

LETTERS

exiles—Vietnamese and American

Montreal, Quebec

Of the 250,000 people in exile as a result of the war in Vietnam, half are Vietnamese and half are Americans. The Vietnamese, whose loyalty to Washington is taken for granted, will become American citizens, thanks to the speedy action of Congress in support of President Ford. The Americans, on the other hand, whose disloyalty to Washington is taken for granted, must seek action on their behalf elsewhere, thanks to the persistent refusal of Congress to accept its responsibility. Perhaps the earned re-entry program should be seen as an accurate reflection of Congressional opinion.

Yet every day we read or hear reports of the lessons learned and policies reassessed, of new-found wisdom visited upon our Senators and Representatives. Now, either their claims to post-Vietnam clear-headedness are true, or they are false. If true, then the Americans still in exile as war resisters may expect relief in the form of a fair and unencumbered chance to resettle in America, the very thing the Vietnamese are getting. If false, then the posturing of many of our public men ought to cease. . . . *Thomas Apple*

Goldner's level

New York City

I found Nancy Goldner's critique of the Bolshoi absolutely magnificent. She shows an understanding of the dance that goes far beyond the typical reviewer's surface comprehension. . . .

Earl Ubell
NBC News

JFK's assassination and the war

Beverly Hills, Calif.

Reports urging re-examination of the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy have begun to stir throughout the land. These are no longer isolated situations of dissatisfaction with findings that lack the appearance of reason. They show now careful study and determination. Moreover, they suggest connections that go far beyond the assassination of one President of the United States. . . .

Suspecting the existence of such broad connections I wondered if they might include the so-called coup in Vietnam just three weeks before the assassination. Accordingly I went to Europe shortly after the assassination to make a probe of the coup. My particular purpose was to question Madame Nhu, widow of Ngo Dinh Nhu, one of the two leaders struck down in the coup. The other was his brother, Ngo Dinh Diem, the President of South Vietnam. Madame Nhu was active in the government there herself; after the coup she escaped to Rome.

I was able to arrange a meeting with her at the Vatican. I questioned her closely, through her son, on the events which preceded the coup, seeking especially to learn whether, in her opinion, Mr. Kennedy had supported it.

Madame Nhu informed me that, contrary to reports published here, the two brothers had sought to negotiate an end to the conflict, and that it was to prevent this that the coup was carried out. She declared emphatically that Mr. Kennedy had activated the brothers in this effort to achieve peace; he had no part in fomenting the coup.

In my opinion, the war, the coup and the Kennedy assassination are closely linked. Thus the necessity of covering up the assassination of a President with the insanely empty notion that no one but the reported assassin up had any part in it. Thus also the long history of assassination of foreign leaders, for a single purpose, the maintenance of armed conflict—and always on the same side, the support of large industry and wealth.

And if a coup in Vietnam, why not another in this country, for the same purpose? Our government has shown itself equal to the task.

George T. Altman

EDITORIALS

Assassination Politics

The Rockefeller Commission was so heavily stacked with Establishment types that it lacked credibility from the start. Its mission was not to investigate but to save the CIA. The original mandate was narrowly defined: to investigate domestic espionage activities which might have violated the organization's charter. Later the President suggested that it should also undertake an investigation of any possible domestic involvement in political assassinations. To this end, the commission was given a sixty-day extension of time in which to file its report. But the commission, by unanimous vote, decided not to complete its investigation of assassination involvements and the President agreed. Now the main portion of the report has been released but not the portion that deals with assassination plots; this portion may—the President is purposefully vague—be released at some time in the future. Meanwhile, this incomplete portion of the report, together with materials the executive branch has gathered, will be turned over to the Attorney General for his scrutiny. The same materials will also be delivered to the Senate and House committees with the injunction that they exercise "the utmost prudence" in deciding which portions of it, if any, should be made public.

This is a curious procedure. Since the commission had undertaken an investigation of assassination capers, why not let it proceed with the added task which the President had specifically suggested?

Politics provides the answer. If the assassination portion had been completed and then released, critics could pronounce it a cover-up. An alibi has now been provided: this portion of the report was never completed. There have been enough leaks and stories to indicate that the CIA was indeed involved in assassination plots. Sen. Frank Church has used the ugly word "murder" and has referred to "hard evidence" and "corroborating testimony." Such statements might easily sustain a charge of cover-up if the report shied away from facts now known. In a normal context, the delivery of a commission report on a subject of major interest would call for some immediate and specific response by the President. By dumping the materials in the lap of the Attorney General the President has provided himself with a routine response to all future questions about assassination plots. He can say as often as necessary that the Attorney General has the material under investigation and, as for his personal position, well, he is "totally opposed to assassinations," which is a good safe statement. Also by turning the same material over to the Senate and House committees, the President has accomplished two political objectives. He can now pose as a gallant gentleman who did not want to release, at this time, material that might reflect on the memories of Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy, "especially . . . the late President Kennedy." Kennedy partisans have been furious over leaks hinting at the involvement of the late President and his brother, if remotely and indirectly, in assassination plots, and have referred to "hit-and-run smears." Since President Ford is known to regard Sen. Edward Kennedy as the most likely and strongest Democratic