Ex-Administration Officials Discuss U.S. Policy in Asia

Some citizens view government as an intellectual monolith, where officials are expected to follow blindly whatever policy has been approved. In actuality, government is a much more fragmented institution where men who hold different positions express their thoughts both before and after decisions are made.

Two former Administration officials who demonstrated that they have formulated their own individual views on Asian affairs are Edwin Oldfather Reischauer and James C. Thomson, Jr. In August, both men left the Executive branch, where each had served more than 5 years, to begin teaching modern Asian history and politics to students at Harvard University. Both men are highly respected both within and outside the government for their high level of performance in their government jobs.

Ambassador to Japan

Reischauer, the better-known of the two men, is one of the nation's most distinguished Asian historians and was awarded a coveted University Professorship upon his return to resume his teaching duties at Harvard. Reischauer served as Ambassador to Japan for 5 years and 4 months, under both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. After he resigned as Ambassador, Reischauer received an administration appointment as head of a special advisory panel to advise the State Department on Far Eastern affairs.

During his years in the Executive branch, Thomson played a less publicized but a central role, in the offices where Asian policy was being made in Washington. After working on the staff of Chester Bowles, Thomson worked as Special Assistant to two Assistant Secretaries of State for Far Eastern Affairs—Roger Hilsman and William P. Bundy. In 1964 he joined the White House foreign affairs staff, then headed by McGeorge Bundy, who was later replaced by Walt W. Rostow. On the White House staff, Thomson specialized on the Far East, and particularly on Communist China. In 1961 Thomson had received his Ph.D. in Chinese history from Harvard. Both Reischauer and Thomson are affiliated with the new Kennedy Institute of Politics at Harvard (*Science*, 7 October).

Neither man has received much publicity recently about his views on Asian policy, although both are willing to be quite frank in discussing the administration's position. The editors of the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin* asked the two men to record a discussion of current Asian affairs; the interesting transcript was published in the 15 October issue of that magazine. This month, they gave further elaboration to their views on Asia in long, separate interviews with *Science*.

Reischauer and Thomson do not agree on every aspect of Asian affairs, but they developed a striking similarity of opinion on many issues during the 5 years they spent in the separate vantage points of Tokyo and Washington. Some of their major points of agreement on Asian policy, as indicated in their interviews with *Science*, are summarized in the following paragraphs:

1) The United States should have avoided becoming involved in a major war in Vietnam. Reischauer adds, however, that "pulling out would have grave consequences. We have to see this one through."

2) The United States should try to "de-escalate" the war in Vietnam, perhaps by suspending the bombing of North Vietnam. Thomson, in particular, insists that this bombing has achieved "none" of the objectives which had been hoped for by American leaders.

3) Expansion of the conflict in Vietnam could still trigger a war between the United States and China. Reischauer and Thomson are not particularly worried about such a war if the United States does not escalate its attacks against North Vietnam.

4) The United States should begin serious efforts to bring the Peking government into the international community—by dropping its opposition to the seating of Communist China in the United Nations while keeping Taiwan a member, by easing trade regulations, and by eventual recognition.

5) U.S. policy makers are so preoccupied with Vietnam that they do not devote sufficient attention to other pressing foreign problems.

6) U.S. foreign policy leaders are not sufficiently knowledgeable about Asia. Both Reischauer and Thomson emphasize the lack of China experts in the top leadership ranks of the State Department.

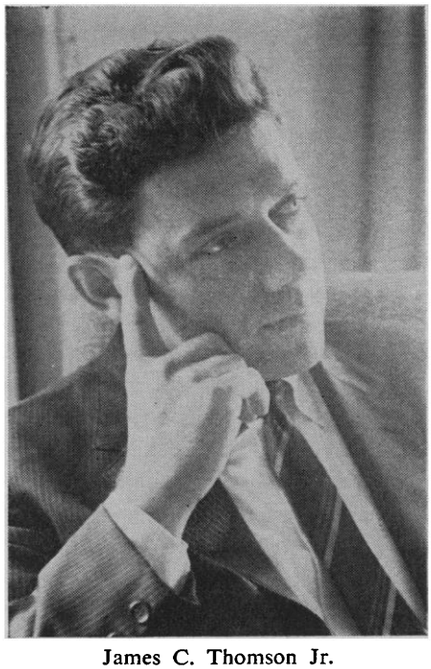
7) The long-term interests of the United States are not served by maintaining a large military force on the Asian mainland. Both men think the United States should play a supporting, rather than a primary, role in Asia.

Reischauer justifies his statement that U.S. involvement in a major war in Vietnam should have been avoided by saying he feels that there are sharp limits to an effective American military role on the Asian continent. He also believes that Asian nationalism is a more effective restraint on Asian communism than any outside force, and that the United States has never put sufficient faith in Asian nationalism.

"Our being involved in a war in South Vietnam is a massive distortion of our priorities, resources, and energies," the usually soft-spoken Thomson exclaims. "The war represents a calamitous and deeply tragic failure of our diplomacy. This is a war that could have been avoided." Thomson thinks the war could have been most easily avoided in earlier years, but that, as late as 1964 or 1965, he believes that President Johnson could have arranged a settlement after receiving his overwhelming electoral mandate. He notes that each administration which has dealt with the Vietnam problem has compounded the mistakes of the preceding administrations.

To both Reischauer and Thomson, stopping the bombing of North Vietnam seems a good first step toward "de-escalation" of the Vietnam war. Thomson also questions the wisdom of large-scale U.S. bombing of South Vietnam: "It's like using a sledge hammer to kill germs. It certainly results in the slaughter of a great many innocent people and does little good for our reputation." Reischauer fears that further U.S. escalation in South Vietnam will overwhelm that country and destroy belief in the independence of the Saigon government.

Reischauer and Thomson believe that the United States has paid heavily for its Vietnam policy in its relations



James C. Thomson Jr.

with other nations. "Inherent in our actions in Vietnam are racial and semi-colonial overtones, no matter how differently we view it," Thomson comments. "Other nations all too easily can conclude—however mistakenly—that we don't understand Asian nationalism, that we have little regard for Asian loss of life, that we seek a neo-colonial hegemony in South Vietnam."

Reischauer says that "there is a very strong feeling throughout Asia" that Americans are more willing to take the lives of Orientals than of Caucasians. "I received a letter from a teacher in Japan just the other day making this very point—that we would not be so willing to kill people in Vietnam if they were white. This feeling is deeply ingrained," Reischauer explains, as he observes that this attitude limits the military role that the United States can effectively play in Asia.

Although the danger of Vietnam's erupting into a war with China does not especially worry either man at present, both feel strongly that certain actions could trigger such a catastrophe. Such actions include an attack on China or an American attempt to destroy the government of North Vietnam.

"As we found out in Korea," Reischauer comments, "the Chinese will move against us if they are pushed too far. It is difficult to know how the Chinese will regard our actions. What may seem to us an insignificant escalation may seem like a very significant step to the Chinese, which will demonstrate our intention to threaten them directly. We run very great risks of Chinese intervention if we invade North Vietnam or indiscriminately bomb Hanoi, Haiphong, or the Red River dikes."

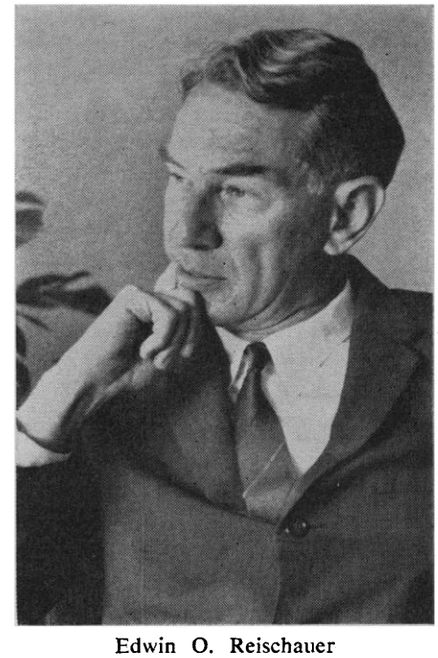
Thomson believes that the United States should reconsider the wisdom of surveillance actions which may have outlived their usefulness—such as naval patrols in the Chinese coastal areas. Reischauer says that "The United States should make it crystal clear that we don't have hostile intentions against China and that we are willing to co-exist with that country."

Both Asian scholars put particular stress on finding ways to co-exist with China. "We haven't made any efforts at all to reclaim China to the family of nations," Reischauer argues. "We have placed all our emphasis on preventing her from getting out of her borders, on keeping her from doing harm to the outside world. We have spent an enormous effort to keep them out of the United Nations. We should keep the door open for China to the United Nations; we should be opening doors for China rather than trying to lock them. They won't accommodate themselves to the realities of the world until they come out and learn about them."

Thomson thinks that recognition of Peking is "a logical long-term consequence" of President Johnson's recent suggestion of reconciliation with mainland China, but that *de jure* recognition is "a long way down the pike" and will be extended only after less dramatic efforts to ameliorate relations have been successful. Thomson says the United States can be said to have recognized the Peking government on a *de facto* basis a decade ago, when President Eisenhower instituted the regular Warsaw talks with the Chinese.

Before *de jure* recognition is given, Thomson thinks it important to admit mainland China to the U.N., to increase travel and scientific exchanges, and to participate with the Chinese in international conferences. "In order to try to cure a disturbed nation (and I think that China has to be regarded as a nation suffering from a psychosis)" Thomson argues, "we have to understand the patient. In dealing with the patient, we have emphasized only one technique—that of the strait-jacket, which is not a full and sophisticated treatment."

Greater contact with the Chinese might lead to a more realistic American assessment of their potentialities.



Edwin O. Reischauer

Thomson says that generalists on China have been somewhat surprised by the rate of Chinese scientific and technical development. "I wouldn't have anticipated such a fast rate 5 years ago. The Chinese have lived up to our worst expectations in regards to the rapidity of their rate of development," Thomson says.

Reischauer does not believe that the United States has any real, long-range Asian policy. "We react to what we think is happening on a piece-meal basis," he laments; "we act on the immediate situation rather than on long-term concepts. We have long-term concepts, but we don't understand what they are. We act on false analogies. We have assumed that Asia is analogous to post-war Europe, where we needed to hold the line against expanding Soviet power, but the situation is much more complicated in Asia, the challenge is a much different one."

Part of the explanation for this lack of an Asian policy is the fact that there is no one in a position of high responsibility in the State Department who knows Asia well. "No one in the top ranks of the State Department has any intimate knowledge of the non-Western world," Thomson observes.

In discussing the reasons for the slow movement in changing U.S. policy toward Communist China, Thomson notes, "There is no Chinese expertise at all on the seventh floor of the State Department. Even at lesser levels, the Chinese expertise has been shunted off by preoccupation with Vietnam."

Thomson lists other impediments to change in U.S. relationships with China: "Among other things, this slow movement on China policy has been caused by certain figures in the bureaucracy who tend to be more rigid, even theological, toward Asian Communism than they are to that of East Europe, or than are the real students of the China problem in the bureaucracy or in the field abroad." Thomson also listed three other factors which have contributed to the glacial slowness of U.S. movement on China policy:

- "The mood of the Chinese, who became more belligerent after the Great Leap Forward.
- "A bureaucratic timidity in the face of what was assumed to be public antipathy to any moves toward reconciliation with China; this has been particularly true in Democratic Administrations which are still gun-shy from the so-called loss of China.
- "The Sino-Soviet split. Especially after the resolution of the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 and the subsequent U.S.–Soviet rapproachment, our Soviet experts cautioned us to do nothing about China."

Thomson now thinks that a series of events in the past year, including the Fulbright hearings on China (*Science*, 14 October), have induced some movement on China policy which has culminated, for the moment, with President Johnson's 12 July speech on the subject.

As for the future, Reischauer anticipates that American military forces will be needed in the Pacific during the coming years, and says that the presence of the Seventh Fleet in Far Eastern waters has had a stabilizing influence. "I think it is necessary," he adds, "to draw a distinction between maintenance of forces in the Pacific and on the Asian mainland. I think it's very important for us to realize that we can only play a supporting role in Asia, not a primary one."

In a similar vein, Thomson argues, "Our task in Asia is to encourage, not to dominate. I fear the over-Americanization of Asian efforts—too much American money being spent, too many Americans on the scene. Our massive military efforts can keep some countries from taking steps to stand on their own feet."

Emphasis on Asia

To some Washington observers, the Johnson Administration now seems to be following an Asian lodestar. Turning away from Europe, Latin America, and Africa, President Johnson has directed American energies to Asia, especially to waging the military conflict in Vietnam. This year, President Johnson has made one major trip to Asia, and Vice President Humphrey has made two trips to the Far East. These tours represent the only extensive foreign travel of the two principal officials of this administration.

On the one hand, U.S. experts on Asia are glad that Americans are paying more attention to the continent. On the other hand, some fear the United States will lavish its favors primarily on those small military allies which are of peripheral importance in the broader Asian perspective. While concentrating attention on countries like South Vietnam, Thailand, Taiwan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Australia, the United States may progressively cut itself off from the more significant Asian countries—India, Japan, Indonesia, and Pakistan. Thomson expresses one part of this concern when he says, "I worry that the Vietnam war, like the Korean war, may push us into overemphasizing the virtues of countries which join with us to the exclusion of more important Asian countries which do not support our position."

If the pattern set in the first period of the Johnson Administration continues, it seems that the size and character of the American involvement in Asia will be the major foreign policy issue of our time. Scholars such as Reischauer and Thomson, as well as government officials, are likely to grapple with the problem of defining the proper American role in Asia for many years to come.—BRYCE NELSON

UNESCO: Stress on Development Brings Parity for Science

Paris. In celebrating its 20th anniversary this month UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, passed a thoroughly respectable milestone in international intellectual cooperation. Hopes of some of its founders and original well-wishers that creation of UNESCO might enable intellectuals and artists to find a path to peace around the pitfalls of politics have not been realized. But the organization has found, or perhaps had thrust upon it, a major mission—assistance to developing nations, with increasing emphasis on science and technology.

As one of the permanent specialized organizations of the United Nations, UNESCO is an intergovernmental organization which depends on member governments both for budget and for approval of its policies. This month the 14th UNESCO general conference convened in Paris to review and approve its budget and program for the 1967–68 biennium.

A turbulent time was not expected in Paris, and no major issues related to the program have so far inflamed the proceedings. Advance consultations with member governments forestall most surprises, and the meeting this year has, in effect, confirmed action taken at the last meeting, 2 years ago, when science was given equal emphasis with education and culture in the UNESCO program [see *Science* **142**, 470 (1963)].

In the years after World War II, when UNESCO was on financial short rations, most of the organization's efforts in science were devoted, quite naturally, to resuscitation of the international scientific community. UNESCO, for example, helped restore the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) to vigor and was instrumental in setting up such other nongovern-