

Stepped Up Bombing Stirs Cedar Rapids

3 Years Has Seen a Shift in Attitude on U.S. Vietnam Role

By ANDREW H. MALCOLM
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CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa, Jan. 5—Almost three years ago a new sign in this city's Butterfly Cafe advised those without shirt or shoes to stay out. "Sooner or later," a waitress explained, "those filthy kids get on your nerves." She was referring to a small band of college students holding one of this well-groomed city's few protests against the Vietnam War. Down the street Mayor Donald J. Canney was calling the American invasion of Cambodia "a reasonable step" and denouncing student protests that "produce a violence of their own."

Today the sign in the cafe is gone.

And Mayor Canney, a 41-year-old Marine veteran, is saying, "There is probably not a sane American who would not want this war ended. I don't necessarily condone all this new recent bombing. It might speed things along. It might not. I guess I just don't know."

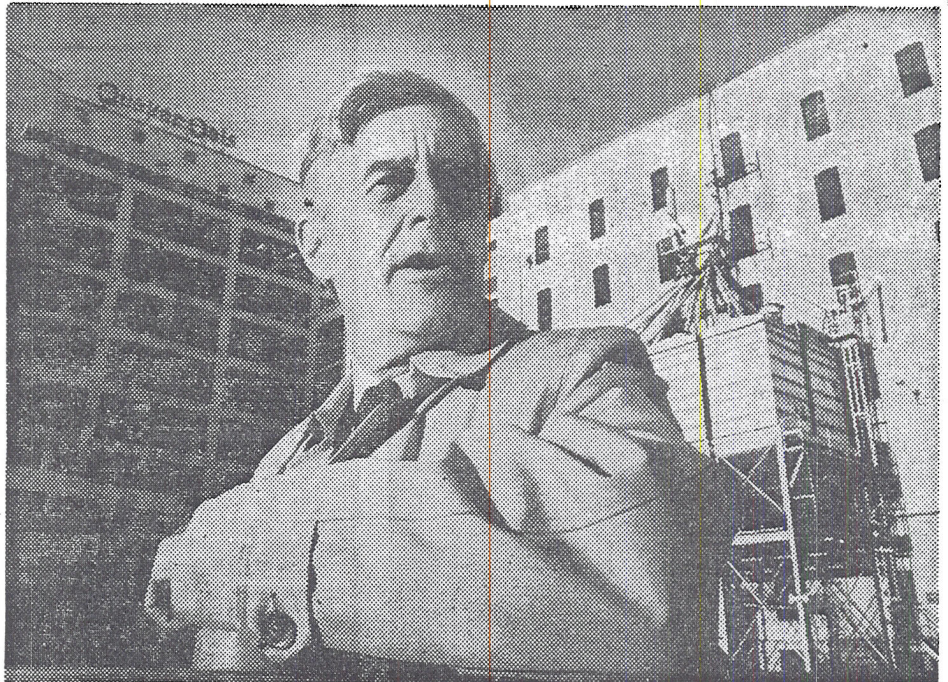
The contrast is perhaps subtle but significant. For now, on the eve of the resumption of peace negotiations in Paris, a growing number of the 110,000 people in this somewhat secluded city in eastern Iowa seem to be having third thoughts about the war that even today seems farther away than Vietnam.

Draft and Shrapnel

At first, some 10 years ago, no one here paid much attention to that place where American advisers went in increasing numbers. Then the draft and the shrapnel began taking their toll of Cedar Rapids young men and it seemed unpatriotic to question the cause.

Stirred by the fighting, a number of students at the city's three colleges staged protests downtown. They were not well received by a prosperous populace that believed, as a retired dentist put it in May, 1970, "In a war situation like this, you have to support your President. There's a lot he knows that we don't."

But now some people here are not so sure. "It seemed there was so much progress and peace was so near," said John Ely, a longtime resident, "then suddenly we turn around and cut loose with the heaviest bombing in the history of man. We still have no peace and no explanation. Why?"



The New York Times/Thomas DeFeo

John Ely, a longtime resident, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He recently organized the Christmas Committee to Stop the Bombing, and 150 people turned out for an antiwar protest.



Mayor Donald J. Canney, once a supporter of the invasion of Cambodia, now says of the recent bombing, "It might speed thing along. It might not. I guess I just don't know." He is a Marine Corps veteran.

onstration standards but four times as many as used to turn out for war protests here.

That was another measure of the subtle change that has reached this bustling industrial city and agricultural trade center.

Cedar Rapids, as its Chamber of Commerce proudly notes, "was named for the cedar trees along the river which had so many rapids, evidence of which is still available below the downtown dam."

Horse thieves used to work out of the long thin island in mid-river. Now the city government does. And almost ever since that day in 1841 when N. B. Brown threw up a bush dam to harness the river, industry has been coming to Cedar Rapids.

There are more than 200 companies here now, including Collins Radio, makers of the astronauts' radio equipment, Quaker Oats, which built the world's largest cereal mill here, and Wilson & Co., which employs 2,400 persons. Wilson's is a busy meat-packing plant that slaughters 1,200 cattle and 10,000 hogs a day, evidence of which is still available downtown whenever there is a south wind.

Day and Night Bustle

Unlike the central business district of many Middle Western cities, Cedar Rapids downtown, where parking costs 15 cents an hour is bustling by day and night with shoppers wearing new clothes.

One tall office building is under construction and another 22-story structure is planned. Unemployment is only 2 per cent. And in Iowa this city trails only Des Moines, 125 miles to the west, in population and retail sales, thanks in part to the region's farmers who forsake their frigid, stubbled cornfields these days to buy their supplies in town.

The once staunch Republican tradition of the city and Linn County, as well as the state, has been eroded, most recently by the upset defeat of incumbent Senator Jack Miller, a Republican, by Richard Clark, a Democrat from the Cedar Rapids suburb of Marion.

Given these economically good times and the end of the military draft and the sizeable weekly casualty lists, the Vietnam war was not the most relevant or contentious issue here. The most passionate bumper sticker on city streets reads: "Only Love Beats Milk."

The bombs that fell on Hanoi and Haiphong also

shook a few people here, including a realtor named Douglas B. West.

A 45-year-old veteran of the Korean war, Mr. West has written a lengthy, rhapsodic poem about the late General of the Army Douglas MacArthur and has described himself as a hawk on the Vietnam War.

In recent months, however, he has changed his mind, along with several friends. And so on Christmas morning, he and his wife, Virginia, left their presents unopened to participate in their first demonstration.

"I think President Nixon has done an excellent job in international relations," Mr. West said, "but there's a better way to go at this than genocide. We haven't been in a hurry to get out for nine years. Now why do we have to bomb the enemy into an agreement quickly now? We did the same thing at the end of World War II. We were so impatient for the end that we dropped the atomic bomb twice.

"I was all for mining Haiphong and bombing the dikes," he continued, "but if peace was so close at hand, why did we have to do all this bombing? Mr. Nixon certainly gave me no explanations." So Mr. West carried the United States flag in the Christmas protest.

He was not alone in his feelings. The Cedar Rapids Gazette called the bombing "the wrong response." And when Mrs. Joan Lipsky, a Republican state representative, heard of the recent

bombing, she sighed, "Oh no."

"I think," she said, "the average person here said to himself, 'Well, we've been lied to again.'"

"I know a lot of business and professional people," said Leo Nussbaum, president of Coe College, "and there's a significant shift. Basically, they supported the Administration and now they're wondering about this petulant bombing."

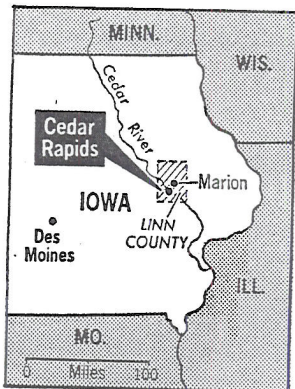
But not everyone is wondering. The Christmas protest also involved taping an appeal for support to the doors of area churches. This aroused the Rev. John P. Woods of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, who said protests only helped the enemy and urged strong military measures.

"If you're going to have a war," he said, "let's carry it out. Sure, you're going to kill women and children. But if Hanoi came over here, they'd be killing our women and children."

A reader of The Des Moines Register, Steve Rausch, seeing an account of Mr. Wood's comment, wrote a letter to the paper saying: "The Rev. Mr. Woods can rest assured that his life as a minister has not been wasted. I am now convinced that there must be a hell."

But once again the war's opponents here have lapsed into inactivity. "It's frustrating," Mr. Ely said. "You do everything you can in good conscience and it doesn't work. I guess all you can do is sit back and watch the news as it unfolds."

Within two days recently Mr. Ely organized the Christmas Committee to Stop the Bombing. It held a rally on Christmas morning at the Federal Building. One hundred and fifty people attended—not much by mass dem-



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