

M-537,203
S-580181P 3 1957

Foreign Affairs and Mr. Kennedy

By J. F. Saunders ✓

Offhand, a 582-page book on American foreign policy would not seem to qualify as light summer reading but size and topic can fool the reader who uses them alone as a yardstick for choosing written entertainment for backyard enjoyment.

Roger Hilsman, one of the stalwarts of the John F. Kennedy administration, writes with such authority and from such a select vantage point of the Cuban missile crisis, the CIA's agonies, the Bay of Pigs and the ordeal of Vietnam, he seals the outer member of from the heat and noiser of the warm season.

His book, *To Move a Nation* (Doubleday \$3.95), has to be ranked as just about the best of the appraisals of the Kennedy approach to world affairs. It is made by a man of the highest competency from a seat in the inner circle of the Kennedy strategy council. It pulls no punches. It is ruthless in exposing mistakes and weaknesses of the Kennedy advisers.

HILSMAN IS convinced that the incredible errors made in the Bay of Pigs debacle became invaluable to President Kennedy in that he never again depended on one set of advisers in making major decisions and from that point on his administration was free of major international blunders.

The President's magnificent handling of the Cuban missile crisis was a powerful example of action by a man who had learned much from embarrassing experience. He listened to all shades of opinion and to all sources of information. Then he moved with unmistakable assurance on a decisive course of action.

Hilsman reveals the little-known fact that the main contact man between the Soviet embassy and the State Department in the missile affair was John Scali, a correspondent for the American Broadcasting Co., who was entrusted by the Russians to convey to the State Department the best possible terms for ending the crisis.

John Scali delivered the

administration's answer to Aleksander Fomin, the senior Soviet intelligence officer in the United States, in the coffee shop of the Statler Hotel in Washington. Fomin was in such a state of excitement he paid the 30-cent check with a \$5 bill and rushed off without his change.

IN HIS COMMENTS on Vietnam, Hilsman clears up a lot of confusion clouding the path of ascendancy to power of Ngo Dinh Diem to the premiership of South Vietnam.

At the time of the 1954 Geneva agreements, Diem was one of the few dominant Vietnamese figures who could not be accused of being either pro-French or pro-Communist. By the fall of 1955, he was able to hold a referendum in which Emperor Bao Dai was unseated and Diem was established as president and chief of state.

The Geneva accords had called for elections leading to the unification of North and South Vietnam in 1956 but Diem rejected the order because he said the Communists were blocking any free electioneering in the North and because South Vietnam had never signed the Geneva accord.

Because of Diem's stature and the job he had done in stabilizing South Vietnam, the Eisenhower administration concurred. Hilsman is convinced that Diem's downfall was triggered by his ceding too much authority to his arrogant brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, and Nhu's acid-tongued wife.

In addition to being a treasured contribution to American history, *To Move a Nation* is a lively portrayal of what was at the very top of the American government at the