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LIFE WITH LYNDON IN THE GREAT SOCIETY, Vol. 1, No. 26

We're not going to say much about the great news conference Lyndon held yesterday morning. He was supposed to have been consulting with his "experts" during the preceding six days or so, and wrestling with his "soul" or his "conscience", or whatever it is he wrestles with.

All that came out of all this at the conference was that we're going to kill more Vietnamese than we ever have in the past. Lyndon repeated the same old crap about "agression from the north". He said he was going to explain why we're doing this to the Vietnamese people. But he didn't. All he did was mumble the tired old phrases about "freedom".

It's apity that Lyndon hasn't sufficient confidence in the "free enterprise system" just to come right out and tell the people of the U.S. that their sons are going to die, and their money is going to be spent, to preserve the American Corporate Empire's eastern military outpost.

If he'd tell it like it is, at least the people would know what they were dying for. On the other hadd, they might not be very eager to die for it. There's the rub.

We suppose nobidy really needs to have it explained to him what we're doing in Vietnam. All he needs do is look at a map of Southeast Asia. The map will show him that if we pull out of Vietnam, we've no place to go but to the Philippines, leaving the vast markets, trade routes and raw materials of that area to the domination of other powers, or, even worse, from our point of view, undominated from outside.

And we've no reason to suppose the people of the Philippines are any happier about our control of their economy than are the Vietnamese. If we let the Vietnamese throw us out, the Philippines people will get the idea they can do it too. Then we're back to Hawaii and the Eastern preserves of the Empire are gone. "Freedom is snuffed out", as Lyndon would say.

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Last week the Washington Post ran an Associated Press story from a correspondent in South Vietnam. The story described an attack by American and Government forces on the village of Bagia. The attack by ground troops had been preceded by a bombing attack. The story began: "The wailing of women and the stench of burned bodies greeted the column of troops as they marched wearily into Bagia."

The story was accompanied by a picture showing a woman sitting in the dust of the village street, cluthhing in her arms the mangled body of her baby. The mangling of the child was accomplished by the bombs and napalm rained upon the village

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by the "leader of the free world." We had to bomb the village, you see, in order to soften it up for the ground troops.

Actually, the village had been "pro-government" all along. But there had been a Viet Cong attack on a Government installation near the village and the American and Government forces figured some of the Viet Cong might have taken refuge in the village. On the strength of this supposition the village was destroyed from the air.

The story quoted a U.S. Air Force Officer, describing U.S. bombing policy with respect to Bagia: "When we are in a bind like we were at Bagia we unload on the whole area to try to save the situation. We usually kill more women and kids than we do Viet Cong, but the government troops just aren't available to clean out the villages so this is the only answer."

Returning from his survey of the situation in Viet Nam, Lyndon's Defense Secretary, MacNamara, said: "The whole United States military effort is absolutely magnificent. The American people ought to be proud of them."

It takes a strong stomach to be Secretary of Defense for the Great Society.

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Lyndon announced that he's appointing Abe Fortas to replace Arthur Goldberg, whom he arm-twisted off the Supreme Court so the latter could present a "liberal face" for the U.S. at the United Nations.

Fortas has for many years been a close personal friend of Lyndon's. He is a member of the Washington law firm of Arnold, Fortas & Porter. Fortas and his partner, Thurman Arnold, held numerous appointive positions during the era of the New Deal. Arnold was Roosevelt's chief of the anti-trust division of the Justice Department and later a federal judge.

Fortas is a director of SuCrest Corp., a sugar and molasses firm with which Adolph Berle, Jr., Kennedy's Latin American expert, is also associated. Fortas is a director and was recently appointed vice-president of Federated Department Stores, Inc., one of the largest chain mercantile organizations in the country. It operates some 55 stores in various cities. Fortas is a director of the Madison National Bank and of the Franklin Life Insurance Company.

He knows all about the Great Society.

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Lyndon also announced that he is appointing John Gardner, President of the Carnegie Corp., to replace Anthony Celebrezze

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as Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare. In announcing the appointment, Lyndon said he had persuaded the directors of the Carnegie Corporation to let Gardner go.

Gardner, in addition to his duties as President of the Carnegie Corp. (which describes itself as pursuing "the advancement and diffusion of knowledge" and which makes grants for "studies of critical problems facing American education, the improvement of teaching, and research and training programs in public and international affairs") is a director of Shell Oil Co. and of the New York Telephone Co.

The directors of the Carnegie Corp. who, as Lyndon says, "let Gardner go" to take charge of the distribution of welfare funds of the U.S. Government, are an interesting crew to be involved in such things. The directors include:

Morris Hadley	Partner, Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy; director, Borden Co.
Frederick M. Eaton	Partner, Shearman & Sterling; director, Great American Insurance Co., Monsanto Chemical Co., N.Y. Life Insurance Co., Consolidated Edison Co. of N.Y.; member, trust advisory board, First National City Bank, N.Y.
Devereux C. Josephs	director, N.Y. Life Ins. Co., Consolidated Edison Co. of N.Y., American Smelting & Refining Co., American Brake Shoe Co., Smith Kline & French Labs, Rockefeller Center.
Frederick Sheffield	director, American Sugar Co., Liggett & Myers Tobacco Co.; member, trust advisory board, Chase Manhattan Bank
Charles Allen Thomas	Chairman, Monsanto Chemical Co.; director, Southern Bell Telephone, St. Louis Union Trust Co., First National Bank in St. Louis, Metropolitan Life Ins. Co. and Rand Corp.
David A. Shepard	Executive vice president, Standard Oil Co. of New Jersey.

Do you find it comforting to know that this is the background of the fellow who will be in charge of distributing the health, education and welfare funds of the Great Society?

Lyndon does. He said so.

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Lyndon's war in Vietnam has some very enthusiastic participants. We mean, not those who are fighting and dying on both sides, but those who are handling the money. Three of the world's biggest oil companies, Standard of New Jersey, Caltex (a consortium of Standard of California and Texaco, which owns much oil production in Indonesia) and Shell Oil Co., are negotiating with the South Vietnamese Government (the one the U.S. owns) for the building of a \$20 million refinery there. These are the principal suppliers of the petroleum needs of the military forces fighting for the preservation of the American Corporate Empire.

Shell, Standard and Caltex might be thought to be a bit balmy, to be investing \$20 million in a country that's about to be drowned in war. Not so. As part of the foreign aid program, the overseas installations of American corporations are insured against such things as war damage. The insurance is just another service rendered by Lyndon to his friends in business. It's an inducement for bringing freedom and prosperity to such benighted lands as South Vietnam.

We're sure the Vietnamese villagers who get destroyed by American bombing raids will find it comforting to know that the napalm (or at least its gasoline ingredient) is made right on the soil of the motherland.

Lyndon is also shipping surplus dried milk to Vietnam. Foremost Dairies, Inc., ever on the alert, is building a plant in Saigon for reconvertng the dried milk to liquid. It'll get contracts, either from the U.S. or the South Vietnamese Government, for the reconvertng. Happy days.

It's reliably reported that the U.S. corporations making these investments in South Vietnam can expect a minimum of 25% to 30% profit on their investments each year.

All this lovely money flows directly from the bombing and burning and pillaging of the Vietnamese people. But, to be realistic, it's just as green as that which flows from any other situation. And that's what's important in the Great Society.

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Eight of the country's largest steel companies have just been found guilty of criminal conspiracy in federal court. According to one newspaper account, the companies were convicted of conspiring "to fix certain steel prices and thus force up the price of such items as washing machines, refrigerators and automobiles."

The people who actually control the policies of these companies are, of course, not touched by this action. The corporations themselves are charged with the violations, and when found guilty are fined. For example Bethlehem Steel and U.S. Steel were fined \$50,000 each.

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Sometimes, as in this case, minor officials of the companies are charged with violations that could net them as much as six months in jail, although there is only one known case of such officials receiving jail sentences.

The fact is, despite the pious statements of the companies to the contrary, the policies which lead to the price-fixing conspiracies are determined in the board rooms of the companies, not in the executive offices.

The positions on the boards of directors are occupied by some of the most respectable people in the country. They are the ones who determine largely what our economy will be like, about how many people will work and how many will go hungry. So long as private enterprise prevails this will be so.

Should it be so? Should persons like these board members be permitted to get away with their conspiracies year after year and generation after generation, with not even the U.S. Government big enough to stop them? (Anyone who thinks those \$50,000 fines are any deterrent doesn't understand the pricing policies of the industry. Such fines just become a part of the cost of doing business and get figured into the price the companies charge for their products.)

That's for you to decide. And if you decide that nobody should be permitted to exercise this kind of power free of any kind of control by the people, remember that the "nobody" includes you too.

In the event that some readers will want more specifics for considering the above questions, we include here the names and connections of some of the more prominent directors of the conspiring companies:

Roger Blough	Chairman, U.S. Steel; director, Commonwealth Fund, Equitable Life; Chairman, National Industrial Conference Bd.
Charles H. Bell	Chairman, General Mills, Inc.; director, U.S. Steel, Northern Pacific Ry., Northwestern National Bank of Minneapolis; Friend of Hubert Humphrey.
Harllee Barnch, Jr.	President of Southern Co. (Alabama Power Co., Georgia Power Co., etc.); director, Southern Railway System, U.S. Steel, General Reinsurance Life Corp., North Star Reinsurance Co.
Francis S. Baer	Chairman, United California Bank; director, Jones & Laughlin Steel Corp., Celanese Corp. of America, Raymond International, Inc.

Frank R. Denton	Vice Chairman, Mellon National Bank & Trust Co.; director, Jones & Laughlin Steel Corp., Pullman, Inc., Westinghouse Electric Corp., Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co., Gulf Oil Corp.
John C. Denton	director, Armco Steel Corp., First National Bank of Kansas City, Mo., Spencer Chemical Division, Gulf Oil Corp.
John A. Mayer	President, Mellon National Bank & Trust Co.; director, Armco Steel Corp., H.J. Heinz Co., Westinghouse Air Brake Co., Diamond Alkali Co., University of Penn.

These are but a few, randomly selected, of the fifty or so directors of these eight companies. Even such a cursory examination as this reveals curious connections between these "competing" companies. For example, Denton the Jones & Laughlin director sits on the board of Mellon National Bank & Trust Co. with Mayer, the Armco director. Competition?

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We regret to report that we made an error of fact some weeks ago. We stated that the wife of Robert Meyner, former governor of New Jersey, was the sister of Adlai Stevenson. Helen Stevenson Meyner is the daughter of William E. Stevenson, U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines, and the granddaughter of J. Ross Stevenson, a theologian. Adlai Stevenson is the son of Lewis Green Stevenson, who managed the copper and gold mines of the Hearst family, and the grandson of Adlai E. Stevenson, vice president of the U.S., 1893-97.

If there was any familial relation between Adlai Stevenson and Helen Stevenson Meyner, it appears to have been remote.

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July 29, 1965
Jack Minnis