

Nuclear policy

We, of course, are infallible. Soensen in his so revealing chapter "The Racows" doesn't say we are infallible, not does Schlesinger, nor does the President as he is quoted. It's just that we alone are always right. And, by coincidence, naturally, the USSR (and our allies and the neutrals - everyone else, including the Republicans who do not follow Kennedy's policies) is always wrong. The proof is easily established, by a combination of omission and misrepresentation, an exotic variant of intellectual dishonesty in which, superficially at least, the printed word is persuasive and highly credible.

As did Kennedy in real life, so does Sorensen (and Schlesinger) just leave out what he wants to leave out. Everything is neatly compartmented. If they are talking about or want to "negotiate" about the cessation of nuclear testing, it is related to nothing else - not to disarmament, to military policy or budgets, to diplomatic problems or crisis, such as Berlin, which was as much, if not more, a crisis for the Soviets as the United States - not even to nuclear testing, for in the tight compartmenting of their thoughts, methods and objectives, only atmospheric nuclear testing is what they would "negotiate". The United States had no desire to cease testing. It was, in fact, almost entirely prepared for an extensive and expensive series of underground tests at the time the Geneva discussions resumed in early August 1961. The United States

concept of negotiation was for Ambassador Dean to " outsit, outtalk and outwait" the Russian delegate, what Dean called "the bladder technique" of diplomacy. This is what the United States wanted, nothing or complete Soviet capitulation. Doing nothing, in its definition, is negotiation. Because the United States wanted it, therefore so also should the USSR, and if it didn't it was a very nasty word.

That Kennedy had gotten tough with Khrushchev at Vienna was of no account. It was in no compartment. Why should not Kennedy get tough and lay down the law? That he had increased the military budget, that he had mobilized the National Guard (which Schlesinger found unworthy of mention in any of his 1100 pages), these were of no importance and certainly should not be considered by the Soviet Union. Kennedy wanted non-negotiation and non-talk, leading to non-compromise and non-agreement of complete capitulation to his singular objective, the halting of only those nuclear tests in the atmosphere. He was well prepared for underground tests as, presumably, the Soviet Union was not. He had his caves and was willing to spend the extra fortune, as presumably the Soviet union had not and was not.

Therefore, what alone was necessary was an end to atmospheric testing.

Kennedy wanted it, and that was enough. Khrushchev didn't, so he and the Soviet Union were unmentionably bad people of singularly evil intent. After all, why should not they be willing to ignore all the United States activity directed against them and that which was going to be, as Kennedy had made only too explicit at Vienna? What should they not be willing to do whatever was necessary to give the United States further military advantage over them.

So, when they announced the resumption of their nuclear testing on August 30, 1961, the language of the President, in Sorensen's delicate understatement, was "unprintable". But that the United States was prepared to do exactly the same thing and thereupon almost immediately did so, underground, need not be mentioned at this point - and isn't. Soviet testing is very bad, and the eloquence of British Prime Minister MacMillan of the consequences of a continuation of the arms race is appropriately quoted - as it relates to the Soviet tests only.

But the United States tests, announced September 5, two brief days after the public blackmailing of the Soviet Union by a public offer to cease atmospheric tests only - why, there is nothing wrong with them? How could there

ber Kennedy wanted it; his advisers wanted it (except for those who wanted a nuclear attack on the Soviet Union instead); therefore, it could be nothing but right.

And the Soviet preparations for their tests? Why, of course, that is the most wretched, unspeakable deception? Of course, exactly the same preparations by the United States and their public utilization within a week of the Soviet Union's, are fine, proper, appropriate and anything but deceitful. That is Sorensen's version.

But would it be Khrushchev's?