

**NORMAN**  
Realist  
**MAILER**  
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**on LBJ**

Years ago in Austin, Texas, not far from the LBJ ranch, even less far from the radio station owned by Lady Bird Johnson, at a time when our President was still Vice President, I read a few lines I had written about Lyndon Johnson to an audience at the University of Texas:

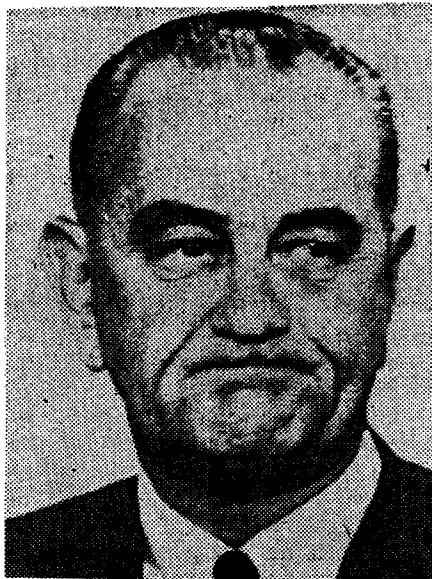
"Johnson had compromised too many contradictions, and now the contradictions were in his face: when he smiled,

the corners of his mouth squeezed gloom; when he was pious, his eyes twinkled irony; when he spoke in a righteous tone, he looked corrupt; when he jested, the ham in his jowls looked to quiver. He was not convincing."

That Texas audience laughed as if I were William Faulkner talking about the Snopes family.

Years later, getting ready to write about Johnson again, I endeavored to come closer:

"The private personality of LBJ, as reported by the authority of the best gossip, is different from his public presence. In private, one is told, he is not too unlike Broderick Crawford in *All the King's Men*, roaring, smarting, bellowing, stabbing fingers on advisors' chests, hugging his daughters, enjoying his food, belching, burping, mean and unforgiving, vindictive, generous, ebullient, vain, suddenly depressed, then roguish, then overbearing, suddenly modest again only to bellow and fart once more."



(Continued from Cover)

I was trying to convince myself to vote for him. I had already decided Goldwater had all the homely assurance of a filthy sock. My vote nonetheless was heavy with gloom, stricken with a sense of bad consequence. There was much about Johnson which appealed not at all, and some of the evidence was intimate.

He had written a book. *My Hope for America*, he called it. Now, a book written by a high official must not be judged by average standards, or one would be forced to say, for example, that Jack Kennedy was not a very good writer and Bobby Kennedy, at last reading, wrote a dead stick's prose. But even at its worst, the prose style of Jack Kennedy (and his ghost writers) is to the prose style of LBJ (and his ghost writers) as de Tocqueville is to Ayn Rand. Reviewing Johnson's book for the *Herald Tribune*, I said:

"It is even not impossible that *My Hope for America* is the worst book ever written by any political leader anywhere . . . a boundless sea of overweening piety . . . an abominable damnable book . . . a prose which stirs half-heard cries of death by suffocation."

I went on to say that Johnson was not a writer but a communications engineer.

"The essence of totalitarian prose is that it does not define, it does not deliver. It oppresses. It obstructs from above. It is profoundly contemptuous of the minds who will receive the message. So it does its best to dull this consciousness with sentences which are nothing but bricked-in power structures."

It was obvious *My Hope for America* was part of the expanding horror of American life. It would be used to brain-wash high school kids. Like all horror, it stayed in the memory. For it offered a surrealistic clue to Lyndon Johnson's real secret vision of a Great Society: jobs for all, everybody with an interesting job, the farmers taken care of—their subsidy checks written by computers—every industrial worker with his own psychoanalyst, every student who was able to pass the aptitude tests able to stay in school forever, Medicare, antibiotics in every glass of drinking water, tranquilizers added to the television dinners, birth control pills in the booze.

The President was willing to go even further. One could conceive of him making a speech:

"Let us reason together. Freedom is indivisible. Marijuana might be just such a freedom. But there are those who argue with justice that marijuana is passed from mouth to mouth. That is, by common consent, unsanitary. Therefore I propose Congress draw up a law requiring marijuana to be marketed solely in suppositories."

There would be a recreation program for all American children—mass calisthenics in air-conditioned stadiums with a glassed-over dome. The majors would have eighty-two baseball teams in each league and the additional teams would take their names from the new housing complexes built around shopping centers—the teams would be called Bypass 60, Ramp 6, Belt 1, Lower Alternate Freeway 4, the Coral Gate Arms.

The colleges would look like factories, the housing projects would keep looking like prisons, the corporation office buildings would be indistinguishable from the colleges, and not even an airline hostess would know where the airport ended and the motel bedroom began.

The sexual revolution would push on. Ladies magazines would wonder whether the orgy had become a vital solution to suburban life. If there would be statisticians to point out that the modern orgy grouping showed an average of eight people and one erection, still State Department intellectuals could point out on their orientation tours through the universities of America that the Sexual Revolution was just begun, and ways would be found to increase vitality.

Camp would have moved on to the Happy Hunting Ground of old art movement. A new art movement would be in. It would be called Shit. Its test would be: Is this object, happening, work, event or production more resonant than it was yesterday? Movies about the Strategic Air Command with Jimmy Stewart, Hubert Humphrey speeches, old Lawrence Welk records, news photographs of Mayor Wagner, Senate testimony by Robert McNamara, interviews with J. Edgar Hoover—these would be the artifacts of the new art movement—Camp was out and Shit was in.

Well, the President contemplating this perspective could not be altogether happy. "The Great Society is a dud," was his lament. "I don't even have an issue with which to slow down the Nigras and their Rights."

The President believed very much in image. He believed the history which made the headlines each day

#### Editor's Note

This is the complete text of Norman Mailer's speech before an audience of several thousand students on Vietnam Day last month at the University of California in Berkeley. A San Francisco paper reported that there was "light applause." Actually Mailer received a standing ovation. KPFA cut him off the air after ten minutes (he didn't know he was on radio) and later they decided to broadcast an edited version.

was more real to the people than the events themselves. It was not the Negro movement that possessed the real importance, it was the Movement's ability to get space in the papers. That ability was equalled only by the President's ability to attach himself to the image of civil rights.

But his ability to control the image, even put it down when necessary, was hampered by one fact. In the Great Society there was no movement, program, plan or ideal which was even remotely as dramatic as the Civil Rights movement. So the Civil Rights movement was going to crowd everything else out of the newspapers.

There was going to be no way to control the Negro Movement, and no way to convince the Negro Movement that their victory was due to his particular attentions. You can never convince a movement of your power unless you can send them back after you have called them forth. So the President needed another issue. Then it came to the President.

Hot damn. Viet Nam.

Viet Nam, that little old country which had been under his nose all these years. Things were getting too quiet in Viet Nam. If there was one thing hotter than Harlem in the summer, it was air raids on rice paddies and napalm on red gooks. Now he had a game. When the war got too good, and everybody was giving too much space to that, he could always tell the Nigras it was good time to be marching on the White House; when they got a little too serious he could bring back Viet Nam.

He could even make all those Barry Goldwater red-necks and state troopers happy—that was a happy nation, when everybody had something going for them. The Nigras had their Civil Rights and the rednecks could be killing gooks. Yes, thought the President, his friends and associates were correct in their estimate of him as a genius. Hot damn. Viet Nam. The President felt like the only stud in a whorehouse on a houseboat:

Ladies and gentlemen, you will notice that up to this point, I have offered little in the way of closely reasoned quiet argument. I did observe for myself that in the discussions about Viet Nam which took place last Saturday in Washington, and were seen by many of us on television, there was an abundance of rational arguments advanced for our escalation in Viet Nam and an equal abundance of equally rational arguments against our involvement there.

Well, so far you have received no rational arguments from me today and you are not likely to receive many more as we go on. I believe our present situation in Viet Nam is so irrational that any attempt to deal with it logically, is illogical in the way surrealism is illogical, and rational political discussion of Adolf Hitler's motives was illogical and then obscene.

Bombing a country at the same time you are offering it aid is as morally repulsive as beating up a kid in an alley and stopping to ask for a kiss.

Reading the papers these days is a nightmare of unrequited love. If one's country lives like a woman in some part of the unconscious dream life of each of us, if beneath all our criticisms and detestations of America's vulgarity, misuse of power, and sheer pompous stupidity, there has been still some optimistic love affair with the secret potentialities of this nation, some buried unvoiced faith that the nature of America was finally good, and not evil, well, that faith has taken a pistol-whipping in the last months. The romance seems not even tragic or doomed, but dirty and misplaced.

Still, let me assume there is some point in trying to be reasonable about Viet Nam even if it is only to discover that there is no logic in the situation. But let me at least make one straightforward attempt to understand what transpires there. I will, however, insist that the logic we employ runs close to the vein of theological argument, for we must try to speak rationally about a mystery.

Since any interpretation which seeks to justify our role in Viet Nam on legal grounds is criminal—since we have no legal justification to be in the country; we are in fact there (as many of you doubtless know already) in violation of the Treaty of the Geneva Conference of 1954 which we were pledged not to obstruct—the only positive argument for our presence is that while we are illegally in Viet Nam we are there at least to fight communism.

Well, that is a large question. It is part of a large mystery. We may leave the largest parts of it for last.

What may properly concern us first are the arguments and complexes of argument which revolve around the domino theory. Viet Nam, says this much discussed theory, is a domino, supporting all the other dominoes of Southeast Asia. This is, of course, argument with the aid of metaphor, argument by image. But metaphors have curious mechanics. There is much dispute about their properties.

Edgar Snow, for example, would argue that the dominoes of Southeast Asia are already falling.

Insofar as they are dominoes, Indonesia has fallen, and Cambodia. Both nations recognize the Viet Cong as the legitimate government of South Viet Nam. Burma gives guarantees to China not to give bases to any U.S. forces. India and Pakistan oppose a U.S. invasion of North Viet Nam. Japan makes known its desire not to fight, de Gaulle excludes French aid, no NATO power promises support for a 'wider war.'

The suspicion must begin that we are not protecting a position of connected bastions so much as we are trying to conceal the fact that the bastions are just about gone—they are not dominoes, but sand castles, and a tide of nationalism is on the way in. It is curious foreign policy to use metaphors in defense of a war; when the metaphors are critically imprecise, it is a swindle.

It is worse than that. The escalation in February began immediately after the Viet Cong attacked our air base near Pleiku, and killed seven American soldiers. In retaliation for this attack, or using the attack as our pretext for an offensive we had already planned, the Air Force proceeded—for the first time—to bomb areas over the Seventeenth Parallel in North Viet Nam.

It is, if we are to use metaphors, it is as if you and I have a small street fight on a city block. You catch

#### Author's Note

A few readers may notice that two or three short passages in this speech are taken directly from my article on the Republican Convention printed in *Esquire* in November, 1964, or from a review I did in the *New York Herald Tribune* on Lyndon Johnson's book, *My Hope for America*, just before the last election. There is also a fragment from a debate in Chicago with William Buckley. Since I wished at certain places in the speech to say what I had said before, it did not seem desirable to look to rewrite such passages; on the other hand, since the extracts were altered a bit to fit the tone of the speech, there seemed no compelling reason to burden the text with excessive quotation marks in and out, back and forth.

me by surprise, you win, and I choose to come back with my gang and stick a plastic bomb on your house. Your maid loses a hand in the explosion; your friend, paying a visit, is blown to bits. I send flowers to the funeral, and a card offering my services as a fire insurance adjuster. Is it possible the ideology of the Communists is being opposed by the spirit of the *Cosa Nostra*?

Let me list another difficulty to fighting communism in Viet Nam. It is that the communism of the Viet Cong is attached to the local nationalism. With the exception of a few dedicated career soldiers, however, the average American in Viet Nam is not much interested in the future of Asia. The freedom-loving spirit of our experts in Saigon has about as much real comprehension of the life of the Asian peasant as the President of the Hilton Hotels Incorporated is on talking terms with his dishwashers at the Hilton Istanbul.

For those of us here, for close to 200 million Americans, Viet Nam is faceless. How many Americans have ever visited that country? Who can say which language is spoken there, or what industries might exist, or even what the country looks like? We do not care. We are not interested in the Vietnamese. If we were to fight a war with the inhabitants of the planet of Mars there would be more emotional participation by the people of

America than there is even now for our share of the war in Viet Nam.

Until recently, until February of this year, South Viet Nam could have fallen and most of us would not have known nor cared particularly if the territory acquired by the Viet Cong were as big as Brooklyn or as big as the state of Texas. Never in our history has so portentous a war been accelerated in a place which means so little to Americans. Therefore we must admit that we confront a mystery. Which is: Why are we already thus involved in a combat which is potentially huge, yet empty of emotional meaning?

The only answer which makes sense is that we are in this war to drive matters to a military climax, we are escalating the war in Viet Nam, we are bombing North Viet Nam, as the first steps in a sequence which is aimed to destroy the nuclear plant of China.

But, if escalation carries up to the summits and abysses of such a moment, then the odds are large that an atomic war will also be upon us. Civilization as we know it would be gone. It is possible all life as we know it would be gone. So we are back to the mystery. Only now it is worse. It asks us to explain why all life would be destroyed for a war in a country we do not care about.

The ill of civilization is that it is removed from nature—disproportions thrive everywhere. The war in Viet Nam is just such a monstrous disproportion. We are present at a mystery. All monstrous disproportion conceals a mystery or an insanity. If a man suffering from a fever decides to cure it by walking through fire, we must say he has either a secret motive or is insane.

Perhaps President Johnson has a secret motive.

I do not speak of the desire to bomb the atomic works of China, as his secret motive. That desire is, for one thing, public—William Buckley was writing in *National Review* about his desire for such an act a month before the first big February air raids on North Viet Nam were begun.

Indeed, a large part of the Pentagon has been obsessed with similar desires since 1946. For twenty years Congressmen have been standing up in Congress to read speeches written by War Department officials which exhort America to destroy the Soviet Union by atom bomb before the Soviet Union becomes too strong. That desire has never ceased. We are a conservative property-loving nation obsessed with the passion to destroy other nations' property.

So one would not speak of the impulse to bomb the nuclear industry of China as a secret motive. That is a public motive. It is merely not over-publicized. Not yet. If President Johnson has a secret motive, it would have to be then of another sort. Most strong motives are finally psychological—money or power is required to satisfy some imbalance in ourselves.

So President Johnson's motive in escalating the war in Viet Nam may be psychic in its nature. This assumes of course that the prime mover in the new war in Viet Nam is precisely the President, it assumes that Viet Nam is not the unhappy expression of vast inevitable historic forces too large for any man; no, to the contrary this premise supposes flat-out that there was a choice in Viet Nam, and one man, balanced at the fulcrum of power between the Pentagon on one side and his liberal support on the other, decided to accelerate the war.

So it is a thesis which would say that the mystery of

Viet Nam revolves around the mystery of Lyndon Johnson's personality.

To ferret one's way into the recesses of that mysterious and explosive personality is an activity which would give pause to many. It gives pause to me. He is after all a very intelligent man. He is doubtless more intelligent than you or me. He is certainly most intelligent about getting his way. He is also a complex man and his sides are many. The only side of him which is evident to all is that he is famished for popularity.

At the Democratic Convention in Atlantic City in 1964, not one picture of the President was hung behind the Speaker's Rostrum, but two. They were each forty feet high. So said his public relations. These photographs, however, looked like they were eighty feet high, high as an eight-story motel. They dominated every moment of the Convention. They spoke of an ego which had the voracity of a beast.

At that convention, there were other clues to the mystery of the President's personality. It was apparent he had vast affection for the powers of television, an affection so huge it shrank from any pretext that he might have equally large affection for his delegates. They were left marooned for the most part behind two huge television towers.

Perhaps a fifth of the delegates were seated in front of those towers. The rest were installed behind. From nearly every position behind the television towers, it was not possible to have a direct view of the speaker on the rostrum. One had to watch him on television. Delegates began to fight for a seat which gave them a good view rather than a poor view of the television set.

The Republican Convention in San Francisco which nominated Barry Goldwater had been not quite so orderly as a rodeo. The Democratic Convention was cancerous—the electronic machines were more crucial than the men.

It was evident that the Establishment was in the service of a most subtle and modern tyrant, an Emperor, to whom all Mafias, legit and illegit, all syndicates, unions, guilds, corporations and institutions . . . could bend their knee. The Establishment had a new leader, a mighty Caesar had arisen, Lyndon Johnson was his name, all hail, Caesar.

Caesar gave promise to unify the land. But at what a cost. For if the ideology were liberal, the methodology was total—to this political church would come Adlai Stevenson and Frank Sinatra, the President of U.S. Steel and the President of the Steel Workers' Union, the C.I.O. and the C.I.A., Martin Luther King and the Pentagon.

Even before the election, a question was there. If we all worked to beat Barry, and got behind Lyndon and pushed, radicals and moderate Republicans, Negroes and Southern liberals, college professors and Cosa Nostra, cafe society and Beatniks-for-Johnson, were we all then going down a liberal superhighway into the deepest swamp of them all?

For Johnson was intelligent enough to run a total land, he had vast competence, no vision, and the heart to hold huge power, he had the vanity of a modern dictator. Under Johnson we could move from the threat of total war to war itself with nothing to prevent it; the anti-Goldwater forces which might keep the country too divided to go to war would now be contained within Johnson.

That was a final description of the Democratic Convention, and still it missed the point. Because the final unhappy point was that Barry Goldwater had established Johnson's power with such total perfection that the man elected had come closer to total control of America than any President before him. What could increase the fear is that Johnson might not be a whole man so much as he was alienated, a modern man, a member in a most curious sense of a minority group.

Lyndon Baines Johnson a member of a minority group? It is an extraordinary forcing of category. It is obvious some other notion is intended than a description of a Negro, a Jew, a Mexican, a Nisei, or a Puerto Rican. Will it make sense if we say Lyndon Johnson is alienated? Alienated from what, you may ask.

But one must speak first of alienation, that intellectual category which would take you through many a turn of the mind in its attempt to explain that particular corrosive sensation so many of us feel in the chest



God Is On Our Side

and the gut so much of the time, that sense of the body growing empty within, of the psyche pierced by a wound whose dimensions keep opening, that unendurable conviction that one is hollow, displaced, without a single identity at one's center. I quote Eric Josephson:

"It [alienation] has been used to refer to an extraordinary variety of psycho-social disorders, including loss of self, anxiety states, anomie, despair, depersonalization, rootlessness, apathy, social disorganization, loneliness, atomization, powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, pessimism and the loss of belief or values. Among the groups . . . described as alienated . . . are women, industrial workers, white-collar workers, migrant workers, artists, suicides, mentally disturbed, addicts, the aged, the young generation as a whole, juvenile delinquents in particular, voters, non-voters, consumers, audiences of mass media, sex deviates, victims of prejudice and discrimination, the prejudiced, bureaucrats, political radicals, the physically handicapped, immigrants, exiles, vagabonds and recluses."

What a huge and comprehensive list. Is anything to be gained by adding to it the name of Lyndon Johnson?

You may still ask—what is he alienated from? The Asian peasant? The dishwasher at the Istanbul Hilton? Of course not. You cannot be alienated unless you wish to participate. Lyndon Johnson does not wish to share a bowl of rice with an Asian peasant.

How then is he alienated, and from what? And I say to you in no disrespect and much uneasiness that it is possible he is alienated from his own clear sanity, that his mind has become a consortium of monstrous proportions, of pictures of himself in duplicate forty feet high, eighty feet high. Lyndon Johnson is not alienated from power, he is the most powerful man in the United States, but he is alienated from judgment, he is close to an imbalance which at worst could tip the world from orbit.

The legitimate fear we can feel is vast. Because there was a time when Lyndon Johnson could have gotten out of Viet Nam very quietly—the image had been prepared for our departure—we heard of nothing but the corruption of the South Viet Nam government and the professional cowardice of the South Vietnamese generals.

We read how a Viet Cong army of 40,000 soldiers was whipping a Government Army of 400,000. We were told in our own newspapers how the Viet Cong armed themselves with American weapons brought to them by deserters or captured in battle with Government troops, we knew it was an empty war for our side, Lyndon Johnson made no attempt to hide that from us. He may even have encouraged the press in this direction for a time. Abruptly, he dropped escalation into our daily life.

There is fear we must feel.

It was not the action of a rational man, but a man driven by need, a gambler who fears that once he stops, once he pulls out of the game, his heart will rupture from tension. You see, Lyndon Johnson is a member of a minority group and so he must have action.

But now let me explain. A member of a minority group is—if we are to speak existentially—not a man who is a member of a category, a Negro or a Jew, but rather a man who feels his existence in a particular way. It is in the very form or context of his existence to live with two opposed notions of himself.

What characterizes a member of a minority group is that he is forced to see himself as both exceptional and insignificant, marvelous and awful, good and evil. So far as he listens to the world outside he is in danger of going insane. The only way he may relieve the unendurable tension which surrounds any sense of his own identity is to define his nature by his own acts, discover his courage or cowardice by actions which engage his courage; discover his judgment by judging; his loyalty by being tested; his originality by creating.

A Negro or a Texan, a President or a housewife, is by this definition a member of a minority group if he contains two opposed notions of himself at the same time.

What characterizes the sensation of being a member of a minority group is that one's emotions are forever locked in the chains of ambivalence—the expression of an emotion forever releasing its opposite—the ego in perpetual transit from the tower to the dungeon and back again. By this definition nearly everyone in America is a member of a minority group, alienated from the self by a double sense of identity and so at the mercy of a self which demands action and more action to define the most rudimentary borders of identity.

It is a demand which will either kill a brave man or force him to grow, but when a coward is put in need of such action he tears the wings off flies.

The great fear that lies upon America is not that Lyndon Johnson is privately close to insanity so much as that he is the expression of the near-insanity of most of us, and his need for action is America's need for action; not brave action, but action; any kind of action; any move to get the motors going. A future death of the spirit lies close and heavy upon American life, a cancerous emptiness at the center which calls for a circus.

The country is in disease. It has been in disease for a long time. There has been nothing in our growth which was organic. We never solved our depression, we merely went to war back in 1941, and going to war never won it, not in our own minds, not as men, no, we won it but as sources of supply; we still do not know that we are equal to the Russians. We won a war but we did not really win it, not in the secret of our sleep.

So we have not really had a prosperity, we have had fever. We have grown rich because of one fact with two opposite interpretations: There has been a cold war. It has been a cold war which came because Communism was indeed a real threat to our freedom, or a cold war which came because capitalism could not survive without an economy geared to war; or is it both—who can know? Who can really know?

The center of our motive is an enigma—is this country extraordinary or accursed? And when we think of Communism, we have to wonder if we are accursed. For we have not even found our Communist threat. We have had a secret police organization and an invisible government large enough by now to occupy the moon, we have hunted Communists from the top of the Time-Life Building to the bottom of the Collier mine, we have not found that many, not that many, and we have looked like Keystone Cops.

We have even had a Negro Revolution in which we did not believe. We have had it, yes we have had it, because (in the true penury of our motive) we could not afford to lose votes in Africa and India, South America and Japan, Viet Nam, the Philippines, name any impoverished place: we have been running in a world election against the collective image of the Russ, and so we have had to give the black man his civil rights or Africa was so much nearer to Marx. But there has not been much like love in the civil rights. We have never been too authentic. No.

We have had a hero. He was a young good-looking man with a beautiful wife, and he won the biggest poker game we ever played, the only real one—we lived for a week ready to die in a nuclear war. Whether we liked it or not. But he won. It was our one true victory in all these years, our moment; so the young man began to inspire a subtle kind of love. His strength proved stronger than we knew. Suddenly he was dead, and we were in grief.

But then came a trial which was worse. For the assassin, or the man who had been arrested but was not the assassin—we will never know, not really—was killed before our sight. In the middle of the funeral came an explosion on the porch. Now, we were going mad. It took more to make a nation go mad than any separate man, but we had taken miles too much. Certainties had shattered.

Our country was fearful, half-mad, inauthentic—it needed a war or it needed a purge. Bile was stirring in the pits of the national conscience and little to oppose it but a lard of guilt cold as the most mediocre of our needs.

We took formal public steps toward a great society, that great society of computers and pills, of job aptitudes and bad architecture, of psychoanalysis, super-highways, astronauts, vaccinations, and a peace corps, that great society where nothing but frozen corn would be sold in the smallest towns of Iowa, where censorship would disappear but every image would be manipulated from birth to death.

Something in the buried animal of modern life grew bestial at the thought of this Great Society—the most advanced technological nation of the civilized world was the one now closest to blood, to shedding the blood and burning the flesh of Asian peasants it had never seen. The Pentagon had been kept on a leash for close to twenty years. Presidents so mediocre in their talents as Truman and Eisenhower had kept the military from dominating the nation.

But Johnson did not.

Out of the pusillanimities or the madneses of his secret sleep he came to a decision to listen to the advice of his military machine, that conger of Joint Forces, War Department and C.I.A. which had among other noteworthy achievements planned the Bay of Pigs. It was now planning its escalation in Viet Nam. And Johnson was in accord.

The body of a consummate politician took recognition as it slept that the nation was in disease and its only cure—out where the drums were beating and the fires would not cease—was to introduce us to the first anxieties of a war whose end might be limitless. Miserable nation cursed with a computer for its commander-in-chief, a computer with an ego so vain it could not bear the memory of his predecessor and the power he had had for a week when the world was on the edge of nuclear war.

Yet, there still remains the largest question of them all. It is the question of fighting Communism. Look, you may say, is it not possible that with all our diseases admitted, we are still less malignant than the Communists, we are the defense of civilization and they, not us, are the barbarians who would destroy it?

If that is true, then—as some of you may argue—the logic must be faced, the Chinese must be stopped, we must bomb their bomb. And I would argue in return that neither capitalism nor communism is the defense of civilization but that they are rather each—in their own way—malignancies upon the spirit of honest adventure and open inquiry which developed across the centuries from primitive man to the Renaissance, and that therefore there is no man alive who can say at this point which system will perpetrate the greater harm upon mankind.

But this I do know: existence alters the nature of essence. An unjust war, an unnatural war, an obscene war brutalizes what is best in a nation and encourages every horror to rise from its sewer.

The Communists could capture every nation on earth but our own and we would still be safe if our intention were clean. Yes. For in the vertiginous terrors of nuclear warfare rests one rock-ledge of safety—in future no great power can ever be destroyed without destroying every other power which would attack it. As a



corollary no philosophy of government can occupy nine-tenths of the globe without being altered to its roots.

The health of Communism, its secret necessity, is an enemy external to itself, war is indeed the health of the totalitarian state, and peace is its disease. Communism would split and rupture and war upon itself if ever it occupied most of the world, for then it would have to solve the problems of most of the world and those problems are not soluble in the rigidity of a system.

Like all top-heavy structures the greatest danger to Communism lies in its growth. Prosperity is its poison, for without a sense of crisis, Communism cannot discipline its future generations. Attack from capitalism is Communism's transfusion of blood. So our war against Communism, most particularly our war against Communism in Asia, is the death of our future. I am going to quote Senator Wayne Morse:

"We shall win one military victory after another; we shall destroy cities, industrial installations, and nuclear installations; we shall kill by the millions. . . . That course of action will lay a foundation of hatred on the part of the colored races of the world against the American people. In due time, those installations will be rebuilt . . . on the foundation of intense hatred by

#### Department of Military Strategy

Jules Feiffer complained last month that Mike Wallace, on his CBS newscast, neglected to mention that civil rights leaders had publicly identified themselves with the peace movement at the Vietnam rally in Madison Square Garden. Responded Wallace in part: "I'm not at all certain non-violence would work with the Viet Cong. Or isn't that what you had in mind?"

Asians for the people of the United States. That hatred will even be inherited by generations of American boys and girls fifty, seventy-five, one hundred, yes, two hundred years from now."

I say: End the cold war. Pull back our boundaries to what we can defend and to what wishes to be defended. Let Communism come to those countries it will come to. Let us not use up our substance trying to hold onto nations which are poor, underdeveloped, and bound to us only by the depths of their hatred for us. We cannot equal the effort the Communists make in such places. We are not dedicated in that direction. We were not born to do that. We have had our frontier already. We cannot be excited to our core, our historic core, by the efforts of new underdeveloped nations to expand their frontiers.

Let the Communists flounder in the countries they acquire. The more countries they hold, the less supportable will become the contradictions of their ideology, the more bitter will grow the divisions in their internal interest, and the more enormous their desire to avoid a war which could only destroy the economies they will have developed at such vast labor and such vast waste. Let it be their waste, not ours. Our mission may be not to raise the level of minimum subsistence in the world so much as it may be to show the first features and promise of that incalculable renaissance men may someday enter.

I have one set of remarks more to make. They concern practical suggestions. I have been visionary in my demands. For it is visionary in 1965 to ask of America that it return to isolationism. No, this country wishes

to have an empire. The grimmest truth may be that half of America at least must be not unwilling to have a war in Viet Nam. Otherwise Lyndon Johnson could not have made his move, since Lyndon Johnson never in his life has dreamed of moving against a majority.

Let us then insist on this—it is equally visionary, but it is at least visionary in a military way and we are talking to militarists—let us say that if we are going to have a war with the Viet Cong, let it be a war of foot soldier against foot soldier. If we wish to take a strange country away from strangers, let us at least be strong enough and brave enough to defeat them on the ground. Our Marines, some would say, are the best soldiers in the world. The counter argument is that native guerrillas can defeat any force of a major power man to man.

Let us, then, fight on fair grounds. Let us say to Lyndon Johnson, to Monstrous McNamara, and to the generals on the scene—fight like men, go in man to man against the Viet Cong. But first, call off the Air Force. They prove nothing except that America is coterminous with the Mafia. Let us win man to man or lose man to man, but let us cease pulverizing people whose faces we have never seen.

But of course we will not cease. Nor will we ever fight man to man against poor peasants. Their vision of existence might be more ferocious and more determined than our own. No, we would rather go on as the most advanced monsters of civilization pulverizing instinct with our detonations, our State Department experts in their little bow ties, and our bombs.

Only, listen, Lyndon Johnson, you have gone too far this time. You are a bully with an Air Force, and since you will not call off your Air Force, there are young people who will persecute you back. It is a little thing, but it will hound you into nightmares and endless corridors of nights without sleep, it will hound you. For listen—this is only one of the thousand things they will do.

They will print up little pictures of you, Lyndon Johnson, the size of post cards, the size of stamps, and some will glue these pictures to walls and posters and telephone booths and billboards—I do not advise it, I would tell these students not to do it to you, but they will. They will find places to put these pictures. They will want to paste your picture, Lyndon Johnson, on a post card, and send it to you. Some will send it to your advisers. Some will send these pictures to men and women at other schools. These pictures will be sent everywhere. These pictures will be pasted up everywhere, upside down.

Silently, without a word, the photograph of you, Lyndon Johnson, will start appearing everywhere, upside down. Your head will speak out—even to the peasant in Asia—it will say that not all Americans are unaware of your monstrous vanity, overweening piety, and doubtful motive. It will tell them that we trust our President so little, and think so little of him, that we see his picture everywhere upside down.

You, Lyndon Johnson, will see those pictures up everywhere upside down, four inches high and forty feet high; you, Lyndon Baines Johnson, will be coming up for air everywhere upside down. Everywhere, upside down. Everywhere. Everywhere.

And those little pictures will tell the world what we think of you and your war in Viet Nam. Everywhere, upside down. Everywhere, everywhere.