

throw of capitalism), and the wartime measures of Trudeau's Government, three major Quebec labor organizations have denounced both, declaring that the latter threatens democracy and the exercise of civil liberties. But the Trudeau Government has received support for its measures from the political opposition and from former Conservative Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, who said the crisis was "far more serious than anything we have faced in peacetime."

Without attempting to pass judgment on the crisis which is Canada's and the measures which her government has taken to combat it, Americans can ask themselves: What would justify the imposition of similar restrictions in the United States? Would we accept such restrictions with the relative ease that the Canadians have shown? The answer to the second question is "Not bloody likely." The answer to the first question is more difficult, since the answer depends upon one's present estimate of American life, and it is on this estimate that Americans are most deeply divided. Any attempt to heal or overcome or anneal that division by force could only extend it.

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What, if anything, does the present example of Canada tell us about ourselves? A number of things worth reflection might be mentioned. However severe we judge the present crisis in America, we do not believe that it justifies the suspension of our traditional democratic processes or civil liberties. And those few who do—and who attempt to show by terrorist attacks that the system is hollow—are becoming increasingly isolated. Although the deep confidence in ourselves as a people, as a nation, has been shaken, our actions show that we expect to muddle our way through without extreme measures.

For many people, of course, that is cause for denunciation, not self-gratulation; for extreme measures, they would argue, are what we need. Not, of course, those adopted by the Canadian Government, not repressive police measures, but something rough enough to shift our priorities so that we can *really* combat poverty, racism, undue military expenditures, so that we can improve the quality of our housing, our education, our medical treatment. And there we are, back in the political arena, making the hard, unpleasant, long-drawn-out struggle to effect social and political change. Confrontation politics, sometimes. Arduous electoral politics, all the time. J.F.

WINDING DOWN IN LAOS?

Since October 8th, U.S. B-52 bombers have been unloading 900 tons of explosives per day on the Ho Chi Minh Trail region at a time when the war is supposed to be "winding down" and becoming Vietnamized. The war in Vietnam *has* been scaled down, but it has become increasingly difficult to follow in the press. So has *one* of the wars in Laos, the struggle for the colonial succession, where things have gone well for the Pathet Lao (who seem in a position to demand a larger role in any future coalition than they have had in the past). But the *other* Laotian war, the air war over eastern Laos, is once again in full swing. As integral parts of the Vietnamese conflict, events in that war shed important light on Washington's posture towards Vietnam.

Laos' eastern provinces have, especially since 1968, been important sanctuaries for North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops and supply forces. Consequently, the command sanctuaries in southeastern Laos and the Ho Chi Minh Trail have been key "targets" in the eyes of U.S. military strategists. But, having been restrained—by Washington and Vientianne—from "cleaning out" these sanctuaries, military efforts have been limited to C.I.A. subversion and to Air Force strikes. The air effort is significant in tactics, size, and in its relationship to a possible end of the war.

For, at a time when Washington is talking peace, emphasizing negotiations, and hinting at victory, it is still meeting the politics of insurgency with the strategies of firepower. This tells us something about the military soul of the doctrine of Vietnamization, its reliance on force (American), and its inability to match solution to problem. In this context one might have expected that the bombing of Laos, being the direct continuation of the tactics and strategy of the Johnson Administration in dealing with infiltration from North Vietnam, would have received some of the moral and strategic criticisms levelled against that President's military analysis. But, despite much talk of peace, the war continues. And in view of the murderous power under consideration, as well as its real irrelevance to the political struggle that is the war in Vietnam, it is important to realize that, in October, 1970, "virtually all the operational B-52's in the war zone" (*New York Times*, October 17) are spending all their time over Laos. K.Z.