

DREW PEARSON

# Bobby Was Wrong On Bay of Pigs

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson today continue their diagnosis of the presidential candidates, with a second column on Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.)

WASHINGTON—One way to gauge the qualifications of a presidential candidate is to look over his record of mistakes. A president cannot afford to make mistakes. A senator or a congressman can. They can go wrong on one or two issues and it will not take the country down the drain. But if a president makes a mistake it can be disastrous. It can affect the nation's course for years and years.

President Eisenhower, for instance, made the mistake of being too complacent when Fidel Castro took over Cuba. Since then we have had a near war with Russia over Cuba, and a Communist nation consistently and energetically trying to subvert our neighbors.

President Kennedy made the mistake of trying to invade Cuba in the ill-prepared, ill-conceived Bay of Pigs fiasco, thus worsening Eisenhower's previous mistake.

A month later he made the mistake of inviting Khrushchev to Vienna for a showdown when he was not prepared for a showdown. This led to the Berlin wall, the serious worsening of USA-USSR relations, and probably the first real military involvement in Vietnam. According to Under Secretary of State George Ball, this was why President Kennedy sent in 18,000 troops to recoup his Bay of Pigs and Berlin wall mistakes.

**THIS IS WHY** it's so important to study a presidential candidate and his record of making mistakes. It's also important to examine his record for being ahead of his party. Vice President Humphrey, for instance, was 10 or 15 years ahead of his party when at the Democratic Convention in 1948 he demanded that the party adopt a strong Civil Rights platform.



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The entire Southern wing of the Democratic Party walked out — though a young Texan named Lyndon Johnson did not. It would have been easy, incidentally, for him to have gone along with the herd. But he did not make that mistake. Today, 20 years later, the party has caught up with Humphrey and he will get most of the South's democratic delegates.

Bobby Kennedy has an excellent record in the Senate. You can't point to a single vote and say he was wrong. It is a better record than that of his rival, Sen. Eugene McCarthy. Kennedy even had the courage to propose legislation regulating cigaret advertising. Few other senators, save Sen. Warren Magnuson, D-Wash., have been that courageous.

But you also have to examine Bobby's record for mistakes of the past to see whether he's likely to make them in the future. As president, he can't afford mistakes. Here is part of the record:

When Bobby was in his twenties, his father asked Justice William O. Douglas to take his son on a trip to Russia to broaden his knowledge. On the trip, Bobby got sick. Douglas wanted to put him in a Moscow hospital, but Bobby refused.

Soviet medicine has made a lot of notable advances, and Russian hospitals are good. But Bobby was so imbued with

suspicion of the Russians that he refused to enter one of their hospitals and as a result almost died before they could get him home.

Later, when attorney general in his brother's cabinet, Bobby was one of JFK's strongest advisers for better relations with Russia. It was he who gave his brother the important advice that he entrust Ambassador Averall Harman with the negotiation of the test-ban treaty, a milestone in improving USA-USSR relations.

**AT THE INCEPTION** of the Bay of Pigs planning, Bobby Kennedy, then a member of the cabinet, hushed up those who were skeptical about it. Specifically he announced to key JFK advisers and to Vice President Johnson that the joint chiefs of staff had unanimously approved the plan to invade Cuba when, privately at least, the joint chiefs were divided. Several of them, outside the cabinet room, were against the move.

Later, during the Cuban missile crisis, it's reported that Attorney General Kennedy changed his tough line. He was opposed to a hazardous confrontation with Russia. He had condoned the initial mistake, but had learned enough not to compound the error.

Senator Kennedy's first experience in government was as a staff member of the McCarthy committee, where he was trained in some of the most flagrant witch-hunting staged by the late senator from Wisconsin. As previously recorded in this column, he went along with McCarthy's tactics long after most of Washington got wise to the senator.

Bobby's recent record in the Senate on the other hand, has been good. He has championed civil liberties. But has his conversion been permanent? That is the question which voters have a right to ask a presidential candidate.

As attorney general it would appear that Bobby had not divorced himself from some of the old witch-hunting tactics of his Joe McCarthy days. He has now come out publicly against wiretapping, and it is reasonably clear that the wholesale eavesdropping by the FBI during his administration was done by J. Edgar Hoover who was at loggerheads with the then attorney general — as he is with the present attorney general. But Bobby did not speak out clearly against wire tapping as has Attorney General Ramsey Clark under Lyndon Johnson.

**AN IN THE** Jimmy Hoffa case Attorney General Kennedy clearly resorted to his old McCarthy techniques. He used as the star witness against Hoffa the regional head of the Teamsters in Baton Rouge, La., Edward G. Partin, whom he fished out of jail where he had been charged with kidnaping and assault.

Kennedy's use of Partin as a witness was so flagrant that it brought a stinging rebuke from Chief Justice Earl Warren. That the rebuke was justified is indicated by the fact that, thanks to Bobby Kennedy's use of Partin, he is now out of jail and has been charged by Gov. John McKeithen with terrorizing unorganized labor in that part of Louisiana.

This is part of the mercurial record of Robert F. Kennedy.