

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1972

Letters to the Editor

'Aiding and Abetting the Enemy . . .'

To the Editor:

The issue drawn between the President and Senator Muskie has been obscured by political rhetoric. It is a simple one: Do we publicly support our elected negotiator or do we undercut him by blabbing our own offer whenever he makes one?

Can the Senator Muskies imagine what would happen to a labor leader negotiating a contract if leaders of various locals began publicly to yap their own offers during his maneuvers with employers? Could he hope to succeed? How could the union expect him to succeed? It is a question of common sense, sound principle of negotiation and loyalty to an elected negotiator.

Forget the Haldemans and the emotion-charged issue of patriotism. There are still the elements of prudence, sound negotiating practice and loyalty to the chosen negotiator.

When Richard Nixon was campaigning for the Republican nomination and then for the Presidency four years ago, he had the common sense and decency to refrain from undercutting President Johnson. I admired his recognition of sound principle and the skill of his performance. Not once did he undermine our elected President.

Let the Democratic aspirants, most of whom seem not to possess the foggiest idea of diplomacy in general or of Asian psychology in particular, emulate this sensible course. An important principle is involved and upon it depends the capacity of a democracy to exercise enough restraint to conduct a successful diplomacy.

There are many people in the world who think that a democracy such as ours cannot conduct a successful diplomacy and indeed our influence in recent years has been on the decline because of our lack of restraint, our propensity for a kind of frontier blabbery among politicians and newspapers alike. We have far to go to

prove these doubters wrong and regain some of our lost confidence and respect. To whom can we return for leadership in that direction if not to our politicians and our editors?

SMITH SIMPSON
Foreign Service Officer [Retired]
Annandale, Va., Feb. 11, 1972

To the Editor:

In your Feb. 9 editorial "The Haldeman Smear" you write: "It strikingly recalls the hysterical, irresponsible cry of treason that paralyzed public debate and policy making in the dark days of the late Senator Joseph R. McCarthy."

To this reader it also strikingly recalls the similarly irresponsible cries of the dark days of Richard M. Nixon, who is alive and well and now living in the White House. Let's not forget Helen Gahagan Douglas and all the others.

JULIET LEWIS
New York, Feb. 10, 1972

To the Editor:

May I be allowed a few innocent questions regarding the recent allegation by President Nixon's assistant H. R. Haldeman, that critics of the President's latest plan on Vietnam were "consciously aiding and abetting the enemy of the United States."

Who precisely is the enemy who is being aided? Surely it is not little North Vietnam. Was Mr. Haldeman, who is reputed to be extremely conservative, referring to Communist China whose prestige the President is about to lift by his sensational visit? Or did he have in mind the leaders of the Soviet Union who are next on the President's itinerary?

Another question one might ask, whenever anyone makes that kind of an assertion, is how does he know?

How precisely does the key assistant to the President of the United States know what does and what does not aid and abet an enemy unless he has direct and reliable access to the enemy's mind?

Absurd as Mr. Haldeman's assertion is, it does invite yet another question. Insofar as the President is not succeeding in extricating the United States from a mistaken war, is he not consciously aiding and abetting whoever prefers to see us remain mired in that morass? These could be his dinner and conversation partners in Peking or Moscow. (Prof.) HENRY L. BRETTON
State Univ. College at Brockport
Brockport, N. Y., Feb. 9, 1972

To the Editor:

Once more the standard-bearers of the anti-Administration forces have unfurled their banner. The double standard is obviously being applied by these "patriotic" voices of doom.

Over-reaction is a word that is used many times; and the thin-skinned liberal world has now over-reacted to a recent statement by H. R. Haldeman. They (the anti-groups) are free to accuse the President of incompetence and deceit, the Vice President of intimidation and inflammatory language, the F.B.I. of taking away our freedoms, Director J. Edgar Hoover of senility. They attack every high echelon member of the Administration at will.

The trouble is the Administration is not supposed to fight back, but it does. According to the rules, Washington must allow itself to be belittled and hammered into oblivion without saying a word.

This attitude, by the so-called "loyal opposition" and by the newspapers and broadcast media as well, makes me very concerned as to the kind of country we would be living in should they come to be the ruling force.

FRANK V. MOON
Huntington, L. I., Feb. 9, 1972