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Sound And Fury Signifying Nothing

THERE is no finer spectacle today than the sight of a U. S. politician—eyes glazed, mind wandering desperately like a mouse in a tin box—pondering 1955's Big Question: Will Ike run or won't he?

From Tammany to Toonerville, the accent has been on anguished brain racking. By now everybody down to the lowliest ward-heeler has contributed something to the bubbling pot of speculation. There has been a great deal of chest-beating and a great deal of misty-eyed whining.

The marvelous thing about the whole agonizing exercise is that it is such a fine, classic study of desperate futility.

At this stage of the game, the argument is largely academic—all the horrified eye-rolling and desk-thumping eloquence to the contrary notwithstanding.

Any utterance from Dwight D. Eisenhower about his intentions at this time—even the tiniest hint—would be unthinkable. In fact, the President would be violating one of the oldest and sturdiest traditions of American politics if he breathed a word about the matter.

It is safe to say that he plans to keep discreetly mum for quite a while.

There is good reason for this silence.

A hint now that he will be bowing out would immediately saddle him with all the handicaps of a lame duck leader, reducing his influence with Congress and deflating his political muscles generally.

On the other hand, if the decision is to run again a long delay would not only increase the pressure for a draft but would also reduce the chance for others to make a real dent in primaries or build convention support.

Ike may have entered the White House as a wide-eyed rookie in the great game of politics but he is in every sense a big leaguer today. He will not muff this play. He may even make it look easy.

And the sound and fury from the bleachers signifies precisely nothing.

Tar Heel Taste: Safe And Sane?

NORTH CAROLINA'S captains of culture can relax. The good, gray GREENSBORO DAILY NEWS assures us that there is absolutely no truth to the report that the state's million-dollar art collection was created under a law barring paintings of buck-naked ladies and work done later than 1800.

But a belletristic rhubarb is stirring just the same. Selections made by Robert Lee Humber and associates, who stocked the soon-to-be-opened galleries in Raleigh, have drawn fire from connoisseurs who sense neglect of the past century and a half.

Our Greensboro contemporary, an old foe of "modernism" in art, plainly thinks such criticism is pure poppycock.

Says the GDN:

> Our offhand and far-removed guess would be that the selection had to be more or less on the safe and non-controversial side, and have some relation to the artistic taste of Tar Heels.
>
> "Safe and non-controversial"?
> The "artistic taste of Tar Heels"?
> The world of art is not and never will be "safe and non-controversial." Nor should it be. It is too personal, too spiced with emotion. The growth of Western painting is really the story of the birth of modern man and his subsequent development down through the centuries.
>
> It is a visible record, too, of the growth of the human spirit. But the manner in which the record has been kept has always been subject to controversy. El Greco was once damned as a mad mystic. Rembrandt's famous NIGHT WATCH was rudely rejected by Hollanders accustomed to being painted in photographic fashion with everything clear-cut and straight-forward. Brueghel caused consternation among the highbrows of his day when he refused to prettify the natural crudities of behavior of his favorite peasant subjects.
>
> A collector who wanted to be "safe and non-controversial" in the mid-17th century would have passed up Rembrandt's NIGHT WATCH. But he would have deprived himself of a distinguished example of high art.
>
> As for the present "artistic taste of Tar Heels," that is something that can hardly be restricted to particular centuries or techniques of painting. Besides, the artistic taste of Tar Heels is something that ought to be cultivated. An art museum is not merely a place of quiet, well-bred amusement. It should *educate*, too. North Carolina's state art museum has a remarkable opportunity to do some powerful educating. If it occasionally strays from orthodox safety zones and exhibits something great and controversial only the mossbacks will grumble.

The Generalissimo Strikes A Pose

CHIANG KAI-SHEK'S Christmas boast that a Nationalist counterattack on the Chinese mainland is drawing nearer day by day sounds more like wishful thinking than an announcement of any concrete plans.

For Chiang is only doing some very desperate whistling in the dark. The Nationalist leader knows better than anyone that such an attack would stand no chance of succeeding without large-scale military support, and that the United States is his only possible source of such aid. Furthermore, the U. S. is in no mood today to support a military action of any size, much less provoke a situation which could easily develop into a third World War.

Chiang's statement, we suspect, was designed to serve two purposes:

1—To attempt to forestall Communist attacks on the offshore islands this spring. The Communists have been for several months building up large concentrations of men and material in several areas along the coast, and recent reports from the Far East indicate that an attack on Matsu and Quemoy may very possibly be mounted this spring.

2—To bolster the morale of his aging army and supporting civilian population on the teeming island of Formosa. The primary reason for the existence of Chiang's army is to return to the mainland under the Nationalist banner, but this hope must seem faint indeed to his men spending their seventh Christmas on Formosa.

The greatest mistake Chiang could now make would be to fulfill his promise of an invasion now. For if he were to mount such an attack, it would almost certainly mean the end of Nationalist China, with the Reds taking advantage of this act to snuff out the Formosa forces and thus become the one and only "China."

Chiang's only hope, in the present situation, is to sit tight and wait until the Communists make a move. Then, and only then, will he have any chance of receiving the aid he will need to meet the Communists effectively.

Bumpkins

IT seems that the striped pants set takes a very dim view of agricultural attaches maintained abroad by the Department of Agriculture. "A lot of these attaches know farming well, but let's face it—that's all they know," says one State Department official in U. S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT. "They seem interested only in farming, they bore foreign dignitaries, forget the proper dress, and are giving the impression that the U. S. is crowded with country bumpkins."

Well, you find bumpkins all over, foreign and domestic, as well as solemn asses. And in the final analysis who plows whom?

From The St. Louis Post-Dispatch

BADGES FOR EVERYBODY

THE KANSAS CITY STAR reports an argument between two men over a parking space during which one man flashed a badge (badges are always "flashed") and threatened to arrest the other. But when the second man demanded to see the badge, the first drove away in a hurry. The skeptical driver just happened to be a badge salesman.

Ever since St. Louis School Board members ordered gold-plated badges at $69.50 apiece, we have wondered what makes people wear badges. The badge industry generally does not worry about this, since the desire pays off in thousands of dollars a year, but badge salesmen seem to work on several assumptions.

One is that people think badges make them important. Many organizations have discovered that badges assure the success of their ventures. And many citizens seem to feel that a badge—any badge—entitles them to special privileges, which is not necessarily so. In fact, it is rarely so.

Badges are for sale to all comers in several hundred designs, in many metals, from about two dollars up. It is even possible to buy a blank badge. The most popular badge is that of a private detective—but in Missouri anybody can buy a detective's badge of some sort. A private investigator wears no authority with his badge unless he has been legally deputized.

Juveniles, naturally, admire badges (Junior G-Men, space men, frontier marshals—anything). The best guess on the mystery of badge-wearing is that many people never outgrow the urge. Anybody can wear a badge. But badges do not have to cost $69.50 to make the urge official.

President Eisenhower's reputation for creating tasty vegetable soups and savory beer stews show how different he is from so many of the politicians whose standard offering is tripe.—NEW ORLEANS STATES.

In the event of an air attack on Dahlongea, we advise everybody to hide behind our office trash can. It's never been hit by anything yet.—DAHLONGEA NUGGET.

When the scientists get all through playing with their orbital basketball, maybe they will take up the practical problem of finding a way to eliminate crab grass.—ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH.

'Hearts And Flowers'

Rockefeller Leaves A Void

By JOSEPH AND STEWART ALSOP

WASHINGTON

NELSON A. Rockefeller was the most important casualty to date of the peculiar policy-maker process of the Eisenhower administration.

Of course they played "Hearts and Flowers" quite beautifully at the funeral. One of the great conveniences of governmental obsequies is that the casualties are not quite in the dear departed category, but are only the dear departing. They can join in their own last rites, which Rockefeller loyally did.

'DEEP REGRET'

He wrote the President that family business imperatively required him to leave the government. The President replied affectionately, with many an expression of deep regret. Every convention was observed. But the fact remains that Rockefeller would never have left his key post as a presidential adviser, if the advice he gave in the recent struggle over next year's budget had not proved unpalatably insistent and forthright.

SHARP OFFENSE

Just how the end came is still cloaked in considerable mystery. Certainly Rockefeller gave sharp offense to Secretary of the Treasury George M. Humphrey and the administration's other budget-firsters. Certainly Rockefeller's intervention was also far from well received by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, who guards his prerogatives with some care. Certainly Rockefeller's position as a presidential adviser—or in plainer language, an official fifth wheel—was always an inherently difficult position.

WORN OUT

But it does not matter very greatly whether or not it was Rockefeller himself who decided that he had worn out his usefulness as seems most likely. In any case, he is really leaving the executive offices because his usefulness there was finally worn out —although no doubt there is no shortage of Rockefeller family business for him to take care of now that he is free to do so.

Furthermore, what wore out Rockefeller's usefulness was his powerful insistence on a wholly new order of national policy priorities. Balancing the budget and even cutting taxes must now yield pride of place, he declared. And he pleaded for giving an over-riding first priority to meeting the double challenge of the enormous progress of the Kremlin's arms program and the wide extension of the Kremlin's political offensive in the Middle and Far East.

FATEFUL DECISION

The decision to neglect this double challenge is a fateful decision. The new theme song seems to be a revised version of the old hymn "Look Only To Lady Luck, She Will Carry Us Through." Maybe Lady Luck really will carry us through, as every sensible person must pray. But if Rockefeller's factually justified forebodings prove correct, as is also possible, his departure from the government will later be remembered in the way men now remember the departures of British officials in the '30s, who got into hot water by insisting that it was dangerous to neglect the challenge of Adolf Hitler.

EXCEPTIONAL COURAGE

To be sure, Rockefeller and his senior partner in the struggle, Vice President Richard Nixon, who showed quite exceptional courage, have some results to show after their fight for different policy priorities. The budget-firsters did not get all they wanted. A great increase of Soviet power and an intensification of Soviet effort were not answered by a considerable reduction of American power and effort. The American policy decision was to carry on as before.

Yet the departure of Rockefeller leaves almost no one but the vice president who is likely to speak up for a change in policy priorities, if and when just carrying on as before begins to prove acutely dangerous.

At the State Department, Secretary Dulles is heavily over-burdened with the endless intricacy and constant movement of day-to-day diplomacy. Questions of American power and American effort, which have mainly to do with the defense and foreign aid program, Dulles tends to leave to his two subordinates, Under-Secretary Herbert Hoover Jr. and Foreign Aid Administrator John Hollister. Both Hollister and Hoover strongly incline to the budget-firster side.

At the Defense Department, Secretary of Defense Charles S. Wilson is no longer willing to reduce our defense effort — which is a form of courage in present circumstances. But Wilson sees no reason to increase the defense effort, either, in order to balance the increase of Soviet strength.

NOTORIOUS

As for the views of Treasury Secretary Humphrey and Budget Director Rowland Hughes, they might almost be described as notorious.

Thus there is no one besides Nixon to signal a change of course, except the President himself. If Eisenhower ever decides a change of course is needed, he will have to overrule most of those who hold the key positions on his team. All hope is now on him.

NELSON ROCKEFELLER
The Budget-Firsters Claim A Victim

GEORGE M. HUMPHREY

'Go Back And Tell Them You're A Sovereign State'

Strain Of U. S. Presidency Can't Be Shifted Elsewhere

By WALTER LIPPMANN

NEW YORK

MR. EISENHOWER'S illness has posed in a new form the old problem of the President's powers. Since the early days of the government Americans have had differing opinions about how much power ought to be vested in the President, how much in the Congress. But in this generation the question of where power should be allocated has acquired a new dimension. We have become concerned also with the question of how much power the President, or Congress, can in fact exercise efficiently, responsively, and without subjecting the human beings in the offices to an intolerable strain.

It is no doubt a sheer coincidence, yet it is a symbolic coincidence, that the responsible leaders of the upper house of the legislature, Sen. Johnson, and the chief executive should both have been stricken, the one at the climax of a hard legislative session, and the other not long after he had resolved a very dangerous crisis of war and peace.

NEW DIMENSION

We have been made aware of this new dimension, that of the human capacity to carry the load, because the load has become so enormously greater. It has become greater because of the wars of this century, because of the huge growth of the American population, of the American economy and of American responsibilities. In the cases of Wilson, Roosevelt, and Eisenhower, we have seen men break under the load.

The load, as such, cannot be lightened; that is to say, it must be carried by someone. The needs of the people, the responsibilities of the government at home and abroad, cannot be diminished. Almost certainly they will continue to grow larger.

CHANGING OFFICE

The presidency, as we know it today, has been adapting itself to these greater burdens by becoming a very different office than it used to be. The presidency is no longer a man and his secretaries and a few assistants. The presidency is in itself a great department of the government. But for the development of this new organ of the government, it would long since have become impossible to administer the government.

In this field Mr. Hoover speaks with special experience and great authority. He has suggested that the load borne by the President himself could be lightened if Congress would create a new office — that of "administrative vice president." Mr. Hoover thinks that of the 64 departments and agencies which now report to the President, or are supposed to, the administrative vice president could handle more than half —some 35 to 40. Assuming that the administrative vice president would be accountable to the President, and that in the greatest matters the President would be accountable for the administrative vice president, much good could, no doubt, come to Mr. Hoover's proposal. It would be another big step towards making the presidency into an organ of government.

AGONIZING DECISIONS

But how much this would actually lighten the load on the President is by no means certain and obvious. In the sense that the President would have less people he had to see, less papers he had to read and to sign, it would, of course, help to save his time and his energy. But is the strain of the presidency due to the fact that the President is overworked? Or is it due to his having so much responsibility in matters which are so often matters of life and death? We must suppose, I would think, that what is so hard is not the work but the worry of being President. Mr. Eisenhower himself, for example, cannot be described as a President who has worked too many hours a day. But at least twice—first in Indochina and last winter in the Formosa Straits—he has had to make agonizing decisions of war and peace. That is the kind of thing, not to mention the harassment of McCarthyism, that must have taken its toll.

HARD HOURS

Now there is no way that these hard decisions can be delegated. And since they cannot be delegated, the President cannot really afford not to keep in very close touch with the events and with the acts that precede the crisis of decision. This means if not long hours, some very hard hours.

And so, while the office of President can be made more efficient by administrative reform, by "streamlining" and the like, the office will always require the whole energy of a very energetic man.

HERBERT HOOVER
A Unique Proposal

People's Platform

No Friendship But No Grudge

Whiteville

Editors, The News:

SOME character wrote a letter to the Platform stating that God "short-changed" the Negroes and that they are of Hamitic origin. Well, to me it is quite evident that the man has never been a very diligent student either of biblical lore or ethnology. His so-called "scripture" is strictly homespun. I'm quite certain that he cannot read the Holy Scriptures in the original Hebrew, therefore I don't think his interpretation of Genesis 9:25,26,27 can be regarded by intelligent people as authoritative. And, of course, as anyone familiar with ethnology knows, the Negro and the Hamitic are two very separate and quite distinct races.

RIDICULOUS CLAIMS

In a more recent letter the Individual claimed that he and all other "righteous" white people have been feeding the Negroes, but that now his sympathy has turned to resentment. Well, I have heard that kind of nonsense before. Most whites who make such ridiculous claims are too poor to even feed themselves. I am a white man, myself, but I haven't been feeding any Negroes and I don't claim that I have.

An Anglo-Saxon, I profess no friendship or sympathy for the Negroes as a race. However, I bear no grudge against those who desire to improve themselves. It is with chagrin that I admit this, but statistics indicate that Negro students are on the average quite superior to whites. But why should I hate the Negroes because so many of my own fellow Anglo-Saxons are too trifling and lazy to really study even when they go off to college? Our white skins don't endow us Anglo-Saxons with any degree of superabundant intellect. The illiterate white man is just as thoroughly illiterate as the illiterate Negro and in my opinion they are both on the same level culturally and socially.

I can't see much reason for maintaining segregation any longer. Take a good look, if you can stomach him, at the typical high school or college "cat." Is he, with his turned-up collar, pegged pants, Harlem boogie haircut and be-bop talk, a white boy, an Anglo-Saxon? The only music he knows is African jazz and the only dances he knows are strictly Negro dances. Do his parents know anything about the history of our Anglo-Saxon culture and civilization or do they have any knowledge of Anglo-Saxon grammar? No! But they can tell you the name of all the top Negro entertainers and they can sing you the latest Negro "hit songs."

—RALPH ROYAL GORE

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

Lady Legislator Braves African Wilds

WASHINGTON

A LOT of congressmen are now coming back from almost every part of the world, most of them traveling at the taxpayers' expense. But grandmotherly 70-year-old Congresswoman Frances Bolton of Cleveland has just finished a 20,000-mile trek through dark Africa at her own expense. Mrs. Bolton couldn't look less like an African explorer but her trip had all the trappings of a Frank Buck expedition.

Charging Bull

In the Belgian Congo, a charging, trumpeting bull elephant almost put an end to her trip. Her only injury, however, came not from wild animals but from an automobile—a broken finger caught in a car door.

With her finger in splints, she traveled by plane, steamer, railway and caravan through 20 African countries, colonies, and protectorates, for the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Hemmed In

As a Republican, Mrs. Bolton has had years of experience with GOP elephants But she ran into the real animal on a dim jungle trail. A big enraged bull charged her party as if they were all Democrats. They were moving through the Belgian Congo by auto caravan when they found themselves hemmed in on three sides by elephants. Here is how Mrs. Bolton describes the incident:

"We stopped to watch a large herd of elephants where two bulls were fighting. Soon an electrical storm began to gather and the elephants became noticeably agitated. Before we knew it, a second herd had lumbered in on our left and a third on our right.

Narrow Escape

"Mountains were around us—a huge grassy plain, two cars, elephants on three sides, nervously protecting their young, and restless because of the lightning," reported the Ohio grandmother. "The man at my side warned us to watch an immense bull elephant straight ahead. His ears were flapping, his trunk swinging and he was shifting from side to side.

"Suddenly, with front feet together and a curious trumpeting, he charged us. The driver in the lead car had no time to turn. He slammed the gears into reverse and came back at us at about 30 miles an hour. Our driver did not lose his head, but backed clear of the oncoming car, got us turned around, and got us out of there. It was a breathless few seconds."

They Like Ike

Before leaving the Belgian Congo, Mrs Bolton met another woman politician—the queen mother of the Watusi tribe.

"We spoke of the vastness of Africa and of the future which we as women have in common although we live across the world from each other," writes the lady legislator. "I offered her a very small present, an attractive printed cotton scarf. She took it with great dignity and with a smile that was mostly in her eyes."

In Nigeria, far removed from American politics, Mrs. Bolton discovered that the natives like Ike.

'King Of U. S.'

They see him in movies, shown by two mobile picture units that the American embassy sends into the heart of the country. The congresswoman found that "the most popular films are those that show President Eisenhower's press conferences. Each of the ten White House press conference films are in top demand. The people come from distant parts to see a film where they say:

"'The king of the United States answers questions from anybody.'"

Christmas-Go-Round

Sprouts from the White House Christmas tree: President Eisenhower pressed the same silver button to light the tree (by remote control from Gettysburg) that Calvin Coolidge pressed to light the first outside White House tree in 1926. The Coolidge tree was a gift of Middlebury College in Vermont and, like this year's spruce from South Dakota was displayed on the ellipse instead of the White House lawn . . . Most tree since Coolidge's day have been "living trees," that is planted in the ground on the White House lawn or in Lafayette Park so as not to disturb th roots, then replanted elsewhere after the Christmas season . . This year's tree, though not planted, is said to be the most beautiful in the 30 years since Coolidge. The 1954 balsam, a gift of Michigan State University, was three feet taller, however . . . Franklin D Roosevelt initiated the remote-control lighting (from Hyde Park) in 1944. Harry Truman followed suit from Independence, Mo., in 1951.