

saw her on television when she and Chuck Robb had been married in the White House in 1967.

After the newlyweds had left for a honeymoon at Camp David, Pat, Julie, Bebe Rebozo, and I sat in the Residence watching the TV specials.

It had been a wonderful day. Even the weather had turned out to be a friend. It was a day that all of us will always remember, because all of us were beautifully, and simply, happy.

THE PENTAGON PAPERS

On Sunday morning, June 13, I picked up the *New York Times*. In the top left-hand corner there was a picture of me standing with Tricia in the Rose Garden. *Tricia Nixon Takes Vows* was the headline. Next to the picture was another headline: *Vietnam Archive: Pentagon Study Traces 3 Decades of Growing U.S. Involvement*.

The story described a 7,000-page study of American involvement in Southeast Asia from World War II through 1968, which had been commissioned by Robert McNamara, Johnson's Secretary of Defense. It contained verbatim documents from the Defense Department, the State Department, the CIA, the White House, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The *Times* announced that it planned to publish not only portions of the study but many of the original documents as well. The newspaper did not say that all these materials were still officially classified "Secret" and "Top Secret." In fact, this was the most massive leak of classified documents in American history.

The McNamara study had been officially titled "The History of U.S. Decision-Making Process on Vietnam." Before long, however, the media had created a more dramatic label: "The Pentagon Papers."

The documents had been illegally turned over to the *Times*, and I believed that the paper acted irresponsibly in publishing them. The *Times* admitted having been in possession of them for more than three months before publishing them, but had never once sought comment from anyone in the government, or inquired whether publication of any of the classified material might threaten national security or endanger the lives of our men in Vietnam.

The defense and intelligence agencies raced to obtain copies of the study in order to assess the impact of its disclosure. The National Security Agency was immediately worried that some of the more recent documents could provide code-breaking clues. They feared that information about signal and electronic intelligence capabilities would be spotted by the trained eyes of enemy experts. The State Department was alarmed because the study would expose Southeast Asia Treaty Organi-

zation contingency war plans that were still in effect. The CIA was worried that past or current informants would be exposed; they said that the study would contain specific references to the names and activities of CIA agents still active in Southeast Asia. In fact, one secret contact dried up almost immediately. A tremor shook the international community because the study contained material relating to the role of other governments as diplomatic go-betweens; several of them made official protests. Dean Rusk issued a statement that the documents would be valuable to the North Vietnamese and the Soviets.

On consideration, we had only two choices: we could do nothing, or we could move for an injunction that would prevent the *New York Times* from continuing publication. Policy argued for moving against the *Times*; politics argued against it.

The McNamara study was primarily a critique of the way Kennedy and Johnson had led the nation into war in Vietnam. It recounted Kennedy's decision to support the coup that ousted President Diem in 1963 and resulted in Diem's death, causing General Maxwell Taylor to comment that one of our worst mistakes was our connivance in the Diem overthrow—"nothing but chaos came as a result." News reports said the document proved that Johnson had told the American people that he was not going to escalate the war, while privately planning an escalation from 17,000 to 185,000 American men. After the release of the papers James Reston wrote of the "deceptive and stealthy American involvement in the war under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson."

Nevertheless, publication of the Pentagon Papers was certain to hurt the whole Vietnam effort. Critics of the war would use them to attack my goals and my policies.

But to me, there was an even more fundamental reason for taking action to prevent publication. An important principle was at stake in this case: it is the role of the government, not the *New York Times*, to judge the impact of a top secret document. Mel Laird felt that over 95 percent of the material could be declassified, but we were all still worried about whatever percent—even if it were only 1 percent—that should not be. If we did not move against the *Times* it would be a signal to every disgruntled bureaucrat in the government that he could leak anything he pleased while the government simply stood by.

The *Times*'s decision to publish the documents was clearly the product of the paper's antiwar policy rather than a consistent attachment to principle. In the early 1960s Otto Otepka, a State Department employee, had shown classified documents relating to lax security procedures in the department to senators who were investigating the problem. Otepka believed that his action was justified because it was the only way

to correct what he considered a dangerous situation. The *Times* had no sympathy for Otepka's action and expressed its editorial indignation:

Orderly procedures are essential if the vital division of power between legislative and executive branches is not to be undermined. The use of "underground" methods to obtain classified documents from lower-level officials is a dangerous departure from such orderly procedures.

The Washington *Post* had also been outraged:

If any underling in the State Department were free at his own discretion to disclose confidential cables or if any agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation could leak the contents of secret files whenever he felt like it, the Executive Branch of the Government would have no security at all.

When the *Times's* publisher, Arthur Sulzberger, was asked about the government's concern that publication of the Pentagon Papers undermined the faith of foreign governments in our ability to deal in confidence, he was reported to have said, "Oh, that's a lot of baloney. I mean, really."

On Tuesday, June 15, the Justice Department moved to enjoin the *Times* from publication until the government could review the documents and verify that they caused no national security problems. In the meantime, the Washington *Post*, the Boston *Globe*, and the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* had obtained copies and started publication on their own.

In court the *Times's* counsel argued at one point that even if publication of the Pentagon Papers contributed to the delay of the return of our POWs, protection of the First Amendment made that a risk we should be willing to take. I was outraged. I did not consider that rights conveyed by the First Amendment for the publication of these documents superior to the right of an American soldier to stay alive in wartime.

At the outset I had hoped that former Presidents Truman and Johnson would join me in taking a strong public stand against such leaks of classified material. As far as I know, however, Truman made no comment. And after talking to Johnson, Bryce Harlow reported that Johnson felt that whatever he said now would be turned against him by the Washington *Post* and the New York *Times*. Those papers, he said, were merely trying to "re-execute" him. Harlow said Johnson had talked in bitter outbursts, accusing the "professors" who wrote the study of misconstruing contingency plans as actual presidential decisions. The authors of the study had all been involved in the actions they were "bitching" about now, Johnson had said, adding that he had never made a decision of any consequence on escalation or the use of troops without the full concurrence of McNamara and others in his administration.

On June 30, the Supreme Court ruled on our effort to prevent publication: the government lost, 6 to 3. One of the majority opinions agreed that the disclosures might have a serious impact on the national interest but said this was still no basis for sanctioning entire restraint on the press. Chief Justice Burger, in his dissent, criticized the undue haste of the Court's deliberation and the *Times's* failure to consult the government: "To me it is hardly believable that a newspaper long regarded as a great institution in American lives would fail to perform one of the basic and simple duties of every citizen with respect to the discovery or possession of stolen property or secret government documents. . . . This duty rests on taxi drivers, justices, and the New York *Times*."

The Pentagon Papers leak came at a particularly sensitive time. We were just three and a half weeks away from Kissinger's secret trip to China, and the SALT talks were under way. Sir Robert Thompson had written in April saying that the major factor now influencing the course of the war was psychological: our military policy was working on the battlefield, but division in America was causing the North Vietnamese to stall in Paris. There had been violent demonstrations in Washington in May. On May 31, at the secret Paris talks, Kissinger offered our most far-reaching proposal yet. On June 13 the Pentagon Papers were published, and on June 22 the Senate voted its first resolution establishing a pull-out timetable for Vietnam. Before long, the North Vietnamese would slam the door on our new proposal and begin building up for a new military offense.

We had lost our court battle against the newspaper that published the documents, but I was determined that we would at least win our public case against the man I believed had stolen them, Daniel Ellsberg. A former Pentagon aide, Ellsberg had come under suspicion soon after the first installments from the study appeared. Whatever others may have thought, I considered what Ellsberg had done to be despicable and contemptible—he had revealed government foreign policy secrets during wartime. He was lionized in much of the media. CBS devoted a large segment of the network news to a respectful interview with him even while he was still a fugitive from the FBI.

On June 28, a Los Angeles grand jury indicted him on one count of theft of government property and one count of unauthorized possession of documents and writings related to national defense.

"I think I've done a good job as a citizen," Ellsberg told the throng of admirers outside the courthouse.

Kissinger, Haldeman, Ehrlichman, and I had met on the afternoon of June 17 to assess the situation. Kissinger had known Ellsberg at Har-

vard and said he was bright but emotionally unstable.

In various interviews Ellsberg had said he was convinced that I intended to escalate the war rather than pull troops out of Vietnam. He said that increased public opposition would be necessary to force unilateral withdrawal. I felt that there was serious reason to be concerned about what he might do next. During his years at the Defense Department, he had had access to some of the most sensitive information in the entire government. And the Rand Corporation, where he had worked before he gave the Pentagon Papers to the *Times*, had 173,000 classified documents in its possession. I wondered how many of these Ellsberg might have and what else he might give to the newspapers.

Ellsberg was not our only worry. From the first there had been rumors and reports of a conspiracy. The earliest report, later discounted, centered on a friend of Ellsberg, a former Defense Department employee who was then a Fellow at the Brookings Institution. I remembered him from the early days of the administration when I had asked Haldeman to get me a copy of the Pentagon file on the events leading up to Johnson's announcement of the bombing halt at the end of the 1968 campaign. I wanted to know what had actually happened; I also wanted the information as potential leverage against those in Johnson's administration who were now trying to undercut my war policy. I was told that a copy of the bombing halt material and other secret documents had been taken from the Pentagon to Brookings by the same man. I wanted the documents back, but I was told that one copy of the bombing halt report had already "disappeared"; I was sure that if word got out that we wanted it, the copy at Brookings might disappear as well.

In the aftershock of the Pentagon Papers leak and all the uncertainty and renewed criticism of the war it produced, my interest in the bombing halt file was rekindled. When I was told that it was still at Brookings, I was furious and frustrated. In the midst of a war and with our secrets being spilled through printing presses all over the world, top-secret government reports were out of reach in the hands of a private think tank largely staffed with antiwar Democrats. It seemed absurd. I could not accept that we had lost so much control over the workings of the government we had been elected to run—I saw absolutely no reason for that report to be at Brookings, and I said I wanted it back right now—even if it meant having to get it surreptitiously. My determination only increased when I learned of a 1969 Brookings circular announcing a new study of Vietnam, due in 1971, to be based in part on "executive branch documents." The director of the study was Dr. Daniel Ellsberg.

We learned that an aide to Elliot Richardson at the State Department had given Ellsberg access to the current Vietnam documents in 1970. Even after the information in them was leaked, presumably by Ellsberg,

Richardson had refused to remove the aide. It was also well known that a number of people on Kissinger's staff had friends and contacts at Brookings, and I wondered if any of them had provided Ellsberg and his friends with documents and materials.

In early July, John Mitchell reported that the Justice Department had continuing indications that Ellsberg had acted as part of a conspiracy; we received a report that the Soviet Embassy in Washington had received a set of the Pentagon Papers before they had been published in the *New York Times*; I was told that some of the documents provided to the newspapers were not even part of the McNamara study. Once again we were facing the question: what more did Ellsberg have, and what else did he plan to do?

In the meantime Ellsberg was successfully using the press, television talk shows, and antiwar rallies to promote the concept of unlawful dissent. Kissinger said that we were in a "revolutionary" situation.

Even as our concern about Ellsberg and his possible collaborators was growing, we learned that J. Edgar Hoover was dragging his feet and treating the case on merely a medium-priority basis; he had assigned no special task forces and no extra manpower to it. He evidently felt that the media would automatically make Ellsberg look like a martyr, and the FBI like the "heavy," if it pursued the case vigorously. Mitchell had been told that Hoover was sensitive about his personal friendship with Ellsberg's father-in-law. Finally, other agencies, principally the Defense Department, were conducting simultaneous investigations, and Hoover strongly resisted sharing his territory with anyone.

I did not care about any reasons or excuses. I wanted someone to light a fire under the FBI in its investigation of Ellsberg, and to keep the departments and agencies active in pursuit of leakers. If a conspiracy existed, I wanted to know, and I wanted the full resources of the government brought to bear in order to find out. If the FBI was not going to pursue the case, then we would have to do it ourselves. Ellsberg was having great success in the media with his efforts to justify unlawful dissent, and while I cared nothing for him personally, I felt that his views had to be discredited. I urged that we find out everything we could about his background, his motives, and his co-conspirators, if they existed.

I was also determined not to sit back while the Democratic architects of our Vietnam involvement tried to make me pay for the war politically. I wanted a good political operative who could sift through the Pentagon Papers as well as State and Defense Department files and get us all the facts on the Bay of Pigs, the Diem assassination, and Johnson's 1968 bombing halt. We were heading into an election year, in which the Vietnam war was almost certainly going to be the biggest issue. I wanted ammunition against the antiwar critics, many of whom were the same

men who, under Kennedy and Johnson, had led us into the Vietnam morass in the first place. Finally, I wanted a revision of the classification system that would ensure that only legitimate foreign policy secrets were classified, but that those that were classified stayed secret.

On July 17, 1971, Ehrlichman assigned Egil "Bud" Krogh, a young lawyer on the Domestic Council staff, to head the leak project. David Young, a lawyer who was formerly a Kissinger aide, Howard Hunt, a former CIA agent, and G. Gordon Liddy, a former FBI man, worked with him. A year and a half later I learned for the first time that because their job was plugging leaks, Young had jokingly put up a sign establishing himself as a "Plumber."

On July 23, the morning before we were scheduled to present our formal position at the SALT talks in Helsinki, the *New York Times* carried a front-page leak of our fallback negotiating position. I tried to motivate Krogh in the strongest terms, and I told him, "We're not going to allow it. We just aren't going to allow it." The Plumbers pushed the departments to investigate with interviews and polygraph tests. An August 13 *New York Times* report was based on a CIA report we had received at the White House only a few days earlier. The information in the story was traceable to a highly secret CIA intelligence source. By fall the CIA reported that we were in the midst of the worst outbreak of leaks since 1953. I urged everyone to keep the pressure on.

On Labor Day weekend, 1971, Krogh's group organized a break-in at the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist in an attempt to get information from his files on his motivation, his further intentions, and any possible co-conspirators.

I do not believe I was told about the break-in at the time, but it is clear that it was at least in part an outgrowth of my sense of urgency about discrediting what Ellsberg had done and finding out what he might do next. Given the temper of those tense and bitter times and the peril I perceived, I cannot say that had I been informed of it beforehand, I would have automatically considered it unprecedented, unwarranted, or unthinkable. Ehrlichman says that he did not know of it in advance, but that he told me about it after the fact in 1972. I do not recall this, and the tapes of the June-July 1972 period indicate that I was not conscious of it then, but I cannot rule it out.

Today the break-in at Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office seems wrong and excessive. But I do not accept that it was as wrong or excessive as what Daniel Ellsberg did, and I still believe that it is a tragedy of circumstances that Bud Krogh and John Ehrlichman went to jail and Daniel Ellsberg went free.

In hindsight I can see that, once I realized the Vietnam war could not

be ended quickly or easily and that I was going to be up against an anti-war movement that was able to dominate the media with its attitudes and values, I was sometimes drawn into the very frame of mind I so despised in the leaders of that movement. They increasingly came to justify almost anything in the name of forcing an immediate end to a war they considered unjustified and immoral. I was similarly driven to preserve the government's ability to conduct foreign policy and to conduct it in the way that I felt would best bring peace. I believed that national security was involved. I still believe it today, and in the same circumstances, I would act now as I did then. History will make the final judgment on the actions, reactions, and excesses of both sides; it is a judgment I do not fear.

By late September the Plumbers unit began to disband. Before long, too, the natural cycle of concern over the Pentagon Papers ran its course and our thoughts turned to other matters.

It is an interesting sidelight of the Pentagon Papers episode that our efforts to document the role of the Kennedy administration in the Diem assassination and the Bay of Pigs did not prove easy. The CIA protects itself, even from Presidents. Helms refused to give Ehrlichman the agency's internal reports dealing with either subject. At one point he told Ehrlichman on the phone that even he did not have a copy of one of the key Bay of Pigs reports. He also expressed concern about all the people, and specifically Howard Hunt, who he said would like to run around in the agency's "soiled linen."

Helms finally brought me several of the items after I had requested them from him personally. I promised him I would not use them to hurt him, his predecessor, or the CIA. "I have one President at a time," he responded. "I only work for you." When Ehrlichman read the materials Helms had delivered, however, he found that several of the reports, including the one on the Bay of Pigs, were still incomplete.

The CIA was closed like a safe, and we could find no one who would give us the combination to open it.

1971: ECONOMIC CONTROLS

I have always believed that America's economy operates best with the least possible government interference. Yet in August 1971 I proposed a series of economic controls and reforms that left even long-time wage and price control advocates breathless.

The economy that Eisenhower had bequeathed to Kennedy in January 1961 was remarkably stable, with a rate of inflation of about 1.5 percent. By 1968, largely because of the effects of the Vietnam war, inflation had soared to 4.7 percent. But the war was not the only cause of