

Editorial Page

Past 'Brush Fire' Stage

Any conflict that has assumed the dimensions of the fighting in South Viet Nam remains only a spark away from a major conflagration. Thus far Moscow has been careful to stress the "defensive" nature of the assistance it promises North Viet Nam, while abetting a riotous attack on the U.S. embassy in Moscow. Red China has confined itself to threats of future retaliation against the "imperialists," while likewise staging "demonstrations."

The Communists may have been content with the kind of attrition they have been waging in Southeast Asia. But they now must

have a healthy regard for the consequences of escalating this conflict to force a military decision. There are few more unlikely spots on the face of the earth for U.S. involvement in war, but the decision is not of this country's making.

By stepping up their attacks and committing troops to the U.S. in Moscow and Peking, the North Vietnamese will only deepen U.S. involvement. It must be clear to the various Communist headquarters that this country has the determination and the power to stay until the people of Southeast Asia have a chance to live a life of their choosing.

Fed Up To Here

Although the President is charged with the responsibility, under the Constitution, for the conduct of foreign affairs—subject only to the advice and consent of the Senate in formal treaty matters—almost every administration finds it prudent to consult certain individuals and committees in Congress and receive their recommendations.

In a practical sense, Congress is in a position to wield considerable influence in foreign affairs, if it wishes to do so. Occasionally, as on the occasion of the House voting to withhold subsidies of food shipments to the United Arab Republic—an action since reversed—it does so.

The House action did have the effect of letting Abdul Nasser know a number of Americans are becoming weary of seeing their tax dollars used to provide aid to a tyrant who holds out his hand for all he can get while telling the United States to take its food and go jump to hell.

In true imitation of Indonesia's Sukarno, who more forcefully told the U.S. it could take its aid and go to hell, Nasser's crude remark came on top of the burning of a costly U.S. installation in Cairo, while government

troops stood idly by.

No nation has taken such abuse from so many recipients of its aid, and so consistently refrained from taking more than token notice. Check the list of more than 100 countries now receiving military or economic assistance from the United States, and among them will be found dozens which—while not publicly thumbing their noses at the U.S. in the manner of a Nasser or a Sukarno—constantly oppose in the UN, in the cold war, in the fight against Communist aggression in Asia and Africa and in most other fields of international relations, every move of the U.S.

Certainly the President, does need a virtually free rein in trying to steer a course for the free world through perilous channels, but his authority in any field, including foreign relations, cannot be absolute. When the dignity of the U.S. suffers because of a weak foreign policy—as it certainly does through continued handouts to despots who publicly insult and ridicule this country but in fact favored the Laos solution—Congress has a right to curtail the President's authority in any way it can.



RAY CROMLEY . . .

LBJ's Trip To Moscow

WASHINGTON (NEA)—There is concern in the State Department and Pentagon over President Johnson's proposed trip to the Soviet Union.

Viet Nam assuredly will come up in the Moscow talks. As things in Viet Nam stand now, Brezhnev and Kossygin will be dealing from strength, Johnson from weakness.

This is no way to assure a free South Viet Nam. "Why couldn't he wait until we're ahead in the Viet Nam war and had Hanoi and Moscow worried about what might happen to North Viet Nam?" asks one official unhappily.

"I'm afraid of what will happen in talks under today's circumstances, when we're not doing so well against the Viet Cong."

Says another official: "When you ask someone to give up something that's going his

way, you must have something to offer. If we were only on the offensive somewhere in the world—anywhere. But that's what comes from not taking the initiative. The President doesn't have many bargaining cards in his hand."

The question being asked behind closed doors in the Pentagon and the State Department is simple:

How much will President Johnson's strong desire to go down in history as the man who worked out a peaceful end to the Soviet-U.S. cold war influence what he agrees to in Viet Nam?

Will the President, for example, consent to a face-saving solution like the one in China after World War II, which resulted in a Communist takeover?

These officials remember what happened to President

Franklin D. Roosevelt at Yalta. They're not happy either about Laos, even though some of them favored the Laos solution at the time "as the only way out."

These questions come up because Johnson and his advisers have made it clear both at the Defense and State Departments that Johnson wants a Kremlin-White House rapprochement his "role" in foreign affairs.

It can be stated with authority: That Johnson believes a real breakthrough in U.S. relations with the men in the Kremlin.

He considers his election a people's mandate to make something out of that breakthrough.

The Pentagon and Department of State worries know President Johnson has a great deal of confidence in his personal ability to negotiate with the sharp brains in the Kremlin. He has, moreover, a strong belief in his ability to convert others to his way of thinking. These worries feel he may have too much confidence.

Johnson came out of the Senate renowned for his shrewd bargaining abilities in compromise with a group of very able bargainers. But the worried diplomats and defense men think he may underestimate the cunningness of Brezhnev, Kossygin, Mikoyan, Podgorny, Sushov and Polyansky, who have fought their way to the top in a political situation much rougher even than Johnson has been used to.

Almanac

By United Press International
This is Monday, Feb. 15, the 46th day of 1965 with 319 to follow.

The Moon is full.
The morning star is Mars.
The evening star is Jupiter.

On this day in history:
In 1862, the first ironclad vessel of the U.S. Navy, the "Monitor," was ready for sea duty

after only 126 days of construction.

In 1898, the battleship "Maine" was blown up at Havana, Cuba, inflaming public opinion and presaging the Spanish-American War.

In 1942, Singapore fell seven days after it was invaded and 70 days after the Japanese invasion of Malaya.

"There Must Be a Paved Road Around Here Somewhere!"



RALPH de TOLEDANO . . .

Silver In Our Coins

To judge by the handouts, charts, and statistical tables reaching me in the mail, the biggest controversy in Washington is over the amount of silver in our coins. On the one hand, the anti-silver forces, representing an industrial view that non-coinage uses of the metal are more important and that Federal preemption of silver stocks sends the price up to uneconomic levels, argue that most of the world is ditching the old types of coins for more practical ones made of cupro-nickel.

On the other hand, a sizable bloc, representing the vending machine interests and the silver bloc in Congress, oppose changing the content of our coins. The vending machine people say that it would work an economic hardship on millions of Americans who now draw their daily sustenance—if not their bread—from coin-operated machines.

Which side can claim the ultimate virtue, I do not know. I can only repeat what I read and hear—and I repeat it only because it strikes me as interesting. My own personal feeling is that a nation's coins are, in a sense, symbolic. To make our quarters, half-dollars, and dollars of inferior metals seems a shame—though this may be a rather silly way to arrive at important decisions.

Most of us take coins for granted. But in our contemporary society, we would probably be lost without them. The National Automatic Merchandising Association points out that 58,000 times every minute Americans step up to a coin-operated vending machine. This adds up to an annual figure in excess of 30 billion. Looking at it another way, Americans buy \$3.5 billion worth of merchandise from some 4.5 million machines every year.

This, moreover, does not include coin telephones, laundromats, parking meters, juke boxes, toll stations, etc. Without coin machines, moreover, we-morning-hour purchasers would be lost. At present they can satisfy the need for a variety of items at any time of the day or night. But coin-vending goes much further.

An estimated 1.5 million Americans get at least one meal a day from coin-operated vending machines—and this does not count the additional millions who snack up at other machines. The juke boxes are something else again, with 470,000 of them grossing an estimated \$420 million a year.

The inside of a coin-vending machine—or any gadget which accepts coins, including turnstiles—looks like a Rubik Goldberg contraption. But it is designed to serve the very useful purpose of accepting real money.

The author of the rebel strategy was named Nguyen Giap, of whom few Americans ever have heard and, consequently, remember his name if they have.

Giap Directs Force
But upon Vo Nguyen Giap may progress naturally from scattered guerrilla action to attack by organized military units.

Events in South Viet Nam indicate he now believes the second phase has been reached.

coins and rejecting the spurious. Slugs, foreign money, etc., cannot pass through one of the gadgets. The machine puts your coin through two tests. The first measures its diameter, thickness, and surface condition. The second assays it for electrical resistivity and density. This involves the metallic composition of the coin, which is put through a magnetic field.

Change the composition of the nickel, the dime, or the quarter, and the coin machine won't work. More than four million coin-operated units will become obsolete. The man who gets his lunch from any automatic gadget will have to do without until the repair men move and re-jigger the magnetic field to accommodate the new coins. This will bring considerable hardship. It will take some time before the existing coinage has been called in. Meanwhile, there will be the new coins. In converted machines, old coins would be rejected. In non-converted machines, new coins would be treated like slugs.

For a long period, the vending machine industry—and those who make use of coin-operated dispensers—would be disgraced. It would cost millions, if not billions, to effect a changeover.

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FULTON LEWIS JR. . .

LBJ-Press Corps Relations Poor

WASHINGTON — Relations between Lyndon Johnson and the capital press corps have badly deteriorated. Last Thursday's hastily called news conference only worsened the situation.

In recent weeks, many of the 1,300 newsmen accredited to the White House have complained to Presidential Press Secretary George Reedy that Mr. Johnson has been derelict in his duty by refusing to hold regularly scheduled press conferences. Then, on Thursday, that criticism broke into public print when the Washington Post's Edward Follari, dean of the White House correspondents, disclosed the editorial discontent.

Stung by the Follari criticism, Mr. Johnson called a press conference that morning. Newsmen were given 37 minutes advance notice. As a result, many reporters were unable to get across town to the White House in time.

And for the 137 newsmen who did show up, the facilities were woefully inadequate. Seats were available for only 31. The other 106 were shoe-horned into tiny room, where the hot glare of television and newswire lights made the situation ludicrous.

Most newsmen could not see the President, their view being blocked by radio and television technicians. The President made no effort to recognize reporters whose questions were likely to be hostile.

Last week's meeting was the 27th press conference held by Johnson since taking office. In only five have newsmen been given advance notice of more than one hour.

What this means is that Presidential press conferences are limited to the relatively few correspondents permanently stationed at the White House. These reporters cannot risk alienating the President by offering hostile queries. The result is what one columnist has termed a "cozy little tea-table press conference" with little opportunity for serious questioning.

The veteran correspondent Bruce Drummond spoke for many of his colleagues that week when he charged that "Mr. Johnson is in the process of destroying the President's press conference as Washington correspondents have known it for 32 years."

Most reporters deplore the frequent use of background briefings by LBJ. The private talks after which reporters can attribute nothing directly to the Chief Executive—led Robert Roth of the Philadelphia Bulletin to write:

"Some reporters have the feeling that the President is interested only in the use he can make of them, that he wants them around not as disseminators of information but as an echo of what he considers important for the public to know. They feel that Mr. Johnson controls the flow of information quite effectively."

Many reporters have been critical of the President's thin skin. Wrote the New York Herald-Tribune's Douglas Kilmer last year: "When the few stories critical of his Administration have appeared, he has made great efforts to learn of their origins and has acted quickly to counter them."

The President has complained to the New York Times and the Washington Star about stories he has found "offensive." A wire service was called down about a story on Panama. White House emissaries sought to suppress the news about Walter Jenkins' arrest. Presidential aides killed a story in a local daily suggesting the Chief Executive was leery about a story on Panama.

Influential Senators have indicated they will fight any efforts by the Administration to amend Section 14b of the Taft-Hartley Act, which permits enactment of state right-to-work laws.

Minority Leader Everett Dirksen, a frequent ally of the President, has said that this is an area where he cannot help. Repeal of 14b, he says, would "end the vitality of the entire federal-state system."

On the House side, Democratic Rep. James Rogers has refused to commit himself to repeal. He talks, in fact, about stiffening labor law to prevent crippling strikes in key industries.

WILLIAM S. WHITE . . .

Picture Looks Better

WASHINGTON—Though it is unattractive to allow the smallest cheerfulness to break through in this matter, the balance sheet of the war in South Viet Nam is in fact much more reassuring than it was, say, a week ago.

While a grimacing optimism would be absurd, it is all the same true that the position is not quite so bleakly hopeless as many people seem positively determined to think. The firm but prudently limited air strikes put in at President Johnson's direction against Communist nests in North Viet Nam have enormously cleared the air.

They have established beyond further possible doubt that Johnson has no intention whatever of having this nation cut

and run from Viet Nam, and, equally no intention whatever of authorizing melodramatic and excessive military adventures simply out of anger or frustration.

One of the great problems in this whole affair has long been that of convincing the Chinese Communists that the United States simply does not propose to allow North Vietnam to overrun South Viet Nam and will—if it firm it must—fight for the integrity of those areas that really want to remain free.

Though the President means precisely this, and always has, he has not been very clear in my in the past has been given many invitations to suspect that maybe the really doesn't. Americans who shrink from the whole burden—and in some cases shrink also from any use of honest power in any circumstance whatever—have over and over speculated grossly but damagingly that perhaps the President really would look with favor on some "negotiated" settlement, no matter all he has said to the contrary.

What is meant here, of course, is that the President might accept a negotiated situation even while the Communists go on with their marauding attacks. Nobody, of course, supposes that any and all negotiations are forever under the ban; what is under the ban is negotiation for a euphemistic appeasement.

Those who have promoted these wild notions have taken a very real responsibility for history in twisting the purposes of their own country in

order to meet their private desires. They have undoubtedly emboldened the Communists to ward the one error most likely to produce a major war—that is, a fatal underestimation of the strength and determination of the United States.

This is a deepening peril—that intended coup-pacifists and their like might lead the Chinese to suppose that the President had been talking through his hat—and can surely exist no longer. While dissent is indispensable to a free society, misrepresentations on mortal issues are no part of fair debate.

From this moment onward, anybody still has the undeniable right to proclaim himself in favor of negotiation with the aggressors, in spite of the fact that every previous negotiation has led only to more Communist aggression. But nobody can justly or honorably whisper any more that the United States Government is hospitable to making any deal with the Communists, unless first they quit assailing their neighbors.

In these weeks of deep winter we are living through a time of somber and fateful decisions in the East. The Chinese Communists have clearly decided to challenge us, at least in every way short of major war. The Russians, too, are in fact being challenged by the Chinese for mastery in world communism. And so the Russians walk a high and swaying wire between their demagogic need to proclaim "solidarity" with their not-so-good Communist brothers, the North Vietnamese, and their deeper requirement not to see China become unbearably strong in Southeast Asia.

No more subtle and delicate military-diplomatic complex ever faced this country. It is like trying to walk a tightrope over a dark room full of strange high explosives. The walk is risky in national honor and in the most elementary interests of the free world. But precisely because it is so intricate, it is a walk every man bearing any kind of public responsibility owes a terrible duty to speak and act here only with care and restraint.

BARBS

You think I'm not nutty? A New York tavern customer thwarted an attempted robbery by drawing his own gun and firing at the stickup man. When the cops came the crook had the "hero" arrested on his charge of felonious assault.

Noted British psychiatrist says that people can be brainwashed to believe anything, sense or nonsense. Now he believes the second phase has been reached.

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