

# LBJ Hardens Vietnam Talk Terms

By Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson

President Johnson's attitude toward the war in Vietnam has hardened. In the past he has said again and again that the United States would be willing to halt the bombing in the north if Hanoi would make an gesture of de-escalation in return. But this no longer is true.

News from the battlefronts has been so encouraging that the President has decided he will not order a halt to the bombing or make any other major concession without equivalent action by North Vietnam.

On the surface the United States will still appear eager to consider peace feelers, but this will be for the sake of our "image" in the world, and will avoid giving fuel to critics at home and abroad.

Actually the President now is convinced that the longer the war goes on, the stronger the U.S. bargaining position will be. So he will pay little attention to the continuing rash of truce balloons being sent up from Hanoi, Paris and Algiers.

One new specific goal of the President is to clear the Communists out of the Mekong Delta before any truce talks start. This is the food factory of South Vietnam, and if the Vietcong were left in control, they would retain

tremendous power over the Saigon government after the fighting ceases.

Further, the President now has information that the bombing of North Vietnam is hurting much more than Hanoi admits. Most of his military advisers have long argued this on the basis that even though the North Vietnamese appear able to repair destroyed bridges and roads and factories quickly, this uses up manpower and materials and strains resources which otherwise could be used to intensify the war in the south.

This is believed to be one of the reasons for Hanoi's growing willingness to soften its terms for peace talks. The lessening of Red China's omnipotence in North Vietnam, of course, is another.

In any event, it was significant that the White House gently rebuked roving Ambassador Averell Harriman when he talked in a taped TV interview about the chances for peace becoming stronger. The White House simply noted that this may have been true when the interview was taped, but that it no longer was.

## New Orleans Plot

In judging the alleged new discoveries in New Orleans of a Kennedy assassination plot, you should remember that Jim Garrison, the District Attorney, is a probable candidate for higher office in Louisiana. It also should be noted that

Garrison estimated that arrests would be "months and months away." That could take him up to the time of Louisiana's primary election campaign.

Whether he actually has important evidence remains to be seen, but there's no question that almost everybody in Louisiana is now talking about him. And if his investigation proves a dud, he can always claim that somebody "higher up" was to blame.

But if he does have credible new evidence, there's no question that it should be brought out.

## Reagan Going Right

Henry Salvatori, a millionaire Los Angeles oil man, is raising around \$400,000 to build a new Governor's Mansion for Gov. Reagan of California. Salvatori also was one of the heaviest contributors to Reagan's campaign funds. A lot of people are wondering what Salvatori wants from Reagan in return.

It may well be that all Salvatori wants is for Reagan to follow right-wing policies; if so, the new Governor is certainly conforming.

He has now appointed Norman Livermore of the Pacific Lumber Company in charge of state resources. Instead of protecting the California redwoods, Livermore will be more inclined to cut them down. Reagan has appointed John Montgomery, a cattleman, as director of state welfare. His

experience with cattle hardly qualifies him as an expert in human welfare problems. Reagan has appointed Allan Grant, a proponent of right-to-work laws, as president of the State Board of Agriculture, and Dr. William McCandless, a physician, to the State Board of Education.

McCandless wanted to circulate to school children a comic strip showing that the Pilgrim Fathers were participants in a Communist experiment at Plymouth Rock.

Public protest against McCandless's appointment was so strong that Reagan tried to withdraw it, but McCandless refused to step down.

## Adam's a Piker

If you sometimes feel that your own politicians get away with too much, consider the case of Mayor Sam Yorty of Los Angeles, most-junketing mayor in California history.

In January he took a trip to Paris, London and Dublin. In February he went to Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Indonesia. In March he's scheduled to go to the Philippines, Hong Kong and Tokyo—all at city expense, and presumably as part of the job of governing Los Angeles.

The mayor has taken 15 foreign trips since he was elected.

On Jan. 18, the Los Angeles City Council voted him an additional \$50,000 for expenses, so he still could show Rep. Adam Clayton Powell a few tricks.