



# DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 105 534

CS 501 047

AUTHOR Sproule, J. Michael  
TITLE Validity and Credibility Gaps in the Johnson Administration Case for Commitment to Vietnam, 1964-1967.  
PUB DATE Dec 74  
NOTE 23p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (Chicago, December, 1974); Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of original document  
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.76 HC Not Available from EDRS. PLUS POSTAGE  
DESCRIPTORS \*Communication (Thought Transfer); \*Credibility; \*Government Role; Higher Education; \*Persuasive Discourse; Political Attitudes; Political Issues; \*Propaganda; Theories; War  
IDENTIFIERS Johnson (Lyndon B); \*Vietnam

## ABSTRACT

The Johnson Administration rationale for commitment to Vietnam was supported by a series of claims about the nature of the Vietnam war and the logic of U.S. involvement in it. This paper states and supports the thesis that the exaggerated tone of certainty in the administration case for commitment had a dual effect, undermining both the rhetorical validity and the effectiveness of the government viewpoint. Stephen Toulmin's "Layout of Arguments," together with his analysis probability in argumentation provide a vehicle for analyzing both the validity and the effectiveness of Johnson Administration efforts to ascribe close to absolute certainty to its argumentative claims. A brief prototype discussion of Toulmin's layout is included and related to specific quotes from the Johnson Administration concerning the Vietnam war. It is concluded from this discussion that criticism of the war centered on perceived discrepancies between the claims of and the reservations about the administration's case for commitment. Vocal protest arose from a perception that the administration engaged in overstated propaganda, and critical commentary became an effort to identify and publicize suppressed information. (TS)

ED105533

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,  
EDUCATION & WELFARE  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF  
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Validity and Credibility Gaps in the Johnson Administration

Case for Commitment to Vietnam, 1964-1967

Presented at

The Speech Communication Association Convention  
December, 1974

by

J. Michael Sproule  
Faculty of Speech  
University of Texas--Permian Basin  
Odessa, Texas 79762

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS  
COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL BY MICRO-  
FICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY  
J. Michael Sproule

TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

## Validity and Credibility Gaps in the Johnson Administration

### Case for Commitment to Vietnam, 1964-1967

The Johnson Administration rationale for commitment to Vietnam was supported by a series of ever-repeated claims about the nature of the Vietnam war and the logic of our involvement in it. The tone of certainty attributed to administration pronouncements caused Arthur Schlesinger to complain, in 1966, that the Executive Branch, "pass[es] on its own ignorance to the American people and to the world as certitude."<sup>1</sup> Utilizing the theory and terminology of Stephen Toulmin I will, in this essay, contend that the 1964-1967 Vietnam argumentation was characterized by overstated claims and undervalued reservations. In so doing, I will state and support the thesis that the overstated tone of certainty in the administration case for commitment had a dual effect--undermining both the rhetorical validity and effectiveness of the government argumentation. Simply stated, the logical "validity gap" precipitated a persuasive "credibility gap" which affected a segment of the American public.

#### Toulmin Methodology: The Probability Attributed to Argumentative Claims

Stephen Toulmin's "Layout of Arguments," taken together with his analysis of probability in argumentation, provides us with a suitable vehicle for analyzing both the validity and effectiveness of Johnson Administration efforts to ascribe close to absolute certainty to its argumentative claims. In his treatise on the Uses of Argument, the English

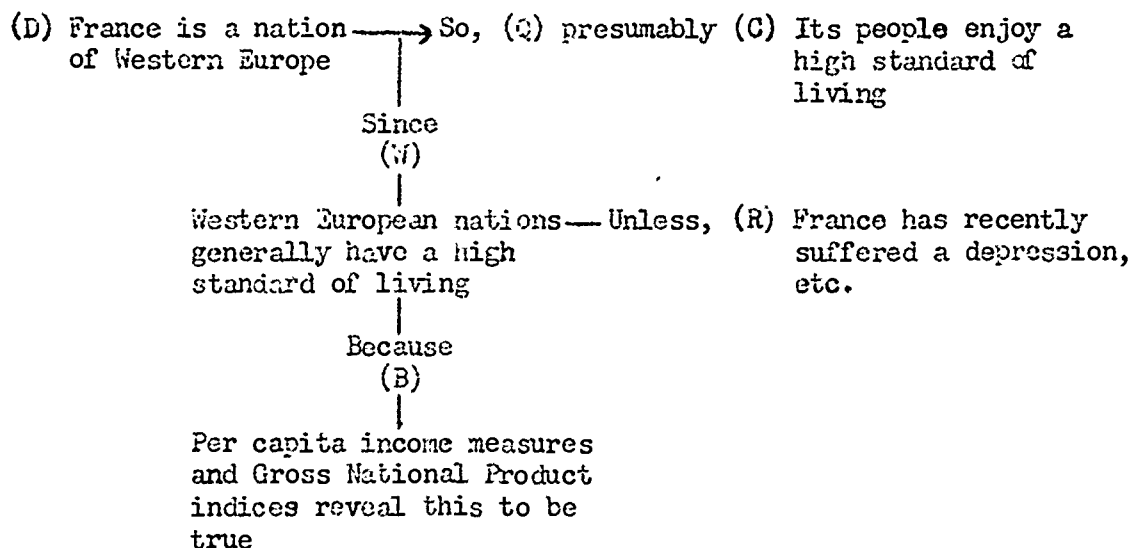
logician examined the process by which claims are supported by data (facts serving as the basis for a claim) and warrants (general authorizing statements justifying the inductive leap from data to claim). Toulmin's system of logic included three additional elements: (1) qualifier: a statement of the certainty attributed to the claim, (2) reservation: statements of possible exceptions to the warrant and (3) backing: specific information in support of a warrant.<sup>2</sup>

Explicit in Toulmin's "Layout" is a distinction "between the 'force' of terms of logical assessment and the 'grounds' or 'criteria' for their use."<sup>3</sup> In his essay on "Probability," Toulmin confirms the implication of this distinction. "Just how far we are entitled to commit ourselves [force of claim] depends on the strength of the grounds, reasons or evidence at our disposal."<sup>4</sup> Relating this discussion of probability to the "Layout of Arguments," Toulmin explains: "It may not be sufficient, therefore, simply to specify our data, warrant and claim: we may need to add some explicit reference to the degree of force which our data confer on our claim in virtue of our warrant. In a word, we may have to put in a qualifier."<sup>5</sup>

In this view, a qualifier is a necessary statement of the certainty attributed to a claim; the choice of a qualifier is dependent on the degree of certainty established by the supporting structure of argument--data, warrant, reservation and backing. Thus, to be correctly laid out--to be valid--there must exist a direct correspondence between qualifier and support of a claim. If the argumentative support does not justify the probability asserted by a qualifier, two eventualities obtain: (1) the argumentative statement (qualifier plus claim) loses validity or (2) the argumentative statement must be rephrased so as to coincide with the

established level of certainty. Since the reservation is a measure of possible exceptions to the force of the data-warrant connection, we must pay particular attention to the presence of reservations in the layout; for the certainty of claim will be a quantity in roughly inverse proportion to the degree of expressed reservation.

A brief prototype discussion of Toulmin's layout will serve to clarify the necessary relations among the argumentative elements discussed above. Consider the following illustration of an argument structured in the Toulmin mode. Beginning with data (D), an arguer seeks to establish the merits of a claim (C). In so doing, he must supply an authorizing statement--warrant (W)--to justify the movement from data to claim. In specifying the warrant and its support--backing (B)--the persuader indicates exceptions to the warrant, or reservations (R), and thereby signifies the degree to which the claim must be qualified (Q). The following diagram illustrates the process:



In this scheme the reservation (R) is an infrequent (i.e., unlikely) occurrence and, thus, the qualifier (Q) "presumably" indicates that the claim (C) is very likely true. The qualifier, then, is a measure of the

degree of certainty (validity) conferred on the claim by the supporting structure of the argument. If a warrant had many exceptions (i.e., a great number of frequently-occurring reservations) then the qualifier should reflect this fact. One might employ the term "possibly" or "there is a slight chance" to indicate the lessened probability that the claim is valid. In this view, qualifiers might vary from strong to weak as follows:

Weak

Strong

possibly - - - - - probably - - - presumably - - - - - certainly

Against this background, how may we characterize the claims of the administration in the years 1964-1967? Are reservations supplied? Are claims moderated? Simply stated, the rhetoric of Vietnam involvement reveals a proneness not to include reservations and exhibits a preference for strongly positive and overstated qualifiers.

Certainty of Claim in the Administration Case for Commitment

The Johnson Administration case for involvement in Vietnam, 1964-1967, was supported by a remarkably consistent set of arguments and assumptions. Through analysis of one hundred rhetorical documents dealing with the war during this period,<sup>6</sup> this writer determined that the administration case could be outlined as follows:

1. Over a twenty-year period, the U.S. has made consistent and firm commitments to the people of South Vietnam.<sup>7</sup>
2. The Government of North Vietnam has, during this period, waged aggression in an attempt to overthrow the Government of South Vietnam and conquer its people.<sup>8</sup>
3. Apart from its effect on the people of the South, a communist takeover would increase the likelihood that neighboring nations would succumb to communist control.<sup>9</sup>

These three arguments--the assertion of a firm U.S. commitment, the "aggression thesis" and the "domino theory"--were basic to the administration

case and shared one additional significant attribute: uniformly, they were stated as indisputable fact. Claims were accompanied by strongly positive qualifiers and reservations were largely ignored or suppressed.

The predilection toward strongly stated claims, which characterized the administration argumentation, flowed logically from the description of the war as a struggle of right versus wrong. The basic claim that the war constituted aggression was most emphatically stated (in all cases, emphasis has been supplied):

Beyond question this aggression was initiated and is directed by Hanoi.<sup>10</sup>

. . . the hard facts and irrefutable evidence . . . lead to one inescapable conclusion: The Republic of Viet-Nam is the object of aggression unleashed by its neighbor to the north.<sup>11</sup>

The record is conclusive. It establishes beyond question that North Viet-Nam is carrying out a carefully conceived plan of aggression against the South.<sup>12</sup>

Statements refuting the notion that the war was a civil conflict ring equally strong.

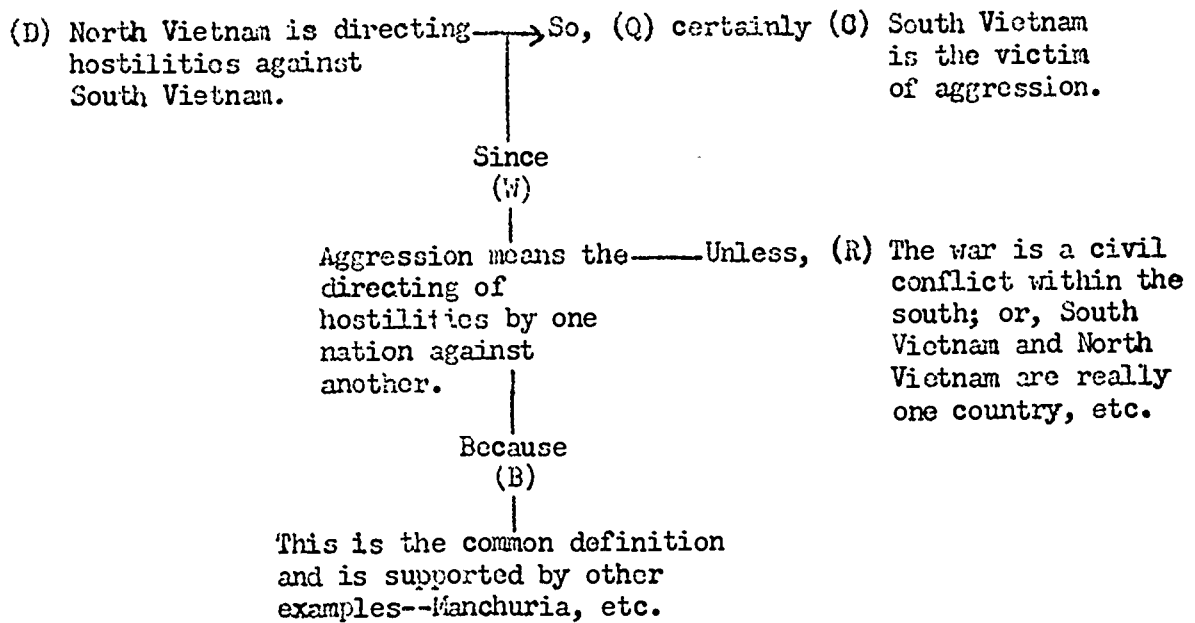
There is no evidence that the Viet Cong has any significant popular following in South Viet-Nam.<sup>13</sup>

Well, the Viet Cong, we must remember in the first place, is controlled by Hanoi. There is no question about that, I think.<sup>14</sup>

These facts make it clear beyond question that the war in South Viet-Nam has few of the attributes of an indigenous revolt.<sup>15</sup>

The central claim that the war was aggression from the north, then, was accompanied by strongly positive qualifiers, with reservations either unstated or expressly refuted. In Toulmin's scheme the aggression thesis would be diagrammed as follows:





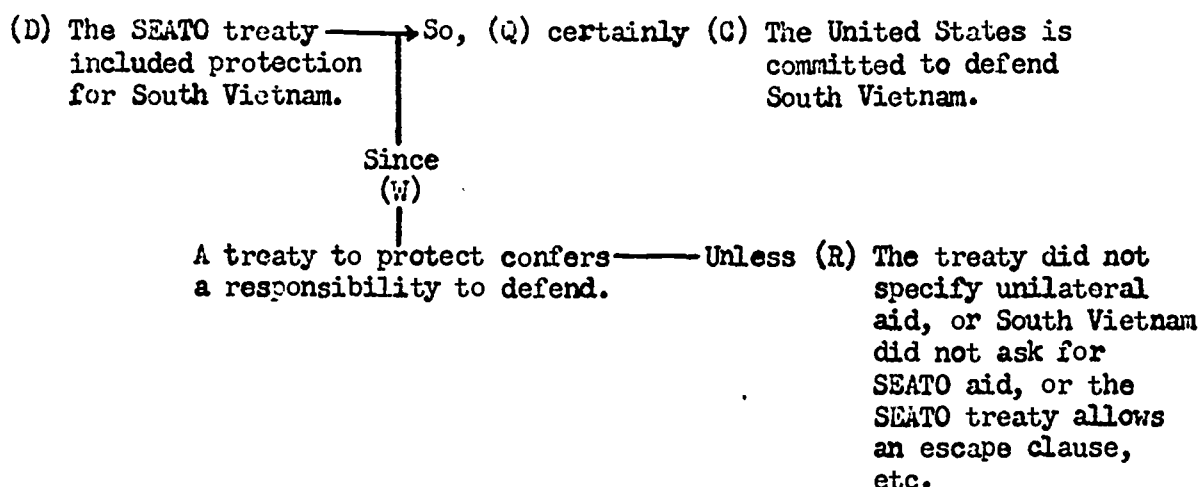
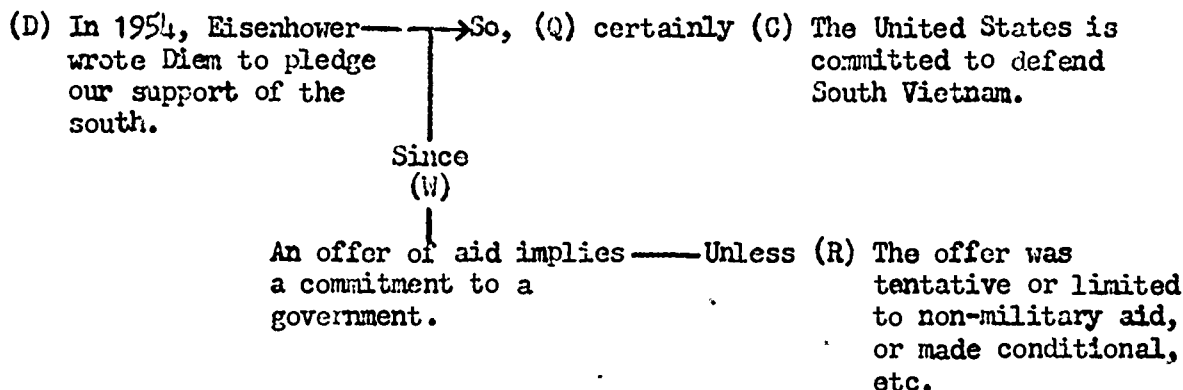
In this example, the reservation is expressly refuted by the administration (i.e., the war is certainly not a civil conflict, etc.) so that the qualifier--"certainly"--is a strongly positive one. (A related reservation to the aggression thesis was also emphatically dismissed. For example, an official rejected the argument that the south was responsible for precluding the 1956 elections to reunify Vietnam: "This argument has no merit."<sup>16</sup>)

The administration claim that the United States was committed to Vietnam was also seen as incontrovertible (emphasis added):

The United States has a clear and direct commitment to the security of South Viet-Nam against external attack.<sup>17</sup>

The commitments--both legal and moral--are so solidly founded that I cannot see how anyone can rightly argue that we should renege on them.<sup>18</sup>

The qualifiers related to the claim of our commitment--"clearly" and "solidly"--are strongly affirmative. Further, the claim is buttressed by two separate data-warrant connections, neither of which has a specified reservation as presented by administration spokesmen:

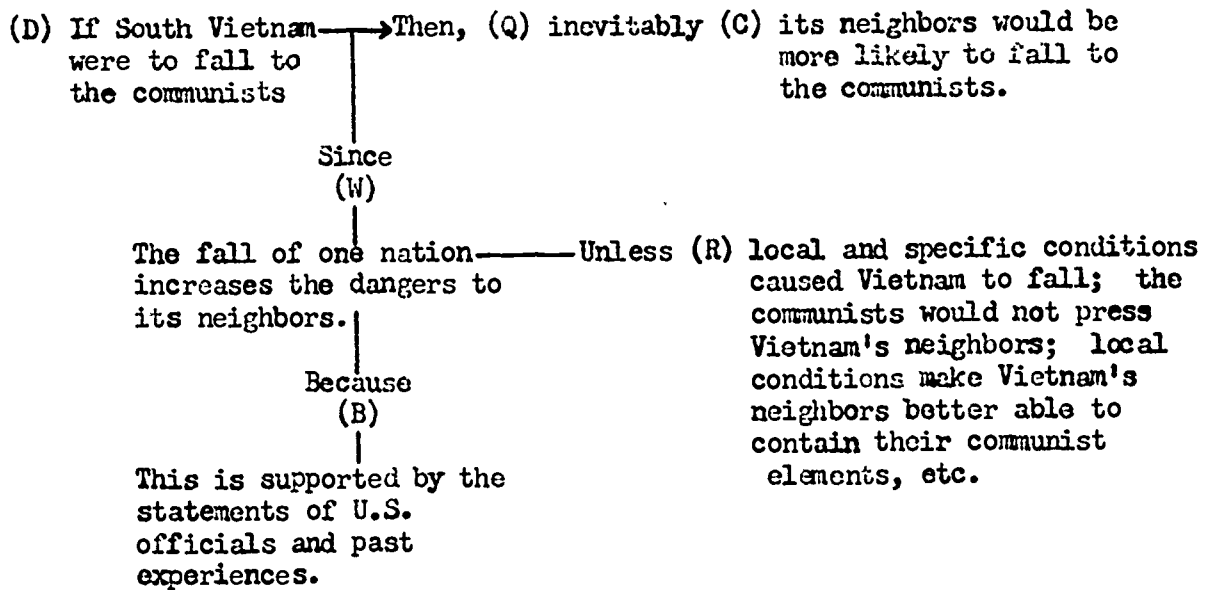


As before, because such potential reservations as above are not specified the claims become definitive.

Consider the final example-category of the proclivity to avoid including reservations. William Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State, made this presentation of the domino theory as strongly affirmative and without exception.

In simple terms, a victory for the Communists in South Viet-Nam would inevitably make the neighboring states more susceptible to Communist pressure and more vulnerable to intensified subversion supported by military pressures.<sup>19</sup>

The claim that the fall of Vietnam would set in motion further losses is qualified as being "inevitable." The argument would be diagrammed as follows:



Here is the typical construction of the domino theory. Note that the reservations to the theory--specified above--are never present in the administration argumentation. Thus, again, failure to acknowledge reservations, or the rejection thereof, leads to strongly reinforced claims.<sup>20</sup>

#### The Rhetorical Effect of Exaggerated Claims: Two Hypotheses

In the foregoing discussion, the absence or refutation of apparent reservations permitted the assertion of high levels of argumentative certainty. Such assertions were, however, invalid because suppressed reservations indicated that absolute certainty was unattainable in these instances. However, apart from the decreased validity of the administration case, the absence of reservations and the concomitant exaggeration of claims produced a related impact--reduced rhetorical effectiveness. While it cannot be credibly asserted that the decline in mass public support for the war accrued from popular perceptions of argumentative invalidity, we may, nevertheless observe a relationship between argumentative invalidity and opposition to the war among select elements of the U.S. population--

chiefly liberals, intellectuals and the news media. This connection between the validity and credibility gaps may be established via an examination of two hypotheses: (1) vocal war critics emerged when relatively intellectual elements of the U.S. population perceived a credibility gap--a discrepancy between administration claims and potential reservations thereto; (2) the resulting critical commentary on the war centered on this discrepancy.

In a perceptive analysis of rhetorical criticism as applied to political rhetoric, David Swanson argues that rhetorical critics too often exaggerate the impact of public address in producing political attitudes and behavior.<sup>21</sup> This caveat, notwithstanding, I will utilize the aforesaid two hypotheses to defend my interpretation that the overstatement of administration claims had a persuasive impact--on a selected group--apart from the logical reduction of validity.

Consider the first hypothesis--that vocal critics emerged when intellectual elements of the population perceived a discrepancy between administration claims and counter-arguments in the form of potential reservations to those claims. Support for this hypothesis is to be found from analyses of the growth of war opposition among the intellectual-educated subgroup. In a study of six anti-war U.S. Senators, Marie Rosenwasser argues that one major strategy of Senatorial war critics was to argue that the administration suppressed war information and engaged in propagandistic efforts. Stressing the public's right to know and traditional American values of freedom, these critics attacked alleged "semantic propaganda" concerning American purposes in the war.<sup>22</sup> In another war-related essay, Jess Yoder discusses the attempt by the Johnson Administration to cast the war as a moral crusade. He finds that the clergy did not generally

accept this viewpoint. Whereas many of the clerical war protesters supported World War II, administration inability to satisfactorily explain Vietnam led to protests.<sup>23</sup>

A similar article by Howard Martin examined the early war protests of Michigan academics, describing their "teach-ins" to present counter-information on the war.<sup>24</sup> Several studies of newsreporting indicate a similar shift of opinion--from war support to opposition--as news reporters came into close contact with the administration withholding of information and its handling of the war. Whereas the media generally supported the early war effort,<sup>25</sup> network reporters assigned to Vietnam underwent a dramatic shift of opinion from hawk to dove and from neutral to dove.<sup>26</sup> Finally, in an analysis of public opinion in the Vietnam war, John Mueller argues that most of the vocal war opposition came from the "journalistic-academic complex" and that opposition originated from inability to grasp administration claims about "the wisdom of an anti-Communist war in Vietnam. . . ." <sup>27</sup> Evidently, then, perceived discrepancies between the rhetoric and perceived alternative "reality" of the Vietnam war led to the emergence of war opposition within subgroups of the U.S. population.

The second hypothesis on war opposition held that critical commentary on the war centered on the aforesaid perception of a validity-credibility gap between stated administration claims and suppressed reservations. For example, critics sought to develop discrepant information to suggest that the aggression thesis was not "beyond question." The argument that the Vietnam war was a simple case of North Vietnamese aggression was refuted largely through efforts to express reservations to the warrant: "aggression means the directing of hostilities by one nation against another." (see Toulmin diagram, p. 6) Reservations to this warrant were

several. First, critics maintained that the 1954 Geneva Accords did not sanction a division of Vietnam into two separate states. Thus, the war was a civil conflict among the people of an artificially-divided country.<sup>28</sup> Secondly, vocal critics argued that the Saigon government--not Hanoi--had subverted the 1956 elections which had been provided to reunify the two zones of Vietnam.<sup>29</sup> A related reservation by the critics was against the administration interpretation that the North Vietnamese had frequently violated the Geneva accords. Critics argued that the United States and South Vietnam had also frequently been cited for violations.<sup>30</sup> Finally, to the argument that the war was simply aggression from the north, critics argued that the fighting resumed partly because of (1) Saigon's refusal to hold the scheduled 1956 elections,<sup>31</sup> and (2) South Vietnamese Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem's repressive measures.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to specifying reservations to the aggression thesis, vocal war critics similarly cited exceptions to the two major administration warrants concerning the indisputability of the U.S. commitment to defend South Vietnam: (1) the 1954 Eisenhower-Diem letter and (2) the SEATO treaty. Vis-a-vis the Eisenhower "commitment," critics alleged that the letter offered Vietnam only economic assistance--and that Eisenhower even made this limited aid conditional upon governmental reforms in Saigon.<sup>33</sup> "Where in this tentative, highly conditional opening of negotiations and statements of hope is the 'commitment,' the 'obligation,' the pledging of our word?"<sup>34</sup> Similarly, the SEATO treaty was said to be invalid as a requirement of U.S. intervention. "In short," concluded Arthur Schlesinger, "the Secretary of State's position that SEATO commits the United States to a military intervention can only be regarded as an exercise in historical and legal distortion."<sup>35</sup>

We have already observed that a third major element in the administration case for commitment became the assertion that the Vietnam was had wider implications than just for the people of the south--that failure to contain communism in Vietnam would lead to a spread of communist contagion. Often labeled "the domino theory" this administration strain of thought was also a target for reservations attached by critics. The domino theory rested somewhat on the assumption that China was a hidden enemy in Vietnam--and this postulate was attacked.<sup>36</sup> If, then, the notion of the Chinese threat was debunked, it was logical for Vietnam critics to challenge the domino theory explicitly. The theory was termed a "military myth" based more on "rhetorical extravagance" than fact.<sup>37</sup> The Burmese Secretary General of the United Nations, U Thant, pointed to the fact that Burma--which shared a 1000-mile border with China--had somehow been able to resist its communist rebels without U.S. troops or major aid.<sup>38</sup> Calling the theory "simplistic," George Kahin insisted that Southeast Asian nations would not "automatically collapse if the Communists were to control all of Viet-Nam." He continued, affirming that, "So long as Southeast Asian governments are in harmony with their nation's nationalism, so long as they are wise enough to meet the most pressing economic and social demands of their people, they are not likely to succumb to communism."<sup>39</sup>

#### Claims and Reservations in Retrospect

It seems clear that the criticism of the war by more educated elements of the U.S. population centered on perceived discrepancies between the claims in and reservations to the administration case for commitment. Vocal protest arose from a perception that the administration engaged in overstated "propaganda," and critical commentary became largely an effort

to identify and publicize suppressed reservations to the administration case. It is difficult to infer the extent to which the overstatement of administration argumentation contributed to the decline in mass public support for the war. Mueller's analysis of opinion polls relative to both the Korean and Vietnam wars does not tend to support a thesis that rhetorical invalidity in the administration case was the major factor in decline in support for the war.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, Mueller and other sources, cited herein, support the thesis that the rhetorical invalidity of overstated administration claims led to vocal war opposition in the relatively more intellectual element of the U.S. population--academicians and journalists, in particular. Thus, it appears that a significant "validity gap" resulted from rhetorical juxtapositions of overstated Executive Branch claims and undervalued reservations. Translated into a "credibility gap," this discrepancy became the source and sword of vocal war criticism. As a former Kennedy-Johnson State Department official--Roger Hillsman--has suggested, "The need for wide support sometimes leads to overselling a policy proposal in the sense of claiming too much for it . . . . For President Johnson's policy of escalation in Vietnam, it was devastating."<sup>41</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Arthur Schlesinger, The Bitter Heritage: Vietnam and American Democracy, 1941-1966 (New York: Fawcett World Library, 1967), p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Toulmin, The Uses of Argument (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), pp. 95-113.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>6</sup> See James Michael Sproule, "The Case for a Wider War: A Study of the Administration Rationale for Commitment to Vietnam, 1964-1967" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1973). These documents were taken chiefly from the Department of State Bulletin and Public Papers of the Presidents, issues for 1964-1967.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Lyndon B. Johnson, "Remarks at Syracuse University on the Communist Challenge in Southeast Asia, August 3, 1964," Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson, 1963-1964 (2 vols.; Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), II, 929. Hereafter references to the Public Papers series will be cited as Public Papers, title, date, volume and page. See also, Lyndon B. Johnson, "The President's News Conference at the LBJ Ranch, March 20, 1965," Public Papers 1965, I, 300-301, Lyndon B. Johnson, "Remarks to Committee Members on the Need for Additional Appropriations for Military Purposes in Viet-Nam and the Dominican Republic, May 4, 1965," Public Papers 1965, I, 485, Lyndon B. Johnson, "Threats to World Peace," Public Papers 1966, I, 684 and

Lyndon B. Johnson, "Address on U.S. Foreign Policy in Vietnam," Public Papers 1967, I, 349. See, also, comments of other U.S. officials:

William P. Bundy, "A Perspective on U.S. Policy in Viet-Nam," Department of State Bulletin, LII, No. 1356 (June 21, 1965), 1004, Robert S. McNamara, "Political and Military Aspects of U.S. Policy in Viet-Nam," Department of State Bulletin, LIII, No. 1366 (August 30, 1965), 353 and Robert S. McNamara, "Buildup of U.S. Forces in Viet-Nam," Department of State Bulletin, LIII, No. 1366 (August 30, 1965), 374.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, William Bundy, "American Policy in South Viet-Nam and Southeast Asia," Department of State Bulletin, LII, No. 1337 (February 8, 1965), 172, "Secretary Rusk Discusses Viet-Nam Situation on 'Face the Nation' Program," Department of State Bulletin, LII, No. 1344 (March 29, 1965), 443, Dean Rusk, "Laos and Viet-Nam--A Prescription for Peace," Department of State Bulletin, L, No. 1302 (June 8, 1964), 890, Robert S. McNamara, "United States Policy in Viet-Nam," Department of State Bulletin, L, No. 1294 (April 13, 1964), 562, Francis T.P. Flimpton, "U.S. Calls for Deeds, Not Words, in U.N. Committee on Defining Aggression," Department of State Bulletin, LII, No. 1351 (May 17, 1965), 776, George Ball, "The Issue in Viet-Nam," Department of State Bulletin, LIV, No. 1390 (February 14, 1966), 242 and Nicholas Katzenbach, "The Complex and Difficult Problems in Viet-Nam," Department of State Bulletin, LVII, No. 1480 (November 6, 1967), 602.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, "Secretary Rusk's News Conference of December 9," Department of State Bulletin, LIII, No. 1383 (December 27, 1965), 1011, Dean Rusk, "SEATO Council of Ministers Meets at Manila," Department of State Bulletin, L, No. 1297 (May 4, 1964), 695, Lyndon B. Johnson, "Remarks to the

Delegates to a Conference of State Legislative Leaders, June 16, 1966," Public Papers 1966, I, 620 and Lyndon B. Johnson, "Remarks to the Delegates to the American Legion National Convention," August 30, 1966, Public Papers 1966, II, 937.

<sup>10</sup> Dean Rusk, "Laos and Viet-Nam--A Prescription for Peace," Department of State Bulletin, L, No. 1302 (June 8, 1964), 890.

<sup>11</sup> Francis T.P. Flimpton, "U.S. Calls for Deeds, Not Words, in U.N. Committee on Defining Aggression," Department of State Bulletin, LII, No. 1351 (May 17, 1965), 776.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of State, Aggression from the North: The Record of North Viet-Nam's Campaign to Conquer South Viet-Nam, Far Eastern Series 130, Pubn. 7839 (February, 1965), p. 29.

<sup>13</sup> Dean Rusk, "The Control of Force in International Relations," Department of State Bulletin, LII, No. 1350 (May 10, 1965), 699.

<sup>14</sup> Elsworth Bunker, "Secretary Rusk and Ambassador Bunker Discuss Viet-Nam in TV-Radio Interviews," Department of State Bulletin, LVII, No. 1475 (October 2, 1967), 417.

<sup>15</sup> George Ball, "The Issue in Viet-Nam," Department of State Bulletin, LIV, No. 1390 (February 14, 1966), 242.

<sup>16</sup> Leonard C. Meeker, "Viet-Nam and the International Law of Self-defense," Department of State Bulletin, LVI, No. 1437 (January 9, 1967), 61.

17 "Vice President Humphrey Returns from Far East Mission," Department of State Bulletin, LIV, No. 1387 (January 24, 1966), 115.

18 Nicholas Katzenbach, "The Complex and Difficult Problems in Vietnam," Department of State Bulletin, LVII, No. 1480 (November 6, 1967), 603.

19 William Bundy, "American Policy in South Viet-Nam and Southeast Asia," Department of State Bulletin, LII, No. 1337 (February 8, 1965), 171.

20 I should note in passing one occasion when the President did somewhat reduce the strength of the domino claim. Speaking to a group of state legislators, Johnson argued, "So your American President cannot tell you--with certainty--that a Southeast Asia dominated by Communist power would bring a third world war much closer to terrible reality . . . But all we have learned in this tragic century strongly suggests to be that it would be so. See Lyndon B. Johnson, "Address on Vietnam Before the National Legislative Conference, San Antonio, Texas, September 29, 1967," Public Papers 1967, II, 878. In this excerpt Johnson specifically substituted the qualifier "strongly suggests" for that of "certainly." However, the claim is yet strongly stated and no reservations are specified.

21 See David L. Swanson, "The New Politics Meets the Old Rhetoric: New Directions in Campaign Communication Research," Quarterly Journal of Speech, LVII, No. 1 (February, 1972), 33-37, especially.

22 Marie E. Rosenwasser, "Six Senate War Critics and Their Appeals for Gaining Audience Response," Today's Speech, XVII, No. 3 (September, 1969), 43-50.

<sup>23</sup> Jess Yoder, "The Protest of the American Clergy in Opposition to the war in Vietnam," Today's Speech, XVII, No. 3 (September, 1969), 51-59.

<sup>24</sup> Howard Martin, "The Rhetoric of Academic Protest," Central States Speech Journal, XVII, No. 4 (November, 1966), 244-50.

<sup>25</sup> See reference in National Broadcasting Company, Vietnam Hindsight, (2 parts; Broadcast Tuesday, December 21 and 22, 1971), Part I, Act I, 2 and comment by Lyndon B. Johnson, "The President's News Conference at the LBJ Ranch, August 8, 1964," Public Papers 1963-1964, II, 940.

<sup>26</sup> See statistics in Lawrence W. Lichty, "Covering Vietnam: Reporters and Process," Paper Read at the Speech Communication Association Convention, Chicago, Illinois, December 28, 1972, table 5. See, also, analysis by Edwin Emery, "The Press in the Vietnam Quagmire," Journalism Quarterly, XLVIII (Winter, 1971), 619-26.

<sup>27</sup> John E. Mueller, "Trends in Popular Support for the wars in Korea and Vietnam," American Political Science Review, LXV, No. 2 (June, 1971), 371.

<sup>28</sup> George H. Kahin and John W. Lewis, The United States in Vietnam (Delta Book, 1967), pp. 348-76.

<sup>29</sup> See Edward S. Herman and Richard B. DuBoff, America's Vietnam Policy: The Strategy of Deception (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1966), p. 83, Bernard B. Fall, "How the French Got Out of Viet-Nam," in The Viet-Nam Reader, ed. by Marcus G. Raskin and Bernard B. Fall (New York: Random House, 1965), pp. 89-90, Schlesinger, p. 33, Ronald Steele,

Pax Americana, Viking Book (revised ed.; New York: The Viking Press, 1970), p. 153, Kahin and Lewis, pp. 57-58, Bernard B. Fall, The Two Viet-Nams: A Political and Military Analysis (2nd revised ed.; New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), p. 233, Robert Scheer and Warren Hinckle, "The Viet-Nam Lobby," in Viet-Nam Reader, p. 76, I.F. Stone, "A Reply to the White Paper," in Viet-Nam Reader, pp. 60-61, J.W. Fulbright, "The War in Viet-Nam," in Viet-Nam Reader, p. 208 and George M. Kahin, "Excerpts from National Teach-In on Viet-Nam Policy," in Viet-Nam Reader, pp. 290-91.

<sup>30</sup> Kahin and Lewis, p. 99 and Fall, Viet-Nam Reader, pp. 90-91.

<sup>31</sup> Charles DeGaulle, "Statement on Southeast Asia," Viet-Nam Reader, p. 270, Kahin, Viet-Nam Reader, pp. 291-92 and Fall, Viet-Nam Reader, p. 91.

<sup>32</sup> Fall, Two Viet-Nams, p. 336, Kahin and Lewis, pp. 99-107, Schlesinger, pp. 35-36, Steele, p. 153, Bernard B. Fall, "Vietnam: The New Korea," Current History, L, No. 294 (February, 1966), 117 and Hans J. Morgenthau, "U.S. Misadventure in Vietnam," Current History, LIV, No. 317 (January, 1968), 33.

<sup>33</sup> See Staff of the Senate Republican Policy Committee, The War in Vietnam (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1967), pp. 21-22.

<sup>34</sup> Don R. and Arthur Larson, "What Is our 'Commitment' in Viet-Nam?" Viet-Nam Reader, p. 101 and Kahin, Viet-Nam Reader, pp. 292-93.

<sup>35</sup> Schlesinger, p. 30.

<sup>36</sup> Ellen J. Hammer, The Struggle for Indochina: 1940-1955 (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1966), pp. 74-75 and Richard Butwell, "Southeast Asia: How Important--To Whom?" Current History, LII, No. 305 (January, 1967), 4.

<sup>37</sup> See, respectively, Butwell, 3 and Schlesinger, p. 87.

<sup>38</sup> U Thant, Viet-Nam Reader, p. 265.

<sup>39</sup> Kahin, Viet-Nam Reader, p. 294.

<sup>40</sup> See Mueller, 358-75. Mueller does not seem to examine the factor of credibility as a source of the decline in mass support for the war, except to cite findings that many Americans expressed a lack of understanding of "what we are fighting for." See Mueller, 374. My own examination of Gallup polls for 1964-1967 indicates a scarcity of surveys dealing with the issue of credibility. See George H. Gallup (comp.), The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion, 1935-1971 (3 vols.; New York: Random House, 1972). However, several polls offer some support to the idea that the mass public perceived, to some extent, an administration credibility gap. A poll of July 18, 1965, revealed that 7% of those who opposed Vietnam policy identified this reason for their opposition: "Johnson is inconsistent." (See Gallup, III, 1951) A Gallup poll of January 9, 1966 asked the question: "If you could sit down and talk to President Johnson and ask him any question you wanted to about Vietnam, what would you ask him?" Gallup reports that a major area of question was concern for why the U.S. was fighting. Also, Gallup indicates many respondents wanted to know, "Are we getting all the truth about Vietnam?" (See Gallup, III, 1982) Finally, a Gallup poll, released June

18, 1967, reported findings in response to the survey question: "Do you feel that you have a clear idea of what the Vietnam war is all about--that is, what we are fighting for?" 48% answered "Yes;" 48% answered "No;" and 4% expressed "No Opinion." See Gallup, III, 2068.

<sup>41</sup> Roger Hilsman, The Politics of Policy Making in Defense and Foreign Affairs (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 126.