

Reprise

6/8/77

Where was Andrew Young when Jimmy Carter failed to avoid Playboy interviewers? Defending Jimmy Carter for his campaign crack about "ethnic purity" in neighborhoods. Where the one turned "ethnic" into a racist slur, the other now turns "racist" into an ethnic catch-all. We continue to believe in Mr. Young's underlying message, but his sloppy habits of speech should draw a penalty: just one coherent speech on race in international affairs, delivered standing in one place.

We hear murmurs of protest against Rosalynn Carter representing the United States in conversations with Caribbean and Latin leaders on her current tour. Assuming that she is half as astute as she was in walking the minefields of American politics in behalf of her husband, we find nothing remarkable or objectionable in her service as ambassador at large. As she has immodestly noted, she is closer to the President than any other person in the world—and seems at least as good an ambassador as the amateurs regularly recruited for temporary duty abroad. The truth is that First Ladies are always on duty and on display, at home or abroad; they should not be confined to tea and dinner parties and, indeed, might well be paid a salary.

After 16 years of deplorable hostility and tension, Cuba and the United States will again station diplomats in each other's capitals so that they can negotiate directly over disputed issues toward the restoration of normal relations, trade and travel. That this development should be controversial attests to the rigidity of much international thinking. Some suggest that Americans should not even talk with Cubans until President Castro has withdrawn every last Cuban soldier from Angola. The place to press the argument against his intervention in Africa is in normal diplomatic meetings—if we are prepared to hear Cuban lectures on the deployment of American troops as well.

The case for the slow withdrawal of American ground troops from a strengthened South Korea remains persuasive to us. Six thousand of a total of 30,000 men are to leave before the end of next year while new plans are drawn to make the South Korean forces self-sufficient, with continuing American air cover. It is the cover-up of South Korean bribery and undercover lobbying that must now be ended for the sake of the pullout. Only an Administration that has prosecuted the Korean influence-peddlers and their dupes or collaborators in Congress will be able to sponsor and gain approval of the increased military aid that the withdrawal will make prudent. An end of repression in South Korea would also enhance that nation's claims on American support.

In a carelessly generous moment, we once thought that Congress was the proper agency to explore and finally lay to rest all the suspicions of conspiracy in the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. in 1963 and 1968. When the first counsel of the House Select Committee on Assassinations showed signs of wishing to promote himself more than his case, we changed our mind. Now our colleague Wendell Rawls Jr. reports that after eight months, the committee has come up with virtually no new information or evidence, has found much of the information that inspired its mission to be in error and still can't find a worthy chief counsel. We would close out this charade and take back the committee's \$2.5 million budget.

The Carter Administration is right about the Concorde. The noisy supersonic jet may or may not exceed the posted noise limits at Kennedy Airport, and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey has a right to regulate noise—fairly. But no one will ever know whether the British-French plane can pass a test until there is a test. Summer weather poses the severest trial. Summer is at hand.