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MONDAY, MAY 14, 1956

Lightning Rod Erected

Genius In The White House

By STEWART ALSOP

WASHINGTON WHO'S THE NEW genius in the White House?

The question was asked, rather sourly, by a leading Democrat when he heard of the President's appointment of Sen. Walter George of Georgia as his personal ambassador to NATO.

The appointment will be popular everywhere, but especially in the South, as a generous gesture to an admired old statesman.

LIGHTNING ROD But that is not the only plus for the administration.

The George appointment blunts Democratic charges that the administration has abandoned bi-partisanship. As the President's personal envoy, the revered George will also serve as a lightning rod to divert Democratic criticism of the administration's foreign policy.

Moreover, as the question quoted above suggests, the George appointment is only the latest in a series of sure-footed and brilliantly timed White House moves, which have kept the Democrats off balance and at a loss for winning issues. Leaving the merits of the issues to one side, consider the political aspects of the President's two major vetoes in this session of Congress.

It is no secret that a presidential veto of the farm bill was precisely what very large numbers of Democrats thirsted for, to provide them with a winning issue. Indeed, some provisions of the farm bill were carefully framed to force a veto. But, especially since the President scored so high in the Indiana primaries, the Democrats are beginning to wonder whether the veto will prove quite the bonanza they had counted on.

The President's farside chat on the veto was effective. Much of the political curse was removed from the veto, moreover, when the administration, quietly abandoning the policy of flexible supports, raised the supports on the most politically sensitive crops to within a few points of 90 per cent. Then the Administration proposed prepayments to farmers under the soil bank plan which would have been denounced as fiscal madness if the Democrats had proposed it.

This was the unkindest cut of all—it put the Democrats in the horrid position of refusing money to the beleaguered farmers in an election year. From a straight political viewpoint, the gas bill veto unquestionably a brilliant move. It put the administration morally on the side of the angels and blunted the "giveaway" issue. At the same time, the vetoed oil and oil interest were put on notice that they would get what they wanted eventually—but only if the Republicans remained in control of the White House.

Or take the administration's fiscal policy. The budget submitted to Congress by the President early this year forecast a very close balance, based on exceedingly conservative estimates of revenue. A fat little surplus now appears in prospect.

Budget experts have reported to the Democratic leadership that the administrative surplus should be around \$2,000,000,000, the cash surplus around \$4,000,000,000. The more the Democratic leaders debate what to do about the surplus, the more aware they become that they are in a box.

If they propose a tax cut which will split their own party on the issue, and be accused of fiscal irresponsibility and trying to buy the election. If they do nothing, they will permit the administration to take credit for a tax cut, or for reducing taxes, or a little of both.

The Democrats darkly suspect that their box was carefully prepared in advance by administration strategists. Whether or not this suspicion is



JAMES HAGERLY Is He The Brain ... Or Is He?

HERBERT BROWNELL ... Or Is He?

Justified, there is no doubt that the White House has shown a real genius during this session, in keeping the Democrats on the defensive and aborting Democratic issues. The achievement is all the more impressive, moreover, if one recalls the stumbling amateurishness which so often showed itself in the first Eisenhower years. Who, then, is the new genius in the White House?

Some identify the genius as White House Chief of Staff Sherman Adams, or Press Secretary James Hagerly, or Attorney General Herbert Brownell, or somebody else. Others espouse the theory that Thomas E. Dewey is the

real mastermind of the administration. But another theory is rapidly gaining ground among both Democrats and Republicans in Capitol Hill. This is that the new political genius in the White House is none other than Dwight D. Eisenhower.

SURE TOUCH Two or three years ago, the President was obviously unsure of himself in the unfamiliar field of politics. But as the years have passed, his assurance of touch has steadily grown. And perhaps his greatest achievement as a politician has been to continue to seem to know above politics, which remains his greatest political asset.

Without Kelley and McConnell, the school legislation is likely to lose. When they return toward the end of June, it will be too late for action, with the political conventions in August as the deadline.

Powerful propaganda is being loosed against federal assistance. This comes from the United States Chamber of Commerce and state organizations.

They argue that the Federal Government should not interfere and that additional schools must be built by states and localities.

Some of these same organizations argue against new school construction being financed at the local level.

The meeting of National Education Association representatives brought out that school construction costs have advanced about 20 per cent during the past year.

It also was brought out that the latest rise in the redoubtable rate of inflation in the Federal Reserve System has caused a tightening of the money supply, which means that school districts must offer more interest on the bonds they float to build schools.

In some instances, this interest rate is proving prohibitive.

THE ONE MAN Every factor is working against the building of new schools. There is one man and only one man who can take the positive steps to change the situation. That is the President of the United States.

He and he alone can bring to focus the power of the federal government in a matter that touches America's leadership — yes, survival—for the future as directly and as immediately as any of the issues conveniently labeled "military."

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The Decline And Fall Of Espionage

WE FEAR that the ancient and cunning art of espionage is totally beyond the comprehension of the Allies. First, the Americans are accused of digging some kind of vast replica of the Holland Tunnel under Berlin's Russian sector to tap telephone lines.

Next, it is reported that a missing British frogman may have been calmed in white gravelly typing on the keel of the Soviet cruiser Ordzhonikidze in Portsmouth Bay.

Tunnels? Frogmen? It is enough to make readers of E. Phillips Oppenheim recoil in horror. What could be more unsuitable than American GIs bumping noisily around in some damp cave and frogmen splashing inquisitively amid visiting Russian warships? No delacy. No sensitivity. No emotion.

"Espionage," says the ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA, "is, in fact, often practiced by persons of undesirable character." Precisely. And the successful spy must have a silky tongue, steady gray eyes, a cruel downward twist to the corners of the mouth and the morais of

a mink. That goes for both male and female members of the cloak & dagger set.

"Two things have to be done," continues the BRITANNIC solemnly: "Information has to be obtained, and it then has to be communicated to the authority which requires it (there is nothing about digging caves), in obtaining information, spies either act for themselves or bribe other persons who have access to the information which they require (a maxim the frogman probably never thought of). In this, woman and man are about equal, the former part" (they couldn't have paid a woman to go into that cave).

The latter matter worries us most. In more than 150 years this nation has not been able to produce one completely satisfactory Mata-Hari.

Thus we are reduced to cave-digging and like exercises, undertaken with all the delicacy and verve of a Machiavellian hood-carrer.

Let's face it. We are too distastfully pure to indulge in such romantic villainy with flair and enthusiasm.

It is not quite fair, either, to compare our draft rejections based on physical fitness to those of other nations. America's physical and mental standards for military service are higher than those of most other nations—including Soviet Russia.

And if our technological gadgets are our undoing then where, pray tell, would we be without them? As a matter of fact, we probably owe our present state of reasonable security to our supremacy in the arts of technology.

The case for better mental and physical fitness—including more exercises—can be argued without scary bombast. Maybe we are not rugged enough. But neither are we so soft that we are in danger of being overwhelmed by Eskimo.

First The Mind, Now The Muscle

LIFE in modern America is one crying jag after another.

Having just survived one nation's doom and gloom and the nation's mental condition we are now being assailed by the hot-eyed prophets of disaster that our physical condition is shot too. In physical fitness, the United States is the "world's worst," say the experts. Seems to us we've also had that song before.

"The trouble with us," quipped Will Rogers in 1931, "is America is just muscle bound from holding the steering wheel, the only way we get tired from work is the bottom of our driving toe."

Brig. Gen. Refrow, deputy director of Selective Service, brought the sermon up to date in 1954. "No one can estimate what the automobile has cost the American people in muscle," he grumbled. Then he warned darkly that our soft ways and super-comfortable environment can be our undoing.

We are perfectly willing to concede that if America ever goes the hell it will not be in a handbasket or on foot but in a V-8 convertible with the top down and the accelerator pushed to the floor. Still, we find the calamity-howling a

trifle overblown.

It is possibly true that Americans lack the physical fitness of Europeans, Asians and Africans. But the doomsayers ignore or don't bother to mention certain offsetting factors. We are considerably healthier than the inhabitants of most foreign nations, having made great strides in controlling disease and extending the life expectancy of our people.

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Good Scouts Don't Talk About Teeth

THE whole thing was reprehensible, not to say sneaky.

Without permission, or even warning, she made the appointment and served the ultimatum: "Go to the dentist or pay for his time. You're licked. Now why don't you be a good scout?"

We said we had been a good scout a long time ago and good scouts didn't go around questioning the integrity of each other's teeth. Nor did they go around signing each other up for the dentist's chair.

Pure logic to us was plain cowardice to her. She said as much rather slyly, we thought. Or maybe she got fretted then and surlily later when she demanded to know whether it was better to suffer a little drilling and recapping now, or wind up 20 years from now full of partial plates and poisoning cavities. We spoke to her of the uncertainty of the world situation, and asked wouldn't it be silly to be H-bombed in a dentist's chair.

At that precise moment, we judged, she was more interested in when than

where the bomb would get us. And at that moment there came upon the household a chilliness like January in May, in which our suspect teeth chattered. They also ached, but we preferred not to noise about that little information.

The cool war was thawed finally by her insatiable suspicion. "What are you doing cracking those Brazil nuts when your so-called teeth?" she asked through a strained smile. We explained about the dental research team who claim that straining on teeth is a better preservative than fluorides, tooth paste, sugar-free diets and dental floss all put together. She said she knew all about these researchers and the fact that such crackling was no good for little boys over 30.

That was the fact, all right, but getting trapped like that didn't make us go for the good scout bit. We'd rather play the forty game. It's easy when your teeth ache.

Oh, we're going—when the time's right. We figure maybe this fall when the six-year set are getting their preschool check-up.

A man needs to be among friends.

From The Christian Science Monitor

WHO WANTS TO LIVE IN PODUNK?

THE New York Transit Authority, by way of a clever three-panel poster, is telling the human ants who make up the subway jams they ought to appreciate crowds—that everybody can't have 'em.

Says the poster in effect: New York—crowded? Sure. Want to move? There are no crowds in Podunk. But who wants to live there?

In general, the poster is preaching a sound philosophy. It is saying: You are here. The crowds are here. At least see the brighter side of what you have to live with.

But to answer the question, Who wants to live in Podunk? Well, something like 50 million Americans live in places of 2,500 population or less. And if such places don't qualify under Broadway's definition of Podunk we're confounded.

These Americans live in their bucolic exile for exactly the same reasons that people live in New York. Some were simply born in Podunk and stayed there; some (for the hard necessity of making a living) have had Podunk thrust upon them. But some—incomprehensible as it may seem to some modern city dwellers—feel they have actually achieved Podunk and are grateful for it.

As supporting evidence, witness the bill recently introduced before Congress

in behalf of the Council of Conservationists to create a new National Wilderness Preservation System.

This system would include not only the existing parks and monuments, but also some 26 "wilderness areas" within national forests. Into such wilderness areas, and others to be added, access other than by foot, horseback, or canoe is prohibited.

And who are those who yearn for such return to primitive nature? We would guess a host would be found in the crowds of New York and other great cities.

And who are those who dream of the bright lights of the rush and crush of metropolitan throngs? Why, people in Podunk, of course—but only now and then.

A proposed solution to juvenile problems in Clarksville, Miss., requests "About 50 parents taking about 50 seconds to take 50 sets of keys to 50 high priced automobiles from 50 high school students." — MATTOON (ILL.) JOURNAL-GAZETTE.

Man blames fate for other accidents but feels personally responsible for making a hole in one. — GREENVILLE PRESS-MONT.

'Oh-Oh—Hold The Presses Again'



They Get Into Gardens

Hunter's Job: Kill 200 Elephants

By ROBERT C. RUARK

JUST across the channel from this ancient Arab stronghold, a curious experiment of our times is taking place. There, on Mandala Island, hard-core Mau Mau are more or less permanently detained, as they call it, without trial.

And just a few miles down the road, a friend of mine named Eric Rundgren is risking his life daily for people he would rather shoot for the Game Department.

STUFFED ELEPHANTS This tropical bushland is thickly studded with the dom palm, a spiky-trunked palm which bears nuts a little smaller than a baseball. Vast herds of elephants come for hundreds of miles in May and June until the area is flooded with as many as three thousand of them. They trample down the native gardens and otherwise inflict mischief on human habitation. They come to stuff themselves with palm nuts.

On one particular occasion he was forced to shoot four animals out of a magazine of five bullets, and the last two chargers he dropped with frontal brain shots at

close range. He was left with one bullet—"feeling very naked," as he says—when the others suddenly dispersed.

On an average day he is up at 5 a. m. and often does not return to camp until 5 p. m. During this time he will have walked 20 miles, half of which will range from a trot to a dead run. I went out with him one morning and we logged 10 miles in two hours, which is too fast for a city sottle like me. My feet still hurt.

Rundgren, as a Game Department employee and professional hunter, has been severely maulled by a leopard and tossed seven times by buffalo. But his respect is still for the elephant.

"I don't know why I hunt them," he said, "except that I'm scared stiff every time I come up on a herd, and I wonder if I'll get out of this one alive."

"The best elephant hunter I ever knew got careless once after a thousand or so elephants destroyed, and an old cow came up behind him and twisted his intestine. Even to this day I don't know whether they trunk you, tusk you or step on you, you're dead."

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

NOW that the venerable and revered Sen. George of Georgia has announced his intention to retire from the Senate, Eisenhower's ambassador to NATO, an important, hitherto undisclosed incident involving Sen. George and the White House can be revealed.

Case Incident

Sen. George recently wound up the chairmanship of a special committee to investigate the \$2,500 offered to Sen. Francis Case (R-SD) during the natural gas debate on behalf of Howard B. Keck of Superior Oil.

During the investigation, the committee's chairman asked for the money from the same H. B. Keck, this one given to the Eisenhower dinner right in the middle of the Senate's gas debate. Unlike Sen. Case, who returned the \$2,500, the \$5,000 from Keck was not

GOP Kept Contribution Of Oil Man

returned by the Republican National Committee nor by the White House. Considerable pressure was brought on Sen. George's committee by the White House not to make this contribution public. Some committee members felt that since the gift to Case came from exactly the same H. B. Keck and Superior Oil, the larger gift to the Eisenhower dinner should be disclosed in order to indicate the general pattern of the gas lobby.

Why Ike Vetted

There was also some Senate resentment of the President's Eisenhower in his veto message should impugn the morality of the Senate at the same time that the President had received twice as much as Sen. Case rejected, right in the middle of the gas debate.

It was fear that the Senate committee might make public the Keck check that materially influenced the President's

decision to veto the gas bill.

In the end, however, Sen. George did not make the \$5,000 contribution to the Eisenhower dinner. He and the committee decided they should stick close to the question of the \$2,500 offered by Keck to Sen. Case, and not go into the Keck gift to more important people.

The Check

Keck's check for \$5,000, dated Jan. 10, 1956, was on the City National Bank of Houston. It was check number 951 and was signed "H. B. Keck" from his office on the 7th Floor, Edison Building, Los Angeles, Calif. This address was printed on one end of the check.

It will be interesting to see whether the new Lobbying Committee headed by Sen. McClellan of Arkansas, which is supposed to probe the ethics of lobbying, will now make public the Keck check.

It looks as if the Ike Administration had paid up its debt to Quaker

Oats. At any rate the debt should be paid up after this week.

Quaker Oats executives were big campaign contributors to Eisenhower in 1952. Afterward, the Federal Reserve chairman of Quaker Oats, was for a time U. S. ambassador to Canada, while Don Louie, president of Quaker Oats, served for a time as under secretary of state. Milton Eisenhower, in turn, was a director of Quaker Oats.

Dog Award

On top of this, Vice President Nixon last week paid off another campaign debt by presenting a medal for distinguished dog heroism to "Snooks," a seven-year-old mongrel picked as the dog hero of the year.

The medal was called the "Ken-Ration Medal," and was, of course, the public relations branchchild of the Quaker Oats Company. Ken-Ration is a Quaker Oats product.