

To the Editor:

A sharp reaction appears to have been set off in both Europe and the United States by the testimony of William F. Clements Jr.,* President Nixon's nominee as Deputy Secretary of Defense, before the Senate Armed Services Committee, headed by Senator Harold E. Hughes. In answer to whether he would recommend the use of nuclear weapons in North Vietnam he stated that he would not preclude their use.

Five years ago, General Curtis LeMay, George Wallace's running mate for Vice President, when interviewed and asked about possible use of nuclear weapons, gave the same answer. The response occasioned such an upheaval among the news media that it was a surprise to me that General LeMay was not taken and dumped into the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.

Yet, if newspaper editors and television newscasters would sharpen their memories, they would find that six years ago the late ex-President Dwight Eisenhower (then recuperating at Camp David from surgery) when questioned by reporters also stated emphatically that he would not preclude the use of nuclear weapons in Vietnam if necessary. Not a single editorial or television newscaster commented on Mr. Eisenhower's answer at that time although it did appear as part of the question and answer report.

That is why knowledgeable persons support the present Administration's recommendations that some controls be exercised in the news media to prevent slanting of news reports by undue emphasis on issues, or ignoring them completely, according to the personal whims of the responsible parties.

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* NYTimes 13 Jan. 73,
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