 108.
[46]Andrew Kopkind, 'Living with the Bomb: The World according to Bok' in ibid., 131.

omebody came by and painted in big, black letters on our yellow door, "A War Criminal Lives Here"'.[47]

Even at this considerable personal cost, Huntington stuck to his conception of the role that a responsible, patriotic intellectual should play in national strategic debate. The febrile atmosphere in the United States as protest against the war mounted both on and off campus, especially after the Tet Offensive of January 1968, only increased his commitment to defending the administration from criticism. Huntington believed that the 'whole thrust' of the wave of protest was 'to devalue and diminish' presidential authority, something he believed it important to defend.[48] In part, Vietnam became linked to his defence of the established order because he feared the domestic consequences of a precipitous withdrawal. A lifelong Democrat, Huntington was particularly concerned that a perceived American defeat in Vietnam on Johnson's watch would lead to a backlash against his party. In 1967, he said that withdrawal would be followed by 'an incredibly strong rightist reaction that would make McCarthyism look like pink tea'.[49] In both his views about the importance of maintaining the authority of the presidency and about the dangers of a right-wing backlash, Huntington was remarkably close to Kissinger. After the invasion of Cambodia, Kissinger voiced his own fears about U.S. political order in a way that sounded remarkably similar to Huntington's own warnings of the dangers of a 'praetorian society' in which political institutions had lost their authority and naked social forces confronted each other. In an extended background briefing he warned about the dangers of 'a rebellion against authority of any kind … whether he be president of a university or the President of the United States'. He added that when the authority of legitimate institutions such as the presidency was destroyed, there would be nothing left but 'a physical test of strength' between naked social forces. 'Upper middle-class college kids are not going to take this country over' in such a situation, he remarked. 'Some more primitive and elemental forces will do that if it happens'.[50]

The travails of the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s led Huntington to extend both his analysis of the importance of political authority and his attempt to educate his countrymen about the realities of power to America's own domestic situation. Like many conservative intellectuals, Huntington found these years dizzying and troubling. A 'democratic surge' challenged the authority of 'the family, the university, business, public and private associations, politics, the governmental bureaucracy, and the military services'. Although Huntington doubtlessly felt the loss of his

[47]Appy, *Patriots*, 319.
[48]Huntington, *American Politics*, 135.
[49]*The Harvard Crimson*, 17 October 1967.
[50]Quoted in David Landau, *Kissinger: The Uses of Power* (New York: Robson, 1974), 130–1.

authority as a university administrator and as an expert most personally of all, it was the loss of authority of political institutions that worried him the most. He worried that this development left the very governability of the United States in doubt.[51]

In Huntington's view, these years saw '[p]reviously passive or unorganized groups in the population now embarked on concerted efforts to establish their claim to opportunities, positions, rewards and privileges, which they had not considered themselves entitled to before'. At the same time as these increasing demands were being placed on America's political institutions, the efficacy of these institutions was declining as their authority and legitimacy was questioned. The undermining of the presidency, the country's most important institution and the one that had provided stable government in the post-war era, was particularly dispiriting to Huntington. '"Who governs?", is obviously one of the most important questions to ask concerning any political system', he wrote, echoing what he had earlier written about the developing countries. 'Even more important, however, may be the question: "Does anybody govern?"'. The answer to the question in the United States used to be that the president did, with the support and cooperation of the executive agencies, Congress and important private institutions. These institutions were now threatened, and the presidency was threatened most of all. Just as he had warned that developing countries could see the pace at which social groups were mobilised into politics race ahead of the capacity of political institutions to cope, the political system of the United States likewise faced now faced too many demands and insufficient means with which to cope with them. The prospect of naked social forces confronting each other in a spiral of polarisation, unmediated by political institutions, threatened. The result would be a United States that was much like the 'praetorian societies' Huntington analysed in his earlier work.[52]

Huntington's concern with political order had come home. He believed that the domestic turmoil of the Vietnam War era was one of the periodic surges of 'creedal passion' in American history in which sufficient numbers of people had become disillusioned by the gap between American ideals and the realities of American life. Under this critical glare, America's political institutions were stripped of their ability to use 'inescapable attributes of the process of government' such as 'hierarchy, coercion, discipline, secrecy, and deception'.[53] The creedal passion would eventually wane, but in the meantime it threatened to do lasting damage to the institutions of politics. Huntington saw his role in response to the democratic surge as being to

[51]Huntington, *The Crisis of Democracy*, 63, 75.
[52]Huntington *et. al*., *The Crisis of Democracy*, 61–2, 92; See also Huntington, *American Politics*, 33, 41, 86, 129, 135, 178, 180, 211.
[53]Huntington *et. al*., *Crisis of Democracy*, 93.

use his expertise in the study of politics – the very expertise whose authority he felt was questioned by the spirit of the times – to help educate his fellow citizens about the realities of politics and to wean them away from what he famously called 'an excess of democracy'.[54] The goal of his activities was to attempt to combat what the authors of the Trilateral Commission report jointly called the 'Vietnamization' of American politics.[55]

Huntington's view of the role of the patriotic and responsible intellectual explains both his provision of a telling critique of U.S. foreign policy to the Johnson administration in private, and his continued defence of that same policy in public. David Landau, a writer who interviewed numerous officials in the national security state while writing a book about Kissinger, said that many of them privately thought Huntington had praised urbanisation in *Foreign Affairs* as a 'tactical ploy designed to interest "hard-headed" Washington officials' in his calls for a political accord.[56] Whether this is true or not, Huntington certainly declined to become one of what he would later characterise as the adversarial intellectuals of these years, and instead took the path of technocracy. As an insider, he would provide his expert advice with the discretion and secrecy that the government had every right to command; to outsiders, he would defend the government from criticism. Huntington's erudite playing of the insider game eventually landed him a job in the Carter White House in 1977. In this respect he again resembled Kissinger, another Harvard academic who was privately but not too loudly critical of the Vietnam War until he was called into government service to help run it. Kissinger's concerns about the impact of the war and of the possibility of precipitous withdrawal on American society even led him to answer the call of a man for whom he had previously professed no great love, Richard Nixon. Huntington, likewise fearing the possibility of a right-wing backlash if the U.S. withdrew precipitously from Vietnam, also became increasingly involved in practical politics in 1968.

While Kissinger famously put his eggs in many baskets during the 1968 campaign, Huntington was loyal to one man. After Johnson stated his intention not to stand again for the presidency on 31 March, Vice-President Hubert Humphrey threw his hat into the ring. Humphrey represented the mainstream of the Democratic Party with which Huntington had always identified. Huntington was no stranger to electoral politics, having written speeches for Adlai Stevenson in 1956. During the course of the 1968 campaign, he became the head of the Humphrey campaign's task force on the Vietnam War. Huntington defended Humphrey on the basis that he would seek a political rather than a military solution to the fighting in Vietnam, an endorsement in

[54]Ibid., 113.
[55]Huntington *et. al*., *Crisis of Democracy*, 3.
[56]*The Harvard Crimson*, 15 February 1972.

line with Huntington's detailed analyses of the conflict. Huntington also drafted a statement for Humphrey which called for the suspension of American bombing of North Vietnam as a bid to begin peace talks. Humphrey allowed Johnson to veto the statement, and he did not make the call until 30 September. Nevertheless, the candidate was impressed with Huntington and the latter stuck with Humphrey. Humphrey, for his part, wrote later that he intended to take Huntington with him into the White House. He also wanted to take Kissinger, noting: 'That Boston bunch is bright. I can understand why John Kennedy used them'.[57]

The possibility of future service in the White House naturally also restricted what Huntington could say about a crucial issue such as Vietnam during the election year of 1968. While he could provide his expert advice to the candidate in private, to publicly enter into an oppositional role as many intellectuals did would have been to scupper his chances of entering the White House. Yet nothing in his character or intellectual work leads us to believe that this was simply craven opportunism; it was, in fact, a logical consequence of his views on authority and the role that loyal experts could serve in reinforcing it. One liberal who had joined Huntington in defence of the administration at a teach-in 1965 but had now moved into opposition dismissed these views with remarks which typified liberal abhorrence with fellow intellectuals who continued to seek involvement in the details of the Vietnam War. 'Those Humphrey professors', said John Kenneth Galbraith, 'are just a bunch of young and old fogeys who consider the Vietnam War as simply a technical problem'.[58]

Having missed the opportunity to enter the White House, Huntington was said to express 'bitter disappointment' at Humphrey's defeat in 1968.[59] As Huntington had taken a formal role in the Humphrey campaign, there was no hope of a role for him in the Nixon White House. It is doubtful that he would have shed his lifelong allegiance to the Democratic Party to accept one, and he would only finally enter the White House along with Jimmy Carter in 1977. After his service in the Humphrey campaign, Huntington came to be seen as an outright dove in Nixon's Washington.[60] Although Huntington was critical of Nixon on many matters, he later said that 'I think Humphrey would have done pretty much what Nixon did' on Vietnam policy.[61] When the moratorium protests swept America in late 1969, Huntington warned that protest would only embolden Hanoi and move peace further away. Once again, he not only declined to join in dissent but also condemned those who did.[62]

[57]Hubert H, Humphrey, *The Education of a Public Man: My Life and Politics* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday 1976), 9.
[58]Quoted in *The Boston Globe*, 28 June 1968, 17.
[59]Putnam, 'Samuel P. Huntington', 841.
[60]David Landau writing in the *The Harvard Crimson*, 15 February 1972.
[61]Appy, *Patriots*, 321.
[62]*The New York Times*, 17 October 1969, 20.

Furthermore, the remarkable correlation between Huntington's concerns and those of Nixon and Kissinger was recorded by Nixon's ever-whirring tape recorders. In a conversation in the Oval Office in 1971, Kissinger told Nixon about how Huntington was under attack by anti-war students and faculty at Harvard. His job, Kissinger said, was imperilled. 'Isn't that a shame?' asked Nixon, who was keen to let it be known he had heard of the academic. He added later: 'I hope he doesn't go'. Their conversation continued, with Kissinger giving his own expert view based on his authority 'as a historian' on the attempt by 'radicals' to break the authority of Harvard and of America's institutions at large: 'But, I think it's the macrocosm [sic] of our society, Mr. President … the radicals understand what they're doing… they think the war is a magnificent opportunity to break the self-confidence of this, of this country … [a]nd of the system'. Their sympathy for Huntington was well placed, for it was precisely in fighting this same battle to preserve the authority of America's political institutions and to avoid a precipitous withdrawal from Vietnam that he had gathered so many enemies. Regardless of party, and whether viewed from the White House or Harvard Yard, the defence of 'political order' during the Vietnam War era had its own logic.[63]

Conclusion

This essay has shown that Huntington's engagement in strategic debates over the Vietnam War was more complex than has hitherto been believed. On the other hand, he was much less influential than his radical critics claimed. Indeed, the striking fact about his engagement in strategic debate over the war was that, even on his own terms, it failed. His attempts to influence public policy both through his confidential reports to the U.S. Government and his involvement in the Humphrey campaign both failed. At the same time, the price that Huntington paid in the esteem of his academic colleagues was sizeable. Although his 1967 report constituted one of the most reasoned critiques of the U.S. approach to nation-building in South Vietnam, the fact it was delivered in secret and his own clumsy defences of the administration robbed him of respect among those opposed to the war. In a survey of intellectuals in the early 1970s asking them who they considered the most influential thinker on the war, Huntington failed to even make the top 20.[64] Hence while he failed to ever gain appreciable influence in the circles of power during this period, he alienated many of his academic colleagues and students in the process. That the former held true made it even more remarkable that he was willing to suffer the latter. As this

[63]Kisisnger and Nixon quoted in *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969–76 (51 vols., Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003–2014), XII, no. 190.
[64]Charles Kadushin, *The American Intellectual Elite* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co, 1974), 188.

essay has shown, it was in his attempts to balance the competing demands of his roles as a government consultant, academic and public intellectual that he became unstuck.

This essay has also demonstrated the interrelationship between Huntington's views on domestic political developments in the United States and U.S. strategy abroad. A concern with 'political order' animated both. Just as scholars have long pointed out U.S. counter-insurgency and nation-building strategy draw on the intellectual lineage of modernisation theory, Huntington's critique also represented a particular world view which was a product of its time. More conservative and realistic in its approach – like Kissinger's – and hence more attuned to the balancing of means and ends which ultimately makes for successful strategy, the full details of Huntington's critique of U.S. strategy in Vietnam deserves to be pulled out from under the shadow of the phrase 'forced-draft urbanization' and the binders of classified reports. Like Kissinger, Huntington sought to encourage a realistic balance between means and ends. Today, as counter-insurgency and nation-building strategies continue to be inspired by the tenets of modernisation and what Huntington called its 'hopeful air of unreality', his critique of it deserves to continue to be heard. Hence by seeking to contribute to a clearer understanding of Huntington's role in strategic debates over the Vietnam War, this essay also clears the way for a better appreciation of his future relevance too.

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