

Secret Notes Define Nixon's Asia Policy

By Jack Anderson

It's interesting to compare President Nixon's public report to the Nation with his private report to congressional leaders on his policy-making, round-the-world trip.

He spoke to the leaders for an hour without notes, but confidential notes were taken of his off-the-cuff remarks. This column has obtained access to these notes.

The President declared bluntly that his policy "is to get out of Vietnam but not to get out of Asia."

He had informed South Vietnamese leaders, he said, that "we have gone as far as we can go at this time. We can't be nibbled to death."

He made it clear, however, that the U.S. will not pull out of Vietnam precipitously.

"The fear of all Asian countries," he said, "is that we might pull out of Vietnam too soon."

"Even India?" asked one leader.

"Yes," said the President, "even India."

He added that Indonesia would have gone communist, in his opinion, "if we hadn't kept the cork in the bottle in Vietnam."

As for the prospects of a Vietnam settlement, he gave this estimate: "If the enemy negotiates, it is my guess that it will come privately. We have offered peace and justice for both sides."

He reported "substantial improvement" in our military

position in Vietnam, thanks to Gen. Creighton Abrams, the American commander, who has "suppressed the enemy's abilities."

There was a controversy after the meeting as to what he had said about the next American troop withdrawal. The confidential notes show his exact words were: "A decision will be made and announced on further troop replacements between August 15 and August 30."

He explained that he preferred the word "replacement" to "withdrawal," because the American combat troops will be replaced by South Vietnamese.

No Manpower Help

Our policy toward communist-menaced Asian countries, the President made clear, will be to furnish materials but not men. Referring specifically to Thailand, he said: "Future help will be in a material way, not in manpower."

Then he added significantly, "I have instructed the State Department accordingly."

Senate Foreign Relations Chairman William Fulbright asked the President whether a "secret" military agreement existed to send armed forces to Thailand.

Except for Navy and Air Force personnel who are stationed in Thailand to aid the Vietnam war, the President said, no Americans are committed to fight in Thailand. Fulbright wasn't satisfied.

"Don't we have an agreement to send specific number to Thailand?" he demanded.

Nixon replied that the Americans don't even participate in the action against North Vietnamese guerrillas who have crossed into Thailand.

"They have not asked for any troops for their defense," he told Fulbright, "and we flatly have not promised them." The President was careful not to comment on whether there had been a previous agreement to send American troops in case Thailand needed them.

He advised the Senate-House leaders that the United States had "cautiously opened up new relaxations of relations with communist China," adding solemnly that "continued isolation of communist China is dangerous."

"Of course," he said, "if communist China threatens us we will meet that in our own way." Referring to China's nuclear capability, he added: "No nuclear power could move conventionally without risking some kind of confrontation."

"Happening" in Rumania

He had received his best information on China, he said, from Pakistan's Yahya Khan and Romanian Premier Nicolae Ceausescu. They had given him insight into the personalities and attitudes of the Chinese leaders, the President said, that he had been unable to get from the U.S. intelligence.

He described his reception in communist Rumania in the language of the hippies.

"I regard that," he said, "as a happening."

He pointed out that "in a city of 1,200,000, one million turned out." He concluded that "there are 150 million people in Eastern Europe who like us."

The crowds were spontaneous everywhere, he reported, except in Bangkok, where the Thai government, in its enthusiasm to welcome him, helped to generate a crowd. There were no serious anti-American incidents anywhere, he said, although he had expected trouble. He ascribed this to the worldwide reaction to the American landing on the moon.

"Apollo was the lightning rod for goodwill demonstrations," he said.

For the first time in all his appearances before congressional leaders, President Nixon received a standing ovation when he walked into the room.

There was an outburst of applause again in the middle of his remarks when he declared that "no money was passed out or promised" on his trip.

After the President concluded his briefing, he was applauded again. And the leader of the opposition, Senate Democratic Leader Mike Mansfield, told him warmly, "I congratulate you upon this turn in our policy."