

Inside the Pentagon by Tecumseh

On MAD, 'limited war,' and Vietnam

Another way of asking what lay behind America's failure in Vietnam, is: What is Danny Graham really?

Americans are currently under siege by waves of articles, historical reviews, and sociological analyses of the military and political disaster known as the Vietnam War. Amid the tripe, there have been several serious attempts by military specialists to take this matter out of the hands of the assorted "experts" loaned to the *Washington Post* by the strange National Defense University.

Unfortunately, there is a fundamental flaw in the military studies and the "popular" accounts alike: Their efforts to explain the American failure in Vietnam avoid the fact that the notion of "limited war," itself a corollary of the strategic doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), was the principle shaping the American conduct of the war. Since "limited" war is a contradiction in terms, America's failure in Vietnam was inevitable, indeed, willful.

There are very few things about Vietnam which are mysterious once this is understood. What must be grasped is the underlying strategic purpose of the MAD doctrine. Then, those who directed and sabotaged U.S. conduct in Vietnam are understood.

Another way of asking what was MAD really, is, what is Lt.-Gen. Daniel Graham really?

The case of *Westmoreland v. CBS* threw some light on this. Evidence produced during the trial convinced even hardened skeptics that there was a conspiracy on the part of then Colonel Graham and others to falsify field-intelligence data. During the trial itself, Graham lied outrageously to the

point of perjury, to divert attention from something.

According to persons on the scene in Vietnam, there is a big story behind a little lie contained in one of Graham's depositions. If cable traffic identifying Graham as a participant in MACV staff meetings in Saigon several months before he claims to have arrived are accurate: *Graham lied about the date on which he arrived in Vietnam!*

What is Graham's little lie designed to cover up? The answer was predictably avoided by both the CBS and Westmoreland legal teams.

Graham falsified his arrival date because he turned up in Saigon at the same time as Robert Komer and other members of a "team." This team took over intelligence analysis at MACV and proceeded to destroy it. From that point on, actual intelligence didn't matter; it was simply concocted in line with the policy pursued by McNamara, McGeorge Bundy, and the associated butchers who had planned the war and were now planning to lose it and pull out.

The curious position held by Komer, a civilian with more power in military matters than military officials, has no precedent. He was functioning as a "commissar," the personal representative of the President and McNamara. Graham was just one of his fakers.

But don't ask simply: "Who did these guys work for?" Ask also: "On behalf of what policy did they work?"

McNamara, Bundy, and his NSC replacement Kissinger, were impos-

ing colonial-style "cabinet" warfare (i.e., limited war) on the U.S. military, in order to test their own "New Yalta" deal for division of imperial spoils with the Russians, and ensure China a major role in the region ("China Card"). In the process, they were only too happy to demoralize and tear down the armed forces of the United States—and to proceed to wreck the U.S. economy in subsequent years ("post-industrial society"). The MAD doctrine was designed to justify destruction of U.S. military and economic strength, in line with New Yalta.

What these fellows were *not* doing was conducting a war to defeat an enemy.

Specifically, Komer, Graham, and other members of the team arrived in Vietnam in 1967 to blind military intelligence and set up the public relations job for American defeat back home. Graham and Komer locked in the incompetent "body count" evaluations—and ran roughshod over any officer who pointed out that enemy strength does not lie in mere numbers of soldiers.

The case of the botched evaluations leading into the Tet Offensive is the celebrated instance: One can judge the purpose of the Komer-Graham lying by the consequences: Whatever actual enemy losses were up to that point, Tet displayed to Americans back home that the "official" version of the war was a fraud. Public support for any type of military engagement collapsed.

Vietnam was not a war, but a cynical, bloody manipulation in the service of MAD. But then, one of the key players, Danny Graham, has built a "military" career on this. What is his "High Frontier" parody of the President's Strategic Defense Initiative today but a cynical manipulation in the service of MAD?