

Letters

Tigers at Foggy Bottom

William Bell's article ["The Cost of Cowardice: Silence in the Foreign Service," July, 1969] calls attention to the serious problems which can result if Foreign Service officers fail to speak their minds within the organization and also indicates that there is a growing group, particularly of young Foreign Service officers, who are making sure that dissent and discussion within the ranks of the Service can be vocal and constructive. In my own instance I have found that constructive criticism has not only been tolerated in the Service but has generally been encouraged. There have been a few bleak periods when this was not true and it may be that some of us who ignored that fact were temporarily impeded in our careers. However, that period seems to be long past and the prospects for the future look promising.

My only regret is that competent young officers like Bill Bell are still leaving the Service at a time when talents like his are seriously needed. I hope that his efforts, as reflected in his article, and others like them, will create a climate in which our best young officers will wish to remain in the Service and carry on the work that lies ahead of us.

WILLIAM H. SULLIVAN
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Sullivan, formerly Ambassador to Laos, is Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs.

My response to Mr. Bell is based upon close association with the Foreign Service

as an educator in the field of international relations and as a one-time, one-year insider.

It is not entirely clear what Mr. Bell is trying to say or do in his article. But, as I read it, he seems to be saying that the U.S. Foreign Service is guilty of cowardice, and that (with rare exception) foreign service officers are afraid to express whatever dissent they are capable of mustering, principally because they lack innate intellectual courage and are intimidated by the system in which they work.

Having touched on these points, Mr. Bell hurries through a number of prescriptions. He is encouraged by the recent statements and actions of Secretary Rogers and Under Secretary Richardson with respect to administrative reform and by the evolution of the Open Forum Panel. He implores the Department to punish "information management," seek out new recruits with "leadership qualities," and reward intellectual courage.

For openers, there is not a shred of evidence in this article to prove that foreign service officers are cowards. That is not surprising because, while foreign service officers may be subject to human frailties and the faults of the system, they are not cowards. In fact, the record of courage both physical and intellectual on the part of foreign service officers is impressive. (Read of the careers of George Kennan, John Paton Davies, and Edmund Gullion, career foreign service officers whose courage can be stacked up against the best of any bureaucracy.) What the Foreign Service may be guilty of is not cowardice but a failure to illuminate its own impressive record of national service. It suffers from silence about its achievements.

It is true that there is not enough dissent coursing through the corridors of the State Department. But this does not mean that there is less dissent expressed within the State Department than within any other large bureaucracy (public or private) or that foreign service officers, any more than officials of any other organization, lack intellectual courage. What it means is that the Department of State, like other bureaucracies, has not yet found the best ways to stimulate and utilize dissenting views and new ideas. The Department, however, is working on this problem and more seriously,

I venture, than any other public or private organization.

Evidence of the Department's serious efforts to improve its performance by encouraging usable dissent are partially indicated but not credited in Mr. Bell's article. He mentions that Professor Chris Argyris "was unkind enough to write a report on 'Some Causes of Organizational Ineffectiveness Within the Department of State.'" Mr. Bell fails to mention that the Department itself commissioned Argyris to do this study and published and distributed thousands of copies of his report. The Department is interested in learning about its problems and what to do about them.

Mr. Bell describes the Junior Foreign Service Officers Club as being a hotbed of intellectual dissent but writes it off as being ineffectual because it is exclusively involved in the "personnel field." Mr. Bell forgets his own point; namely, that the personnel system accounts for much of the conformity which he criticizes. The junior foreign service officers know this, and they want to change the process. If they succeed, the system will put them in places where they can get their licks at the policy issues which Mr. Bell claims they "never" discuss.

Mr. Bell mentions the Open Forum Panel and tries to say some nice things about it. But he ends up saying that the Panel, like the Department itself, is bottling "distilled water" instead of sparkling new ideas and that it must now shift its attention to outside contacts because it found so little "food for thought" within the Department.

Mr. Bell would have been more helpful and accurate if he had concluded instead that the Open Forum Panel was hard-pressed to discover new foreign policy ideas because it is a fact of life that good ones are very hard to come by, and that the OFP was turning to the outside, not because it was dying of thirst in the Department, but because it was genuinely interested in serving as a conduit into the policy process for ideas from the outside. It would also have been accurate to add that the Open Forum Panel is discovering that good, usable ideas are no more plentiful outside the building than within (Galbraith, Goodwin, and Schlesinger notwithstanding).

Mr. Bell is helpful when he catalogues the

reasons why the Department of State is currently finding it difficult to recruit the best young talent. Much of what he points to may be beyond the control of the Department insofar as it is a result of the cyclical swing to a period of national introversion. Where it is in the Department's power to improve its recruiting by, for example, reforming the examination and processing procedure and working toward a more representative Foreign Service, it is attempting to do so.

Mr. Bell's most grievous disservice to the Foreign Service is one of omission. His article fails to mention the active and increasingly successful reform efforts of the American Foreign Service Association. This Association of 7,000 active and retired foreign service officers is defining and addressing itself to the problems of the diplomatic service in a way unprecedented and unparalleled in the annals of bureaucracies. The Association, after a year of careful study by task forces of foreign service officers working in their spare time, issued a report on the major problems of the Department of State. The report is a critical look at the inside by insiders. It goes beyond the problems noted by Mr. Bell, tackles a score of others, and concludes with constructive, detailed recommendations for reform. This workmanlike report, entitled *Toward a Modern Diplomacy*, is more representative of the intellectual quality and courage of United States Foreign Service Officers than is Mr. Bell's commentary. It is, therefore, more entitled to be read and seriously considered than his article.

Finally, I may have a basic philosophical difference with Mr. Bell. He seems to believe that a noisy Foreign Service (whose disagreements are audible and observable to the public?) can work. I believe that only a disciplined Foreign Service that keeps its disagreements to itself can work.

There must be consistency in our foreign policies for them to be believed and respected. This can only be achieved by a system which appears to those who observe it from the outside to be a "silent" service. Within the Department of State and its embassies, opposing views must be encouraged and given a fair hearing. Outside these buildings, policy must be loyally supported and implemented by career officers. In the

long term, that is the only way the best interests of this country can be served by its diplomats.

PETER F. KROGH
Medford, Massachusetts

Mr. Krogh is associate dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.

Edelman: Pro and Con

As a part-time resident of East Africa, I commend Peter Edelman ["Kenya and Tanzania: Developmental Contrast," July, 1969] for bringing to American attention the tremendous difference between Kenya and Tanzania in terms of their development program. I agree with virtually everything that Edelman has written in his description of the two countries. I look forward to more penetrating articles on Africa in your magazine.

GARY GAPPERT
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Gappert is the Washington Director of the American Committee on Africa.

Peter Edelman's article has caught my eye on the basis of his assertion that Kenyatta's likely successor will be Daniel Arap Moi because... "Arap Moi is a Kikuyu."

As long as Mr. Edelman is in the business of making political predictions for Kenya, the very least he could do—especially since he has a Ford Grant to be in Kenya, for God's sake—is to research those persons about whose future he is predicting, in a responsible and accurate manner.

Mr. Arap Moi happens to be Kalenjin. Arap would never be a Kikuyu name. In fact, I believe it is akin to Fitz, Von, etc., and means "son of" in some East African languages, but not Kikuyu.

NANCY MAMIS
New York

The author, Peter Edelman, responds:

You are quite right, of course, that Mr. Arap Moi is a Kalenjin. I regret the error.

However, as you know, the basic point remains the same: it's difficult for a Luo to come to power in Kenya. The Mboya tragedy was sad confirmation of this fact.

More on "More on"

To say that most civil servants are afraid to fight to the point of quitting their jobs for substantive issues which concern them ["More on Courage and Cowardice," August, 1969] is simply not relevant to the experience of many, if not most, federal bureaucrats. That they are *not* in positions where it is possible to take stands on issues is probably the greatest single source of frustration to a large crop of well-educated, highly intelligent, concerned young people who are attracted to the lower and middle levels of the federal bureaucracy by a desire to contribute their talents to solving the nation's and the world's problems.

It is not that these people see themselves as "technicians who have no proper role fighting over substantive issues"; rather, they end up functioning as technicians because of the nature of the system in which they have chosen to work. Except at high policy levels, the role of the civil servant more often than not is that of the technician administering laws and regulations, collecting data, etc. As a result, particularly for the younger civil servant, the choice will not be between courage and cowardice but will often be between submission to the seeming meaninglessness of technical detail and frustrated departure for other fields of endeavor.

THOMAS FULDA
Vienna, Virginia

The "Appendage" That Roared

Arthur Alpert's article ["Crossed Wires: Cable TV and the Public Interest," July, 1969] is a useful analysis of the dilemmas of our present and future national communications policy. It is difficult to explain, however, his one-line dismissal of non-commercial communications potential, as a "little-watched appendage."

This seems a special oversight since it is non-commercial television and radio which seek to serve minority audiences—a virtue Mr. Alpert identifies only one paragraph before, and which he considers an omission in the “American television system.” If it is a defect in the commercial side of the system, it is an operating principle on the non-commercial side. To have acknowledged this would have made for a much less routine exposition of a communications policy which exploits fully the expanding range of transmission formats and systems.

WILLIAM G. HARLEY
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Harley is president of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters.

Attacking the First Strike

Morton Kondracke makes a number of errors of fact and interpretation in his rather ideological article [“Washington’s Whipped Issue: Our First-Strike Capability,” June, 1969]. For instance, he repeats the myth that the “missile gap” of the 1960 Presidential campaign was a “phony,” a mystifying assertion since it is widely known that the “gap” was based on the best information available at the time and was only disproved in retrospect when new information became available later.

A far more important error is his persistent confusion of the strategic concepts “Damage Limitation” and “war-winning.” While not completely unrelated, the two concepts do not begin to equate, though Kondracke first labors to suggest that they do and later just assumes it. Though this issue is anything but “the first question” to consider (as he asserts), it is important enough to deserve a calmer examination than his. Let me sketchily suggest three reasons why “Damage Limitation” (D.L.) is an idea worthy of careful analysis. Two concern, respectively, the beginning and ending of nuclear war.

There is a distinct tendency to discuss nuclear war in a contextual vacuum. But in fact all observers agree that an “out of the blue” strike on the U.S. is exceedingly un-

likely. If nuclear war comes it will come by growing out of some lesser conflict—escalation. Use of nuclears may well not begin “all at once.” In such situations, D.L. may be an extremely valuable capability to have.

Second, a prime U.S. strategic goal is and must be the *termination*—ending, not “winning”—of any nuclear war. While the best way to terminate is not to begin, we have to think about how to stop one that starts. If there is to be any hope of halting nuclear war short of catastrophe, we must have options other than just the city-busting that Kondracke favors. The “mutual unconditional deterrence” Kondracke likes so much can equally well be called “mutual unconditional suicide.” Again, a role for D.L. is at least plausible.

Third, there are nations other than the Soviet Union, and accidental or unauthorized attacks. One would think that it was too obvious that D.L. could have an important role here for Kondracke to fail even to mention it.

All this has not proved Kondracke completely wrong: his preferences have features of interest and the issues are far too complicated to be compressible into a letter or short article. That is why there is by now a considerable body of literature in this field, authored by “brilliant and sophisticated thinkers” for whom Kondracke seems to have a vast but unexplained contempt. The conclusions we should come to are not obvious, which is why we do indeed need the debate that Kondracke calls for, but which is also why we do not need the ideology and false emotionalism which seem to be Kondracke’s own contributions to the debate.

RICHARD SMOKE
Boston

Mr. Smoke is a graduate student specializing in national security policy at M.I.T.

The author, Morton M. Kondracke, replies:

Mr. Smoke is correct on one point: damage limitation and “war-winning” do not exactly equate. For example, if both the Soviet Union and the United States maintained arsenals of only a few offensive missiles, but had vast and virtually-impenetrable

anti-ballistic missile systems, the ABMs would be "damage-limiting" but not war-winning. They would be strictly defensive.

This is not how U.S. and Soviet forces are arrayed, however. Each side has approximately 1,000 fixed land-based offensive missiles which at present are relatively inaccurate. In this posture, each nation has "assured destruction capability"—the ability to deter war—but little ability to limit damage. Add on to this, now, the same "thick" ABM system (in the name of "damage limitation") and you have a war-winning posture: the ability to strike first, demolishing the Soviet Union, and to destroy enough retaliating Soviet missiles before impact so as to give the United States "relative advantage" when the dust clears. If the Soviets had such a capacity and we had none, the Pentagon would regard the Soviet posture as war-winning, no mistake about it.

Our thick ABM system was delayed when President Nixon replaced President Johnson's Sentinel system with Safeguard, but the more ominous damage-limiting device—MIRV—seems unstoppable. The U.S. and the Soviet Union are developing high-accuracy multiple warheads enabling each to destroy the other side's land-based missiles. The "damage-limiting" rationale is this: the more missiles you destroy on the ground, the less remain to strike you back. Lest anyone think this damage-limiting weapon is not war-winning, let him recall Secretary of Defense Laird's reaction to the Soviet SS-9 rocket and its multiple-warhead potential.

The point is that while it is possible to conceive of contexts in which damage-limiting weapons are not war-winning, they do not apply today. In the context we live in, deployment of such weapons by either side is looked upon by the other as war-winning, as degrading to its deterrent, as a provocation demanding response.

In view of the grave instabilities created by damage-limiting weapons, it is not sufficient to point to accidental, unauthorized ("mad general") or "nth nation" launches as the rationale for their deployment. Indeed, none of these is the Pentagon's principal rationale—or Mr. Smoke's. Both conceive it possible to fight less-than-total nuclear wars and to stop them with one side (the

Pentagon says, our side) or both sides relatively intact. Following this premise, they coolly devise "options" for doing so and (damage-limiting) weapons to carry out the options. I submit, however, that a nuclear war environment will be far different from that prevailing in an air-conditioned think tank or war room. I do not see rational planners remaining rational when nuclear bursts begin incinerating cities and demolishing the communications system that would allow them even to know whether an attack was total or less-than-total. And how could the nation launching a first strike depend on the other to respond "rationally" to its "limited" attack?

I suggested for debate that we consider a different premise: that any nuclear war, however it starts, will be total by the time it is over. Following this reasoning, I suggested maintaining a secure deterrent and announcing that it will be used against cities in the event of attack. I can understand why some strategic thinkers would reject this system of mutual unconditional deterrence. Their job is to think about nuclear war, and thinking about it is difficult if it is rendered "unthinkable." Options would get closed. But, I, unemotionally and unideologically, ask them to consider that, in keeping our options open for war-fighting and war-winning, we continually build weapons that undermine deterrence, our best hope for survival. We always put the best possible face on it; we say we're merely securing our own deterrent, as we did in the early 1960's in response to a "missile gap" that was a phony. President Eisenhower denied that such a gap existed, and he was right.

Blocking the Highways

Many of us in New Orleans have enjoyed reading reprints of your article "The Highwaymen" [March, 1969]. The recent decision of Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe to deny federal funds to our Riverfront-Elysian Fields Expressway has reversed the senseless march of concrete in our cities.

Many different kinds of people worked against this expressway, with most of the

effort being spent in trying to find out what officialdom had on the drawing boards but would not show to the public. The most revealing events were several open hearings—and it took much pressure to set them up.

The *Vieux Carré Courier*, a small bi-monthly paper dedicated to the cause of preservation, was an invaluable asset in both reporting and widely circulating up-to-date information on the struggle.

The expressway's potential impact on Jackson Square and the French Quarter created the initial furor. For a long time the battle was waged primarily by residents of the affected areas, and preservationists were weary. But when plans were announced for another bridge across the Mississippi, which would have linked up with the riverfront expressway and fed into our well-established uptown residential section, new recruits joined in. At this point we had our first direct political victory in support for an uptown district Councilman, whose election was a decided upset to the political establishment.

A lawsuit challenged the right of the Highway Department to impose a mammoth structure, which would have loomed high over the rooftops of our protected historic district. It was hoped that lengthy litigation would delay the project long enough for political action to take effect.

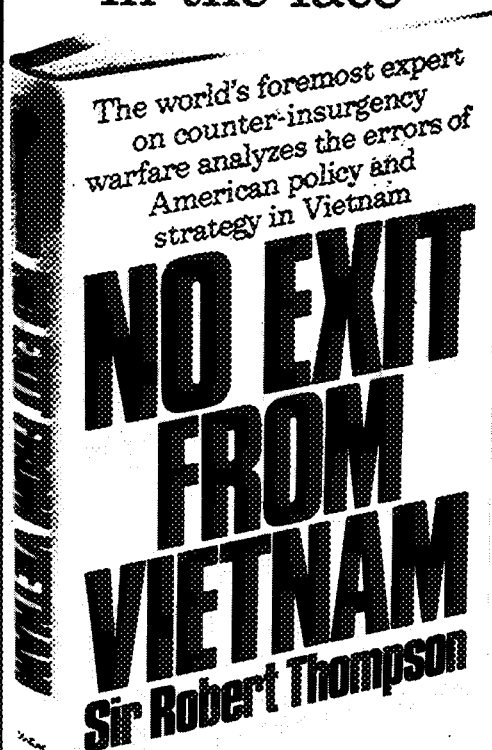
The findings of the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, issued some four months ago, were the beginning of the end for the plan: it suggested that another route be found, or that the expressway be built underground.

Inflexibility of the proponents was a significant factor in our eventual victory. If they had been willing to compromise on the elevated portion in front of Jackson Square, I believe that we would now have some sort of roadway built along the riverfront, but they were obstinate beyond the point of reason.

MARGARET P. McILHENNY
New Orleans

Editor's Note: More good news for highway opponents—Mayor Lindsay of New York City has cancelled plans for two major expressways, the Lower Manhattan and the Cross-Brooklyn.

The first book
that has dared
to look the facts
in the face



SIR ROBERT THOMPSON, who played a leading role in the British victory over the Communist guerrillas in Malaysia, shows why the United States, with all its military and economic might, has failed in Vietnam. He shows how greatly we have misunderstood People's Revolutionary Warfare, trying crash programs for quick results instead of undercutting the insurgents by winning over the Vietnamese peasants. And the Paris talks, Sir Robert feels, are doomed to frustration unless we come to grips with the Communist concept of negotiations as an aggressive weapon aimed at victory, not peace.

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McKAY

WHERE WILL YOU BE WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT—

by John Wicklein

In the 99-degree heat of this year's Washington July, my friend's air conditioner broke down. That same night, on television, he heard that the electric company was appealing to its customers to use as little current as possible, because of a shortage of power. Assuming that all appliances "normally" break down sometime or other, he did not connect the breakdown with the appeal until the repairman came.

"Your condenser burned out," the repairman told him.

"Why?" my friend asked.

"Low voltage—the power company cut the voltage to spread the power around. I've had half a dozen calls on air conditioners that have burned out because of it."

"Could I prove that in court?"

"Maybe," said the repairman.

At that point, my friend felt mad enough to try. Why, he asked himself, as others were asking themselves throughout the Northeast, why doesn't the power company have enough power to meet its summer air conditioning loads, when it's been pushing the sale of air conditioners all spring? Aren't such load increases predictable years in advance? Why, four years after the Big Blackout of 1965, are we still skating on the outer edge of electrical capacity?

We are still at the edge. When three of its generators broke down in four days in August, Consolidated Edison Company of New York warned customers that its reserves were gone. A further breakdown—or one very hot day when all the air conditioners are on—might force the company to drop some of them off the line.

John Wicklein, a former reporter for The New York Times, is a producer of public affairs programs for National Educational Television in Washington.