

The Turmoil in America

WASHINGTON — You return home after a month in Asia and note the escalation of irresponsible politicking, and you are less inclined to be angry at the foreigners who talked of the United States decaying from within.

You find shrill cries of "treason" emanating from the White House, remindful of those old days of McCarthyism when no accusation was too wild or baseless to utter if it held the prospect of political gain.

YOU RETURN to a sorry spectacle you thought you would never live to see — when a governor of Virginia shows high principle and refuses to run with a racist mob on the issue of school busing but the President of the United States leaps into the pack looking for the easiest way to turn an emotional issue into votes.

And Sen. Henry Jackson of Washington, in his desperate bid for the Democratic nomination, risks a long-built reputation as a fairly decent guy on civil rights, by trying to claim leadership of the anti-busing rabble.

President Nixon has tried to reclaim the high road by asserting that he does not impugn the patriotism of his Vietnam-policy critics. Thus he politely half disavows the words of his chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman, who accused Democratic presidential aspirants of "consciously" aiding and abetting the Communist enemies.

We note, alas, that Mr. Nixon's communications director, Herb Klein, and his party chairman, Kansas Sen. Robert Dole, continue to harangue audiences with the suggestion that a bunch of Democratic trai-

tors are trying to take over the White House.

Dole has demanded that Sen. Edmund Muskie withdraw from the presidential race because Muskie allegedly is guilty of the crime of claiming that his peace plan is more acceptable to Hanoi than the one recently proffered by Mr. Nixon.

Is this treason? Readers will be interested in Page 92 of the 1969 World Almanac which records that on Oct. 7, 1968, Nixon told UPI editors and publishers that he could accept a peace settlement which President Johnson could not accept. Shades of Muskie!

And on Oct. 9 in Santa Monica, Calif., when pressed by anti-war hecklers, Nixon shouted: "Those who have had a chance for four years and could not produce peace should not be given another chance."

Politics did not quite stop at the water's edge in 1968.

And do Haldeman and Dole recall those secret cables to Saigon from that Nixon favorite, Mrs. Claire Chennault, urging the South Vietnamese not to go to the peace talks in Paris until after the election because to do so would help elect Hubert H. Humphrey? Do they recall that Saigon did indeed stall, at a cost of many lives?

IN SHORT TIME this country will throw off the trauma of a brief new foray into McCarthyism. What it will not recover from for a generation or more is the spectacle of the President repudiating the federal judiciary and abandoning brave public school officials while he tries to dredge votes out of the busing problem.