

25  
Monday, October 30, 1967  
12:10 p.m.

Mr. President:

These foreign reactions to the anti-war demonstrations at the Pentagon are, on the whole, heartening. (pages 4-7)

*Pres file*

W. W. Rostow

WW Rostow:rln

ANTI-WAR DEMONSTRATIONS GIVEN "SECOND LOOK"

New editorials reviewing last weekend's anti-war demonstrations in the U.S. and elsewhere indicate that the world press by and large considered the protests to have been ineffectual. Commentators taking a "second look" at the episodes made these points:

- 1) The demonstrators failed to offer useful alternatives to U.S. Viet-Nam policy.
- 2) Official restraint in dealing with the marchers had favorably impressed the world.

However, a Bangkok paper criticized the Administration for failing to maintain a "dialogue with U.S. intellectuals and writers, professors and students."

"Who is Doing What to Whom?"

The independent weekly London Economist, out today, proposed that "last week's anti-Viet-Nam war demonstrators should ask themselves a question Lenin asked -- 'Who is doing what to whom?'"

Opponents of the American intervention in Viet-Nam use two different arguments. The first does not stand up to a moment's serious examination. This is the argument that the Americans are there to further their own selfish and presumably material interests...

"The alternative is to say that the Americans went into Southeast Asia for unselfish reasons -- but that they got their calculations horribly wrong. The first thing to note about this interpretation is that it puts the Americans on the right side of the who-whom question... Secondly, this interpretation still leaves the critics with the job of saying what makes them think that the Americans' original calculations were wrong..."

"Demonstrations Failed"

Yesterday's independent Die Presse of Vienna reported from Washington that "the bombing of targets in the center of Hanoi is evidence that the recent anti-war demonstrations in the U.S. failed in their purpose.

"Government officials as well as many independent observers appear convinced that these demonstrations have hurt rather than helped the anti-war movement. This is assumed chiefly because the organizers were unable to control their own demonstrations. Parents as well as juvenile participants now recognize with relief that major bloodshed was prevented only by the authorities and by the establishment which the demonstrators assailed."

Yesterday's independent Telegraaf of Amsterdam concluded that "time will tell who is right, but most certainly it will not be the demonstrators, who cannot see and judge the scope and background of this horrible tragedy," the Viet-Nam war.

The correspondent of independent Algemeen Handelsblatt of Amsterdam and liberal Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant called the Washington demonstration "counterproductive... What happened here this weekend was the best thing that could have happened for President Johnson."

Independent Het Parool, Amsterdam, said the demonstrations should not be "overrated." It asserted that "American power is the best guarantee for the free world, and anti-Americanism -- from the extreme left to the extreme right -- is a danger."

"No Sign of Weakness"

Trouw of Amsterdam, an opponent of U.S. Viet-Nam policy, declared that the demonstration was "an expression of legitimate opposition... The fact that this opposition is possible in the U.S. is no sign of weakness, but rather is an example of the real power of democratic privileges and freedom in the U.S."

An editor of Switzerland's prestigious Neue Zuercher Zeitung, recently returned from South Viet-Nam, wrote Wednesday:

"Little was heard about Communist long-term aggression during last weekend's protests. It was striking that zealous people far from the scene of action acted and talked differently from those with more immediate experience and responsibility... Those who, from their cloudland of illusion or demagogic, exhort America to withdraw, are delaying peace."

"More Violence in Japan"

In Japan, conservative Tokyo Shimbun compared the "orderly" demonstration in Washington and its "minor scuffles with the police" with the "violence and confusion that characterize demonstrations in Japan... There is no need for bloody struggles. The fact that they gathered from all over America should be reason enough to let the whole nation hear and see their assertions." The paper judged that the American students' sentiment that they did not want to die in what they considered to be a "purposeless war" showed that they were "not extreme and vacuous ideologists."

Yesterday's conservative Evening News of Manila said the President's ability to maintain a "cool" attitude in the face of anti-war demonstrations and adverse public opinion, "not to mention the prevailing stance of tenacity in the U.S. Congress, attests to the sincerity and earnestness of President Johnson's words.

"The long, tedious process of policy making in the White House gives more than ample ground for the assumption that President Johnson's decision to widen the scope of U.S. offensive and defensive operations was based on a body of comprehensive and expertly evaluated military and diplomatic intelligence."

Bangkok: "Dialogue Inadequate"

Wednesday's Bangkok Post strongly deplored the demonstrations in Washington and in other capitals as having "considerably weakened the position of the U.S. Administration on Viet-Nam in the eyes of the world... It is important that the present drift in U.S. public opinion against the war in Viet-Nam is stopped or effectively dealt with..."

"Isn't it true that the present U.S. Administration's dialogue with U.S. intellectuals and writers, professors and students, has never been weaker than it is today? In fact, the Administration in Washington has not only failed to tap the latent sources of American idealism in order to strengthen the cause of freedom and justice, but has also apparently failed to convince the outside world that the Administration is, as a whole, fully united in its determination to continue to fight for its goals in Viet-Nam."

"Protests Should be Aimed at Hanoi"

The Times of India's Washington correspondent wrote Tuesday that "the demonstration was not as large as expected. Nevertheless, it was noisy and dramatic enough... North Viet-Nam seems to count on the support of the anti-war group in breaking the U.S. will to fight.

"The fact, however, is that no U.S. President can afford to halt the war or to beat a retreat from Viet-Nam without at least a face-saving negotiated peace. Any move which tends to engender a hope in Hanoi that Washington would act otherwise helps to prolong the war... For LBJ, the problem is not as simple as some advocates of a cessation in the bombing make out."

Rio de Janeiro's conservative O Globo observed yesterday that "anti-war demonstrations all over the world... are addressed to Washington, but the address should be Hanoi... The situation is clear: One side is disposed to negotiate and the other is not. Is there any logic, beside the false Communist one, in demonstrating against the side that wants peace and not protesting against the one that does not want it?"