

# Origins of the American War in Vietnam: The OSS Role in Saigon in 1945

Geoffrey Gunn

## Origins of the American War in Vietnam: The OSS Role in Saigon in 1945

Geoff Gunn

Nearly thirty years have passed since the end of the “Vietnam War” or rather the “American War,” as it is known in Vietnam. But the American war in Vietnam originated in the French war to restore colonialism in the power vacuum following the Japanese surrender in August-September 1945. As the following article documents, early U.S. post-war planners seemed to have grasped the iniquitous nature of old-style colonialism only to have forgotten their ideals when confronted with an independent revolutionary movement in the early days of US-Soviet conflict. History has revealed the disastrous consequences of American escalation in Vietnam on the wrong side of history, just as the lessons of history appear seldom to have been learned as, one generation on, America plunges into no less disastrous military adventures in other theaters in pursuit of militant Islam tied to terror.

### A Watershed in U.S. Policy on Southeast Asia

As the Pentagon Papers reveal, U.S. policy towards France and repossession of its colonial territories was ambivalent. On the one hand, the U.S. supported Free French claims to all overseas possessions. On the other hand, in the Atlantic Charter and in other pronouncements, the U.S. proclaimed support for national self-determination and

independence. Through 1944, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt held to his views on colonialism and proscribed direct U.S. support for French resistance groups inside Indochina. By January 1945, U.S. concerns had shifted decisively to the Japanese archipelago and the prospect of U.S. force commitments to Southeast Asia was nixed, leaving this sphere to British forces. Following the Yalta Conference (February 1945), U.S. planners declined to offer logistical support to Free French forces in Indochina. But the American position came under French criticism in March 1945 in the wake of the Japanese coup de force in Vichy French-administered Indochina leading to Japanese military takeover and internment of French civilians. The American decision to forego commitment to operations in Southeast Asia prompted the Singapore-based British Southeast Asia Command (SEAC) commander Admiral Louis Mountbatten to liberate Malaya without U.S. assistance. At the time of Roosevelt's death on 12 April 1945, U.S. policy towards the colonial possessions of Allies was in “disarray.” [1]

Roosevelt is on record for his anti-colonial views with regard to French rule in Indochina. These were elaborated at the Teheran Conference of 28 November 1943 where Roosevelt and Stalin concurred that Indochina should not be returned to the French, and were reiterated in January the following year over the opposition of the British “who fear the effect [trusteeship] would have on their own possessions and those of the Dutch.” As reported by Charles Taussig, who interviewed Roosevelt, “the President was concerned about the plight of “brown people” in the East ruled

over by a handful of whites. “Our goal must be to help them achieve independence - 1.1 billion enemies are dangerous,” he said. Roosevelt opined that French Indochina and New Caledonia should be placed under a trusteeship or, at a minimum, should France retain these colonies, then with the proviso that independence was the ultimate goal. [2]

Roosevelt also launched the predecessor of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), headed by William Donovan, in July 1941. Enjoying close ties to Roosevelt, Donovan was instructed to provide cover to support national liberation movements in Asia to resist the Japanese. Whereas in France the OSS worked alongside the Free French to resist the Nazi occupation, in Asia the situation differed in Asia. When Japanese invaded Indochina in September 1940, the U.S. froze Japanese assets, the first of several moves that would lead to the Pearl Harbor attack. In July 1942, with Japanese occupation of Southeast Asia a reality, the OSS set up a guerrilla base in India for operations in Southeast Asia and China. In northern Vietnam and southern Yunnan, the OSS worked hand-in-hand with the Vietnamese communists, while Ho Chi Minh’s Viet Minh gave assistance to downed U.S. fliers. The OSS team was also present in Hanoi on 17 August 1945, the day that the Viet Minh took over Hanoi from the Japanese. [3]



**Vo Nguyen Giap with Vietminh**

Roosevelt's penchant for trusteeships as a bridge to independence foundered, however, in the face of determined British opposition. At the Dumbarton Oaks Conference in August-September 1944, where the blueprint for a new international system was brokered, the British skirted the colonial issue altogether. The President's lip service to anti-colonialism was not matched by U.S. intervention in Vietnam, indeed Indochina would be assigned a status parallel to that of Burma, Malaya and the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia), that is free territory to be re-conquered by the colonial powers. [4]

The advent of the Truman Administration in April 1945 represented a turning point in Washington's thinking on the larger questions of colonialism and independence. The New Deal idealism of Roosevelt and Donovan, which viewed the struggle against Western colonialism as part of the struggle against tyranny, came under intense scrutiny in the light of a reappraisal of the Soviet Union and changing conceptions of the U.S. global role in general, and its position in the Asia-Pacific in particular.

The change of direction in the Truman Administration was matched by a more assertive approach by the State Department, especially its European section. In April 1945, French diplomats in Washington “skillfully” applied pressure to gain official recognition of French sovereignty in Indochina. Notably, at the United Nations Conference at San Francisco in May-June 1945, Under-Secretary of State James Dunn, together with Secretary of State Edward Stettinius, assured the French about the unchanged colonial status of Indochina, asserting that Washington had never “officially” questioned French sovereignty. According to Richard J. Aldrich, at this stage the OSS in the field was obviously “out of step with metropolitan policy-makers,” especially with respect to the larger issues of colonialism and communism. [5]

But the dye was also set for the future of post-surrender Indochina by the terms of the Potsdam Conference of July-August 1945 where it was decided to temporarily partition Vietnam (and Laos) at the 16th parallel. Under this arrangement, Allied chiefs-of staff assigned British forces to take the Japanese surrender in Saigon and in Cambodia, while Japanese troops were to surrender to Chinese forces of Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) north of the 16th parallel.

Notable, as well, was the direction and influence of George Kennan of the U.S. State Department. Kennan, who had helped establish the U.S. Embassy in Moscow in 1933, became increasingly skeptical towards the USSR, believing that the Roosevelt spirit of cooperation was misplaced. Apparently, State Department realists had already drawn the line on vigilance against international communism, even prior to the advent of the Truman administration.

Support for the Dutch and French under the Atlantic Treaty obliged the U.S. to walk a fine line in dealing with these two nations with respect to their Southeast Asian colonies. Kennan recommended that the Dutch and French distance themselves from 19th century imperialism and face up to modern realities. He also urged multinational collaboration in Asia with India, Pakistan, and the Philippines to dispel association with white imperialism. Specifically, Kennan recognized militant Asian nationalism as a historical reality and viewed any attempt to reverse this process as an “anti-historical act and, in the long run, would create more problems than it solves and cause more damage than benefit.” But, according to A.K. Nelson in an introduction to a State Department Policy Planning paper, Kennan viewed Soviet attention to Southeast Asia as a strategic lever against the U.S. [6]

Kennan was convinced that the Soviet Union had expansionist goals and that it had to be

stopped, the subject of his now famous “Long Telegram” of 22 February 1946. The U.S. Cold War policy of “containment” as enunciated in the Truman Doctrine of 12 March 1947, also bears Kennan's signature. America's slide into the Vietnam War, as tracked in the Pentagon Papers and elsewhere, can be traced back to these watershed events and decisions. But how did these lofty ideals, reappraisals, and fast-shifting commitments play out on the ground in Saigon in the heady days of August-September 1945 following the Japanese surrender?

### **The China-Indochina Theater**

In the larger scheme, the U.S. role in Indochina preceding and following the Japanese surrender flowed out of its commitments in support of Jiang Jieshi and the Guomindang in the China Theater, which included those parts of Thailand and Indochina then occupied by the Allies. While Jiang exercised preeminence over the Allies in the China Theater, at a meeting at his wartime headquarters in Chongqing (Chungking) on 16 October 1943, SEAC Commander, Louis Mountbatten gained the Generalissimo's approval for the British-dominated SEAC to operate inside these boundaries.



**Mountbatten in China, 1944**

As early as 1942-1943 clandestine American parties were operating in Free China and by 1944, the OSS already actively sought the support of the Viet Minh in the anti-Japanese cause. [7] In 1945 the OSS was reorganized with the tacit agreement of SEAC and China, setting up staff headquarters in strategically located Kunming in Yunnan. The Japanese *coup de force* in Indochina of March 1945 also galvanized the OSS into action in the north, just as Free French guerrillas took to the mountains in both Vietnam and Laos to prepare for an eventual colonial restoration.

Drawing upon OSS sources, Specter [8] argues that the American role in the south, if more conspicuous than in the north, was much less important. Yet it was in Saigon in September 1945 that American support for self-determination and independence came unstuck.[9] The following account seeks to explain less well documented events and actions on the part of the OSS in southern

Vietnam, which, together with contemporaneous events in Laos, also highlight conflicts of interests and goals among the British, French and the Americans concerning restoration of the colonial status quo ante.

### **First Americans in Saigon**

The first Americans into Saigon entered by parachute on 1 September 1945. They were a prisoner-of-war evacuation group under First Lieutenant Emile R. Counasse. This was an advance element of Operation Embankment, in turn planned as early as 10 August by OSS Detachment 404 based in Sri Lanka (Ceylon). The above group was to accompany British troops to Saigon with the stated objective of investigating war crimes, locating and assisting Allied POWs, particularly Americans, securing American properties, and tracking political trends. From the outset British General Gracey had objected to the American presence in Vietnam. However, he was overridden by SEAC commander, Mountbatten. Operation Embankment was commanded by Lieut-Colonel A. Peter Dewey, who arrived in Saigon by C-47 on 2 September with four team members landing on a Japanese airfield near the main Saigon (Tan Son Nhut) airport. Dewey was told that he was on his own and could expect no logistical help from the British. This arrangement also allowed him to operate independently. [10]



CORBIS

### **Peter Dewey**

The arrival of the OSS team was not America's first involvement in southern Vietnam. For three years American air and naval forces had been harassing Japanese positions in and around Vietnam. Notably, Saigon harbor had been raided by U.S. carrier-based aircraft and bombing raids had flown out of India. At least one American airman had been shot down over Cholon, Saigon's China-town, in an attempted raid on the railway station.

Eventually, the OSS team liberated 214 Americans held in Japanese POW camps outside of Saigon. The majority had been captured in Java and employed on the River Kwai railroad before being interned in Saigon. Another eight were airmen shot down over Indochina. They were flown out of Saigon on seven DC3s on 5 September. [11] Archival sources make no mention of Dewey's brief to investigate Japanese war crimes, indeed these records possibly remain classified. Setting aside high profile cases, such as with Field Marshal Terauchi Hisaichi, it was the French

who vigorously prosecuted Japanese war crimes in Vietnam, of which there were many against French officials and French and Vietnamese civilians alike. French investigations led to the execution of five Japanese for the murder of American airmen downed in Indochina. At this time, many Japanese, Kempeitai included, avoided investigation by throwing in their lot with the Viet Minh as military advisors and in other roles.

In the event, Counasse's advance team was greeted "respectfully" by the Japanese. They also had to content with the so-called United National Front government in Saigon comprising Trotskyists, Cao Dai, Hao Hoa and other nationalist and religious groups and sects. While dismissing the motley coalition government as a "drugstore revolution," the team nevertheless reported that its control was "complete," even if its actions appeared "hazy" or unexplainable. With Dewey's arrival and assumption of local command, the American team established close contact with the leaders of the independence movement, including the Viet Minh. Almost immediately, however, Dewey was prevailed upon by both the French and General Douglas Gracey, the British commander of occupation forces south of the 16th parallel as outlined in the Potsdam Conference, to keep his distance, lest he give the impression of official U.S. support for the independence movement.

Dewey had also made personal contact with the Viet Minh. On 7 September, he radioed the first American account of what had transpired in Saigon on Independence Day, matching the events of the August Revolution in Hanoi, leading to the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam by a triumphant Ho Chi Minh. He also air-pouched a comprehensive report on complex Vietnamese political maneuvers in the south and confirmed French General Cedile's arrival on 22-23 August. Dewey made contact with left-wing French

elements then in Saigon leading to his meeting with the Viet Minh supremo of southern Vietnam and future communist historian, Tran Van Giau (along with Dr. Pham Ngoc Thac and Nguyen Van Tao) on 27 August. He kept up a stream of reports relating to the fragile relationship between Giau and the Trotskyists. [12]

U.S.-Vietnamese relations took a major turn for the worse on 24 September, when OSS Captain Joseph Coolidge was wounded in an ambush and two days later when Dewey was killed (26 September) in then mysterious circumstances by a group of Vietnamese. Dewey's successor, Lt. James R. Withrow, arrived soon after, to observe the French re-conquest of South Vietnam. [13]

Sometimes billed as America's first Vietnam War casualty, Dewey was born in 1916 in Chicago, schooled in Switzerland and later majored in French at Yale. He saw action in France against the Germans, before evacuating via Portugal and Spain back to the U.S. In August 1942 he enlisted in the U.S. army as an intelligence officer with the Air Transport Command in Africa. Following an approach made to an old family friend, General Bill Donovan, he was recruited by the OSS. Dewey was also the son of U.S. Congressman, Charles S. Dewey. He was dispatched deep into German occupied France supplying crucial intelligence on the German withdrawal and making an epic 600-mile retreat march through enemy territory. Returning to Washington, in July 1945 he was selected to head the OSS team that would enter Saigon after the Japanese surrender.

Dewey's OSS team was ordered to leave Sri Lanka for Saigon on 1 September. Following stops in Rangoon and Bangkok, the team arrived at Tan Son Nuth airport in Saigon on 4 September where they were met by members of the Japanese High Command and "enthusiastic crowds of Vietnamese," holding

high expectations of a perceived American commitment for an end to colonial empires. Until 12 September, the OSS team with headquarters at the Villa Ferrier northeast of the airport, was the only Allied presence in Saigon. Later that day, a company of British soldiers (a Gurkha division from Rangoon) flew in at around the same time as a company of French paratroopers from Calcutta.

In the interim, Dewey made contact with the Viet Minh-established Committee of the South. Advocates of a "peaceful policy," they looked to America, China, and Russia to prevent a French restoration. Also opposing the French were the pro-Japanese Phuc Quoc Party as well as the United National Front. They spread rumors of an imminent French restoration and were in no mood for negotiations. As always, the Binh Xuyen (Saigon gangsters) were a force to be reckoned with. For their part, the Viet Minh had constructed makeshift roadblocks around Saigon to prevent the French return.

Three days prior to Dewey's death, General Jean Cedile and his forces brazenly occupied all major buildings in Saigon, while arming interned French troops. But these were French troops released under British General Gracey's order, and Gracey himself was responsible for disarming the Japanese. Provocative actions by the newly armed French troops along with French civilians on the streets of Saigon threw the Viet Minh on the defensive, ironically setting the trap for Dewey on the fateful day of 26 September. Dewey attempted to lodge an official complaint with Gracey, but the British commander, suspecting that Dewey was in cahoots with the Viet Minh, declared the American persona non grata and ordered him out of the country. Dewey acceded to this order, believed by the American party to have been passed down by the French, not at all happy with the OSS role in Indochina generally. [14]

Returning to the Villa Ferrier from the airport

by jeep owing to a delay in the arrival of his aircraft, Dewey - "possibly mistaken for a Frenchman" - was shot dead in a Viet Minh ambush on the airport perimeter. His companion, Major Herbet Bleuchel, was able to escape. Subsequently, six Vietnamese were killed in a fierce exchange of fire with the beleaguered OSS team holed up in the Villa Ferrier, pending the arrival of two British Gurkha platoons who helped evacuate the American party to the Continental Hotel.

Testimony in the form of a signed affidavit of 13 October 1945 by Captain Frank H. White, an OSS team member who sought to recover Dewey's body, is also revealing. According to White, in the late afternoon, he approached a Vietnamese party displaying a Red Cross flag, seeking to recover bodies of their slain comrades. White observed a considerable number of armed Vietnamese in the vicinity including the leader of the party, a French-speaking individual around 30 years old. Launching into a polemic against the French and the British who protected them, he asserted that, had he known that Dewey was American, he would not have ordered the attack. He also stated that his party had only attacked OSS headquarters because he believed that French and British resided there. White also observed that the Vietnamese were equipped with Japanese military material including cartridge boxes and canteens. [15]

Recriminations as to who ordered the killing poisoned the atmosphere, with some Americans blaming British Special Operations Executive (SOE), also operating clandestinely in Saigon, and the British blaming the Japanese, while the French blamed the Viet Minh. In part, to mollify the Americans, Ho Chi Minh let it be known that he disapproved of the killing. This took the form of a letter addressed to President Truman expressing condolences and friendship with the American people. Long after the end of the war, Tran Van Giau apologized to Dewey's daughter for the Viet Minh error. [16] The

Allied Control Commission subsequently produced a report on Dewey's death, inter alia casting doubt on whether the incident could have been prevented if the Americans were allowed to fly an American flag on their jeeps as wished, and as forbidden by the French. [17]

### **The OSS View**

Documents relating to OSS Activity in Vietnam, notably those relating to Dewey's death, are also revealing of the attitudes of the OSS, not to mention French, British and Japanese towards the Viet Minh but also the Viet Minh *pris de position* in this standoff.

The brief by Major F. M. Small is illustrative. As he wrote in a signed affidavit of 25 October 1945, "From my own observation and study, the general situation in Saigon reflects an intense desire on the part of the Vietnamese (Annamese) for independence and thorough hatred of them for the French and any other white people who happen to be in any way supporting or sympathizing with the French. The hatred of the Vietnamese for the French has been brought about by the not too enlightened policy of the French, which has been to exploit the Vietnamese to the greatest extent possible and treat them more or less with contempt. The Vietnamese naturally greatly resent the British protection of French interests and insomuch as the American military in Saigon regularly attend British staff meetings, it is quite likely that the Vietnamese infer that the United States tacitly approves the British policy." Small also described British General Gracey as "not well suited to his assignment." Notably, his mishandling of the situation with respect to arming the French POWs was the "single immediate contribution to the intensification of Vietnamese animosity to all whites in Saigon, and thus directly contributed to Dewey's death." [18]

### **Sideshow in Laos**

Neither was there any love lost between the newly returned French in Laos and a party of Americans dubbed Raven Mission dispatched by OSS headquarters in Kunming and parachuted into the landlocked country on 16 September 1945. [19] French General and military historian Jean Boucher de Crèvecoeur [20] goes as far as to say that the American officers were not only opposed to the French and pro-French Lao but actually supported (pro-independence) groups including Prince Phetsarath, the anti-French Lao Issara or Lao nationalist leader, obliquely backed by the Japanese. Major Aaron Banks (already a veteran of various anti-Nazi missions in Europe) and Major Charles Holland of the OSS are described as spouting anti-French propaganda.

Events reached a climax on 27 September when a British party led by Major Peter Kemp of Force 136 (the cover name for the British SOE in Southeast Asia) crossing the Mekong from their base at Nakhon Phanom in northeast Thailand were surrounded by an armed Viet Minh patrol who demanded the surrender of French Lieutenant Francis Klotz. Although protected by the British, Klotz was assassinated by the Viet Minh. To the disdain of the French, OSS agent Reese, also accompanying the party, maintained his neutrality. Although, the OSS party remonstrated with the Viet Minh, the killer was never transferred to the British base as they demanded. According to de Crèvecoeur, [21] the incident was also a turning point for the Americans recalled from the mission by higher authorities in Kunming. [22] But in the eyes of the Americans “what made the British operations reprehensible was that they were undertaken on behalf of the French” (and working in territory north of the 16th parallel formally reserved for the Chinese under the Potsdam Agreement). [23]

More than anything, the events in Saigon as well as the Laos incident reveals the bind that individual Americans were in, especially in

being seen by the French and their British allies as siding with the Viet Minh (alongside Lao nationalists) against pro-French collaborators and coalitions, who were actively succored by stay-behind Free French guerrillas. It may not have been apparent at the time, but the Americans in urban Saigon, as well as the back blocks of Laos, were witness to the first sparks igniting what would be a fratricidal 30-year civil and international war of almost incalculable costs.

Certain of the OSS veterans and relatives have returned to Vietnam as virtual state guests, as with Peter Dewey's daughter. Notably, Viet Minh and OSS veterans, including Asian members, have held at least two reunions, one in 1995 and one in 1997 in New York. Some of the OSS veterans returned to civilian life, as with Frank White who became a foreign correspondent. Georges Wickes, also with Dewey in Saigon, became a professor of English at the University of Oregon. Another, Major Aaron Banks, also a Korean War veteran, joined the American war as the “father” of the Green Berets or U.S. Special Forces. Yet another of the OSS team in Laos, B. Hugh Tovar, went on to play key roles in U.S. Cold War operations. Among other posts, Tovar served the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta in 1964-1966 during the Suharto coup and bloodbath, later resurfacing as CIA station chief in Laos between May 1970 and September 1973, at the height of the “secret war” and bombing. In Washington, Tovar headed Covert Action and Counterintelligence Staffs. More recently, Tovar emerged as an advocate of Hmong minority rights in the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

It would be tempting to allow that the OSS-Viet Minh reunions of the mid to late 1990s were harbingers of a larger reconciliation between Washington and Hanoi. While the realities of the American war long pushed these historical memories to the background, the sacrifices shared by both the OSS and the Viet Minh in



the anti-Japanese struggle of 1944-1945 are nevertheless notable. Still it required larger shifts by both sides to even reach the stage of resumption of economic ties. Political accommodation would arrive only during the Clinton Administration. Up until 1993, the United States still imposed an economic embargo upon Vietnam. Although bitterly opposed by many veteran groups, along with Republicans in Congress, Clinton lifted the embargo and, in July 1995, restored diplomatic relations. In part, Clinton was also under pressure from American business interests that were still barred from trading with Vietnam. But, responsive to veteran groups, Washington also demanded progress by Hanoi in expediting the search and recovery of missing-persons or MIA cases, while ignoring Vietnamese demands for reparations for Agent Orange and other victims of the American war. In November 2000, Clinton became the first U.S. head of state to visit Vietnam since the end of the war. Although offering no apologies, he nevertheless expressed the need to further the process of reconciliation. As he stated in Hanoi, "The history we leave behind is painful and hard. We must not forget it, but we must not be controlled by it." As one who had said "no" to the war in his youth, his audience was doubtless all the more appreciative. In November 2006 George W. Bush became the second U.S. president to visit Vietnam since the end of the war, ostensibly to strengthen business ties in the booming Vietnamese economy. But Bush's visit also drew comparisons between U.S. failure in Vietnam and the war in Iraq, prompting the president's suggestive, but ironic, "We'll succeed unless we quit" one-liner. [24]

*Geoff Gunn is author of Political Struggles in Laos, 1930-1954 (Duang Kamol, Bangkok, 1988; reprint White Lotus, Bangkok, 2005) and an Asia-Pacific Journal coordinator. He wrote this article for The Asia-Pacific Journal.*

*Recommended citation: Geoff Gunn, "Origins of the American War in Vietnam: The OSS Role in Saigon in 1945." The Asia-Pacific Journal, Vol. 19-3-09, May 9, 2009.*

#### Notes

- [1] *Pentagon Papers: The Defense Department History of United States Decisionmaking on Vietnam*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1971, Chapter 1 "Background to the Crisis, 1940-50" pp. 1-52.
- [2] Thomas G. Paterson and Dennis Merrill, *Major Problems in American Foreign Policy, Vol. II: Since 1914*, 4th ed. D.C. Heath and Co., Lexington 1995, pp.189-90.
- [3] Archimedes Patti, *Why Viet Nam? Prelude to America's Albatross*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1980.
- [4] *Pentagon Papers*.
- [5] Richard J. Aldrich, *Intelligence and the War Against Japan, Britain, America and the Politics of the Secret Service*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 305; 343-45.
- [6] A.K. Nelson (ed), *The State Department Policy Staff papers, 1947-1949* (3 vols. New York), pp. 1ix.
- [7] Patti, *Why Viet Nam?*, p.52.
- [8] R.H. Spector, *Advice and Support The Early Years of the United States Army in Vietnam 1941-1960*, The Free Press New York London, 1985.
- [9] For a focused study of intra-factional struggles between the Viet Minh, Trotskyists, and others in Saigon in 1945, see David G. Marr, *Vietnam 1945: The Quest for Power* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1995).
- [10] Patti, *Why Viet Nam?*, p. 272.
- [11] OSS Southeast Asia Command.
- [12] Patti, *Why Viet Nam?*, pp. 275-76.
- [13] Spector, *Advice and Support*, p. 68.
- [14] In a recent book on the role of the British in Vietnam, *Britain in Vietnam: Prelude to Disaster, 1945-6* (Routledge, 2007, chap "Death of an OSS Man"), Peter Neville strikes a more critical position on the OSS role in Saigon, at least as reported by Archimedes Patti in *Why Viet Nam?* Neville even doubts that Dewey was ordered out of Vietnam suggesting he wished

to leave on his own volition.

[15] Death of Major Peter Dewey, October 1945, Pike Collection, Item no. 2360209040

[16] Seymour Topping, "Vietnamese Historian Recalls Untold Story of Tragic Murder of Peter Dewey," in *The OSS Society, Inc*, Summer 2005, pp.3-4.

[17] Documents Relating to OSS Activity in French Indochina MLB-2739-B.

[18] Death of Major Peter Dewey, October 1945.

[19] Arthur J. Dommen and George W. Dalley, "The OSS and Laos: The 1945 Raven Mission and American Policy," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 22, no.2, September, 1991, pp.327-46.

[20] Jean Boucher de Crèvecoeur, *La Liberation du Laos, 1945-1946*, Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre, Vincennes, 1985, pp. 51-60.

[21] de Crèvecoeur, *La Liberation*, pp.51-60.

[22] Dommen and Dalley, p.342.

[23] Dommen and Dalley (p.346) suggest that knowledge of the "impermissible independence" of the OSS in Laos actually gave pause to President Truman and successors as to the need for firmer presidential control over a successor intelligence organization, namely the CIA. The OSS also fell victim of intra-bureaucratic turf wars in Washington. Abolished by Truman, the OSS was formally closed down in October 1945 with individuals morphing into a Strategic Services Unit coming under the War Department. In July 1947, the CIA was created as America's prime intelligence organization, just as the Cold War was given priority.

See, Aldrich, *Intelligence and the War Against Japan*, p.343.

[24] Robert Scheer, "Bush's Vietnam Analogy," *The Nation*, 22 November 2006.