Style and Personality Differ

Presidents Johnson and Kennedy Compared

By TOM WICKER

DALLAS — Washington seems far away from this city of human and national tragedy. But it is not. For it is in that glittering city on the Potomac, stunned and confused no more than this one on the plains, that the aftermath will unfold and the national life will go on.

Perhaps only at the death of a President does it come fully clear how nearly that national life — the basic expression of what John F. Kennedy loved to call "the great republic" — has become centralized and symbolized in the White House and the man who lives there. What is most certain today, as Lyndon Johnson ends his first 72 hours as President, is that there will be little change, yet there will be great change.

There will be little change because the national life and a nation's course are not irrelevant affairs, swinging wildly like a weather vane in any gale. A national life and course spring fundamentally from an almost algebraic total of all the people, their areas, the interests, the activities, the ideas, that are contained within it. And the death of a man, even of a President, will not much change these matters. The harsh fact of death is that life goes on about as it did before.

Vice President Johnson reporting to President Kennedy on his Scandinavian trip last September.

Nor is the presidency an office of whim and inclination. Great imperatives always act upon it. The necessities pile up. The limitations remain. Wheels in motion are hard to stop; not easily slowed or speeded. The world in which a nation exists, no less than the nation itself, spins remorselessly upon its axis — diminished by all deaths, altered by few.

Great Change

Yet, the accession of Lyndon Johnson to the office of John Kennedy will bring great change, too. For if the presidency imposes upon its occupant its own inescapable requirements, yet the manner and style in which he makes what may even be inevitable responses are vital ingredients of those responses.

In short, if the man cannot defy the office, neither can the office defy the man. Theodore C. Sorensen, Mr. Kennedy's brilliant legal counsel, recently published a book setting forth what he believed were the limitations —of politics, for instance, of available means, of available time — that acted in varying degree upon all presidents. But in the end he came to the conclusion that the greatness of the office depended upon the greatness of the man who was president.

One cannot yet assess the greatness of John Kennedy, or declare with certainty that there was greatness in him; so much less can one assess Lyndon Johnson. Few men ever came to his high office better prepared, on paper, for his task; yet few have entered the White House so much an enigma, so hotly debated among those who know him, perhaps so incongruously accoutered personally for his job.

A comparison of the two men, Kennedy and Johnson, is possible and may offer a clue to the change that inevitably will flow from the new President's character and style. It can only be a tentative comparison, however, for Mr. Johnson in the White House may prove a very different man from Mr. Johnson, the one-time master of the United States Senate — just as the F. D. R. of the Hundred Days was different from the Franklin Roosevelt of the Wilson administration, and J. F. K. in office seemed scarcely related to the playboy Congressman of 15 years before.

Man of Aristocracy

The comparison must begin in background. John Kennedy was a man of the Eastern seaboard, of the second generation aristocracy, of the massive wealth of the 20th century, of the Ivy League intellectuals, of the ward politics of the great cities. Lyndon Johnson is a man of the West, but also of that bitter Southern cotton-and-sharecropper life that spills over into east Texas. He recalls the drought-stricken farmers and ranchers in the dusty Johnson City of his youth.

His political roots lie deep in rural Texas, for he worked always in this state to prevent the emergence of city machines, relying instead upon the farm, ranch and Latino vote. He is a man of wealth, too, but of wealth come by late in life, of wealth sprung from the latter-day riches of a state where splendor and vulgarity spout like oil from the ugly derricks of Houston and Odessa.

He is a southern Protestant without intellectual pretention, without the suave education of the East, without the stylish exterior of a man in an Englishcut suit and a Riviera tan. His humor is broad, often earthy, his voice hoarse and southern, his public manner sometimes embarrassingly humble and — there is no other word — corny.

But these differences of background are not necessarily damaging to Mr. Johnson. His roots lie more nearly in the American soil and soul, perhaps, than did those of Mr. Kennedy, who sometimes seemed bewildered by the vast life and country that rolls beyond the Appalachians to the Pacific. And if there is a really fundamental difference between the two men, it may be this:

Mr. Kennedy, on the evidence of his record and the words of those who knew him best, came by his allegiance to and his fervor for the Democratic party and the New Deal spirit, in which it has largely existed for 30 years, by the processes of the intellect. In his mind, he became convinced of the need for social change, economic progress, for what Democrats love to call "a party of the people." Inevitably, his response sometimes seemed equally cerebral and as coolly derived.

Lyndon Johnson grew up in an allegiance to his party and its spirit. It is rooted in his life, not his mind.

Strong elements in Texas, it is true, bitterly criticize him for opportunism, for serving "the interests" of the power structure of this state, for disregard of the have-nots among whom he grew to manhood.

Their case on the record seems strong. Yet it is a charge that can be as fairly made against the modern Democratic party, torn always between the city and the South, the masses and the Bourbons, the forgotten men and Big Brother — historically rooted in slavery as well as Populism, in the Southern courthouse as well as Ellis Island.

The important point is that Mr. Johnson, the one-time school teacher, protege of F. D. R., confidant of Sam Rayburn, and wizard legislator, may be more closely in tune with his party and his people than his predecessor was. And if Mr. Kennedy suffered, as critics were beginning to believe, from a sort of detachment, a form of intellectuality, a lack of ingrained, instinctive conviction, Mr. Johnson's tendencies in the other direction, his inborn share of the spiritual divisions of the Democratic party, may make his touch upon that party and its future more effective. For men and nations are not led, but moved.

Far From Certain

It is a far-from-certain prospect. Those who are critics of the new President say that he is vain, quick to anger, lightning in his shifts of mood and position, stubborn in his desires, not so much persuasive as relentless, a man of manoeuvre and calculation, an orator without skill but with frequent flamboyance, occasional fervor and power —a man who can be impossible in his demands, imposing in his accomplishments, fierce in his actions, embarrassing in his pretensions, Machiavellian in his politics, callous of others. All agree though that he is always unsparing of his own energies and talents.

If there is a likeness to other Presidents, it probably is to Harry S. Truman—another man rooted in the rich earth of the country, unskilled in the ways of the learned and the sophisticated, impossible at times, imposing at others, deeply committed to the job at hand.

Mr. Truman, it is now widely believed, was a great President. But he was not that because of his intellect or his manner, but because of his fundamental character, his unflinching courage in critical moments. He came to office upon the death of Franklin Roosevelt far less known to the country, far less able to command its respect, than Lyndon Johnson. On this day of confusion and grief, surely there are good grounds for hope that Mr. Johnson will meet his challenge as squarely.

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Israel Worried

Nuclear Threat In Middle East

By C. L. SULZBERGER

PARIS — The crucial puzzle of the Middle East is easy to characterize and impossible to solve. This is simply how to keep peace in a highly emotional area as it enters the atomic missile kindergarten.

While de facto armistice exists in the Palestine war, that conflict still smoulders. Many Arab leaders talk of another round once they feel strong enough to win. In this respect, Egypt (United Arab Republic) is the only state Israel fears.

So long as Nasser hasn't achieved weapons superiority, Israel isn't seriously worried. But it feels a danger period is likely to start in about two years. Aided by German technicians, Egypt has become a fledgling missile power and Nasser boasts his rockets have sufficient range to plaster all Israel. But if such salvos are charged only with non-nuclear high explosives, they are not considered conclusive.

However, Israel claims India is helping Nasser develop a new kind of warhead which might be described as made of nuclear garbage derived from isotopes. The Israelis contend this would not have great demolition effect but would produce deadly widespread fallout.

Sure Target

Israel acknowledges Egypt probably doesn't have accurate guidance systems. Nevertheless, it believes that were Nasser to aim missiles at a broad target like Tel Aviv, he could hardly fail to hit at least once.

If their intelligence is correct and, in about two years, Egypt can make such warheads, an extraordinary threat would develop. Israeli scientists say one missile so equipped could land in Tel Aviv with minimal initial damage. However, geiger counters would then detect spreading fallout and the entire region, which includes a huge population fraction and key airfields, would ultimately have to be evacuated.

No outsider can confirm Israel's assumptions. But if these should be accurate, the implications are enormous. Two immediate results are Israel's efforts to obtain ground-to-ground missiles and probable attempts to fabricate atomic devices at its Dimona reactor where French scientists help.

The United States is reluctant to supply either the desired missiles or funds with which Israel might purchase France's Veronica rocket, an arm capable of reaching upper Egypt. Egypt itself is almost as vulnerable to nuclear missile attack as Israel; its population is compressed within the Nile valley's strait confines.

Washington has told the Israelis the U.S. does not think they have reason to fear. It argues Nasser has moderated his aspirations and is not contemplating another Palestine war; that his missiles are only souped-up V-2's and there is no evidence of atomic warhead experiments. Finally, it assures Israel it will protect the status quo by squashing any aggressor.

Israel, however, mistrusts Nasser's intentions and potential. It asks: How can America help Israel survive a first-strike if Israel's intelligence should some prove more accurate than Washington's? What would happen in the following hypothetical case? Dormant frontier quarrels between Israel and Egypt begin to flare up. Cairo announces an Israeli raid has killed several dozen Egyptians and that, as punitive retaliation, it is firing one salvo of missiles, equipped with high explosive warheads. These kill several hundred Israelis.

The Israelis however, insist these are really nuclear garbage warheads and they must evacuate their main centres, poisoned for years. Does the United States, after verifying Israel's claim, send a Polaris submarine to destroy Cairo and Alexandria? The Israelis are in the first place doubtful and in the second place assert this would be too late to save them since their main city has become uninhabitable, leaving no place for its residents to go.

Their answer is they must have their own deterrent which Nasser would consider credible because it would depend on an Israeli decision alone, not action by a perplexed Washington. But Washington sees nothing but disaster if it helps establish in the Middle East a kind of poorer man's version of France's poor man's force de frappe.

Washington doesn't really know that Israel is right in assessing Nasser and doesn't really know what Israel would do if it possessed the counterforce it wants. What it does know is that the Middle East would become impossibly dangerous. This is the crucial puzzle.

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Hussan A Disappointed Man

Moroccan King Fears Another Cuba in Algeria

By STEPHEN COULTER

RABAT — King Hassan of Morocco, in an exclusive interview with me, asserted that Algeria is close to becoming another Cuba.

The 33-year-old King, relaxed and confident, was sitting in his office in the royal palace in the sun-bathed city.

"You would have thought yourself in Cuba," he said, speaking of the fighting zone and the Algerians he had seen there, "They even have beards. I hardly knew I was in North Africa."

Occasionally swivelling in his chair, smoking French cigarettes in a black holder, the King spoke freely for an hour of the crucial phase through which his country is passing, the dispute with Algeria, his system of monarchy and the imprisonment of his opponents. He gives the impression of calm self-containment.

He rarely gestures and speaks fluently, never raising his voice or hesitating for a word. He is obviously a man to run things. Not once did he refer questions to the two Cabinet Ministers present who listened closely, leaning forward in their chairs.

HASSAN II
expresses bitterness

One is prepared for perhaps a shade of flamboyance after mounting the black marble stairs past the mokhazni — palace servants — in their white robes and the household regiment in bright red and grey.

But only one curious touch about him catches the eye—a tiny gold and red enamel crown fixed in the buttonhole of his light grey two-piece lounge suit.

Disillusioned Man

The King is plainly worried by the revolutionary state of affairs in Algeria, but not, he contends, because he is one of the few remaining African monarchs. "This country, a monarchy, has financial, economic and social lessons to give to countries which call themselves socialist without having any socialist policies," he said.

Far from blood and thunder, he discusses Algeria like a saddened man and speaks with restraint of the risks he took to help the Algerian revolution. The frontier clash has caused extreme bitterness and disillusion and all the Moroccans did for the Algerian cause.

North Africa was more united under the French, ministers say wryly, than it is now. Some of the tanks that attacked the Moroccans were tanks they themselves had given to the Algerians.

There is also a lot of common-sense talked in Rabat about the absurdity of continuing economic nationalism — each state having its own airline, its own refineries, and so on. But a united Maghreb is obviously further off than ever.

Imported Ideology

"All the objective conditions exist for Communism in Algeria now—unemployment, misery, lack of cadres, a regime built on a single party," the King said.

"It is an imported ideology which does not allow peaceful cohabitation."

King Hassan paused, reflectively tapped the ash off his cigarette. "I can't understand how a country which has just come out of a war and is at grips with all sorts of difficulties, with half its elite in prison or exile, can claim in the space of five months to have discovered all the answers and call itself better than its neighbors. But I am deeply convinced that the Algerian people are not Communists."

The Moroccan case, the King thinks, will finally prevail as a result of the Addis Ababa conference of African Foreign Ministers which is arbitrating on the frontier dispute. "But it isn't a question of our winning the battle of the frontiers. We have to win the ideological battle with Algeria."

Lean On Russia

What about Soviet aid to Algeria? The King, who admits to having channelled "enormous quantities" of Russian war material to Algeria during the war with France, said: "Since then the Algerians have gone in for a big buying program from the Russians."

The King has chosen this "critical moment," as he describes it, to appoint the first new government to work under the new constitution approved by refendum in May. (On Monday, Nov. 18, it made its first appearance at the opening session of the new Parliament, also elected in May).

The King is an admirer of General de Gaulle and there is plenty of the Gaullist technique in play here—referendums, ministers appointed by the King, a Gaullist type constitution, widespread use of radio and TV.

The King calls it constitutional monarchy, but it comes no closer to the British system than General de Gaulle's.

The Government, however, is a minority Government of the Constitutional Defence party which holds about 40 per cent of seats. The second largest party, Istiqlal, the traditional right wing, with about 30 per cent has boycotted subsequent municipal and other elections on the grounds that polling was rigged and there was intimidation.

Would the King accept the logical consequences of constitutional monarchy which would reduce his personal powers to something like the British sovereign's.

"Britain is one thing, Morocco another," he answered. "I have accepted reduced powers because that was what I wanted."

Special to The Montreal Star and The London Sunday Times

From Star Files

THIRTY YEARS AGO
Saturday, November 25, 1933

Berlin—Direct German-French negotiations have been begun in an effort to solve the grave European political situation. The groundwork was prepared through diplomatic channels.

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New York—Maxim Litvinoff, Soviet Foreign Commissar, served subtle warning last night that Moscow expected Soviet Russia and the United States to stand shoulder to shoulder in preserving peace in the world, and, more particularly, in the Far East.

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London—Russian-British trade negotiations are making progress in conversations here. It was believed that conclusion of a new trade pact was in sight in which the Dominions are fully protected.

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TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO
Friday, November 25, 1938

Paris—The Prime Ministers of Britain and France warned Poland today against invading Czechoslovakia's eastern territory. France and Britain, along with Germany and Italy, agreed in the Munich pact to guarantee the new frontiers of Czechoslovakia.

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Devonport, England—Britain spends a million pounds ($5,000,000) daily for defence purposes, War Secretary Leslie Hore-Belisha said today. He said 340 million pounds had been spent on improving army, navy and air force equipment during the past year.

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New York — The East counted its dead at more than 50 today after one of the heaviest November snowstorms in its history. Most of the dead were killed in automobile accidents on icy pavements.

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TWENTY YEARS AGO
Thursday, November 25, 1943

Stockholm — Nazi leaders were reported setting in motion the wholesale evacuation of Berlin, where raging fires kindled by British aerial bombing sent clouds of smoke drifting almost 300 miles across the Baltic to the Swedish coast.

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Moscow — A massive tank and infantry battle raged into its 11th day in the rolling hills west of Kiev today, and front reports indicated the bloody German counter-offensive to smash open the Zhitomir salient had begun to crack.

* * *

Washington—The responsibility for disciplining Lt.-Gen. George S. Patton, Jr. for striking an enlisted man in a fit of anger was placed squarely on Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower by War Secretary Henry Stimson, today.

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