

### *Truth in Vietnam*

There are many keys that will open a small window for a glimpse of truth and Arthur Schlesinger has given us numerous ones in *A Thousand Days*. Of particular brilliance is the illuminating statement in the Jan. 25 issue: "The McCarthy era, by demonstrating the peril of dangerous thoughts, elevated conformism into a conditioned reflex. Career men stopped telling Washington what they really thought and consecrated themselves to the clichés of the cold war." One man was able to control the actions of the majority through the neurotic exercise of his power!

We are told that our present policy in Vietnam was instituted and supported by Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy. There is enough half-truth in this statement to stop most arguments but Schlesinger's key along with two historical facts opens a window. The facts are: President Eisenhower refused to bomb Communists at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 despite heavy pressure from the Hawks and similarly President Kennedy refused to bomb the Communists at the Bay of Pigs in 1961.

That neither of them gave in to the pressure is believed by me to be due to their fundamental belief that domestic arm-twisting practices are not applicable in dealing with nations fighting for their freedom. (That President Eisenhower now publicly supports our policy is the reaction of a man extremely loyal to the Presidency).

The phobia of a Communist infiltration (McCarthyism) has been replaced by the obsession that foreign policy may be managed like domestic policy (Johnsonism). The proof that this is so is visible every day but particularly so in Adlai Stephenson's heart-breaking cry that he "could never quite believe what he was called upon to say" and that his defense of U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic "took several years off my life."

I will concede this, that the arm-twisting policy applied to a nation fighting for freedom will work if the arm is twisted off and the nation is beat into submission with it. Is that where we are headed in Vietnam? H. DUANE BUSBY.

Washington.