

Clifford, HHH Hit Nixon on Arms 'Gap'

10/26/68

Atom-Strength Secrets Bared

By George C. Wilson
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Pentagon put itself into the political campaign yesterday by releasing previously secret figures to rebut Richard Nixon's claims of a "security gap."

Defense Secretary Clark Clifford at a Pentagon news conference said the United States has a "substantial military superiority" over the Soviet Union.

He backed up this assertion by reaching into his breast pocket for a sheet of intelligence figures on the relative strengths of the United States and the Soviet Union.

They showed the U.S. still has more than a 3 to 1 edge in H-bombs, but that the Soviets are fast closing their ICBM gap and building missile-carrying submarines at an impressive rate.

The Defense Secretary, who until yesterday had stayed out of the political cross-fire between Nixon and Vice President Humphrey, also blunted Nixon's "submarine gap" issue by announcing the go-ahead for a new breed of attack submarine.

The nuclear-powered sub-
See CLIFFORD, A5, Col. 1



United Press International

Clifford: U.S. has "substantial military superiority."

GOP Foe Called 'Irresponsible'

By Don Oberdorfer
Washington Post Staff Writer

SAN JOSE, Calif., Oct. 25—Vice President Humphrey, the Democratic presidential candidate, charged Republican candidate Richard M. Nixon today with "playing politics with our national security" and threatening world peace by "irresponsible" campaign statements on military security.

Humphrey's strongly worded attack, which he read to newsmen and cameras this morning in Los Angeles, was in rebuttal to a radio address by Nixon Thursday night. Humphrey said his staff aides had been in touch with Pentagon officials in composing his reply.

The Democratic candidate has been bearing down on nuclear weapons control in an attempt to draw a clear line between himself and his opponent on the search for peace. Nixon's radio address, which emphasized a requirement for "clearcut U.S. weapons superiority" and charged the Democrats with creating a "security gap," was therefore received
See HUMPHREY, A4, Col. 5

CLIFFORD, From A1

marine is designed to be extra quiet so the enemy could not detect it easily. The prototype's cost is estimated at between \$150 million and \$175 million.

'Whiz Kids' Overruled

The Systems Analysis office in the Pentagon, which came up with the higher figure, had recommended to Clifford that he reject the quiet submarine and delay the construction of the high-speed sub approved earlier.

So Clifford's action on the quiet sub reverses the "Whiz Kids" who Nixon on Thursday night promised "to root out" of the Pentagon.

The Clifford press conference appeared to be part of a well orchestrated Johnson Administration effort to counter-attack Nixon on the defense issue. Humphrey hit Nixon on the same subject yesterday, charging in Los Angeles that he was "playing politics with national security."

The military flavor of the political campaign was further strengthened by heightened expectations in Washington yesterday that President Johnson was on the verge of announcing a Vietnam bombing halt.

Biggest Pullback

Clifford did not address himself to the bombing question, but he did say the North Vietnamese have withdrawn more of their troops from the battle areas in the current lull than in any previous one.

He said an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 enemy troops had withdrawn, some of them farther back from the fighting zones than ever before. (Some military sources last week had estimated as many as 60,000 troops had withdrawn.)

The Defense Secretary said "it is too soon to be able to attach any significance" to the enemy troop withdrawals and "lower level of combat." He said there are still 80,000 North Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam.

As for the current downward trend in battle deaths, Clif-

ford shied away from the word "lull" which he used at his Aug. 15 press conference in describing the character of the war then.

"I do not know if this is a lull that exists today," he said yesterday. He added that he was proscribed from discussing the Paris peace negotiations but commented: "I know the President is pursuing every avenue and he is not leaving stone unturned" in the search for peace.

On the issue of relative U.S.-Soviet strength, Clifford gave these figures, declaring they were current "as of today":

	U.S.	Russia
ICBMs	1054	900
Submarine missiles	656	75-80
Long-range bombers	646	150-155
Total deliverable warheads	4206	1200

These figures indicate that the Soviet Union has deployed 180 ICBMs since Oct. 1, 1967 and increased its submarine missile force substantially. Former Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara said in his posture statement early this year that the Soviet Union as of Oct. 1, 1967 had 720 ICBMs, 30 submarine-launched ballistic missiles in nuclear boats, 155 intercontinental bombers and a total of 1000 warheads which could be fired at the U.S.

Narrowing Gap

Nixon, using Clifford's own figures, thus can point to an ever-narrowing Soviet ICBM gap plus a high rate of Polaris-type submarine production. Navy sources assert the Soviets have launched several submarines of this type in recent months, each carrying the U.S. load of 16 missiles. Clifford's figures indicate three

Soviet Polaris-type subs have gone to sea since Oct. 1.

But in terms of deliverable warheads—the figure McNamara said was the most meaningful one—the U.S. still enjoys more than a 3 to 1 edge over the Soviet Union.

Clifford said the U.S. today has a "substantial military superiority . . . I shall certainly do all in my power to continue to maintain that superiority as long as I hold this position."

On Vietnam, Clifford said, "We would make a mistake if we were to conclude that because of the present lowered level of combat that the enemy is not in position to go on with additional warfare." He added, "There is even some indication" that the enemy is planning new attacks.

Asked for the Pentagon's justification for the loss of American lives and resources in the Vietnam war, Clifford said. "It is an appropriate investment because by so doing we have prevented a much larger effort later on which could have been infinitely more expensive in both lives and treasure."

In a separate development yesterday, Sen. John C. Stennis (D-Miss.), who is slated to become chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee in the new Congress, said that the diversion of resources to the Vietnam "has had an adverse effect on military forces essential to security elsewhere."

He said, "New and advanced weapons which could and should have been purchased with the money spent in Vietnam have not been acquired." Stennis spoke in Memphis to the Military Order of World Wars.

HHH Hits Nixon for 'Politics' on Arms

HUMPHREY, From A1 as a Godsend in the Humphrey camp.

Another Godsend, in the form of a different sort of challenge, was a blunt and biting introduction of the Vice President this afternoon at San Jose State College by the 24-year-old student body president, Dick Minor.

Minor challenged Humphrey to explain why he is "unable to capture the imagination" of students and liberals—why many people across the land are voting for him only as the lesser of

three evils—despite his history of "once" having been a progressive and farsighted Senator.

Humphrey had received an advance text of the introduction, and he replied by reading and ad libbing a fervent plea to the assembled students to work within the Democratic Party and remake it in their own image rather than "pack up and opt out."

Humphrey declared that "you're in a hurry, and so am I" to end the Vietnam war, curb the arms race, and establish justice for the

black man, the Mexican-American and the left-out white. The only way to do it, he insisted, was to "stay at the nitty gritty of the hard job, the hard grinding work" rather than to by-pass the democratic process in "a series of self-frustrating movements."

Most of the students appeared to be impressed. Student body president Minor said he felt Humphrey had begun to have "a change of heart" about speaking to the real issues before the Nation, though he appeared to be disappointed that Humphrey did not disassociate himself from the Johnson Administration.

The Vice President's statement on military security this morning was in fact a strong defense of the national defense records of the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations as well as an attack on Nixon.

While stating that the first task and central problem of any President is to maintain a stable balance in nuclear power, Humphrey went on to declare that "we are the strongest Nation on earth."

Humphrey cited Pentagon-supplied statistics to show a vast increase in U.S. military might which has occurred during the past eight years in heavy strategic bombers, nuclear submarines, tactical aircraft and ballistic missile multiple warheads, asserting in each instance that the United States is well ahead of the Soviet Union.

"There is no security gap," declared Humphrey. "There will be no survival gap—unless we follow Mr. Nixon's advice . . .

"In an effort to catch

votes," Humphrey asserted, "he is playing politics with our national security, undermining the confidence of our allies, encouraging recklessness among our enemies, and undermining our long and patient efforts to bring a rational end to the madness of the strategic arms race."

Humphrey also declared that "by his statement last night, Mr. Nixon has threatened to bring down the whole fragile architecture of peace, of retreat from the insanity of the arms race, that has been so carefully constructed by the Administrations of Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson."

In Humphrey's view, the Nixon policy would "accelerate" the strategic arms race, "thereby rising a war of mutual suicide."

Humphrey said that "every missile, every nuclear warhead we build that we do not need, makes it more difficult to stop the arms race, and brings us closer to the day when we will be unable to stop the plunge to nuclear war." Humphrey did not specify what missile systems or what level of nuclear warheads he would define as not needed.

I a symposium with nine California "Scientists for Humphrey-Muskie" on a sunny motel lawn here this afternoon, the Vice President took his opponent to task on the cost of building new weapons systems.

"Mr. Nixon says I would be an expensive President," noted Humphrey "but when you talk about new sophisticated weapons systems such as are on the drawing boards now, you are talking about hundreds of billions of dollars."



Associated Press

shopping tour of his own. Humphrey squeezed, sampled and bought jar of peanut butter, candy, a cake and a donut.