

Ellsberg: Nixon Plan Precluded

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President Nixon's 1968 secret plan to end the war was actually "a conscious policy which precluded any chance for peace" in Vietnam, Dr. Daniel Ellsberg charged Tuesday.

Ellsberg, the anti-war activist charged with leaking the secret Pentagon papers, asserted that Nixon has pursued a two-pronged strategy which assured continuation of the war.

The former Defense Department official came to Miami Beach to issue these charges at a press conference preceding Tuesday's sessions of the Republican National Convention. He was introduced by the GOP's most vocal Vietnam war critic, Rep. Paul N. McCloskey of California.

Ellsberg claimed the twin elements of the strategy the President has followed since the early months of his administration are:

- Stepped-up military pressure on North Vietnam, culminating in the recent quarantine and mining of Haiphong Harbor.

- Withdrawal of large numbers of American troops from Vietnam, but the maintenance of a U.S. military presence there indefinitely.

As an employe of the Rand Corp., Ellsberg said, he had been assigned to prepare an "options paper" on Vietnam by top Nixon adviser Henry Kissinger after the 1968 election and delivered it to Kissinger on Christmas 1968.

Copies of the paper, which listed seven alternatives ranging from heavy military escalation to unilateral withdrawal of forces, were passed out at the press conference.

Ellsberg said that Kissinger had knocked out the sev-

enth option — unilateral withdrawal — saying that Nixon did not consider that course worthy of consideration.

The others were passed on to the President, and the paper was presented at the first meeting of the National Security Council in the Nixon Administration, late in January 1969, he said.

But Ellsberg conceded that he was not privy to top-level deliberations on Vietnam after that, and indicated his charges about subsequent administration policy were his own conclusions.



As a warning to North Vietnam, he said, the President in the spring of 1969:

- Sent Navy frogmen into Haiphong Harbor, ostensibly to chart it for mining, but actually to impress the North Vietnamese.

- Sent U.S. Marines on an extensive combat mission into Laos, Operation Dewey

Canyon One.

- Ordered bombing of Cambodia by B52s.

All these actions were kept secret at the time, but word of the marine foray and the bombing later leaked out, Ellsberg said.

Nixon and Kissinger had hoped to gain Soviet intervention with Hanoi to stop

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the fighting, but gave up on that by May 1969 and turned to further escalation to pressure the north, Ellsberg asserted.

In that month, Kissinger told Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin that the harbor-mining policy was a possibility, although it did not come until three years later, Ellsberg said.

Because of these communications to the Russians and actions against North Vietnam, "it was a secret plan not to the Russians, not to the North Vietnamese, but to the American public," Ellsberg charged.