

On China As on Vietnam, Bobby "Teases" the Anti-War Forces

Even Javits Now More Outspoken Than Kennedy on the Bombing

A POLITICAL "TEASER": When I was a boy a certain kind of girl was known as a certain kind of tease. She promised a lot but she never delivered. Robert Kennedy seems to be that kind of a politician. He's always flirting with the liberals but manages to avoid coming to the point. On Vietnam he's been titillating opponents of the war at home and abroad by saying cryptically that he has "reservations" about the bombing of the North. This was his line at Oxford recently. Kennedy seems to feel that a "reservation"—like an advance phone call to a busy night club—will save him a seat with the anti-war forces. But everybody has "reservations" about the bombing of the North. Some think it's too little and some that it's too much. In the Senate the other day six Democrats called for an end of the bombing. Kennedy was not among them. They were Morse, Gruening, Hartke, Pell, Clark and McGovern. Now Kennedy has been outflanked even by his Republican fellow Senator from New York, the unctuous and usually ambiguous Javits—even Javits has come right out and said we ought to stop the bombing or restrict it to supply routes leading South. Where does Kennedy stand on the bombing?*

The Illusion of Dissent

We recommend the vivid picture of the Senator and his entourage by the New Left's Robert Scheer in the February issue of *Ramparts* Magazine. "The Kennedy rhetoric is dangerous," Scheer writes, "precisely because it provides the illusion of dissent without its substance." An example is the Senator's address on China policy at the University of Chicago, Feb. 8. Months of mountainous effort by a whole battalion of experts went into the delivery of this slick little mouse. The language is brilliant, the quotations marvellous, the subtleties a delight: the Kennedys may treat writers capriciously but they have a flair for picking the best. But while the speech skillfully needles Johnson it does not venture any alternatives of its own.

* He finally deplored resumption.

McNamara Boasts of Rising Arms Sales Abroad

"During the period FY 1962 through FY 1966, the total program has resulted in sales [of arms abroad] of \$8.1 billion. . . . In addition we have outstanding sales commitments amounting to about \$3 billion. . . . For the domestic economy these sales will ultimately mean about 1.4 million man-years of employment spread throughout the 50 states and over \$1 billion in profits to American industry."

—McNamara to Senate Armed Forces Com. Feb. 23

"If we choose to remain an Asian power . . ." Kennedy says at one point and begs the biggest question of all. "Of course," Kennedy said at another, "the shadow of the Vietnam war hovers over all these deliberations. That is itself an immense and complex subject. . . ." Indeed it is. We are asked to marvel at the speech because, as the *Baltimore Sun* pointed out, it represents a "180 degree turn" from the days when Kennedy was helping McCarthy hound those still trading with China. But Kennedy in Chicago could still say "Out of those long years emerged the China we see today—a China suffering from all the monstrous injustice and corruptions which a Communist regime inevitably imposes." This cliché is nonsense. Whatever the injustices in China, they can hardly match the recent Nationalist past. As for corruption—this is the least corrupt regime, virtually all observers agree, that China has had in generations. A regime that could go through the recent famines without mass starvation, though it had (unlike India) no outside aid, is a mighty step forward from the past, whatever its current convulsions.

What needs most to be said is that we can no more be an Asian power than China can be a Pan-American power. The slower we are to learn that lesson the greater the cost in life and treasure. The Johnson Doctrine of the Manila Conference was as dangerous as if Peking were to declare a protectorate over Latin America. This needs to be challenged but Kennedy did not challenge it.

When They Do It—It's Sinister: But When We Do The Same Thing It's Beneficent

"We have seen large numbers of boats and other vessels dashing south along the coast of North Vietnam to resupply their forces in the southern part of North Vietnam * and in the demilitarized zone. Now, this and the large number of incidents indicates that they are not particularly interested in an actual cease-fire."

—Secretary of State Rusk at press conference Feb. 9

"Saigon, Feb. 11—In making their case for resumption of the bombing of North Vietnam, U.S. officials here and in Washington reported with considerable detail that North Vietnam was moving supplies closer to South Vietnam during the Tet holiday cease-fire—evidence, they said, that the enemy is not genuinely interested in a de-escalation of the war. But American military authorities neglected to mention that on Thursday, the first full day of the cease-fire, a one-day record of 2,762 tons was set for American cargo delivered by air to units in the field.

* Not in South Vietnam, note, but in their own country.

"The daily Air Force communique in the past has routinely listed the volume of cargo and the number of passengers carried. But yesterday, the same day the report on the increased flow of materials in North Vietnam was released, these figures were missing and there was only a line about 'normal resupply missions.' An Air Force officer said the U.S. headquarters command had 'told us not to' release the cargo figures yesterday. When the Air Force was questioned again, the figures finally were supplied. They showed that U.S. planes, not counting truck and ship movements, carried 7,402 tons of supplies and more than 17,000 men during the first three days of the cease-fire."

—Chicago Daily News Service in Wash. Post Feb. 12

"In Washington a State Department spokesman confirmed the U.S. was continuing resupply missions in Vietnam. Asked how this differed from North Vietnamese efforts, he said the North Vietnamese activity was 'clear evidence of their intent to continue their aggressive action' while the U.S. was committed to combat aggression."

—Added by the Washington Post to the story above

What Johnson Really Means When He Talks of His Desire for Peace

(Continued from Page One)

Why Did Rusk Go So Far?

Why did Rusk have to go that far in his reply to what was, after all, a simple question of fact? Was it perhaps because this more qualified reply was made necessary by the diplomatic and intra-Administration dialogue going on behind the scenes? Through Prime Minister Wilson, the U.S. apparently had been telling Premier Kosygin that the bombings would "not be called off permanently" (as the *Washington Star* reported Feb. 13 just before the bombings resumed) "unless North Vietnam takes some reciprocal step on the ground—such as reducing its flow of men and supplies to the South, or pulling back some of its regular troops already in South Vietnam." There are people in the government who believe just such a scaling down of activity has been underway. It is as if Rusk were saying to them and to the other side that only if the de-escalation were greater, or movement of men and supplies stopped altogether, would we be ready to grant "political consequences", i.e. reciprocal concessions. There are other people in the government who wanted to rush resumption of the bombing before this scaling down became so obvious as to make it difficult to start bombing again. "There is evidence" the latest issue of *U.S. News & World Report* (Feb. 20) said "that Hanoi, while not willing to make any open deal with the U.S., has already started cutting down its infiltration of the South—perhaps hopeful that the U.S. will finally decide to end the bombing without a public discussion in return." It reported that the rate had fallen from 7,000 a month in the first six months of last year to 1600 a month from July through October. Instead of focussing attention on these hopeful signs the U.S. military has done its best to blur or hide them. "Figures for the past three months," *U.S. News & World Report* continued, "have been deliberately held up by military officers in Saigon." The excuse is that the figures are not yet conclusive. Westmoreland's command is not so scrupulous about figures when they serve its purposes.

The crux of the issue is not the reliability of the statistics.

Howard Walk-Out on Goldberg Speech

"They expect us to fight for peace in Vietnam when we don't even have peace in Washington. They've got a lot of gall to send somebody here to talk to us colored people about peace. . . . They are drafting all the young black men. We don't have any business fighting in Vietnam when we don't have any rights here."

—From TV interviews with the 40 students and 5 faculty members who walked out just as Ambassador Goldberg began his speech on "America's Peace Aims in Vietnam" Feb. 10 at Howard University.

It lies in deeper political and psychological considerations. *U.S. News & World Report* put its fingers on these when it said some top officials believe that while Hanoi wants the bombings to end "and will reduce their infiltration in return," it will not "publicly announce any reduction for fear of damaging Viet Cong morale in the South." The U.S. on the other hand—no doubt for that very reason—wants an "open confirmation" from Hanoi. The U.S. is waiting for "North Vietnam to admit before the world that it has not only been directing but actually feeding the fires of aggression in the South." As the *Washington Star* reported (Feb. 10) after the Rusk press conference, "What is lacking in Hanoi's proposal, U.S. officials say privately, is North Vietnam's utter refusal to acknowledge formally its involvement in the war in South Vietnam. . . . Until Hanoi does take responsibility for its role in the war, any talks with its leaders would be futile, officials believe." But if Hanoi takes responsibility for the war, it excuses the U.S. bombings and declares itself guilty of aggression. More important, it would thereby open itself to a demand not only that it stop sending men and supplies but that it call off the rebellion in the South as the price for an end to American attacks upon it. The U.S. has in effect upped the ante for peace because it thinks that its military juggernaut can crush the opposition, especially at a time when the Sino-Soviet split makes supply more difficult. When Johnson says he wants peace, he means surrender.

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