

PROGRAM Edward P. Morgan

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MORGAN'S COMMENT

EDWARD P. MORGAN: "Americans are constantly worried about the nation's image. In 1960 John F. Kennedy made a major campaign issue out of the punishment to US prestige by the government's bungling of the U-2 spy plane incident, the subsequent collapse of the Paris Summit Meeting, before it began, and the cancellation in the face of ugly protest riots of President Eisenhower's goodwill visit to Japan.

"Just the other day, ex-Vice President Nixon, who as Kennedy's opponent six years ago, tried to rebut those charges, took the offensive and accused the Johnson Administration of letting American prestige in the world sag to a new low.

"The issue is a valid subject for debate. But the dialogue can only be meaningful, if all hands recognize and accept a brace of qualifying facts. In the first place, the power and the wealth of the United States make it inevitably a sitting duck target for all kinds of criticism at home and abroad.

"Never in history has a world power escaped being thus chartered. We Americans invite more than the usual drum fire of such attacks, perhaps, because other nations are suspicious of our generosity, resentful of our demands for gratitude for favors bestowed and furious over what they take for our self righteousness. They may be inclined to be self righteous too, but what heightens their frustration is the fact that we are strong enough to inflict or at least appear to try to inflict our self righteous values on the rest of the world.

"This leads to the second vital qualifying fact in arguing the issue of image. We must be careful not to mistake shadow for substance. This I think, is really the key to our difficulty. We abominate war, we sanctify sovereignty and decry intervention into the affairs of other nation's states.

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"Like our forefathers, who signed the Declaration of Independence, we hold as self evident, the truths that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

"We loathe injustice and despite the practices -- depise the practices, I should say, of spying and subversion, dark arts, we prefer to leave to our enemies. In short we're pretty grand. In fact, of course, we can behave with just about as much cussedness as our neighbors, or so it seems to them.

"We make war in Vietnam, intervene in the Dominican Republic, observe international law, only when it suits us. Agree in practice, that some men are created more equal than others. We cheat and engage in espionage, in the name of national security. And of course, invoke God's blessing on all our enterprises, almost as automatically as we stamp, 'In God We Trust,' on our coins.

"In short, we're human like everybody else. The trouble is, we are not inclined to admit it. We're living on a double standard. We have ideals as we should, but we sometimes talk ourselves into believing, that mouthing them is living up to them. The answer is not to abandon principle but to realize how far away from principle, some of our practices are getting us.

"That brings us to the problem of the Central Intelligence Agency. As a recent series of articles in the New York Times made plain, the CIA has too often gotten monstrously out of hand. It is also plain, that it's registered some monumental achievements and that the savage state of civilization being what it is in the world, we cannot abolish it. But it does not -- it does need to be brought under more rigorous Congressional control.

"This is more easily said than done, four subcommittees of the Armed Services and Appropriation Committees of Congress, now somewhat vaguely review the funds and functions of the CIA. A rigid watchdog committee may not be the answer. In any case, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee move today, toward approval of a proposal by Senator McCarthy of Minnesota, to add three members of that committee to the group now privy the CIA affairs. The key to success of any such group, is the quality of its members. In this tricky and often dirty business of espionage, however, there is a danger of the CIA and the country for that matter, becoming subverted by it own subversion.

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"As a prominent University President recently remarked privately, the episode in which the CIA wormed into a Michigan State project to train police in Vietnam, was shocking and disgraceful, not just because the spy agency was involved but because it indicated too, that Michigan State didn't know what it was doing. Why, Senator Fulbright has demanded, of Admiral W. F. Rayborn, CIA's director, why was the fact suppressed, that the author of a recent scholarly article on the Viet Cong, in the quarterly foreign affairs, was in the employ of the agency? Why, indeed?

"Innocent as this instance may have been, the possibilities of sinister subterfuge in similar ones, are breathtaking.

"America is probably neither so arrogant as Senator Fulbright fears, nor so pure as President Johnson avows. But if the nation is to consolidate its position in between, it must regard itself with candor and take an honest inventory. Then it will have a credible image, warts and all."