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VIET-NAM AND BI-PARTISAN FOREIGN POLICY

By George Leppert

The concept of bi-partisan foreign policy developed in the United States in the last 20 years denies the fundamental principles of representative government and threatens our security as a nation. Congressional and public debate are stifled, and constructive criticism is made to seem tantamount to treason.

Prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, there was no such thing as bi-partisan foreign policy. FDR saw the need to lend material support to Great Britain and her allies and he did so, but not without opposition by a strong Republican isolationist minority in the Congress.

After the United States entered the war against the Axis powers Congressional debate on foreign policy questions was tabled "for the duration." Our entire national effort was necessarily concentrated upon the unprecedented military and industrial tasks of total war.

It was during World War II that our involvement with Indo-China began. FDR firmly resolved that France should not be allowed to resume colonial occupation of Indo-China after the war. Even when the Japanese army was slaughtering French resistance fighters in early 1945, General Chennault's 14th Air Force was not permitted to supply the French troops fighting and dying just 150 miles from our airfields in China.

The defeat of Japan brought a brief period of joint Nationalist Chinese and British occupation of Indo-China; the Chinese then agreed to withdraw from the north and

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the French replaced the British in the South. This left the French military forces and the Viet-Minh, which was the broadly-based wartime resistance movement, in a country with virtually no government. The United States remained relatively aloof from the war that followed, until 1950, when the Korean War started.

By this time, the Cold War was in full swing, Senator Joseph McCarthy had been in Washington four years, and our foreign policy had acquired a dangerous immunity from debate. Moreover, our commitment to "contain Communism" in Korea put the Indo-Chinese struggle in an entirely new light. A United States Military Advisory Group arrived in Viet-Nam in July, 1950, and our military aid to France began, though on a very small scale at first because of our involvement in Korea.

By 1954, the United States was paying 78% of the cost of the French colonial war in Viet-Nam. Optimistic reports of the imminent French victory were issued periodically, and in March, 1954, Admiral Arthur Radford, Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, predicted that "the French are going to win this war." Just six weeks later, in May, the French were surrounded and defeated at Dienbienphu.

The Geneva Accords of 1954 established a truce and temporarily divided Viet-Nam into two segments. In the North, Ho Chi Minh was permitted to consolidate his gains and set up a government completely controlled by the Communist party. In the South, an anti-Communist government under Ngo Dinh Diem was established. The Geneva Accords further provided for a nationwide election within two years to form a single government for all of Viet-Nam.

Diem moved steadily toward a more and more repressive police state, and by 1956 there were tens of thousands of political prisoners in his jails. The free elections promised for 1956 were never held; there was no doubt in Saigon or in Washington that the Viet-Minh faction would have deposed Diem.

By the time President Kennedy inherited the Diem dictatorship in 1960, the short-sighted policies of John Foster Dulles and the Eisenhower administration had created in Viet-Nam (as in Cuba) a deteriorating situation which had no apparent solution even as acceptable as

that reached in Geneva in 1954. Tragically, President Kennedy, and later President Johnson, continued to get their briefings from Henry Cabot Lodge, Maxwell Taylor, and from warhawks who insisted that, although the situation was deteriorating, victory was possible if we deepened our military commitment.

With a few notable exceptions, the Congress was silent throughout. Some of the Members no doubt honestly believed that the spread of Communism was primarily a military phenomenon, to be combatted by guns, tanks and planes. Many others must have seen the fallacy of this simplistic view, must have known that the real roots of totalitarian take-over lie in massive failures in the economic, political and social reform of feudalistic societies.

But Congress was silent -- perhaps in fear of the right-wing attack which any politician invites when he questions the relevance of the anti-Communist crusade to the real threats we face in today's world.

Fortunately, there is greater hope today, in spite of the greater danger, because of the unprecedented reactions at home and abroad to our bombing of North Viet-Nam since last February. To be sure, most Congressional Republicans and reactionary Southern Democrats have soundly endorsed the escalation of the war, but many Democrats, in and out of Congress, have made their strong objections known.

One important result of the ensuing debate has been a gradual progression of the Administration's position statements from cold-war cliches to a more frank statement of hard and unpleasant facts. Gone are the optimistic predictions of a Saigon victory; "stalemate" leading to negotiations now seems to be our objective. Distasteful as this concept is to the world's most powerful nation, it seems to reflect a growing awareness that the conflict in the South is primarily an indigenous revolution rather than an invasion by outside forces. Some of our leaders also see that if we crush North Viet-Nam, we make Chinese expansion easier, not more difficult.

Another result of the great Viet-Nam debate is a marked shift in administrative policy since February. Although the critics have not succeeded in stopping the bombing in the North, the U.S. is now willing, even anxious to negotiate with Viet-Cong leaders; we are asking for

U.N. intervention, after having at first snubbed U Thant; and we are now on record as willing to accept the 1954 Geneva Accords as a basis for peace in Southeast Asia.

These dramatic shifts in U.S. policy in just a few months must be credited, at least in large part, to the development of hard public and Congressional opposition to the rigid policies of Acheson, Dulles and Eisenhower. Unmistakeable, also, was the public rejection of thought

What President Johnson can salvage from the dismal 20-year war in Viet-Nam is not clear at this point -- no one can disagree with his determination to bring the fighting to a halt. But if one result of the tragic errors we have made there since 1950 is the end of bipartisan foreign policy and the resumption of informed Congressional and public debate on foreign policy issues, our personal and national security will be enhanced immeasurably.

The precinct democrat is an independent newsletter, published quarterly, whose columns are open to democrats of all persuasions. ALL LABOR IS DONATED. Editor: Lee Hancock. Mailing address: 1283 Mace Drive, San Jose, California.

ANNOUNCING

The annual meeting of the precinct democrat will be held:

Sunday, December 5, 1965

2:00 p.m.

2537 Northwood Drive
San Jose, California



Are you a Christian?
Well, yes I go to Church
Anything else?
I believe in God
Hmmm, I see

A is B
B is C
Therefore A is D
It makes sense

The Christian Knights
of the Ku Klux Klan
Burning crosses
Bombing churches
It makes sense

The Statue of Liberty
Her back to Harlem
The American dollar
"in God we Trust"
Christian

Three bodies found
Four little girls killed
The Choir still singing
out "freedom"
Pray

John F. Kennedy
Our first Catholic President
Assassinated
Mourned
Forgotten?

World War II
Six Million fried
The Germans forgiven
Now our friends
Friendship

Foreign aid to
Spain
Money to Latin America
Industry for West Germany
Poverty in America
Brotherhood

WATTS -- EPILOGUE OR PROLOGUE ?? by Acap

To the inhabitants of Harlem's garbage-strewn streets and dilapidated tenements, the wide streets and individual houses of the Watts district might have looked like the "promised land," wrote Newsweek editors in the August 30th issue. But to the residents of Watts, 34% Negro unemployment, 50% school dropout rate, high percentage of broken homes, and twice the average Los Angeles crime rate did not create the atmosphere of a "promised land." Illiteracy among Los Angeles Negro slums is 12% and population density is four times that of the city as a whole.

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The Newsweek article goes on to tell us that there is a vacuum of leadership in the Watts area. Of the seven Negro public representatives in Los Angeles, only one, Assemblyman Mervyn Dymally, lives in the Watts area. Civil rights organizations are notably absent, and powerful churches have failed to speak up.

These were the socio-economic "explainers" for the Watts tragedy. Sociologists also cited the momentum of the civil rights movement and the pressure of rising expectations that can never be satisfied, the effect of those leaders who, often for their own profit or purposes, would lead the unknowing into believing that all wrongs must and can be righted now for everyone.

But past ills cannot be erased or forgotten. Past injustices can never be completely rectified or wrongs completely righted. Those who continue to believe so or who lead others to believe so are being deceived or deceiving. Human nature does not work that way. Change does not occur over night -- not change in basic human nature or deeply inculcated personal habits and beliefs.

I have called Watts a tragedy and so it is, not only for the Negro but for every member of mankind, whether he knows it or not. There is no guarantee that man like many animals before him may not pass into extinction. Our tenure on this globe has been most brief and will probably be abbreviated by our own short-sightedness, unless we learn to live in relative peace with our neighbor, until we learn to like or dislike him as an individual and not as a member of a particular group.

The most immediate and worst result of the Watts tragedy is the hardening of the fictitious distinctions between black and white. No person, no group of persons, are well served by such walls of hate. The theory of bipolarity is no more accurate in social intercourse than it is between relations of nations, and we blind ourselves to possible solutions as long as we pursue such idle polemics. There are other deprived peoples in this world and in this nation, and they are not all black -- many are yellow or red or swarthy Latin types; some are even white. Until each person decides to stop thinking in terms of "them" and "we," no one will have true equality of opportunity, equal rights under the law, or equal freedoms.

Mexican-Americans are entitled to the chance for better jobs; American Indians are entitled to good integrated schools; and Orientals are entitled to live where they please, just as are Jews, Negroes and whites. We shall have more tragedies like Watts until we begin to rid ourselves of this tunnel vision. This is not a world of blacks and whites; it is a world of people, every one of whom deserves a fair chance for improving himself. But now we have introduced a new thought -- improving oneself.

The old axiom of taking the horse to water still holds true. The best opportunities now will not change the past or completely correct the status quo or open magic doors to tomorrow. The horse must be thirsty and willing to drink if he wishes to quench his thirst. The so-called "haves" of the world must be willing to pump the water and provide the trough but the horse, once his need is slaked, must be willing to pull his share of the burden.

This is a problem for all of us. Those who can must meet with other citizens of the community of all races and creeds. They must discuss and argue the very real problems of living closely together, of competing for acceptance, recognition, homes, and jobs. Those who cannot so participate must attempt to readjust their thinking to gain tolerance and understanding of all fellow men.

Until we do these things, the Watts, the Selmas, the street scenes of violence, hatred, race against race, man against man, will continue to occur. We're all in the same boat and we can easily sink it or swamp it with our quarrels. The tragedy of Watts is not a southern phenomenon or peculiar to Los Angeles or New York slums. The hates, the needs, the passions, the desires of the victims of these tragedies are present in us all. We will not begin to solve the problems, to live in relative abundance, peace or physical security until we learn to think of the person next to us an individual not totally unlike ourselves, with similar drives and fallacies, entitled to the same opportunities and subject to the same laws and rules as we.

When men and women meet together as individuals to discuss and seek solutions to problems affecting them all, only then will any man have true opportunity or freedom.

the Precinct Democrat

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Kimi Fujii

Hayward, Calif.

THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND??

BY Cep

Now is the time for the Democratic Party in California to take stock of itself. Who represents us? Where are we going? How are we going to get there? We can only answer these questions by the kind of leaders we select and by the support or lack of it that we give them at the polls. If liberal Democrats are to find their ideas reflected by the party, if we are to maintain the vigor that keeps a party healthy, we must try to find spirited, effective leadership now, before the Republicans bind up their wounds.

What is the image of the party in California now? Cranston and Salinger were both defeated in statewide elections last year. Stanley Mosk has "retired" to the State Supreme Court. Jimmy Roosevelt was very hard hit in the Los Angeles mayoralty race and has now even left the congress. Those who represent the party to most Californians are Pat Brown, Jesse Unruh and Hugh Burns. Is this the "image" we want?

Sy Cassidy, President of the CDC, was asked recently if he thought the CDC and Alan Cranston could survive politically in view of the defeat of the CDC-endorsed candidate in the 1964 primary. His reply was that the CDC would survive, but that he could not say about Cranston. Of course, one can understand why he made the statement: the CDC blames Cranston for its defeat, nobody loves a loser, and Cranston is rumored to have burdensome campaign debts. At most of the recent CDC functions Cranston has been shouldered aside or ignored. In a word, his political future, except as Controller, looks dim.

Alan Cranston deserves another look. But regardless of the party attitude, liberal Democrats must stop quibbling among themselves and look at what is happening. We cannot afford many more George Murphy elections.
