

# War Aims Switch Charged by RFK

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Sen. Robert F. Kennedy (D-N.Y.) said yesterday that the Johnson Administration has "seriously undermined" the Nation's moral standing by its handling of the war in Vietnam.

Kennedy laid the blame on what he called a switch in the official rationale for U.S. involvement.

Instead of a war to help the South Vietnamese decide their own future, he said, it has become a conflict to check Chinese communism and forestall a fight on other battle-grounds.

"All of us should examine our own consciences," Kennedy said. "We're killing innocent people . . . Do we have that right to perform these acts because we want to protect ourselves?"

Secretary of State Dean Rusk last month called the war a testing ground against the threat of "a billion Chinese . . . armed with nuclear weapons." The Administration has repeated the theme again and again in recent weeks, but denied that it represents any more than a new emphasis on a long-standing goal of the Vietnamese struggle.

Kennedy charged yesterday that it is a new and badly mistaken policy that suggests that the original justification for the war has crumbled.

"We've switched," he said in an appearance on the CBS (WTOP) program "Face the Nation." "Our whole moral

See DEBATE, A16, Col. 1

position, it seems to me, changes tremendously. I think it's been badly undermined."

## Cannot Travel Freely

This is why, Kennedy said, President Johnson and Vice President Humphrey can no longer travel freely around the world or even around the United States.

"It's because of Vietnam," Kennedy said.

Vice President Humphrey, meanwhile, defended the Administration's conduct of the war as a struggle to prevent a nuclear holocaust.

"I believe we're pursuing the right course—the use of power with restraint," Humphrey said on NBC's "Meet the Press" (WRC) after watching Kennedy's interview.

Kennedy said he would stay out of the campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination, supporting neither President Johnson nor Sen. Eugene McCarthy (D-Minn.). He said he would support Mr. Johnson and Humphrey if they are renominated, but thought McCarthy could produce a "healthful" debate on Vietnam.

## Denies Conflict

Kennedy denied that his welcoming McCarthy's candidacy conflicted with past promises to support the Johnson-Humphrey ticket.

He said those pledges were made to put down talk that he might seek the Democratic presidential nomination himself. "I was the only one that was being mentioned during that period of time," he said.

The New York Senator said his own entry into the race would only cloud the Vietnam issue. "It would immediately become a personality strug-

gle," he said.

## Will Speak Out

At the same time, Kennedy said he intended to keep speaking out on Vietnam. But he said, "I'm not doing it on the basis of building up a political following so I can challenge President Johnson."

Kennedy said American involvement in Vietnam began because "we were making the effort there so that people would have the right to decide their own future."

But since the South Vietnamese have failed to support the war "and are not making the effort," Kennedy said:

"Now we've changed and we've switched. Maybe they don't want it, but we want it."

"So we're going in there and we're killing South Vietnamese—we're killing children—we're killing women—we're killing innocent people because we don't want to have the war fought on American soil—or because (the Communists) are 12,000 miles away and they might get to be 11,000 miles away."

## Disputes Forecasts

Kennedy also disputed forecasts by Gen. William C. Westmoreland, American military commander in South Vietnam, and Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker that the U. S. troop commitment could be reduced by 1969 as more South Vietnamese troops enter the fighting.

Kennedy said the optimism mistakenly assumes that North Vietnam will not escalate the fighting. And he said he saw little hope of shifting a major share of the military burden to the South Vietnamese.

"The South Vietnamese over the past year have done less, far less," he charged. "We're carrying the burden of the fighting, we're carrying the burden of the war. . . That's what I resent."

Kennedy asked, for example, why it wasn't the South Vietnamese Army that went up Hill 875 near Dakto in bloody fighting last week.

In his interview, Humphrey responded to these charges.

"The South Vietnamese Army has been at Dakto and has been at the DMZ (demilitarized zone between North and South Vietnam)," the Vice President said. ". . . some of the most courageous fighting of this war has been by some of the units of the South Vietnamese Army, the ARVN, in

DEBATE—From Page A1

# War 'Switch' Is Undermining U.S. Standing, RFK Warns



Associated Press

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY

... defends U.S. conduct

the Demilitarized Zone."

Humphrey reminded his audience that South Vietnamese troops also have the job of pacification.

"It is the nitty-gritty, the hard part of this war as much as any other part," he said, "and the ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) is doing a good job . . ."

"If we stick with it," he said, "there is no doubt in my mind that this will result

in a durable peace in Vietnam, the protection of the independence of Vietnam, and the improvement of international security in Southeast Asia which will result in our own national security."

### Rusk States Views

In other developments:

• Secretary of State Rusk said the key to peace is simply a Communist decision to halt aggression. In an article in the December issue of Reader's Digest, Rusk said he had "no doubt" that if all who entered South Vietnam from the north were to go home, "the authentic southerners on both sides could resolve their problems."

• Sen. McCarthy accused

President Johnson of establishing what amounts to "a four-year dictatorship" over foreign policy.

In an interview on the Public Broadcast Laboratory, McCarthy pointed to Under Secretary of State Nicholas deB. Katzenbach's recent testimony asserting, McCarthy said, that "the whole initiative (in foreign policy) and all of the power rested with the President and the State Department."

• President Johnson's national security adviser, Walt W. Rostow, suggested that American involvement in Vietnam also serves as a counterforce to keep Hanoi independent of Communist China. "If

we left the Asian mainland," Rostow said in an interview in Look magazine, "they would themselves be hard put to maintain their independence."

"If we pulled out of Vietnam and saw the dominance of Asia by a single power," Rostow also said, "we would react and probably have a bigger war."