Press Release
June 8, 2011

National Archives and Presidential Libraries Release
Pentagon Papers
Washington, DC—On June 13, 2011, the National Archives and the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon Presidential Libraries will release in its entirety the official Report of the Office of the Secretary of Defense Vietnam Task Force (commonly referred to as the Pentagon Papers). This is the 40th anniversary of the leak of these Papers by the New York Times. Approximately 2,804 pages or 24% of the Report will be opened for the first time as compared to the Senator Gruelvet Edition of the Pentagon Papers, the most common benchmark used in Pentagon Papers discussions.

Opening Information:
Beginning June 13, each library and the Research Room at the National Archives facility in College Park, MD will have hard copies of the papers available for review, beginning at 12 noon EDT in College Park and at the Kennedy Library, 10 AM CDT at the Johnson Library, and at noon EST at the Nixon Library. The materials will also be available online [http://www.archives.gov/research/pentagon-papers], June 13, at 12 noon EDT.

Locations:
John F. Kennedy Library,
Columbia Point,
Boston MA 02125
(617) 514-1629
www.jfklibrary.org

Lyndon Johnson Library,
213 Red River Street,
Austin, Texas 78705
(512) 719-6612
www.lbjlibrary.org

Richard Nixon Library,
18001 Yorba Linda Boulevard,
Yorba Linda, California 92886
(714) 853-6120
www.nixonlibrary.gov

National Archives at College Park,
8601 Adelphi Rd,
College Park, MD 20740-8321
(301) 857-0100

Background Information
The 7,600 page report was commissioned by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara in 1967. He appointed Defense Department official John McNaughton, Morton Halperin, and Leslie Gelb to lead the task force. McNaughton’s organization published a 47 volume document known as the Report of the OSD (Office of Secretary of Defense) Vietnam Task Force and given the title United States-Vietnam Relations 1945-1967. The entire report was classified at the Top Secret level, although certain volumes of the report contained public statements that were considered declassified. The Department of Justice and OSD investigations into the leak of the classified report determined that at least fifteen original copies were made (it’s not clear if more than fifteen were printed). The National Archives has one complete set and multiple copies of various volumes of the report located in two record series from Record Group 360, Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and Record Group 65, Records of the Department of Justice. Complete original sets are also at the Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon Libraries.

The New York Times published the first unauthorized release of what it termed the Vietnam Archive on June 13, 1971. The source document of that leak, along with the leaks to more than a dozen other media outlets, was a copy of the Report created by Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony Russo. That copy of the report which was well documented in Mr. Ellsberg’s 2002 work, Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers, was not the prime document created by Leslie Gelb’s task force. The conditions under which the copies of the Report were made and distributed, coupled with the speed with which the copies were distributed and the urgency to publish the material, meant that the newspaper and magazine releases of the Papers covered only a very small portion of the 7,600 page Report.

The subsequent copies of the Report that were leaked to the U.S. Congress ultimately bore more of the report published. Senator Mike Gravel (D, Alaska) made available his copy of the Report to the publishing house of Beacon Press, located in Boston. The Beacon Press edition was published in 1971. However, Beacon Press had its own reproduction problems that led to reprints, paragraphs, and even full pages of the report being deleted, possibly due to the quality problems in the copy received from Senator Gravel. In addition, the Beacon Press edition completely reorganized the volume of the original Report they received. The House Committee on Armed Services also published its version in 1971. This version followed the same arrangement as the original report, but had some text removed during declassification review.

Ellsberg and Russo did not leak Part VI of the Report, which describes various negotiating initiatives. The State Department declassified Part VI in 2002 at the Johnson Library.

This current release by the National Archives and the Presidential libraries will present the American public with the first definitive look at this historic document.

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For press information, contact the National Archives Public Affairs staff at 202-357-0330.

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