CONGRESSMAN'S REPORT
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June 10, 1965

Johnson and His Critics: Diplomacy in a Fishbowl

Viet Nam lies 7,000 miles away; Santo Domingo is 400. But the troubled events in these two widely-separated places are related and involve basic foreign policy issues. Our actions have shocked some Americans and pleased others. They have prompted one of the most heated foreign policy debates we have heard in this country since the early 1940s. And behind all of these events and these actions is the lonely man who can't correct his mistakes in the "final arguments" -- the President of the United States.

I saw a cartoon the other day. It showed President Johnson walking alone through a dark and gloomy terrain. He was saying to himself, "There seem to be some lonely stretches." And indeed there are. No men alive today, except former Presidents Truman and Eisenhower, know what it means to bear the awful responsibilities of that office. And it may be significant that both of these men are supporting the President.

Recently I had the rare privilege of sitting in the Cabinet Room of the White House for nearly two hours as the President defended and explained his policies in these two trouble spots. Wrestling with the hard alternatives presented him and with the conflicting advice being offered from all sides, he said, "Every President wants to do what is right. This is not the problem. The problem is to know what is right."

What is right in these situations? What kind of action should the United States take to advance its interests in this volatile and changing world? A few years ago political scientists and others were critical of our foreign policy, saying it was little more than a set of meaningless phrases imploring the rest of the world to comply with our version of goodness and morality. The danger in this, we were told, was that other nations would tend to expect words, rather than action, if we were put to the test. And we might find our ability to influence events on the decline as a result.

I believe President Johnson has determined that this nation will not decline in power and prestige, and that we will adopt a credible foreign policy which other nations will -- not necessarily love -- but respect. In the end it is generally power, and not good intentions or moral preachments, which prevails in the affairs of nations. A nation ignores this basic fact at its peril.

Has the President made decisions which will advance our national interest? Only history can decide. Some of the best minds in the country say, "No." But I can't help wondering how different those decisions would have been if those same critics had been saddled with the same responsibility in the same circumstances. One can't emphasize enough the important distinction between the spectator and the participant.

THE FOREST VS. THE TREES

The President's critics, in the Congress and in the press, have broadcast their views widely. The President has expounded his views in a number of speeches and television appearances. Yet I do not believe that the reasoning and philosophy behind the President's actions have been sufficiently understood. Lyndon Johnson is not a warmonger; he wants peace and stability; he wants freedom to develop his domestic programs; he wants to reduce our commitments overseas.

An effective foreign policy for these troubled and revolutionary times must not be just reactions to external events; it must be initiative as well. If we are not going to spend this era fighting the wrong wars in the wrong places, we need a positive foreign policy setting forth long-term goals and objectives toward which we can direct specific military, political and economic decisions. In this newsletter I shall explore "the forest," as I think the President views it, and then relate it, as he does, to the "trees" in Saigon and Santo Domingo. In the process I want to reflect on some of the critical arguments being made against United States policy in these areas.

NEEDED -- A NEW NAME FOR A NEW ERA

In the late 1940s someone came up with a catchy name for the power struggle that followed World War II. He called it the "Cold War."

But not even "cold" wars last indefinitely, and I think we need a new phrase for the era in which we now find ourselves. For one thing, the "war" is no longer cold. In places like Viet Nam it's pretty hot. But, more than this, there are important differences to be noted between the world of 18 years ago and the world today. Communism is no longer monolithic. The Soviet Union, while still making noises and gestures toward Communist expansion, has turned inward to its own domestic problems. In fact, Russia is now a "have" nation with things to lose in any major encounter. In this new era the bully we have to worry most about is not Russia but China, still very much a "have not" nation.

Then, too, methods have changed. Before the last Soviet ultimatum in Berlin, to which President Kennedy responded with firmness, and the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, when our strong stand caused the Russians to withdraw, there had been repeated tests of our will to resist direct military action. Since then Russia has gone one way -- avoiding military encounters -- and China has gone another. And in China's case the emphasis has been on internal revolution, subversion, and -- as in Viet Nam -- guerrilla "wars of national liberation." These changes call for new thinking and new tactics on our part.

There is still another characteristic of this new era, and I think it's the most important of all. At the start of the Cold War we were concerned about what happened to Europe. We saved it. Now we're concerned about what happens to countless brand-new nations on the continent of Africa, in Southeast Asia and elsewhere. Here there is no direct confrontation of great powers, as there was in occupied Europe. Rather, there is concern on the part of at least three contending power blocs that these nations not become strong allies of some other bloc. The nature of the struggle

thus is quite different from the struggle that has concerned us in past years. The overwhelming military confrontations, with their awesome implications of nuclear war and world destruction, have subsided. And more limited encounters have become the order of the day.

In these new nations we see tremendous forces at work. As I commented in my foreign policy newsletters of last year, there are four concurrent revolutions in progress around the world. There is the political revolution in which the old colonial order is being replaced by self-government. There is the economic revolution in which two billion underprivileged people are trying to break through the walls of poverty and ignorance. There is the population revolution, threatening the world with ever-new problems in production of food, fiber, housing and other essentials of life. And finally there is the scientific revolution, posing unknown threats to the existing order. Nowhere are these four revolutions more forbidding than in the newly-developing nations.

This is the world President Johnson looks out upon and the world in which he has to make his decisions. It's probably no more awesome than the Cold War world, but it poses new challenges and requires new responses. Whether he is right or wrong, President Johnson clearly intends to have his country make the right responses to these challenges. For he is aware that the history of mankind is strewn with doctrines and ideas which were perfect for one age and disastrous for another.

PHILOSOPHY BASED ON EXPERIENCE

Before you can understand a man's philosophy you must understand the man. President Johnson has said, "Our political philosophies are the sum of our life's experiences." He is a man born in 1908. Two shattering and disruptive events left their marks on people of his generation -- the Great Depression and World War II. As he views his country's future, we must never again have the bread-lines and economic waste of the 30s, and we must never again become involved in a major, world war.

In his lifetime we have fought two world wars and a serious but limited war in Korea. To Mr. Johnson the key to avoiding other large conflicts is this: Never let a potential enemy miscalculate our intentions. It is his belief, supported by most historians, that we became involved in each of those wars because our intentions were misunderstood. Consider the following:

** In the first three years of World War I we were an isolationist people. There was no evidence apparent to the Germans that we would join in on the side of the Allies. On the contrary, President Wilson was re-elected in 1916 on the slogan that he "kept us out of war." Congressmen ran for office on their opposition to foreign entanglements. Germany thus was tempted to take far bolder steps than prudence would have dictated if she had assessed our will differently.

** In the 1930s Hitler, noting our rejection of the League of Nations, our "America First" rallies and the many speeches of our isolationist senators, was persuaded that we would stand by while he conquered Europe. Even as great a leader as Senator Robert Taft had declared, "It would be better that Hitler conquered all of Europe than

that a single American boy die in this foreign conflict." And, indeed, it is quite possible that we would have let Hitler carry out his conquests had not the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and resolved our domestic debate. Thus, again, Germany miscalculated the intentions and will of the United States by heeding our own words and actions.

** In the late 1940s and early 1950s we led North Korea, China and the Soviet Union to believe that South Korea was outside our defense perimeter. The result was a long and costly war.

** After the 1962 Cuban missile crisis President Kennedy remarked to me and other Members of Congress that it's most frightening aspect was that each side had misjudged the other. Khrushchev assumed we would permit installation of missiles 90 miles off our shores; we assumed he wouldn't dare. The result could have been World War III, but luckily wasn't.

The lesson President Johnson draws from all this is that the Russians and Chinese simply will not believe that we are serious about defending really vital places like Berlin, the Philippines, Japan, Turkey or India if we stand back and allow them to take less important places like South Viet Nam. In short, he believes we are being tested there, and possibly in the Dominican Republic too, and in his view if we fail we shall surely be confronted with more difficult tests elsewhere.

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC DISCUSSION

This brings us to a related point. It has been suggested that the President wants no public criticism of his policies. No doubt he is as sensitive to criticism as all of our recent presidents have been. However, I think he has been receptive of the advice he has been given, and nowhere was this more apparent than in his Baltimore speech calling for unconditional negotiation in Viet Nam.

What the President wants, I believe, is more responsible criticism and less of the other kind. How to draw the line is difficult, of course. But the fact is that intemperate and uninformed attacks on this country's foreign policy can have a material effect on the course of the very events in question. A few weeks ago there were some indications, gained through intelligence channels, that the Hanoi government was about ready for a negotiated settlement. Unfortunately, these came to nothing, and our intelligence sources indicate the probable reason: recurring attacks by prominent Americans on our Viet Nam policy led strategists in Hanoi and Peking to believe that an outraged American public opinion very soon would force us to abandon the struggle and pull out.

Public discussion is important, and I am sure the President would defend the right of a critic to speak out, even irresponsibly, for this is the essence of our democratic system. For this reason I abhor the kind of thought control imposed on the American people through the sedition laws of World War I. But what we say in a free society does influence the leaders of other countries, and I believe it is the responsibility of all of us to weigh this influence when we speak out. If a senator believes the President is pursuing policies that are dangerous and wrong, he ought to talk with the President and try to persuade him privately. If this fails and he remains convinced of his

own judgment in the matter, he has a right and duty to go to the press and the public seeking to rally public opinion to his side. A private citizen, of course, has less opportunity to communicate his views, but at the same time his remarks carry less weight overseas. But even a private citizen, who loves his country, should weigh his words before he accuses his President of favoring dictators or advocating a new world war.

The fact is that the President of the United States, unlike the rulers of China and the Soviet Union, has to operate in a fishbowl. When we demand that he explain his every move, and preferably in advance, we make his position increasingly difficult in relation to these other participants in the world struggle. The President may not always be right; he may be wrong in Viet Nam or the Dominican Republic or both places. But he is our President, and he deserves our loyalty and support.

J.B. Priestley put it this way: "We should behave toward our country as women behave toward the men they love. A loving wife will do anything for her husband except to stop criticizing and trying to improve him. That is also the right attitude for a citizen."

VIET NAM -- THE PROS AND CONS

With this background and in the spirit of open debate and discussion, let's look at some of the arguments made against our Viet Nam policy and compare them with the President's answers:

Argument: We should stop the fighting and negotiate a settlement. The President answers: "This is what I want, too. But, pray tell me, with whom and where shall I negotiate? I have offered to negotiate with any government at any time, but there has been no response. I replied to the 19 unaligned nations who asked for an end to the war; Hanoi did not. Our diplomats all over the world have tried to make contact with Hanoi and Peking; the answer is scorn and ridicule. But I want to negotiate a settlement, and I will continue to press for negotiations."

Argument: Viet Nam is not of critical importance to this country; it really makes no difference if we lose it. The President answers: "We are being tested to see if we will stand behind our commitments. Either we will remain a leader in world affairs or we won't. No matter how much we talk about freedom, democracy and international morality, it is mainly power that influences nations. If we shrink from honoring a commitment, we can expect our influence over world events to decline and that of our enemies to grow. We stood firm in Greece and Berlin, and the world is better for it; the same will be true in Viet Nam."

Argument: The risks are so great that we ought to pull out before it's too late. Arthur Schlesinger, the former advisor to President Kennedy, answered this very well at the excellent "teach-in" we had in Washington recently. He said a pull-out would prove to the Communist world that the militant Chinese position is right and the Russian position wrong in the current ideological struggle. This would mean ever more aggressive action by the Chinese and their allies around the world -- and possibly

force the Soviet Union to adopt similar tactics. It could only spell increasing trouble for the United States and the free world.

A GUNBOAT DIPLOMAT?

Similarly, the President is under attack for his actions in the Dominican Republic. This is what we're hearing:

> Argument: We violated our treaties in landing troops in Santo Domingo. This action will undo all the confidence and good will we have earned in Latin America in the last 30 years. The President replies: "Historians will have plenty of time to weigh the facts; I didn't. In my judgment there was a very great risk that another Castro would emerge in the Caribbean. I acted to prevent that and insure that the Dominican people could have an opportunity to choose their own government. A decision not to act in what is clearly our sphere of influence might have been irreversible. I'm called a gunboat diplomat by some of my critics, but what would they have called me if the revolution had produced another Castro?"

ISN'T THIS THE GOLDWATER POLICY?

One student with whom I talked recently in Arizona remarked with some bitterness, "I supported Johnson and Humphrey because I was frightened of the Goldwater foreign policy. If we are to have Goldwaterism abroad, I'd prefer to have the real, genuine article and not a watered-down substitute." In my judgment this criticism reveals, first, a misunderstanding of Senator Goldwater's views (he said recently he would "pray" as President for a provocation to bomb Red China) and, second, a tendency to accept the "wishy-washy" description accorded President Johnson by his opponents last fall. The President advocated a strong and credible foreign policy then, and he is attempting to carry out such a policy now.

A few years ago we had a totally unbelievable policy based on so-called "massive retaliation" to any enemy move. President Johnson has substituted for this a policy of limited response -- just that measure of force needed to demonstrate our will. He doesn't pray for a chance to expand the war in Viet Nam. He wants no "holy" war with Red China or the Soviet Union. Rather, through firmness to our commitments he hopes to strengthen our role in world affairs, thereby increasing prospects for peace. This policy of cautious and carefully-measured response is not the Goldwater policy I read about in either of his books or heard about in the campaign last fall, and it is not the policy he is advocating today.

HISTORY AND THE LONG VIEW

Most Americans today acknowledge that President Truman was one of our best presidents, yet he contributed to the miscalculation in Korea. President Eisenhower, seeking a settlement with the Soviet Union, bungled the U-2 affair and perpetuated the Cold War. President Johnson, seeking only peace, has become involved in two awkward military situations. How will history assess these presidents and their actions? We can only guess, but what is clear is that the

decisions of our presidents never come easy. Even in a free society such as ours all facts can't be disclosed all the time. And no one not in that position of awesome responsibility can know fully what factors are involved in the decisions that are made.

I believe President Johnson made the case for a credible foreign policy when he said in this State of the Union Message this year: "We will not, and we should not, assume that it is the task of Americans alone to settle all the conflicts of a torn and troubled world ... We are prepared to live as good neighbors with all, but we cannot be indifferent to acts designed to injure our interests, or our citizens, or our establishments abroad. The community of nations requires mutual respect. We shall extend it -- and we shall expect it."

As I write this, there is no way to know how events turn out for us. But before this year is out I think we will have turned some corners, for better or worse, both in Viet Nam and the Dominican Republic. I am inclined to believe this dark hour will pass. As Saville R. Davis wrote in the Christian Science Monitor a few days ago:

> "For all the rough methods that tough-minded Americans may use against communism, and for all the high-handed politics they may use, their motive is to clean up the situation and get out. And they may end these vexing episodes in Viet Nam and the Caribbean by doing just that.
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> "The crisis of confidence in the world today is based on the fear that they won't. But they probably will, all the same."