

Foreign Affairs in Precarious Balance

By C. L. Sulzberger

LONDON — It is generally considered that the next two or three weeks will be critical in demonstrating whether President Nixon is able to pursue his main foreign policy objectives along the conceptual lines hitherto followed, or whether administrative chaos produced by the Watergate scandal may start to paralyze U.S. initiatives.

As things stand at the end of May, the more prescient and unemotional observers abroad believe that American diplomacy may be expected to continue on a fundamentally sound and strong basis. Whether that will endure, however, depends on the unknown factor of the U.S. public and political mood.

Already it has become evident that Washington's effort to settle the Cambodian aspect of the Indo-China war is gravely compromised. In his most recent Paris negotiations with Le Duc Tho, Henry Kissinger seems unquestionably to have been weakened and embarrassed on this issue.

The Watergate mess itself was and is in no sense directly tied to Indo-China. But the revolt against presidential authority, immensely inflamed by the juggling scandal and its ramifications, encouraged congress to cut off funds to finance bombing in Cambodia. This removed from Kissinger's hand a valuable bargaining trump.

Although there have been hints of some improvement in the Indo-China situation with respect to Laos and Vietnam, Cambodia appears in poor shape. There is no escape from what are euphemistically called "grim realities." Indeed, one might now say Washington's remaining hope is to delay an inevitable collapse of its position there.

But on other U.S. policy aspects, the debilitating influence of scandal hasn't yet made itself felt. On the Middle East, there has been no slippage. Kissinger, who had long avoided personal involvement in the ticklish Arab-Israeli argument, has now become active in this diplomatic minefield. Moreover, Brezhnev and Nixon agree that new efforts must be made to reduce its explosive potential.

And there is every expectation the Brezhnev-Nixon talks will go off as foreseen, without a hitch, next month. All important discussion points have been agreed upon, and fundamental joint decisions regarding these have already been taken in preliminary negotiations.

Enough momentum has already been generated, with respect to the culmination of Soviet-American negotiations after four painstaking years of Nixon policy, to carry things on toward their expected conclusion. But there is no similar diplomatic momentum visible in terms of policy initiatives more recently launched by Washington.

Thus, while the "year of Europe" is considered the President's primary objective for 1973 foreign policy, that "year" has not gotten off to a booming start.

There is indeed every effort to stress the Atlantic relationship. It is hoped this will reduce the recent competition for prestige among the Western allies, a prestige that depended more on their respective relationships with Moscow or Peking than with each other.

This gave the two communist capitals an inferential veto over the policies of several North Atlantic partners. Now it is clear the Soviets will always deal first with the strongest NATO member, the United States. This fact helps cool off the intra-alliance competition and makes allied relationships again more obviously important than adversary relationships.

But just as these trends became fully clear, the Watergate affair detonated. At

a moment when Washington hoped to reap the fruits of a carefully devised long-range policy, the American people and the American political system exploded over an issue of deep moral significance.

The trouble is that what began as what might properly be called a sordid and ridiculous political affair speedily assumed the shape of a furious concurrent power battle between an executive branch, exposed as confused and inept, and a

legislative branch which had previously felt maneuvered and confined.

This struggle has developed with increasingly fevered intensity as Watergate's own stain spreads.

Morally sound as the opponents of a tarnished White House are on the issues involved, their effort to curb and then reduce presidential power on foreign and defense policy run counter to the tide of current history. This could produce serious dangers.

Development of new and dreadful weapons plus instant communications have combined to increase rather than decrease the strength of the executive in most important nations nowadays by emphasizing the frequent need for swift governmental decisions.

If, as a consequence of disgust with recent White House behavior we reject contemporary historical logic, the United States — and indeed, the whole world — could be unbalanced.

New York Times Service

Election Law Changes

WE HOPE the Iowa senate finds time in the remaining days of this session to adopt a bill the house passed last week that proposes sweeping changes in the state's somewhat antiquated election laws.

House Republicans, including their previously recalcitrant conservative bloc, stuck together to pass the bill over unexpected last-minute opposition from Democrats. Their main objection struck at the major provisions that are vitally essential in any election law revision.

The bill calls for dozens upon dozens of technical changes, and other changes, in present election laws. For the most part there was little opposition to these proposals.

Democratic resistance centered largely on these major changes: (1) A provision extending the requirement that all qualified residents must be registered to be eligible to vote (only those living in counties of over 50,000 population and cities of over 10,000 are required to register now). (2) A provision closing registration 15 days before each election to give county commissioners of election more time to prepare poll books (registration closes 10 days before elections now).

Democratic opposition to statewide registration came as a shocker since Democrats, as well as Republicans, have called for it in the past. Some Democrats explained that the refusal of the 55-member Republican majority (in the 100-member house) to accept an amendment directing the state to pay registration costs, turned them off on supporting the bill.

The Democrats did have a point with this amendment, and it was surprising that Republicans refused to go along. Without this amendment, counties will have to pick up the cost of registration (as those over 50,000 are doing now), which means the money will have to come from property taxpayers. And Republicans are committed,

through Governor Ray, to keep properly taxes down.

But having lost that "who's going to pay for it" argument, temporarily at least, Democrats should have supported statewide registration. It simply is not fair that some voters should be required to register when others are not, simply because of where they live.

There's another good reason for statewide registration. The present Iowa law is discriminatory. Discriminatory, as explained by the bill's floor manager, Rep. Richard Drake of Muscatine, in that a person now can vote in nonregistration areas, but not in registration areas, if he moves into the state in the 10 days before an election. He has this right, Drake pointed out, as a result of the U.S. supreme court decision in a Tennessee residency case.

Democrats, perhaps, were on more solid ground in opposing the provision to close registration five days earlier than at present. Their argument is weak, however, that an additional barrier to keeping people away from the polls results from this in that many don't think about registering until two weeks or so before elections.

Iowa already has one of the most progressive registration laws in the nation. It is possible to register in Iowa any time during the year except before elections. Even, then, it is possible to register for the next election during the 10 days prior to the upcoming election. Many states open registration only certain times of the year and many close it not 10 or 15 days before but 30 days before each election.

Under the bill's terms statewide registration would not take effect until July 1, 1975. But senate passage this year would be a big help to county commissioners and other election officials to make necessary preparations in present nonregistration areas for a smooth transition period, as well as to gear up for the changes that would take effect July 1, 1974.

What's in a Name

WHEN CONGRESS enters its dog days, more or less idle minds turn to dreaming up bills that would be great to lobby. So it was in a recent session that a fictitious Long-Spong-Fong Kong bill was suggested.

Inspired by that, the feet-on-desk gang at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Assn. have listed more hypothetical legislation that deserves consideration — the Hunt-Heinz-Pickle-Pepper food additive bill and the Muskie-Pike-Fish-Frey bill, among others. Honest, all names are present members of congress.

All of which tempts ink-stained idlers here to have a go at the

Iowa general assembly. Curiously, the senate provides slim pickings, so on to the house and these mythical measures:

Grassley-Hill slope seeding bill; Small-Drake Des Moines school limitation bill; Fisher-Crabb marine import bill; Carr-Horn auto noise abatement bill; Junker-Welden car restoration bill; Harper-Stromer string music bill; Pellett-Rapp anti-BB gun bill; West-Woods Missouri river bank forestation bill; Holden-Patchett tire repair bill; and Wulf-Den Herder predator roundup bill.

This pastime reportedly originated in the Punsylvania legislature.

Fire Hazards, Budget Pinch

Timber Sell-Off Secrets Told

By Jack Anderson

WASHINGTON — Our national forests, with 82 million acres of timberland, provide a refuge for a variety of wild creatures and a recreation area for the populace. Americans by the tens of millions roam the federal woods each year.

They may be interested in a revealing, two-inch stack of documents, intended for official eyes only. These show that the Nixon administration is selling off a staggering 11.8 billion board feet of the taxpayers' timber.

Yet at the same time, the administration is reducing the money and manpower needed to prevent the cut-off from becoming a fire hazard. In the cautious language of bureaucrats, the memos warn that the untreated slash could turn into tinder and create dangers of massive forest fires.

The Forest Service is trying, Watergate style, to suppress the incriminating memos. An "Early Warning Alert" has been circulated, cautioning that the memos are "privileged information" and must be withheld from the public.

All federal employees are sternly forbidden from releasing "this information unless or until released to the public by the department." The Natural Resources Defense Council, for instance, is pressing for action.

Nevertheless, we will publish the highlights and make the full texts available to any group interested in saving our forests.

The timber toll of 11.8 billion board feet was approved by the Cost of Living Council under political pressure from the lumber industry and economic pressure from the construction boom. The sup-



Jack Anderson

pressed memos promise even "higher output goals in 1974 and 1975."

Yet the memos tell how the Forest Service, which is supposed to manage our national forests, is caught in a budget squeeze. Its funds are being slashed by \$105 million, its full-time work force reduced from 20,400 to 18,810.

Forest Service chief John McGuire described the problem in a confidential wire to his regional directors. The timber cutting "is 18 percent higher" than in 1972, he reported. "Additional funding and manpower will be required . . . to achieve that 18 percent increase." He solicited their views.

From vast region nine, which stretches from the North Atlantic states to Iowa, came a blunt response from Fire Control Chief Edward Hielman.

"With our projected increase in timber activities," he wrote, "comes an increase in fire exposure due to the harvesting activity itself, post-sale slash treatment, and subsequent public use of areas containing untreated slash. Obviously, an increase in fire protection is in order if we are to avoid immediate

and long-term future reductions in our timber supply."

This was echoed by Regional Forester Max Peterson in Atlanta's region eight, which covers all the southern states. Fund reductions "may be serious . . ." he warned. "We don't know at this point how much of our goal this will place in jeopardy."

In other areas, the foresters predicted they would have to fall back on the wasteful practice of "clearcutting" to meet the 11.8 billion board feet goal.

Bolstered by these replies, McGuire and his men began drafting some memos of their own. One for the White House, itself, says tentatively that "additional funds are needed . . . if fall-off timber . . . is to be prevented." The memo warns "the 1975 goals cannot be sustained."

Some foresters tried to take their complaints up to Capitol Hill. This brought some sharp "specific guidance" from the White House to the agriculture department, which has jurisdiction over the Forest Service.

In a private April 2 memo, Assistant Agriculture Secretary Robert Long wrote to the Forest Service chief:

"The President expects (you) actively to support the budget . . . This support should be given in testimony before congressional committees, in informal contacts with members of congress and their staffs, and in speeches and meetings with outside groups."

Nevertheless, McGuire told us honestly: "I cannot legally say to the loggers, here is the national forest, help yourself." A final decision on the 11.8 billion board feet, meanwhile, awaits White House action.

United Feature Syndicate

"If he thinks Vietnam was a hardship, wait till he tries to sign a peace treaty with US!"



The People's Forum

Lost-Son Search Still Going On

To the Editor:

Recently the Linn county sheriff's department announced that its part in the search for our son, Guy Heckle, is concluded. We are sorry to lose their assistance, but we realize that the officers have many other important duties which demand their time and attention. They have spent many man-hours in search of our son, and we are sincerely grateful.

Since this announcement, we have received numerous inquiries regarding the search being ended. We want the public to know that the search is definitely continuing.

As parents, our children are our first concern, and when one of them is missing we are unable to give up at this time. There is a large backwater area which has never been searched due to the high river level.

Each evening when the weather and river level permit, my wife and I search the river bank and backwater area until dark. On weekends we are aided by relatives and friends. There are others still searching on their own.

We have not yet sent public or private thank-yous, because we do not want to give the impression that the search is finished. The help we have received from the community is immeasurable. There are not words to express our gratitude, especially for the hopes and prayers from friends and strangers alike.

We feel there are two possible answers to Guy's disappearance. Either he did get lost and drowned in the river, or there is the remote possibility he met with foul play, and he could be anywhere, dead or alive. We are still praying for a miracle and we hope our friends, many of whom we don't even know, will continue to pray with us and aid in the search.

Mr. and Mrs. Howard Heckle
1505 Forty-eighth street NE

Truth and Lies

To the Editor:

The people who back the President aren't always pro-Nixonites any more than those who don't are to be called an-

ti-Christ. Aren't these people who don't want to be called pro-Nixonites satisfied that our boys are home from Vietnam?

Just because the President is going to send a bunch of liberals to jail they call him Tricky Dick. If these same people were in some of these other foreign countries, they'd be shot for less than that. Don't these liberals ever think of the Ten Commandments?

I'm part of the public, and I'm not suffering over Watergate, for I haven't forgotten the Bay of Pigs, Pueblo incident, Pearl Harbor, Cuban missile crises, Otto Otepka scandal and other . . . cover-ups or lies . . .

I'm not worried over the press, because if they'd only tell the truth it would be bad enough without all the guesswork commonly called lies. I also wouldn't worry over Brezhnev. He doesn't believe in the Ten Commandments, so how can he tell the truth from a lie or right from wrong?

I'm sure President Nixon does, because Quakers aren't murderers or killers. I honestly hope that these liberals will have their eyes opened before it's too late. In a country such as ours no one should have to worry unless he helps bring it on himself.

Marvin J. Kainz
Garnaville

Destined

To the Editor:

This is the second time I have felt anger, disgust and sadness enough to write in hope that my words may reach the right ears and hearts to find some way to protect our little country cemeteries.

The Shucyville cemetery has been ravaged. Where last year stood beautiful masterpieces of stone with touching epitaphs dating back to 1800s, now every tall stone lies broken off and toppled in sad heaps of broken stone.

A mile away in the Holy Presbyterian church cemetery is the grave of my 17-year-old son, his stone paid for by classmates of Prairie high and friends from his job. Unimportant to strangers this

red marble slab—but it is a lasting remembrance to Cliff White from those who loved him. How sad if someday his stone too were spoiled.

These persons who hunt the cemeteries, who destroy headstones, who klick over the flowers and break vases should realize they have an appointment to be part of a cemetery themselves, someday.

Mrs. Robert L. Beall
Route 1, Ely

Why 'Shock'?

To the Editor:

I don't understand why it is so shocking to discover three infant bodies in a trunk when some find it casual to terminate the lives of infants through legal abortion.

Why should the killing of a 3-month-old or even a 6-month-old child be more "shocking" than the killing of a child a few months earlier through abortion?

And why should any young mother be punished or suffer mental anguish from public opinion for killing her child of a few days old when she could have done it legally and with approval three months earlier? This makes no sense to me.

Perhaps we need to define "life" as applying only to "wanted" humans.

Mrs. Robert Carey
795 Alpine road
Marion

LETTERS

The Gazette's editorial page welcomes readers' opinions, subject to these guidelines:

Length limit: 400 words.
One letter per writer every 30 days.
All may be condensed and edited without changing meaning.
None published anonymously.
Writer's telephone number (not printed) should follow name, address and readable handwritten signature to help authenticate.
Contents deal more with issues and events than personalities.
No poetry.

Symbolized by Kissinger

China Playing U.S. Friendship Big

By Marquis Childs

PEKING — On Chinese television and in movie theaters throughout the country is a documentary film entitled "Chairman Mao and Dr. Kissinger."

With Chinese subtitles for Kissinger's English, it shows the revered leader with President Nixon's adviser for national security in a discussion of the two nations and their growing friendship.

This is a striking illustration of the commitment the leaders of the People's Republic have made to the American involvement. It is, in effect, a blessing before the hundreds of millions by the man who has something like the status of a god in the eyes of those same millions.

It says something, too, about the importance of Kissinger's role in the drama of America and the New China.

In the handsome China pictorial, two pages with color photos are given to "Dr. Kissinger Visits China". Kissinger and his aide, Winston Lord, are pictured in earnest conversation with Mao and Premier Chou En-lai. This English-lan-

guage publication is widely distributed.

The leaders of the People's Republic look to continuity and stability far into the future. A blessing by Mao will carry into the years ahead and be plus during the transitional period when the old leaders will have passed from the scene. Mao is 73. Chou is 75. To outsiders, at any rate, their successors are not visible.

What China hopes for from the United States is twofold.

First is the very fact of friendship. The American presence in Peking. The rapid-

ly growing exchanges — these are a counter to the fear that is basic not only to Chinese policy but to the fundamental conviction of the people subject to a continuous infusion of propaganda.

That is the fear of an attack by the Soviet Union — either a pre-emptive strike against China's nuclear development or a mass attack by the million or more Russians on the northern border.

The second hope is for greatly expanded trade. The 10 Boeing 707s that will be delivered next year are a beginning of the kind of benefits to accrue from America's advanced technology.

Pay-as-you-go on the international market is a policy long adhered to by the Chinese. There are signs, however, that a shift is in the making. Several times to this reporter officials have spoken of the possibility of "deferred payments."

They may well be interested in credits from the export-import bank that could open the way for the construction of whole plants in the petro-chemical and fertilizer fields.

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