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EDITORIALS

'Change in Personnel'

President Kennedy said that South Vietnam needed a "change in personnel," meaning specifically the ouster of Ngo Dinh Nhu and Mme. Nhu. Mr. Kennedy now has his change of personnel with President Diem included, but it will avail him little unless it is supplemented by a change of policy. The President talks like a thinker and by comparison with some of his predecessors he is one. In the South Vietnam situation it is time to think, and think hard.

The objective of the American presence in South Vietnam has never been spelled out. It is said vaguely that we are there to "win the war." What war? The civil war inside South Vietnam? History suggests that outside interference in a civil war often is the kiss of death for the side the outsiders want to help. Are we fighting to contain Red China? Aside from the fact that the current and prospective troubles of the Red regime serve as a pretty efficient container, at least for the time being, Mr. Kennedy might consider that the Vietnamese and the Chinese (of whatever political complexion) have been hereditary enemies over a much longer period than the existence of the American Republic. With a little encouragement the Vietnamese, North and South together, might serve as a bulwark against the great bogey. Are we there merely to train our forces in counter-insurgency? If so, it is getting rather expensive and complicated; they should be proficient by now. Or is it our unquenchable desire to establish democracy in the rice paddies, to improve life for the South Vietnamese masses? If so, who will believe it, and since when has such a far-out altruism, to the tune of \$1.5 million a day and well over a hundred American lives so far, been sanctioned by the American taxpayer? If he reads the papers, he knows, moreover, that the war which we support in South Vietnam has only made the people of both Vietnams more wretched.

The change in personnel will not necessarily improve matters from any of the above standpoints. At the same time, complicity in the coup itself has increased our measure of responsibility for what happens in South Vietnam.

General Eisenhower's memoirs scarcely reveal him as a great statesman, but he did carry out his campaign promise to end the Korean War and the world has been the better for it. The American public must be getting as sick of the Vietnamese war as it was of the Korean one, and if Mr. Kennedy wants to hand a similar campaign issue to his Republican opponent in 1964 — assuming a Republican nominee who would have the sense and courage to make something of it — all he needs to do is to continue on his present course. The alternative is constructive statesmanship, and here Mr. Kennedy might do worse than to reread General de Gaulle's proposal of last September on

which *The Nation* based an editorial proposal (September 21). In barest outline, the idea was to talk with Ho Chi Minh through suitable intermediaries, with a view to ending the civil war and effecting a Federation of North and South, the North to remain Communist, the South capitalist, with free intercourse between the two. Each has what the other needs, and neither is getting it. If the border were unsealed, the flow of commerce would help solve some problems. Others would remain, but they could be dealt with by those principally involved — the Vietnamese people and leaders whom they might select if given a voice. A United Nations presence would be needed to insure that Red China and the United States alike kept their hands off. The headaches involved in such a course could not possibly equal those that await Mr. Kennedy if he puts his trust in a new organization chart, filled with schemers no whit better than those he has just helped to oust.

One Man, One Vote, Two Offices

How many elective offices should the same man run for at the same time? The question was raised in 1960 by the then Senator, now Vice President, Lyndon Johnson. The voice of the people may be the voice of God but, the forehanded Mr. Johnson reasoned, you never can tell till the votes are counted. The Texas legislature, always glad to oblige a great native statesman, passed a law enabling Mr. Johnson to run simultaneously for the Senate and the Vice Presidency. He won both. Mr. Johnson was severely criticized by Mr. Goldwater for this duality. Now Mr. Goldwater is apparently preparing to take out election insurance himself.

The plan is for Senator Goldwater to file for re-election to the Senate shortly before the Republican national convention. If worse comes to worst, he will remain a Senator, since his re-election to that humble office is very likely if he runs. Barry's Presidential campaign manager, Denison Kitchel, says that if his man is nominated in San Francisco, he will not run for the Senate. This is pure forbearance on Barry's part, for there is nothing in the Arizona constitution to prevent him from running simultaneously for dog-catcher of Phoenix, Senator from Arizona, and President of the United States.

Mr. Kitchel assures the press that Mr. Goldwater has no such intention. If the Republicans inconceivably fail to nominate him for the highest office in the land, he will indeed run for the Senate; but if he is nominated for the Presidency and accepts, a substitute will be found to try for the Senate. This involves some complications, however. Unfortunately the filing period for the Senate ends before the national convention, so if he wants his insurance Barry must file before he can be sure that the convention will designate him to save the country. In fact, he intends to