

## Royce Brier

# Pentagon World Is On the Ball

**I**N SOME MEASURE the Pentagon brass got what it wanted when President Nixon decided to enter Cambodia. But not in full measure. It would be impossible to set the limits of what the Pentagon wants in Asia. The generals are not about to tell you, anyway, and they wouldn't tell Mr. Nixon, either.

It is not his world, and he wouldn't understand. To understand what the Pentagon wants anywhere, you must graduate from West Point, and over the years accumulate stars in effective and honorable service.

It follows that neither do you and I understand the Pentagon world. What we all must understand, however, is that it is a world different from ours. It does not think as does a non-military world.

Yet the Pentagon world has the same aim as ours — the prosperity (using the word in its widest sense) of the United States among nations. Where it differs is in the method of attaining the end.

This is the cross of a democratic, or self-governing society, or shall we call it an inherent problem since 1789.

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**A** PRESIDENT'S DUTY, under the Constitution, is to represent us, the whole citizenry, and to minister to our wants and interests as he sees them.

He thus stands between us and the generals. He must advise with them, especially in wartime, but only within the limits set by his own intelligence and our welfare. He is not compelled to accept all the concepts of the generals, and if he is a good President he is bound to disappoint them in some historical circumstances.

In World War I, satirists and cartoonists conceived a character called Colonel Blimp, an exaggerated symbol of military stupidity. There were colonels and generals in the British Army as feckless as Blimp, but they did not predominate.

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**T**HE PENTAGON is stuffed with alert, resolute men who know the score in the contest with the citizenry. They are adept at presenting their world in the best possible light, and in defending it against any threat which might diminish its power or slow its drive.

A good example of this was the rattle of the news tickers just preceding the Cambodian decision, news designed to establish that enemy lodgement in Cambodia menaced American soldiery in Vietnam. This was essentially Mr. Nixon's pleading when he announced his decision.

But it is doubtful if the President or his civil government anticipated the shock Cambodia visited on the people, or its persistent interpretation as an expansion of the Indochina war, which they had thought was shrinking.

This generated immense pressure on Mr. Nixon to qualify and limit the Cambodian involvement, and he did so when he announced he expected to begin a withdrawal this week from Cambodian soil.

The tickers rattled again, for note a news dispatch from Vietnam saying the generals were "startled and bewildered." They have already found so much enemy gear in Cambodia, they cannot digest or secure it if their manpower is cut. The generals thus face the people with a potential fait accompli. The most perceptive view of this may be to confess the Pentagon generals are not Colonel Blimps, but cunning and resourceful men defending their world.

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