

Editorials

Commentary

Toward a new balance of terror

by Jack Todd
Nebraskan Editorial Columnist

For weeks now, America's doves have had no one on whom to vent the accumulated wrath and frustration of the Johnson years. The old president bowed out gracefully, leaving most of his critics shuffling from foot-to-foot like schoolboys wanting to go out and wondering if they really should have driven him from power.

The new president began so cautiously, so slowly that the critics had nothing to focus on — no moves, either liberal or conservative, which would give some indication of the direction his presidency would take.

NOW, LESS THAN two months into office, Richard Milhouse Nixon seems on the verge of blowing it all. Sometime today he is expected to announce his approval of a limited Sentinel anti-ballistic missile system, throwing away the uneasy seven-week truce he has maintained with the liberals, and more importantly, committing this nation to a nuclear arms escalation to which there can be no end in sight.

Even a limited ABM system would continue the strange government policies that have elected to feed the military and starve the cities since the end of World War II. Boston City Councilman Tom Atkins, addressing a panel of experts in Lexington, Mass., during a debate on the ABM's merits, phrased it best:

"YOU TALK of megatons. We are interested in snow removal. You talk of penetration aids. What we want is housing. You talk of nuclear sufficiency. I say there is massive insufficiency as far as our domestic sanity is concerned."

Whatever the arguments for sanity in terms of the balance between military and domestic spending, the crux of the problem is fear. In escalating the arms race, the President would be pandering to those millions of Americans who are afraid they can kill more Americans than we can kill Russians. Here the figures come in.

With a full ABM system, the proponents say, we would lose only 30 million Americans. Without it, we may lose as many as 120 million in an all-out conflict. Some choice.

FORMER SECRETARY of Defense McNamara, who was partially responsible for the original go-ahead decision on the Sentinel, has himself expressed the fear that the decision will blossom from the original "thin" commitment, capable of thwarting a Red Chinese attack, into a "thick" commitment to shield the nation from

Soviet missiles, eventually costing something in excess of the current national debt.

The twin results of such a proliferation of missiles are obvious. First, the approaching financial crisis of the cities will become a certainty, with city governments unable to rely for emergency funds on a federal government hamstrung by missile costs.

Second, the President will have foregone the opportunity for a bold new step in the direction of peace, and heightened the possibility that we may lose 30 million people, even after spending billions of dollars.

THE CHOICE is this: a step up the ladder of insecurity toward a heightened balance of terror, or a step down the ladder toward a balance of confidence, domestic and international security.

If the President goes ahead with the ABM system, the honeymoon will end. It should.



"YOU'RE the semanticist, Dr. Hayakawa! ... YOU tell them they're afraid of scarecrows!"

Standing head

... by George Kaufman

In this country, which prides itself among the nations for freedom of religion, it is an unfortunate fact that after nearly 200 years there is still no freedom from religion.

In the supposedly enlightened second half of this supposedly enlightened century, our supposedly enlightened modern America still has not divested itself of the institutionalized superstitions of the past; in fact has further solidified certain areas of religious practice which border on the absurd.

"CHURCH ATTENDANCE" has become a must for anyone running for a public office in this country, regardless of the public actions of the candidate. It is as important to belong to the right church in most communities as it is to belong to the right country club or the right chapter of the American Legion or Elks Club.

Even parents whose outlook is not religious in nature are often self-coerced to "take" their children to Sunday School, because it is an institution of our society.

We who have no national religion print "In God We Trust" on our money, insert references to our Anglo-Saxonized, monotheistic god in our government proclamations and our "Pledge of Allegiance." ("One nation under (one) God".)

IT IS only recently that our government has decided a man may be against killing another man without proclaiming a belief in one of the "acceptable" mythical deities before a court. And sadly, as witnessed by the Abbott case, that law has not gone beyond the lawbooks into practice.

Our soldiers, who are to protect the "religious freedom" of our country, are actually forced to attend a church "of their choice" each Sunday while in training. There is no "choice" to not make a choice.

In our scientifically-advanced society, the enlightened institution of Hyde Park on this campus is too often still preoccupied with unrelenting religious "arguments" by zealous Nebraska farm boys.

They nitpick at one another's shades of difference, using for reference quotations from a book written by men who did not even know the world was round.

ONE IS OFTEN tempted to muster a group of young men to compete as the "Reform Atheist" team in the local Church League softball tournament and see what would happen.

But, of course, what would happen is all too obvious and the point of it all would doubtless be lost amid the pious indignation and righteous hate.

The worst part of the whole religious fervor of this nation, however, is not that it has made a social facade of what was once a sincere movement dedicated to social reform. The worst manifestation is the attempt, frighteningly 1984-ish in nature, to rewrite history to make the early years of our country's existence seem to be a religious "crusade", sanctioned by some great "God" who had chosen America as His People.

GEORGE WASHINGTON, although his beliefs tended toward a Deist point of view, is presented to our young school children as a religious zealot, with most of the pictures they see of him depicting him on his knees praying for divine guidance in killing the British.

Other early leaders, such as Benjamin Franklin, are also glossed over in similar ways.

Our slaughter and eventual near-genocide of the "savages" who occupied the country before God's people arrived, our expansionistic wars, our imperialistic disregard for human life and property in building the country is labeled "Manifest Destiny", with an aura of heavenly assent added.

THE FIRST whites to land on the Eastern shores are proclaimed "Pilgrims" in search of a land where they can escape from persecution so that they may practice their religion in freedom. In actuality they were all too often looking for a place where they could substitute their brand of persecution for another.

Perhaps, with time, things will get better. Perhaps, in time, the right just to live will be accorded equal importance with the right to live for some sort of undefined afterlife, presided over by an equally undefined deity. Man-willing.

Paris and the Middle East Crisis

by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak

Washington — Aside from spreading goodwill, the one solid accomplishment of President Nixon's long talk with Gen. de Gaulle in Paris was assurance that the French would not be the advocate of the Arab countries in the Big Four Mid-East talks now being arranged.

The exact details of de Gaulle's assurance are secret, but there was this promise: despite France's long courtship of the Arabs, de Gaulle would play an even-handed role as go-between for the two sides.

That pledge was crucial to President Nixon's meticulously-planned approach to the first stage of what he calls the "era of negotiation."

WITHOUT THE French pledge, Mr. Nixon might never have committed the U.S. to full-scale talks with the Russians, British, and French at the United Nations on the flaring Middle East crisis.

Thus, until Mr. Nixon's visit to Paris, the U.S. had reacted with extreme caution to the pitches for a four-power approach that began pouring out of Moscow and Paris last fall. With the Soviet Union and France obviously lined up on the Arab side and the British ambivalent, the U.S. wasn't about to get into four-power talks to propose a settlement of the issues with the cards stacked against Israel.

That's why the White House reaction under both Presidents Johnson and Nixon was distinctly cautious. The most he would

talk about was a possible four-power statement appealing to Gunnar Jarring, the UN's Middle East mediator, to make another try at a settlement by long-distance mediation. That caution avoided a vicious backfire from pro-Israeli politicians charging that the U.S. was indirectly undercutting the Israeli position.

BUT AFTER seeing de Gaulle two weeks ago, Mr. Nixon abruptly broadened this cautious approach. The U.S. is now ready to go along with Big-Four talks at the UN on the whole range of substantive Arab vs. Israel issues that has made the Middle East so dangerous to world peace.

That may not seem much of an advance. In fact, however, it was crucial to the President's delicate first-stage of negotiations on East-West issues, the most important of which is nuclear arms control.

Quite apart from Middle East questions, the four-power talks are designed to give Mr. Nixon his first reading on a vital point: are the Russians serious about negotiating a relaxation of tensions or do they simply want a quickie arms-control agreement with the U.S.?

Contrary to critics who claim Mr. Nixon is pushing Moscow too hard by insisting on a Middle East agreement as a prior condition for arms talks, the fact is otherwise. What is expected of the Soviets is not total agreement on a Middle East settlement (although, of course, that is the objective) but

evidence that Moscow genuinely wants a solution.

EVEN THAT condition is too much for some critics, who want Mr. Nixon (and wanted President Johnson before him) to take immediate advantage of the Soviet Union's lust for an arms-limitation agreement.

Mr. Nixon's refusal to take that route is deeply imbedded. His "era of negotiation" is no passing fancy, and he feels there is no shortcut for the step-by-step course he's now embarked on. Moreover, he is showing patience with the Russians, testing each step carefully.

Furthermore, in rebuttal to Mr. Nixon's critics is this startling fact about recent U.S.-Soviet relations: more time was consumed the past 10 years negotiating cultural exchange agreements than arms control. Given that background, Mr. Nixon feels justified in not entering quickie arms-control talks.

As of today, that ground preparation probably will last about two months. If that produces fertile soil for U.S.-Soviet relations, the time spent would be productive indeed.

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"... You say they're BOTH ours ...?"

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Carte Blanche

by Larry Crossman

The Scene: An underdeveloped nation in the Middle East, South East Asia, or Black Africa.

The Cast: Dr. T----- S-----, M.A., Ph.D. in Economics, Political Science, or Psychology from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska, U.S.A.

The Plot: Dr. T----- S----- and his party have seized the reins of power in a bloodless coup against the central government. The military pledges its support as the government radio station announces the nation will now be taking a neutralist position in the arena of international politics. The United States has been given 48 hours to terminate its economic and military missions. Dr. T----- S----- refuses to grant an interview to the American ambassador. High sources tell newsmen that the new party leader intends to steer the nation away from the West into a pro-Eastern position. The leader, bitterly disillusioned by his experiences as a student in the United States, privately states that Uncle Sam can go to hell.

Does this sound like the plot of a best seller? If yes, then read it again and think about some of the comments foreign students have been making in the Rag and at Hyde Park about their reception at the University. The consensus is that Nebraskans are disinterested, perhaps tolerant at best, of the international students on campus. The foreign student's first reaction is bewilderment, later alienation as he retreats to the company of other foreigners, and finally a keen feeling of resentment against Americans and the United States.

These angry people return to their homelands with graduate degrees and enter into high positions in society and government. Unlike the United States, Western Europe, and the Soviet Union, most of the nations of the underdeveloped Third World lack adequate facilities for advanced training. Students wishing to continue their education beyond the undergraduate level, must go abroad to study.

Their experience abroad has special meaning for them. Time spent in a university, whether in one's own country or abroad, is full of questioning the purpose of life, formulating a personal philosophy, and interacting with one's fellow students. Unfortunately, many foreign students in the United States leave here with psychological scars from their negative experiences.

Few Americans realize that both Ho Chi Minh and Che Guevara spent some time in the United States in their youth. Admittedly their examples are extreme and neither was a student here, but both were affected by their experience in the United States. There is little doubt that the actions of both these men have had personal consequences for all of us.

The point of all this is that the African or Asian student who you see sitting by himself in the corner of your class or looking lonely in the Union Lounge might possibly one day be announcing over the radio in the capital city of his nation that all United States property is immediately confiscated and diplomatic relations are being severed. If you had only talked to him, history might have been different . . .

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