11 Dec 71

Tom Braden

Nixon apparently forsaking India to keep from upsetting Red China

WASHINGTON — Sen. Fred Harris, D-Okla., who ran one of the shortest presidential campaigns on record, espoused the thesis that the United States ought to have a foreign policy "based on morality."

For this reason, Harris became something of a joke among Washington observers. "What is a foreign policy based on morality?" the wiseacres would ask. "Wouldn't it be better to have a foreign policy based on the interests of the United States?"

Morality is always an easy target and no doubt the Harris slogan was simpliste. But grant the sophisticates their point, and then try to explain why the interests of the United States require that we should back a dictator in Pakistan against the only democracy in the East.

Not only that. Why should we back a dictator who is certain to lose? Is this realpolitik? Is it in the interest of the United States to be on the wrong side of the moral question and to be on the wrong side of the power relationship, too?

Sen. Fred Harris
Something of a joke

The answers at the White House are not very convincing. First, it is argued, that when Madame Gandhi was here last month, she gave no indication that her timetable was so rapid. She is accused of waiting for the big snows to block the mountain passes so that Chinese armies could not interfere with her plans for aggression.

United Nations action to halt this aggression is already discounted. But, it is pointed out, there is no good reason why the United States should reward aggression by continuing economic aid to India. If nothing is done to condemn aggression, so the Nixon Administration is saying, Russia may get false ideas.

Isn't it more likely that the Russians will get the idea that whenever a popular government is threatened, the U. S. will back the wrong side? Doesn't this help Russia's propaganda abroad?

As for Madame Gandhi not telling Mr. Nixon and Dr. Henry Kissinger what she had in mind, isn't there anybody at the White House to read the newspapers? Surely it seems possible that somebody might have figured out that 9 million refugees pouring into India constituted a political and economic threat to which India's leaders might feel she had to respond.

In short, the White House explanation is as simpliste as the Fred Harris slogan. There must have been other reasons on President Nixon's mind, and it is not hard to guess what they were.

Kissinger has told the Indian ambassador here that there was a slight delay in the cutoff of arms to Pakistan because the administration did not want to take action which interfered with Pakistan's help in arranging his trip to China. Since this is so, it seems at least permissible to guess that U. S. condemnation of India is related to the President's trip to China. If so, Mrs. Nixon is paying a very high price for Chinese rapprochment.

He is breaking off ties with our oldest and only democratic friend in the East and making us an apologist for a policy of ruthless murder all for the sake of not antagonizing China.