

MARY MCGRORY



Nixon Has Succeeded In Polarizing Nation

WASHINGTON—The protesters planning this week's antiwar demonstrations were in "no way whatever" affected by Richard Nixon's speech, which was not directed at them anyway. Disheartened and disbelieving, they went back to their telephones and mimeograph machines and address lists to plan for a two-day observance that the most optimistic cannot be sure will not divide them again from the President's "silent majority."

Anticipating in Nixon's speech some new sophisticated angle on the war they have fought against so long, they had assembled a panel of academic experts to prepare a line-by-line reply. Jeremy Lerner, a McCarthy speech writer, and Adam Walinsky, Robert Kennedy's scribe, were flown in to provide eloquent refutation.

But, as Walinsky and Sam Brown, director of the Vietnam Moratorium, read an advance copy antiphonally at Moratorium headquarters Monday night, they knew that all that had happened was that the President had redeemed completely his promise to ignore protest.

Much more to the point, it turned out, was the summons of the cream of the McCarthy and Kennedy advance men and logistical experts, who set grimly about making arrangements for the new armies of the night that will mass at 6 p.m. next Thursday.

Just as the President heard the next morning from his constituency, they heard from theirs. As on Oct. 15, the President was proving to be the most effective mobilizer. People who weren't sure to come on Nov. 15 were moved by the speech.

That doughty veteran of diplomacy, Averell Harriman, had joined the Moratorium only after the President said

it would be useless. But he has withheld his approval of the new gathering, as has the majority on Capitol Hill.

Office-holders are not only leery of violence; many of them have a sinking feeling that the President reached those of the center and right who, while unhappy with the war, cannot believe that the President doesn't know more than they do.

The President has succeeded in polarizing the country. It was a curious ambition for a man leading a "Forward Together administration," but with Vice President Spiro T. Agnew wielding the club, he has lined up everybody on opposite sides.

He has given the protesters an unanswerable question: How many is enough to prove that the majority is on the side of withdrawal? No precise body-count was made of the Oct. 15 observance, and leaders of the November demonstration, the coalition of the New Mobilization and Moratorium forces, absolutely refuse to say how many people they expect or how many they want.

The two organizations are not "hearts with one purpose alone," as Yeats called the Irish rebels. The Moratorium, which is politically oriented, wants to build a firmer foundation under local opinion, turn out new groups of professionals and new legions of doorbell ringers.

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