

James Reston Says

Now why did Kennedy have to get killed just then?

Past Gives Johnson Comfort in Midst of Criticism

New York Times News Service
Washington, D. C. — In the tragic week when President Kennedy was murdered, there was a crisis in Vietnam. The arrangements had been made for Kennedy to go from Dallas to Vice-President Johnson's ranch in Texas to receive a report on the war from Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge.

After the assassination, all plans, of course, had to be changed.

A few days later, however, Lodge put the solemn facts before the new president. The South Vietnamese army was in danger of being overwhelmed. Either the United States had to take a much more active part in the fighting or the war might be lost.

The problem, said Lodge, must be carefully studied and a decision taken.

President Johnson's reaction was decisive and personal. He is reported to have responded: "I am not going to be the first

president of the United States to lose a war."

Conscious of Past

This personal approach to the terrible dilemmas of the war helps explain what has happened ever since. Johnson apparently sees himself as the defender of the faith. He is now very conscious of the past. The heroes of the last generations were those who feared the worst and defied the public opinion of the day.

Abraham Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt were vilified, but perceived the coming age — and were finally re-deemed and venerated by the historians.

In fact, Johnson now carries around a piece of paper which he recites on the similarity between his problems and the problems of past war presidents.

Never mind, say his aides in the White House, about the rising criticism of Sens. Case of

New Jersey, Morton of Kentucky and the rest. Other great men have passed this way before.

Churchill an Example

Look at Churchill, rejected until the evening of his days, but steadfast and defiant, triumphant in the end — the great man of the age.

This sort of thing is going on around the White House today.

The president is being told by his shrinking company of intimates that the Communist aggression in Vietnam is the same as the Nazi aggression in the Rhineland, Austria and Czechoslovakia and he is holding the line. As Churchill defended freedom in Europe, so Johnson is holding the bridge in Asia until Japan and India—the two potential anchors of free Asia — finally take over responsibility for creating order in that part of the world.

The trouble is that Johnson not only wants to defend the principle of opposing aggres-

sion in Vietnam, but he wants to win the election of 1968 as well. His speech in San Antonio Friday illustrates the point. He did not say that it was important to oppose Communist aggression with an American expeditionary force of 500,000 men, and that Eisenhower and Kennedy had refused to do so and therefore had underestimated the problem. This would have been a defensible policy. Instead, Johnson tried to give the impression that he was merely carrying on the same policy as Eisenhower and Kennedy, which is manifestly untrue.

He presented himself at San Antonio as both the bold Churchill, defending western civilization, and the cautious Eisenhower who refused to plunge an American expeditionary force into a war in Asia.

He argued that the failure to do so would not only lose South Vietnam but might lose

all of southeast Asia and lead to a world war. Eisenhower, by contrast, refused to embark in a policy of intervention and escalation, as Johnson has done.

Opposition Uncertain

This is why the opposition to Johnson's policy is now both deep and wide.

It is not that the opposition is sure he is wrong; the opposition is not sure it is right. But there is a growing feeling here that Johnson is thinking about the problem in personal and partisan ways; that, as usual, he is not dealing with the problem but merely with the politics of the problem.

NEW YORK TIMES, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1967

Garrison Accuses Warren of Trying To 'Dynamite' Case

NEW ORLEANS, Sept. 6 (AP) — District Attorney Jim Garrison has accused Chief Justice Earl Warren of trying to "dynamite" his investigation into the assassination of President Kennedy.

Justice Warren told newsmen in Tokyo Monday he had not seen a single fact—including data compiled by Mr. Garrison—to contradict the Warren Commission's report on the assassination.

Mr. Garrison contends that Clay L. Shaw, New Orleans businessman, conspired with Lee Harvey Oswald and others to murder President Kennedy. The Warren Commission decided that Oswald had acted alone.

"It is a little disconcerting," said Mr. Garrison, "to find the Chief Justice of the United States on his hands and knees

trying to tie some sticks of dynamite to the case."

Mr. Garrison said Justice Warren's comment showed that the "Establishment" of the United States was opening a count-

erattack to try to stop his inquiry.

"Of course, from their point of view it is necessary to discredit the investigation no matter what the cost," Mr. Garrison said. "They don't think we are wrong about the assassination—they know we are right."

Justice Warren told the Tokyo Foreign Correspondents Club that he had "absolutely no doubts" of the Warren Commission report's accuracy and scope.

Court Action Noted

TOKYO, Sept. 6 (UPI)—Aske during his visit here about the investigation being conducted by District Attorney Jim Garrison of New Orleans, Justice Warren said:

"I want to skirt this very carefully because the case could someday come before the Supreme Court."

But he added that "so far as Mr. Garrison's information to the public is concerned, I have seen absolutely nothing that would conflict with the report of the commission."