

Today and Tomorrow . . . By Walter Lippmann

Goldwater Versus Johnson *Part 7/28/64*

Comparing the Goldwater platform and speeches with the Johnson performance, one can begin to see, I think, that the two men differ on two over-riding questions. The first is whether we must move towards or can move away from a thermonuclear showdown with the Soviet Union. The second is whether we should take up the unfinished business of internal reform and development, which has been interrupted by the wars of this generation.



Lippmann

THE Johnson Administration has been proceeding on the fundamental assumption that we can move away from thermonuclear war, and that this enables us to deal with the unfinished internal business which we cannot afford to neglect any longer.

The Johnson Administration has taken off from the point which the Kennedy Administration achieved—from the fact that the nuclear showdown has already taken place. As a test of will, the showdown took place in the Cuban missile confrontation; as a test of nuclear capability, the showdown took place in the parallel Soviet and American nuclear tests which preceded the test ban treaty. In those tests both sides failed to win the radical breakthrough which would have changed the existing balance of nuclear power.

American nuclear superiority was not challenged by the tests. Nor was the fact changed that American superiority is very far short of American supremacy, that is to say, of American capac-

ity to dictate a settlement to the Soviet Union.

The net result is a balance of nuclear power in which both sides are mutually deterred. Neither side can impose its will upon the other, neither can dominate its own allies, and neither can impose a military solution even on weak countries, such as Albania or Cuba or Viet-Nam.

As a result, there is a pause, lull, an unratified truce, which cannot be altered drastically in our favor by brinkmanship, that is by threatening nuclear war. So thorough has been the showdown and so deeply have the minds of men been impressed by it that brinkmanship is out of date: it has been deflated into mere bluffing.

THIS PAUSE, this lull, this unratified truce is a condition which the American people have not known during the thirty years or more since Japan invaded Manchuria and Hitler rose in Germany. A whole generation of Americans have grown up in a time when the main preoccupation was war—the Second World War, the Korean War, the Cold War. To the questions of how to avoid war, how to prepare for war, how to wage war, the American people have had to give their prime attention, their best energy, enormous wealth and many lives. For this unavoidable preoccupation with war a very big price has had to be paid. The price paid by the war generation has been the neglect of the internal affairs of the nation.

The Johnson Administration's policy is based on the pause, the lull, the unratified truce—not on eternal peace, not on general disarmament, but on the

achievement of a balance of nuclear power which establishes and compels an armistice in the Cold War. Lyndon Johnson is the first American President in a generation who has been free to turn much of his attention for awhile at least to the unfinished domestic business which for so long has had to be neglected.

SENATOR Goldwater differs sharply from President Johnson both in his estimate of the condition of international affairs and in his beliefs about domestic affairs. Senator Goldwater denies that there has been a showdown. Indeed, he rarely even mentions the Cuban missile confrontation. His belief is that we shall come to a series of showdowns, not only where there is revivety but also when we come olutionary communist act to give active American support to revolutionary movements in Eastern Europe and within the Soviet Union itself.

If Senator Goldwater is right that we must enter a period of showdowns until communism has been defeated throughout the world, it follows, of course, that our over-riding preoccupation in a Goldwater Administration would have to be war. This preoccupation with war fits neatly into his "conservatism," into his conviction that there is no important unfinished business which calls for national action.

THESE are it seems to me the basic Goldwater-Johnson issues. Is there a military pause? Is there unfinished national business which we can and must tend to? The more closely the campaign can be focused upon these two questions, the more sense it will make.