

My Lai massacre point: government, press credibility

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it." He said he did not believe that the massacre would affect Mr. Nixon's secret timetable of troop withdrawal or Vietnamization of the war, but suggested that the President "might try to appease the public's disillusionment" over the incident by "taking steps that would make it appear as though the timetable were affected, though it was not in fact affected."

Donald Smith, president of Smith, Miller Associates, consulting engineers, said that "I can't help but feel that the reports of a massacre are exaggerated, but I'm really not familiar enough with the facts to know for sure. It's almost unbelievable, really," Mr. Smith said when asked if he believed reports of a Vietnamese massacre.

Mr. Smith said that he believed that "it is definitely a matter for public concern because it is in some way an indication of the moral standing of our country and our armed forces." But he tempered his statement with a cautionary note: "I do believe it's difficult to know whether what we are told is factual or not," he concluded.

Hanford Eckman, newly elected Dallas school director, admitted that he had ambivalent feelings about reports of the massacre, and noted that "I don't think we know all the facts and I'll wait until I hear or read more about it before I formulate any opinions."

Mr. Eckman stated that "I don't feel it's been presented in a proper fashion" and although "the news media are probably trying to be fair, it is a slightly sensational thing and they're probably getting all the mileage out of it they can, though it's an unfortunate subject to do this with."

William Connolly, newly elected mayor of Irvings Lake, when asked if he believed reports of large scale killings in Vietnam, said, "yes, I believe that these people were killed."

He added, however, "these situations do happen in war, and battlefield situations are very different from anything civilians will ever encounter. For this reason I think it is difficult and most improper to offer judgments on this matter when all we have to rely on are reports which may not be accurate. We must be very, very careful. We must not be hasty in judging these men."

Mr. Connolly did believe, he said, that the incident should have been made public. "Our military represents the United States government and is an extension of our government, not a separate group," he concluded.

Taking a different approach on the question from most, the Rev. John S. Prater, pastor of Prince of Peace Episcopal Church in Dallas said that he "accepted as accurate" reports of the massacre. He said he was dismayed at a statement that the massacre has been accepted by some as merely part of war and added, "I can't accept that. I think it (the massacre) is horrible."

He said that he felt strongly that "it should be brought to the public's attention."

In Mountaintop the president of Crestwood School District, Morgan Gittens, said he thought "the whole thing has been blown up out of all proportion. It may not be nearly as bad as the news makes it. The Moratorium people caused this thing to be blown up like it is, in order to make their own propaganda," he continued.

"Just because American GI's were involved, it's a 'terrible thing,' but hardly anything is ever said about the worse atrocities committed by the other side. They don't report their incidents to the press," Mr. Gittens said.

"Any man who has ever been in any war who has seen the Chinese army in action . . . any man who has seen what war does, would go again if it would help keep this kind of thing from happening right here in our own country," Mr. Gittens went on to say.

"I doubt that the massacre will have any effect on President Nixon's Vietnam policy. In the end, we'll probably find out that only about half of what we've heard on the news is really true. Lots of things enter into a situation like this. It could have been an accident, or the result of mortar fire. The GI's may have killed everything that moved, or it could have been done by artillery fire. I don't believe that our men could have deliberately shot the My Lai people," Mr. Gittens concluded.

Jane Barnes, president of the Mountaintop Women's Club also pointed to her feelings about information now available on the massacre. "While I do not condone violence in any form," she said, "I would not want to express an opinion on

this particular action until all the facts are known."

Mrs. Paul Hoppersberger, girl scout leader in Nuangola said, "I don't really have an opinion because I have nothing to do with it and don't know all the facts."

Newly elected magistrate for the Mountaintop district, attorney Richard Kane expressed himself this way: ". . . we're 6000 miles away. What does it matter what we think? We can't really decide one way or another anyway until all the facts are in. We have enough problems right here in Mountaintop without having to worry about Tricky Dick's (President Richard Nixon) problems. I prefer to keep my opinion to myself. I'm part of the 'silent majority,' it's very easy to be one of the vocal minority . . ."

Allen Bayley, president of Wright Township Improvement Association held the same opinions about government and the press. "Mostly," he said, "it's just hearsay. We'll have to wait until all the facts are in. Vice President Agnew is right when he says that the news media are weighting the news. They're responsible for trying these men before they're actually put on trial. I really resent the news media trying these men in print," Mr. Bayley continued.

"The massacre won't have any effect on President Nixon's troop withdrawals because you just can't have government being affected by demonstrations or the news media. These things should never affect national policy. . . . It's interesting that Sen. George McGovern, who has been advocating complete American troop withdrawal, now has recently proposed that the United States protect all South Vietnamese refugees after we pull out. This indicates that he does believe that should our troops withdraw, there will probably be mass murders, mass retaliation by the Viet Cong against those South Vietnamese who sided with the Americans . . ."

In the Clarks Summit area, Dr. Ernest Pickering, dean of the Baptist Bible Seminary said that the massacre had not changed his attitude on the war. "This has not changed my opinion at all," he told a Northeastern staffer. "I regret that the incident had to happen, but I still think that we have got to win this war. It was probably just a series of isolated incidents . . . the public does have a right to know about this though," the educator continued. But he reserved his judgment about the guilt until all the facts are in, he explained.

The Rev. Elbert Oswald of Clarks Summit Trinity Lutheran Church said that "this is the kind of thing you have got to expect. After all, war is hell."

Robert McGregor, president of the Clarks Summit borough council said that "it hasn't changed my mind. I have always felt that war is hell. It has a brutalizing effect even on mild people. I would like to get out of this war as fast as possible, but I don't know how they are going to do it," he continued.

"I was overseas for four years, I saw men made into brutes and not just the Germans or the Japanese either. You can never predict who will be changed . . . this is not the first time that this has happened, and it probably won't be the last," he concluded.

ARSONIST HITS GROVE

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is to apprehend him so he can receive psychiatric aid."

The Methodist minister voiced the fear that soon "burning down empty cottages may not be enough for this person, and he may turn next to occupied houses or barns."

As a deterrent to more fires, the Rev. Kulp said, "the UGI company has agreed to install dusk-to-dawn lights on the campground as soon as possible."

Investigation of the fires is being conducted by State Fire Marshal Paul Cotter, Sgt. Guers and Troopers Gerald Wargo and Stanley Karmonsky of Shickshinny Substation, and fire officials from Huntington Mills.

Theodore Parkman, Abington Heights School Board member, maintained his long-time dove position. "This just enforces my attitudes," he told a Northeastern staff writer. "I strongly favor complete withdrawal . . . as quickly as possible. My attitudes are known. I read the list of war dead at the recent moratorium," he concluded.

Coralie Cogswell, English teacher at the Worthington Scranton Campus of Penn State, said that the recent pictures in the news media "really grabbed" her. "If anything this just intensifies my feeling that we have got to get out as soon as possible. I just don't know what goes on in President Nixon's mind. If it had stayed a military matter nobody ever would have heard of it and that's wrong," she said.

hunger talks, White House style, termed success

by J.R. FREEMAN AND WILLIAM SCRANTON 3d

In an exclusive interview, Mrs. Joseph Young, a Scranton resident and chairman of the national Voluntary Action by Women Task Force, told two staff members of Northeastern Newspapers about her hour-long discussion with President Nixon during the White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, and Health. Mrs. Young outlined some of the problems facing a meaningful program to feed 10 million hungry Americans.

A long-time advocate of local participation in self-help endeavors for the poor, Mrs. Young, wife of architect Joseph Young, was chosen as one of a group of six participants to represent the conference before the President. She was the spokesman for the conference members, and also the delegate chosen to meet the press.

Following is a question and answer report of the discussion:

Q. Can you give us some ideas in what ways you think the White House Conference was a success, or, if you will, in what ways you think it was a failure?

A. The first way that it was a success is that it accomplished what it set out to do, which was to study the whole panorama of nutrition and health in the United States in 26 sections and to come up with substantial recommendations in all of these areas. The document that will be presented to the President at the end of the year is a very substantive document dealing with surveying the health, nutrition education in all of its

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borough building to be renovated

It has been announced that the contracts are out for bids on renovations to the Dallas Borough Building. Bids are to be opened at the Dallas Borough council meeting Dec. 16. Smith, Miller and Associates are the architectural firm that has drawn up the plans for the repairs and improvements to the building. Councilmen Jerry Machell and Robert Parry have been handling negotiations for Dallas Borough.

Donald Smith, of Smith, Miller and Associates, architects, said that they are planning extensive alterations necessary to accommodate the new magistrate, Harold Major, and his secretary with private offices

for each as well as a hearing room which will also be used for council meetings.

In addition, the police desk will be partitioned for privacy with a separate waiting room for visitors. A new heating plant will be installed as well as new floor coverings, new acoustical ceilings and new lighting appropriate for current day standards.


Mr. Smith said there would also be fireproofing and new legal exits to suit the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry's requirements. The rear exit will be from the public meeting room and open out into the parking lot. Battery type emergency lighting will also be installed.



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ROAD DISPUTE

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of Catherine DeJules and the house and barn belonging to Sherman Hefft, highway department representatives added.

According to the plans there will be no right of way acquisition at Browns Manor and the roadway will be at the same elevation there. Forty feet of frontage will be taken from the Trucksville Free Methodist Church. Officials continued that the homes of Reed Sneider, Marguerite Sutton, Pearl Hablett, Mr. Piet, Carmen Milazze, Mr. Stern, Leonard Enza, Albert E. Turner, Joseph Gober, Mr. Siffers and Mr. Crumblebine will be condemned. A store owned by Mr. Sutton will also be acquired, they said.

In protesting the acquisition one of the home owners, Mrs. Turner, explained that her former home on Carverton Road had also been condemned by the state when they built Francis Sloum State Park.

Joseph E. Quinn, district ONIEF appraiser said that all property owners would officially be notified by letter then contacted by agents and appraisers. He said properties will be appraised individually and damages paid according to current market values. Where a home is being acquired, he explained, the former owner will have the opportunity to purchase it back if he retains sufficient land on which to relocate the building. He added that there is current legislation coming up for relocation assistance.

Representative O'Connell also pointed out new legislation for interest rate differential in view of the changing money market. The state will pay moving costs and penalties for mortgage prepayments.

Representative O'Connell explained that the money was not yet available for the road and two items would determine the starting date for construction. First, he said, the establishment of a capital budget, and second, the passing of new legislation. Legislation, now before a Senate Committee, the representative revealed, would increase automobile license fees from the present \$10 fee that has been in effect since World War II.

Mr. O'Connell said that he feels that this important legislation will come before the House of Representatives in the next month or two. He said, "I will vote for it and add amendments to return a percentage of the money which is designated for statewide road improvements to the municipalities." Representative O'Connell said he would make another report to the people on the matter shortly after the first of the year.

The State Highway officials in attendance at the meeting admitted that the money was not now available for the road and that they didn't know when it would be. Pending legislation, they said, the date for starting condemnation proceedings on the homes being taken on Carverton Road is an unknown factor.

Representative O'Connell stated that he felt it was a very informative meeting. He said he had personally promised the residents of Carverton Road this meeting so that they would have first hand information on the road plans. Other highway officials in attendance in addition to Mr. Radomski and Mr. Quinn were Robert W. Kilcullen, Thomas A. Dunda, Thomas J. Kane, Michael Pasenick and Robert J. Schneider.



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