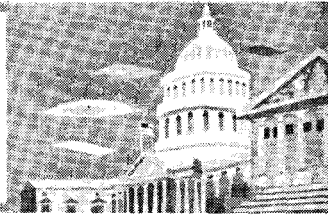


State of Affairs



The Cruel Pendulum

WASHINGTON.

THE PENDULUM of U.S. policy in Vietnam has swung wide into a new militarist phase. Efforts to get negotiations going have been abandoned for the time being. The President feels he has tried hard, but that Hanoi has refused to "give him any change."

Actually, Hanoi is no longer asking for "permanent" cessation of the bombing in the North; it is only asking for "unconditional" cessation, and that is vague wording indeed. But since this change on the part of the North Vietnamese, the Americans have decided that Hanoi must first offer some form of de-escalation before the bombing can be halted. The United States is prepared to take the first step in this de-escalation minuet; it would even agree to declaring part of North Vietnam immune to bombing. But there must be a *quid pro quo*. Simply to agree to come to the conference table is not enough.

Whether it was wise to insist on de-escalation before negotiations rather than making it the first item on the agenda of the negotiations is questioned, not at the top level, but among a good many in the Johnson Administration who are familiar with the problem. At any rate, once this de-escalation condition was rejected by the North Vietnamese the emphasis in Washington shifted sharply to making life in the North more disagreeable through stepped-up bombing.

Targets which have been off-limits for a long time are now on the list, which, in general terms, excludes only "population centers." There is now a tendency to accept greater risks than before, with the possible corollaries of Chinese intervention and the chance of severely embarrassing the Russians. This is made obvious, for instance, by the decision to attack MIG airfields. Secretary of Defense McNamara is on public rec-

ord against the bombing of these jet airfields because, he argues, it could force the North Vietnamese to withdraw their jets to Chinese air bases, which in turn would raise the issue of "hot pursuit" in this country. This change of policy in spite of Mr. McNamara's argument is one of several signs that his influence in the high councils, at least as far as the military strategy in Vietnam is concerned, has weakened, and that of Dean Rusk, Walt Rostow, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff has increased. McNamara has never believed that the bombing of North Vietnam can have a decisive influence. He accepted it as helpful in interdicting the use of the supply routes from the North to the South, but did not think it would bring the enemy to its knees or to the conference table.

But this is exactly the reasoning now behind the escalation of the bombing. Are the North Vietnamese really prepared to see the vitals of their country destroyed? The assumption is that they will in the end prefer to come to the negotiating table under terms more acceptable to the United States than those they have offered so far. American military policy, therefore, is best summed up in one sentence of General William C. Westmoreland's address before Congress: "The rate of decline [of the enemy's morale] will be in proportion to the pressure directed against him."

The pressures of the American forces in the South have certainly been mounting and have helped to improve the situation to the point where the enemy cannot hope to win. The pressures on the North through bombing are also increasing. But while this is being written, State Department officials predict North Vietnam may launch a major attack across the demilitarized zone. The enemy strength is estimated to be at least four divisions. What is surprising, however, is that the North Vietnamese are able to concentrate that many troops in one area despite heavy bombing by B-52s and despite long-range artillery bombardment. The reported North Vietnamese concentration across the border has also led to transfers of American military units to the northern provinces, which could easily lead to the enemy's taking advantage of the weakened American position in the central provinces. It is also difficult to understand why American long-range artillery has been put almost directly below the border of the demilitarized zone, virtually into the front line; why it is allowed to be shelled by enemy mortars and field artillery every night; and why it is not withdrawn slightly farther and onto more favorable terrain.

Also, despite American reinforcements in these northern border provinces, the North Vietnamese seem to



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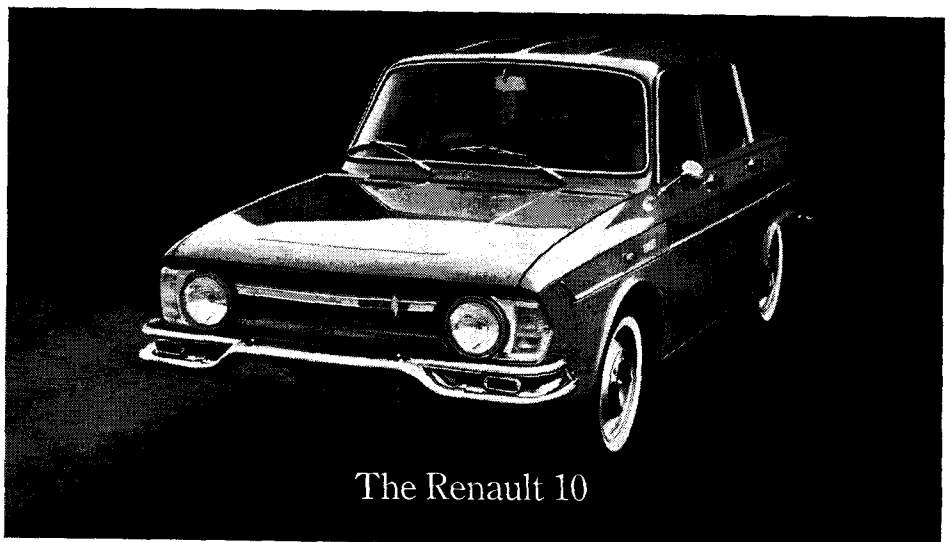
It also has some things that aren't absolutely necessary for sheer transportation: Four doors instead of two. Ridiculously (by some standards) plump seats. A little more leg room.

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have succeeded with their terrorist methods and have created such insecurity in this area that whatever progress in pacifying the villages and hamlets had been achieved has now been lost, and whatever hope there was in making this area safe has been given up for the rest of this year. It all shows how difficult the American task is, how deceptive military power can be in this situation, and how stretched American manpower is.

There is also a danger that the United States in its pacification strategy is falling into the same mistake it did when it gradually assumed an increasing load of the fighting from the South Vietnamese army. The more the American forces took over, the less the war became a South Vietnamese cause. Robert Komer, whom the President put in charge of pacification, and others have said that it is for the South Vietnamese to pacify their country. This is something only they could and should do; it is not something at which Americans can be expected to succeed.

Pacification can work only if it is done at the grassroots level. It requires the kind of psychological understanding of the local people, the kind of close personal contact that only the South Vietnamese are capable of. But there are



signs now that more and more American advisers are attached to local South Vietnamese pacification teams. The danger is that just as the South Vietnamese began to rely more and more on the Americans to do the fighting—this is not to depreciate the fighting that is still being done by South Vietnamese units which General Westmoreland praised so highly—they may also increasingly come to rely on Americans to assume the burden of pacification. This would not only further increase the strain on American manpower but it would also doom the pacification program.

Thus the cruelty of the American dilemma in Vietnam is more in evidence than ever. The optimism that prevailed last spring and late last year has evaporated. A new and much tougher mood has set in. The President is being told that intensification of the bombing in the North could bring the war to a decisive phase and lead to negotiations before the end of this year. And so the pendulum of American policy and the mood in the White House swing back and forth.

—HENRY BRANDON.

Chess Corner—No. 114

WHEN the American immortal Harry Nelson Pillsbury lost to world champion Dr. Emanuel Lasker at St. Petersburg, 1896 [see Chess Corner—No. 113, May 13], he discovered an improvement on his seventh turn. For eight long years, he secretly persevered, finally getting the opportunity to spring it on the good doctor at Cambridge Springs, 1904.

Now, a new move in an opening rarely refutes the debut, but this was an exception. Here, that move shattered Lasker's King-side pawn phalanx under which he was forced to seek refuge. And Pillsbury rained scissor-like flailing blows against the hostile position. And, even though the world champion has a constitution made of iron, he succumbed.

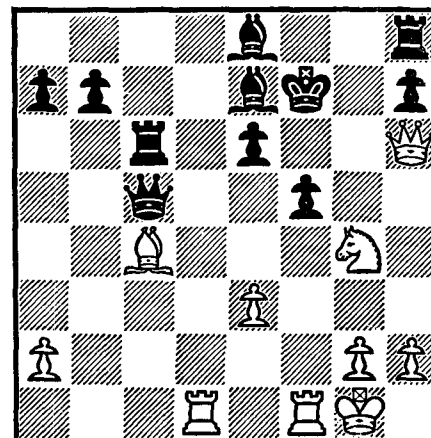
Thus, eight years later, Pillsbury had produced a brilliant echo of Lasker's triumph at St. Petersburg. Sweet revenge!

Here is the game.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED

Pillsbury	Lasker	Pillsbury	Lasker
White	Black	White	Black
1 P-Q4	P-Q4	14 O-O	R-B1
2 P-QB4	P-K3	15 Q-Q3	R-B2
3 N-QB3	N-KB3	16 N-K4	B-K2
4 N-B3	P-B4	17 N-Q6ch	K-B1
5 B-N5	PxQP	18 N-B4	Q-N4
6 QxP	N-B3	19 P-B4	PxP
7 BxN!	PxB	20 Q-Q4	P-B3
8 Q-R4	PxP	21 QxP/4	Q-QB4
9 R-Q1	B-Q2	22 N-K5	B-K1
10 P-K3	N-K4	23 N-N4	P-B4
11 NxN	PxN	24 Q-R6ch	K-B2
12 QxBP	Q-N3	25 B-B4	R-B3
13 B-K2	QxNP		

LASKER



PILLSBURY

26 RxPch	QxR	29 Q-R5ch	K-N1
27 R-KB1	QxRch	30 N-K5	Resigns
28 KxQ	B-Q2		

—AL HOROWITZ.