

Missile Race Briefing Awes Legislators

By Drew Pearson

Important differences have developed inside the Johnson Administration regarding the stopping of bombing North Vietnam as a move toward peace.

The chief differences are between Secretary of State Dean Rusk, the "No. 1 Hawk" in the Cabinet, and U.N. Ambassador Arthur Goldberg, with Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. Both are doves.

Part of this difference developed at a White House briefing for Congressmen last week for about 75 members of the House, with their wives.

Most of the Congressmen indicated 100 per cent support of the President's Vietnam policy, though some Republicans wanted to know why he had not gone further in bombing the heart of Hanoi and the seaport of Haiphong.

Rep. Clarence Long of Maryland, a Democrat, whose son recently won a Silver Star in Vietnam, urged a harder prosecution of the war. Charles Chamberlain of Lansing, Mich., a GOP oldtimer, wanted to know why we hadn't gone in and used every bomb in the arsenal against every target available.

Secretary McNamara re-

plied that we had bombed about as many targets as we could without getting the Chinese into the war—or the Russians; and that the number of targets was decreasing with each sortie.

Three Democratic Congressmen—Jack Bingham, Lester Wolff and James Scheuer, all of New York—felt the Administration was not following up peace feelers aggressively enough.

Lone Dove

But Rep. John Dow, Democrat of Grandview, N.Y., had the courage to stand up and tell the President bluntly that his policy in Vietnam was wrong. "We should stop the bombing and we should get out," said Dow. "I mean now." The President made no comment.

Most brilliant presentation at the meeting was made by Secretary McNamara, not regarding the war but regarding the futility of getting into an anti-missile-missile race with Soviet Russia. He made what one Congressman described as a "frightening presentation" regarding the over-kill by both countries—the ability to wipe each other out.

McNamara projected the missile race up to 1978 when he said the United States would still be far ahead of Russia in missiles.

"Look," said the Secretary of Defense, "this country can afford anything. We are a

wealthy nation. You tell me to buy 5000 missiles; or I can buy 10,000. But what good does it do? Russia can destroy us, and we can destroy them. Furthermore, the country which attacks first is likely to get hurt the worst. Say that Russia hits us first, aiming primarily at military targets, and kills an estimated 100 million Americans.

"When we strike back, we would not be centering only on military targets in the Soviet Union, because we would know that they had already utilized their full capability in air attack and exploited their resources.

Rusk Ducks

"We would aim at everything, including population centers. The country that strikes back, after receiving the first blow, would be forced to do this—to try to annihilate the entire population. So, the Soviets would suffer twice as many casualties as the United States. Perhaps 200 million Russians would be killed by our counter-blow."

McNamara made a profound impression.

At one point, Rep. Scheuer told Rusk that he was impressed by the testimony of such experienced diplomats as George Kennan, former Ambassador to Russia, and Edwin Reischauer, former Ambassador to Japan, that the road to peace was by stopping

the bombing of North Vietnam.

"In view of the unanimous statements of such experienced diplomats," asked Rep. Scheuer, "isn't there some way we can deploy ground troops to prevent supplies from coming South instead of bombing, while we explore approaches to peace?"

Rusk replied with an American Legion type speech which did not answer the question.

"I am not going to let one American boy be subjected to an increased number of bullets," he orated.

As the White House briefing broke up, several Congressmen privately asked the same question of Secretary McNamara. "Isn't it possible to deploy men on the ground instead of bombing in order to prevent supplies from going South?" they asked.

"Of course it is," replied the Secretary of Defense. "This is what we have been planning. Furthermore, we have told them that we are ready to stop bombing the North as soon as we get a firm peace feeler. But we have told them that they shouldn't ask us to stop bombing until they are serious. For if we fail in the peace talks, we would have to come back and clobber them harder than ever. This would be a setback to all moderates who want peace."

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