

These private non-governmental organizations perform many services in the public interest and, given the complexity of our society, both the range of their activities and the extent of their responsibilities seem destined to grow. The best of these agencies perform services that the society needs and the government cannot perform, nor will any profit-making agency. They can, for example, move readily into areas that need open intellectual examination and arrive at relatively objective appraisal; they are free to examine and explore tender, touchy problems and to raise the hard and unpleasant questions; they can be committed to principles without being partisan to parties.

The Council on Religion and International Affairs, for example, examines foreign policy within the moral context in which it is shaped and relates that foreign policy to the democratic processes of our country. It brings into a common forum of discussion highly competent people in and out of government, people with widely divergent views, allegiances and backgrounds. These people are united in their belief that sustained political discussion is valuable and they are able to develop

and refine that intellectual exchange, that civilized and informed dialogue which is necessary to the health of a democratic society.

When visitors from other countries—students, businessmen and political leaders—have attended these forums they have almost unfailingly been impressed with the ability of such groups to carry on open, informed, intense debate on issues of national importance. They learn something that is very special about our society, something that is fostered by a host of non-governmental organizations. Nevertheless, many of the private organizations that perform this public service lack sufficient funds to extend or even maintain that service. If they had sufficient funds fewer of them would have become dependent on the C.I.A., and those services which they rendered that were valuable could well have been carried on openly. That the C.I.A. became involved in the way it did exposes it to criticism, but that it became involved is a judgment on a society which has not yet found a way properly to evaluate and support those non-partisan, nonprofit, non-governmental organizations that are vital to its welfare.

J.F.

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## ***in the magazines***

Reprinted below is the major portion of an editorial on "Bombs and Balms" which appeared in the February 1 issue of *The Christian Century*:

"If reports we have read in the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Toronto Daily Star* are correct, the United States government repudiates scriptural injunctions about feeding the hungry enemy or in other ways ministering to him in his misery. In fact the Johnson Administration not only refuses to involve itself in that kind of charity but also tries to hamper individual Christians and Christian institutions that try to obey the injunctions. The *Times* states that 'the Johnson Administration is quietly attempting to block donations by American Quakers to a Canadian Quaker group sending medical supplies to North Vietnam and the Viet Cong.'

"In October the U.S. Treasury instructed 14,000 U.S. banks not to honor checks payable to the Canadian Friends Service Committee or its officers for medical goods. The *Star* stated: 'The U.S. government has forbidden Canadian subsidiaries of American drug

companies to sell medical supplies to Canadian Quakers for shipment to North Vietnam. The regulation was quoted yesterday by Stanley Sommerfield, chief counsel for the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control. Sommerfield also hinted at possible severe retaliation against the Royal Bank of Canada for its refusal to cooperate in choking off funds to the Canadian Friends Service Committee of Toronto.' . . .

"By the time this is read a shipment of 640,000 anti-malarial and antibiotic tablets will be on its way to Vietnam despite U.S. government harassment—probably on a Soviet-bloc ship out of a Canadian harbor. This shipment will be divided three ways among the South Vietnam Red Cross and the Red Cross organizations of North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front. The United States attempt to stop such shipments in a reprehensible intrusion into the internal affairs of Canada and an intolerable repression of the Christian's right to obey the elementary commandments of his faith. The United States spends

millions of dollars pouring scalding napalm on Vietnamese. If a few Christians want to obey their Christ by sending medicines to the wounded and the sick, they should be encouraged to do so—not threatened and harassed. The Quakers, it should be noted, do not send military supplies and secrets to the enemy. They send healing. Does this balm give aid and comfort to the enemy? Certainly. Does it to any extent hamper the U.S. war effort? Of course it does. If we let wounded and diseased Vietnamese die there will be fewer of them to kill later. Is this the only logic we Christians know, the only authority we obey? It is not!"

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Major George Fielding Eliot finds the prosecution of the Vietnam war hampered by the fact that a civilian, Secretary of Defense McNamara, "constituted himself not only the director, but the sole public spokesman of the war" (*National Review*, February 21). "The most troublesome—and potentially—dangerous—hangover from the days of doomsday paralysis which is still with us," Eliot notes, "is the lingering notion that the professional judgment of our military leaders should still be kept on a tight civilian leash, even in matters of operational detail. This attitude prevents us from making the most effective use of our large reservoir of talent in the military business of weighing risk against advantage. Since nothing whatever can replace experience and skill when it comes to fighting, the reluctance to make full use of our military brainpower places us at a serious disadvantage when we face a well-led opponent, as we do in Vietnam. . . ."

Among the Defense Secretary's shortcomings cited by Major Eliot is his failure "to tap that reservoir of public confidence of which the armed services are the possessors, and which is so essential an ingredient in the successful prosecution of an American war—especially a distant and limited war of which the object is only dimly perceived by the public and which Mr. MacNamara most conspicuously lacks the ability to make clear. It may be doubted that it has ever occurred to him, or would be credited if it had, that in war and most especially in a war of this character, the American public very badly needs what may be called a military father-figure, wearing the uniform and dedicated to the tradition to which all American officers of stature are heirs—the tradition of loyalty to the men committed to their care. This is a known loyalty in which the public has instinctive confidence; and that confidence is not transferable to civilian cabinet officers. . . ."

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"Of all the enigmas and contradictions that surround Lyndon Johnson, none is more puzzling than his view of the world" writes a White House correspondent in *War/Peace Report* for January. Yet "no

question is more central to an understanding of his conduct of American foreign policy, and none is harder to answer with certainty."

"The first puzzle is whether Johnson has a world view at all," says James Deakin. The President's "critics say that the Texan in the White House possesses no philosophic substratum to guide and illuminate his day-to-day conduct of foreign policy. He has no basic idea of what should be the ultimate goals of American diplomacy, no concept of an eventual world order. . . ."

"At the other end of the spectrum" Deakin identifies "a phenomenon that could be called 'Lyndon of the Secret Wisdom.' In this role, assiduously promoted by his staff and by some journalistic defenders, the President is a man who knows exactly what he wants to do in foreign affairs but who insists on doing it his own way, which may not always be congenial to the sophisticated. He has an intuitively perceptive (if not trained and formal) view of the world, and he is a shrewd and capable operator." . . .

Deakin finds that "picking a path between these polarizations is not easy." On the one hand, "after three years in the Presidency, Johnson cannot fairly be said to be a complete novice in international affairs or to be completely lacking in appreciation of the elemental forces at work in the world. . . ." Yet, Deakin asserts, "if some of the biggest gaps in Johnson's knowledge of the world have been partly filled . . . a basic flaw still remains. . . . The problem is simply that Johnson and many others of his political generation formed their essential international attitudes in the years immediately after World War II, in the coldest period of the Cold War, when the dominating feature on the international landscape was the great confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union."

From this perspective "the Vietnam involvement can be traced in large measure to Johnson's conventional view of communism. The assumption that China, simply because it is Communist, is inexorably expansionistic makes it impossible for the United States to examine the millennial hostility between China and Indo-China, to discern whether . . . there is bitter division between Peking and Hanoi over the conduct of the war, and to analyze the consequences of China's isolation from the world. Equally important, it causes the Administration to commit the largest part of its attention to an Asian war, to the neglect of urgent European problems. And, ironically, it makes it difficult for the President to capitalize on the chief triumph of diplomacy in the twenty years since the end of World War II—the fact that the United States and Russia have avoided going to war. The crowning tragedy of the Johnson Administration could well be that it failed to see the lesson that if war with Russia . . . could be avoided in one generation, war with China could be avoided in the next."

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