

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

**Congretulations on your editorial, "Wider War, Wider
Risks"**

Mann, Erika

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Adresse: Maria-Theresia-Straße 23, 81675 München

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August 22, 1967

To the Herald Tribune

Congratulations on your editorial, "Wider War, Wider Risks" (The New York Times) of August 21. Rightly, that article stresses the extreme risk run by the President in further escalating the war. "Mr. Johnson", the writer states, "might be wrong in calculating both China's knowledge (of L.B.J.'s innocent intentions) and its (China's) response." And: "Perhaps the Peking regime is too mired in the struggle against anti-Maoists at home and the ideological war with the Soviet Union abroad to react to American bombing close to its frontier. This is the hope - evidently the conviction - of the President." Perhaps so. It cannot, however, and should not be taken for granted that war with China is not precisely what Mr. Johnson wants. His hope - probably his conviction - rather concerns the Soviet Union and her unwillingness - let's pray - to intervene in a war without which the Johnson era threatens to end in November 1968. The man who said - and one year later laughingly boasted of having said - "Your daddy may go down in history as having started World War III" was fully aware of the dangers inherent in the comparatively moderate "brinkmanship" of that time. Meanwhile two things have become increasingly clear:

1. The Vietnam war will not be won within the next 15 months.
2. Consequently, Mr. Johnson has every reason to fear for his job, - unless, that is, "an act of God" were to keep him in office.

And as war with China appears to be the ^{only} such happening now feasible, the President may well tend to bring it about. He is - if not "the ugliest", easily the most ambitious" thing "I ever saw". As a foreign, though assiduous student of Johnsonian psychology I should not ^{dream} of saying so, were he not also the one earthly being capable - both technically and morally - of destroying this fragile planet of ours. "Ending history" by doing just that would be no small achievement. Whereas, to L.B.J.'s remarkable mind, losing the presidency would be
THE END.