

Vietnam Report

In his article "Academy membership fight goes public" (News & Comment, 5 Dec., p. 1192), Eliot Marshall writes: "One of the letters Lang sent to all members of the Academy may be in error for it has been challenged directly by Huntington. The letter, written to Lang by Marion Levy, describes Levy's shaky recollection of a 1966 survey of political opinion in Vietnam, proposed to the State Department. . . . Levy cited many methodological weaknesses in the proposal." The "challenge" made by Huntington concerned solely and specifically whether the study involved what could be called technically a "survey" or "questionnaire." My memory was not shaky about a proposal to "discriminate and analyze, if I recall correctly, different political sets and their opinions in Saigon and the surrounding area" and, indeed, I cited many methodological weaknesses. According to Robert D. Putnam of Harvard University: "[f]rom 1966 to 1969 Huntington chaired the Vietnam subcommittee of the U.S. government's Southeast Asia Development Advisory Group . . . and in 1967 was asked by the State Department to prepare a detailed report on political development, the war, and U.S. policy" (1, p. 842). Also according to Putnam, Huntington's research has now been declassified. After learning of this specific reference, both I (5 November 1986) and Serge Lang (28 November 1986) wrote again to Huntington to ask for further information about his report, for a copy of the report, and for his "research instruments" (as he calls them). As of the time this letter went to press, neither of us had received a reply from Huntington. Until I receive this documentation, I shall continue to raise the question of whether Huntington had the language and historical qualification for scholarly expertise in the matters dealt with in his report. I believe that as a scholar, Huntington owes it to the academic community and especially to readers of *Science* to provide the appropriate documents to allow for a public analysis of his report, and whether or how I was in "error."

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REFERENCES

1. For confirmation, see "Samuel P. Huntington: An appreciation" [R. D. Putnam, *PS* (a publication of the American Political Science Association) 19, 837 (fall 1986)].

Response: That Marion Levy might have an incomplete recollection of a conversation

of 20 years ago is not surprising. It is surprising that he does not describe more completely what he wrote 9 months ago. His letter of 12 May 1986 to Serge Lang was a three-page, single-spaced attack on a study he said I proposed to undertake in Vietnam in the mid-1960s. He criticized this study explicitly and exclusively on the grounds that it was going to "analyze . . . different political sets and their opinions in Saigon and the surrounding area." "The problem of getting adequate samples for any such survey technique study as is called for in the proposal," he said, "was beyond the reach of any of the talent that I knew of there." During his own work in Vietnam, Levy said, he "had not located anybody who could claim any competence whatsoever in social science survey techniques. . . ." In addition, he argued that "the people who were going to carry out the study would not even know whether their questionnaires had been correctly translated into the relevant languages; they would not know whether they had been properly administered to respondents; they would not even be sure that they had been administered at all." As a result, he said, no one "would have the slightest idea in hell as to whether or not the results presented were in any way reliable" and hence the proposer of such a study "had to be either a charlatan or a fool."

Levy thus based his highly personal ad hominem attack on me exclusively on the claim that the study I purportedly undertook in Vietnam was a "survey technique study." As I have stated before, this is totally false. I have *never* been involved in the

planning, direction, or implementation of a survey research study in Vietnam or anywhere else.

Levy now appears to be trying to extricate himself from a wholly untenable position and is instead asking whether I carried out *any* study in Vietnam in the mid-1960s. About that too, however, there can be no debate. Of course I did, as indeed he did also, and I have never made any secret of my work there as a consultant to the Policy Planning Council of the State Department. I subsequently published an article in *Foreign Affairs* (1) based in large part on that study, and then, after I secured its declassification under the Freedom of Information Act, quoted from my report in a piece in the *Washington Post* (2). Levy's vicious attack on me, however, was not based on my doing a study in Vietnam but rather quite explicitly on my supposedly undertaking, in his phrase, a "survey technique study." On that he is 100% wrong.

Levy talks about the responsibility of scholars. One responsibility surely is to check out the facts before circulating charges that someone is "a charlatan or a fool" that derive from incomplete recollections of a corridor conversation 20 years ago.

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REFERENCES

1. S. P. Huntington, *Foreign Affairs* 46, 642 (1968).
2. ———, *Washington Post*, 1 February 1977, p. A 17.

Erratum: In the report "Site-specific nick in the T-DNA border sequence as a result of *Agrobacterium vir* gene expression" by K. Wang *et al.* (30 Jan., p. 587), figure 2A on page 588 should have shown a 3.2-kilobase band in lane b that was not visible. Also, 1.9-kilobase

bands in lanes e and g were not visible. A print that shows the bands in figure 2, A and B, appears below. In addition, reference 24 should have been to J. L. Slightom, L. Jouanin, F. Leach, R. F. Drong, D. Tepfer, *EMBO J.* 4, 3069 (1985).

