

In The Nation

Plenty of Ground for Policy Reappraisal

By ARTHUR KROCK

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Senator Jackson of Washington has now powerfully enforced the mounting concern and mystification in Congress and public study groups over the primary influence in shaping the foreign policy of the United States that President Kennedy has increasingly granted to the United Nations. Jackson is the second member of the Democratic Senate hierarchy to raise questions pertinent to this highly important situation for the purpose of inducing the President to reappraise and modify it.

The first was Senator Fulbright. He is chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, which is the Senate deputy in executing that body's constitutional assignment as junior partner of the Executive in the international field. Writing in the October, 1961, issue of Foreign Affairs, Fulbright urged the formation of "a concert of free nations" to meet the challenge of world communism; and he counseled limiting the U. N. to what Jackson described as "tasks . . . within its capabilities." Demonstrably, these tasks do not, as Jackson noted, include the ability or the will to "put an end to the cold war."

Mr. Kennedy's response to this judgment has been to forge even closer inter-relation between U. N. and United States foreign policy, and to broaden the function of our U. N. delegation as (in Jackson's term) "a second foreign office." The President's reliance on the U. N. for what it already had shown it neither could nor would do, reached the point where, in his address to the Assembly last September, he asserted that "in the development of this organization rests the only alternative to war."

Not only has recent U. N. history controverted this glowing evaluation, but more and more influential dissents have been publicly registered. The Fulbright article was supported in November by John J. McCloy, one of the most experienced agents in international negotiation, who acted for the last three Presidents in this capacity. Addressing a national audience, McCloy urged the formation of a new economic and political community of the Americas and Western Europe, to supply the U. N.'s lack of the potential of keeping world peace. "Many of our present problems," he said, "would then fall into place . . ." because world communism could not "seriously contemplate an attack on such a combination of strength."

Self-Answering Questions

Senator Jackson's approach to a fundamental U. N. policy revision was to begin with a top-level review conducted under the authority of the President and the Secretary of State . . . handled in a non-partisan manner." This review, he said, would meet the acute need he sees "to take another look at our role in the United Nations, remembering that the U. N. is not a substitute for national policies wisely conceived to uphold our vital interests." The Senator presented in the form of questions the issues calling for review. But his appended comment to each of the following inquiries made it completely plain that he believes the answers are in the affirmative:

"Are we taking an exaggerated view of the U. N.'s role? May not the most useful functions of the U. N. lie in serving as a link between the West and the newly independent states . . . to seek out areas of agreement rather than to dramatize conflicts of interest . . . and bring every issue to a vote? In our approach to the U. N. do we make too much of the talk and too little of the deed . . . attempt to measure something called "world opinion" by taking the temperature of the Assembly? Should our U. N. representatives play a larger role in our policy-making process than our representatives to N. A. T. O. and to major world capitals?"

Although the President at his news conference today said he saw no conflict between his U. N. position and Jackson's, conflict is plainly exposed in a comparison between these questions, Jackson's comments thereon and the President's record. His news conference statements today were mostly unresponsive to the Senator's criticisms, and silent on his U. N. policy reappraisal proposal. But the cogency of these criticisms by a Democratic Senator, whose committee studies have strengthened security, and who served Mr. Kennedy as party national chairman in the 1960 campaign, advance the day when the President must meet the issues they raise.