

Editorials  
Commentary

# Atmosphere of Saigon has changed

By Flora Lewis

There's a lot less barbed wire in the streets and a lot fewer young men of trait age caroming around town on motor scooters. The newspaper ads for brothels are a little more discreet. The tawdry bars are open again, though a year ago President Thieu promised they would not be permitted. But they are dispirited and not crowded.

Saigon has changed in the year since the devastating Tet offensive of 1968. And the surface impression of general improvement is solidly borne

out in all the offices and camps where Vietnamese and Americans follow the progress of the war.

The campaign to root out covert Viet Cong agents who've been operating all over the place for years is netting more and more high-level underground personnel, the ones who matter. In Binh Dinh province, for example, the chief Viet Cong tax collector was caught. The fact that he was informed upon reflects directly that local business men no longer feel they must buy protection from the Viet Cong as well as from the Saigon government.

The campaign to open roads and assert the government's presence is bringing more and more areas into the category of "relatively secure." It's possible for Americans to drive, by day, to places that have been on "the other side" for years.

The campaign to rally defectors from the Viet Cong to accept the government's amnesty offer is bringing in more people than ever before. Village elections are being held though, for security reasons, election dates are not announced until the last minute.

For the first time, there is good coordination of all the intelligence about the Viet Cong that trickles into the many different nerve endings of government and seldom used to be passed along. For the first time, there is an impressive plan to give security, local authority and usable help to the villagers who are the base of the nation.

In short, it is true that the military situation in Vietnam has turned very considerably in the allies' favor during the past year.

"TET really helped us a lot," the Vietnamese say now. They do not mean, as U.S. officials claimed at the time, that it was any kind of allied success. It was a palpable disaster. They mean that the shock of disaster finally stirred this apathetic, selfish capital to some efforts at defense.

The second salutary shock was President Johnson's decision not to run for reelection and to end the bombing in the North. For the first time since this became an American war, people here realized that the Americans who came well after it started might leave before it really ends.

Perhaps the greatest improvement in Saigon is in the degree of candor and realism of its politicians.

"WE'VE GOT TO do something to save ourselves," they say. "We see now that the Americans aren't going to do all the saving." Everybody, down to waiters and newspaper vendors, understood the real message brought by Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird here when he lavished praise on Vietnamese armed forces. It meant that the U.S. is going to start withdrawing troops, probably in late summer, and turn more and more of the job of fighting back to the Vietnamese.

Practically everybody welcomes that, providing it isn't too abrupt. Some even say they wish the U.S. would cut down to 50,000 men so that they would really depend on their own sons for their own survival.

And yet there is an overwhelming mood of cynicism, helplessness, hopelessness. Nothing good is expected from the Paris talks. Few believe South Vietnam can hold its own against the Communists when the battlefields are growing rice again.

In the same breath that speaks with great optimism, Vietnamese leaders say frankly they are pessimistic: "We are too divided. We need leadership. When the war ends, it will be 1954 all over again and the same disastrous cycle will lie ahead."

Looking backwards, things are better here. So people avoid looking forward.

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## The birth

## of power?

Student power is struggling to be born this week.

The labor pains began over a week ago, when the University Board of Regents turned down graduate and foreign student coed visitation. Pushing against the walls of the womb of apathy, student power may finally have in this the issue it needs.

Several students have initiated a petition to ask, and perhaps force, the Regents to reconsider their rather stupid move. And the Unicameral's acknowledgement of the 20 majority age, though still short of recognizing the real value of Nebraska's youth, should give incentive to the movement.

If the Regents fail to reconsider, if they continue to treat the students as children without maturity, then they may well provide the last straw.

Eventually, the students will recognize the paternalistic, strangling attitude the Regents practice. And they will lash out. The unorganized student body will unite to fight its way to personal freedoms.

Student power, in its most active sense, will be born.

Ed Icenogle

### DAILY NEBRASKAN

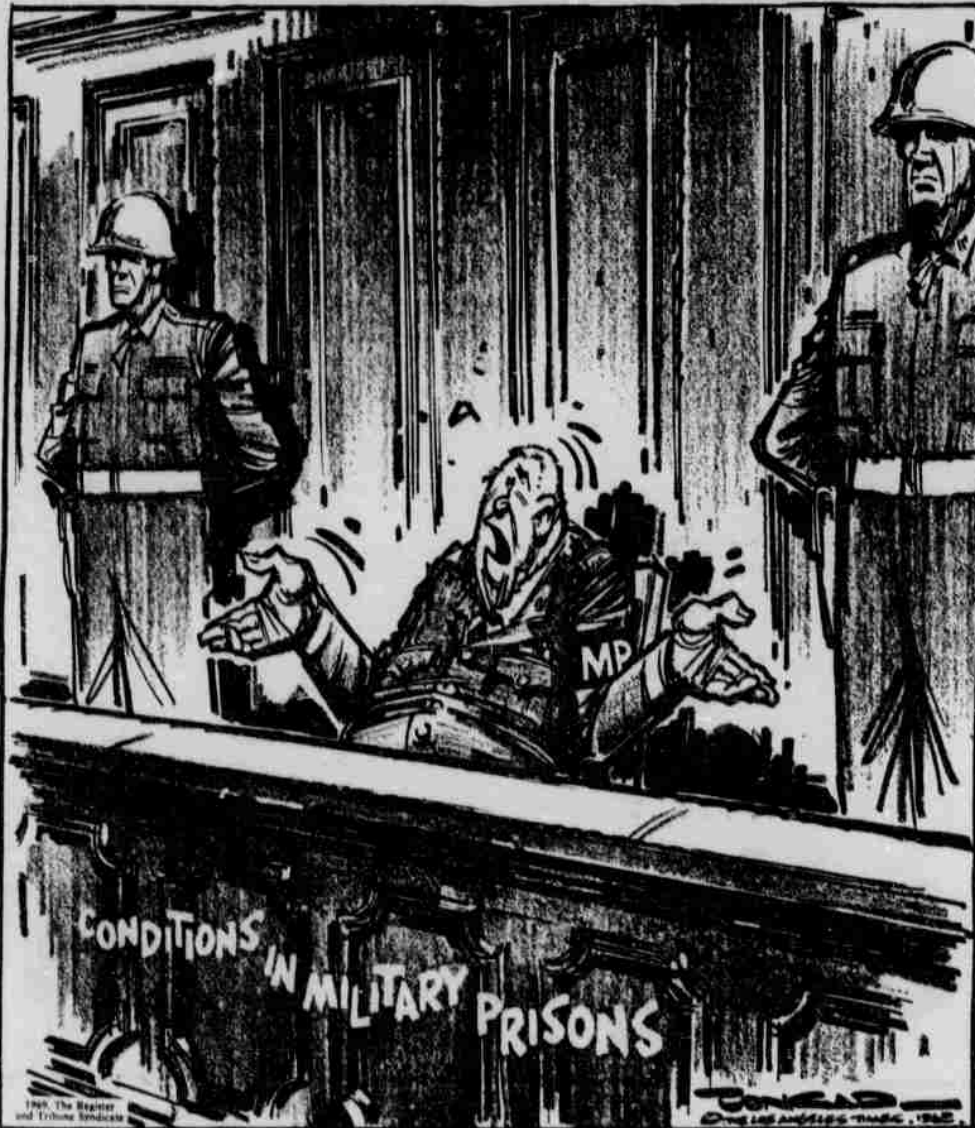
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"I was just following orders...!"

# Domestic politics stimulate ABM controversy

by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak

Washington — There was pleasure, though carefully concealed, in the White House when Lyndon B. Johnson reacted gruffly to a private preview of President Nixon's anti-ballistic missile (ABM) decision.

A Nixon aide telephoned the former President at the LBJ Ranch to brief him, one day in advance, on Nixon's decision: junking the old LBJ plan of ABM deployment to protect major population centers and replacing it with a threadbare thin system of protecting only offensive missile installations.

Johnson's snap reaction, somewhat peevish, was that he would have to answer press queries by saying the Nixon administration was leaving the cities undefended.

In contrast to the usual White House ritual of seeking approbation from former Presidents for great decisions, the Nixon White House could not have been more delighted. Such a public LBJ stand, they felt, would emphasize that Nixon's ABM plans represent a marked scaling down.

This points up just how intimately the entire ABM question is linked with domestic politics. Realizing that the Johnson system of deployment around major cities would evoke a disruptive national debate, Nixon men were eager to show that the new President's plans had little in common with his predecessors.

INDEED, WHAT Mr. Nixon was agonizing over the past week before reaching his decision was essentially a problem of politics. He wanted to reconcile the insistence by Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird and the uniformed military that some ABM deployment is essential as a deterrent to rising Soviet offensive might, on the one hand, with rising popular opposition to the ABM on the other hand.

Nixon's reconciliation was a partial success. The impression given of a system thin to the point of anemia, anti-ABM Senators ruefully admit, makes their chances of defeating it in the Senate far more difficult.

But just as Nixon administration officials were slow to perceive the grass-roots worry about nuclear-tipped defensive missiles in the backyard, so they miscalculated badly in feeling that the thinness of the announced deployment would fully appease the Senate's anti-ABM bloc.

At a White House reception on the eve of the President's announcement, Laird and his Deputy Secretary of Defense, David Packard, were busy telling anti-ABM Senators that the Nixon decision, then still unannounced, would please them. Multi-millionaire Packard was even willing to wager with one such Senator that he would approve of what the President said the next morning.

ONE REASON why Packard lost his bet is the Senator's realization that the thin initial deployment, limited to two sites in Montana and North Dakota, can grow quickly. Depending on possible negotiations with the Soviets and the President's decisions, these Senators realized that an ABM system not much smaller than Mr. Johnson's proposal may be constructed by the 1970s.

But what really saddens Republican foes of the ABM are the political mignonne-beens. "I think Nixon just passed up a hell of an opportunity for the Republican party," one Republican member of the Senate Armed Services Committee told us. According to his view, Mr. Nixon has sacrificed

the chance to ingratiate himself with liberals and intellectuals at no real cost, either in terms of politics or national security.

JUST SUCH ARGUMENTS were pressed upon Mr. Nixon as his day of decision neared. Three Republican foes of the ABM — Sens. Sherman Cooper of Kentucky, Charles H. Percy of Illinois, and Jacob Javits of New York — presented the political arguments a week before the decision to White House national security advisor Henry Kissinger (after they had failed to get an interview with Mr. Nixon himself).

Percy, in particular, was eloquent in explaining what was at stake in ABM deployment: the possibility of tumultuous national debate aborting the fragile spirit of unity Mr. Nixon has sought since Jan. 20 and the elimination of any possible gains among youth, intellectuals, and a great many liberal-leaning voters.

The President's characteristically cautious decision probably avoided the pitfalls described by Percy but also surrendered the opportunities he had suggested. His plan seems modest enough to bypass a truly rancorous controversy in the Senate and the country. But it will win no hurrahs from those voters who opposed him last fall and were just beginning to wonder whether they might have been mistaken.

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### Compus opinion . . .

## An answer to Carte Blanche

Dear Editor:

I want to reply to Larry Grossman's interesting article published as "Carte Blanche" in the Daily Nebraskan on Friday, March 14. As usual I think he hit the point and presented the right arguments about the foreign students and their feelings against the United States. I agree with all the facts he presented, but not with his interpretation of them.

Friendliness is not the solution. Foreign students get a number of psychological scars due to many factors, mainly to the different culture. He has been in Europe and in Latin America, and has very well the meaning of being different, and foreign.

HOWEVER MANY more "Doctors T.S." will come in the future, that is for sure. Many U.S.-trained people get a feeling of resentment against North Americans and their behavior, and when they go back to their home countries they take important roles; sometimes they even become presidents (as T.S., as the president of Ghana, and many others), or influential intellectual leaders; the U.S. as he knows, is the only "anti-intellectual" country in today's world, in which to call somebody an "egghead" is very insulting.

However, even the most friendly and well-adjusted foreign student leaves the U.S. full of anti-North American feelings. Why? I could write a 500 page book explaining why, but I will save you the worry of reading it!

Voltaire said that the best way of being enemy of the Catholic church was to study with the Jesuits. And the best way of getting a realistic idea of the United States of North America is studying in Nebraska, Kansas or Wisconsin.

Foreign students do not like the U.S. because they know it very well. They expected to find a broadminded society, because of all that junk concerning democracy, individual freedom, and orientation towards the future. They expected to find a "wonderland", like Alice's, because of all the advertisements and the slogans repeated, and repeated and repeated.

THERE IS no solution, let's face it. Friendliness makes things even worse. Foreign students attempt to communicate with North Americans during the first stage of their adaptation

to the University. But they find ignorance, lack of interest, and an offensive feeling of arrogance.

He said in his article that no graduate institutions existed in the Third World (meaning outside of the U.S., the USSR and Western Europe). That is not true. They exist, and they have high quality. And from that affirmation in a very well-informed person it is just a matter of degree to ask whether there are medical schools, psychology departments, or art studios, outside of your Golden Paradise.

People have asked me many times whether it was possible to study medicine in Colombia, whether we have TV, cars, and movie houses. The first times I found that relatively funny, but after the tenth time it was very offensive.

FOREIGN STUDENTS are not going to talk with "gringos" who just want to make ridiculous comparisons, and to convince themselves that the United States ("America"), as some of them say, ignoring that America is a continent that goes from Alaska to Argentina) is the most wonderful product of the human intelligence, and that those foreigners do not have the same "income per capita", 1969 cars, or color TV that they do.

Why communicate with them? One gets tired of repeating over and over the same story. There is a terrible ignorance in the U.S. student population concerning the world, and conversation for conversation's sake is a waste of time and energy.

The majority of the "gringos" who are friendly with the foreign students (and that is his solution, if I understood his "Carte Blanche") do not do it on equal grounds. They have a protective attitude that is very offensive to the majority of the foreigners.

They do not want to know about Nigeria, Egypt or Holland, but they want to feel "better, more civilized, richer," etc. Friendliness is not the solution. One can attempt to give more information, better attitudes, and so forth to the North American population. But I am sure that many more T.S. will appear, in spite of everything.

FOREIGN STUDENTS when they are getting used to the United States repeat that old statement of the famous German philosopher: "The better I know men, the most I love my dog."

Ruben Ardila



"Houseboating is great, Mr. President . . . but, haven't we drifted long enough?"

## De profundis

. . . by Fred Schmidt

It was bound to happen. With campus disruption an everyday occurrence it was only a matter of time until the moguls of the television industry began churning out dramas to capitalize on public interest and curiosity about student rebels.

Several weeks ago on "Adam 12" (Jack Webb's blue collar version of "Dragnet") the L.A. Police gently evicted a group that had taken over the Administration Building. "Many of your grievances I can sympathize with," said the chancellor liberally, as he placed a phone call to the police, "but not your methods."

THAT PARTICULAR group of students was redeemed when a part-time student policeman saved their sinister leader's life from a bomb that the latter had planted.

Two recent dramas both deal with situations in which a more modest leftist was betrayed by a revolutionary side-kick in the hope that a martyr would inspire general upheaval.

In "Judd for the Defense" a black graduate student secretly gives out false information framing a loveable professor (played by loveable Dennis Weaver, who should stick with "Gentle Ben").

The other case-in-point was NBC's two-hour travesty "The Whole World is Watching" which, we are threatened, will become "a bold new dramatic series in the fall." An activity leader, the kind who initiates petitions for everything from naming a dorm after Mickey Bitzko to outlawing girls' drill teams, is on trial for murdering a campus cop.

ACTUALLY, HE killed the cop in self-defense, (Mercy!) and has one witness who promises to testify in his behalf. But that witness is a long-haired "Che lives" type who plans to burn the defendant with his testimony and ignite the campus.

In all of these dramas, the sinister plans of the radicals are foiled; they are censured and told that revolution isn't nice, that change must come through normal channels.

So why all the rhetoric about these tubular turkeys? Because the public will swallow them hook, line, and fisherman. Such programs serve only to confirm the doubts and prejudices of America's vast non-academic TV audience. The dissidents they see are "good kids" but one or two evil, godless agitators can easily lead them astray.

Of course, the programs also noted that some student grievances are legitimate — but none bothered to delve into just what those grievances are.

THE SHADOWS of racist institutions and the military-industrial complex on campuses are not even given lip-service. Only the "Judd" episode had sufficient fortitude to chastise unconcerned faculty and administration personnel.

The problems of the nation's campuses are too explosive to allow crude stereotypes and half-truths to be showered upon the public.

If the television industry really wants to enlighten Americans about campus problems they should present every aspect of college life as experienced by different students rather than depicting a crew of shaggy malcontents who parade about, reefer-in-mouth, with a copy of Mao in one hand, a guitar in the other, and several books of matches in each pocket, duping naive young ding a lings.

CONTRARY TO the television myth, radicals are not the sole cause of campus disorder; that blame also rests with deeply-rooted oppressive conditions both on and off campus, and those who serve to perpetuate them.