

Ball: HHH Optimistic On Peace

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By Richard Halloran
Washington Post Staff Writer

Vice President Humphrey believes that an honorable political solution to the Vietnam war can be reached within the next several months, former Ambassador to the United Nations George W. Ball said yesterday.

Ball, who resigned from the U.N. Post last week to become Humphrey's chief foreign policy adviser, said the Vice President shares his "reasoned optimism" on the Vietnam question.

After seven years of pessimism about Vietnam, Ball said, "Within the past month or so I have been beginning to feel that we are on the verge of a breakthrough, which doesn't mean the completion of a settlement, but it means real movement in the negotiations."

Clifford's View

Ball answered questions on the televised news program, "Face the Nation" (CBS, WTOP). A less optimistic view came from Secretary of Defense Clark M. Clifford, who appeared on "Meet the Press" (NBC, WRC).

Clifford said he thinks there are "bits and straws" to indicate slight progress in the Paris peace talks. He said "that the talks are going on in themselves indicates some intention" to find peace.

Clifford, however, saw no progress on the issue of bombing North Vietnam. The North Vietnamese have demanded that the U.S. stop bombing before any further discussion. The United States has said it must first have some sign of reciprocity. "To date," Clifford said, "they have not told us one single thing they would do, or even discuss, if we would stop the bombing."

Ball said that Humphrey "of course" can chart his own course on Vietnam if he becomes President.

Humphrey Speech Tonight

He said the Vice President

will bring up "his own proposal of what he would do" when he speaks on Vietnam this evening.

Ball chided the American press for "a strange aberration" in seeing the presidential campaign as a race between Humphrey and President Johnson rather than a Humphrey contest with Richard M. Nixon, the Republican nominee.

He said Humphrey "is going to set all this rather irrelevant argument to rest" when he speaks tonight.

Ball gave one instance in which the Vice President has already opposed President Johnson's Vietnam policy. He said Humphrey argued against the decision to resume bombing Hanoi while Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin was visiting there in 1965.

Ball said that Humphrey as President "would do everything possible to reduce the level of forces in Vietnam." Clifford, however, said that while he hoped for a troop reduction, "the Defense Department has no plans at this time for the return of any troops."

See TALKS, A2, Col. 4

HHH Optimistic on Peace: Ball

TALKS, From A1

The level of combat is such that we are building up our troops, not cutting them down."

Ball accused Nixon of moving from one position to another according to political exigencies. He said he had seen no evidence of Nixon becoming more mature and responsible.

Ball said Nixon would probably escalate the Vietnam war if he becomes President. He charged that Nixon has "blind faith" in military power and that Nixon thinks "that the only way that we can have a prosperous and happy world is for the United States simply to threaten, to have arms and threaten to use them."

Clifford, in his television appearance, disagreed with a Senate subcommittee's report last week that the U.S. lead

over the Soviets in nuclear power has been eroded.

Sees 4-1 Edge

Clifford said that, computing intercontinental ballistic missiles, Polaris and possibly Poseidon missiles fired from submarines, and bombers, the U.S. "striking force in the nuclear field today is four to one" greater than the Soviet Union's.

Clifford also said that U.S. negotiators, after 22 meetings with the North Koreans, had made no progress on obtaining the release of the 52 Pueblo crew members. He said that patience and diplomatic negotiations are the best way to get them back.

He added that "suggestions of using military force, I am afraid, would not get our men back alive."