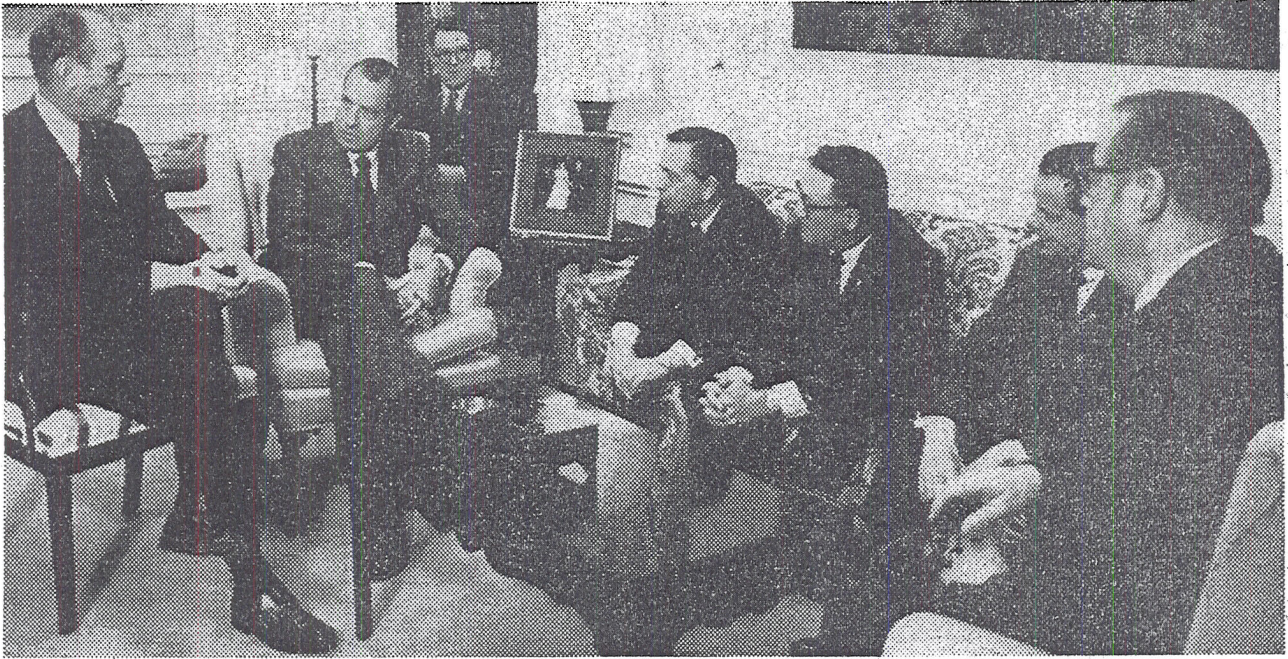


NIXON PROMISES VIETNAM PULLOUT OF 100,000 MORE G.I.'S BY DECEMBER; PLEDGES TO END U.S. ROLE IN WAR



The New York Times/Mike Lien

President Nixon speaks to Gerald R. Ford, left, House Republican leader. On couch, from left, are Representative Carl Albert, and Senators Robert P. Griffin, Republican; Robert C. Byrd, Democrat, and Hugh Scott, G.O.P. leader.

LAOS PUSH UPHELD

President Says It Hurt Foe Even More Than Cambodia Action

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Text of the President's speech
will be found on Page 6.

By MAX FRANKEL

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 7—President Nixon scheduled tonight a withdrawal of 100,000 more American soldiers from South Vietnam by Dec. 1.

The seven-month goal will leave 184,000 American troops in the war zone 11 months before the 1972 Presidential election. Mr. Nixon asked to be held accountable in that election if he failed in his further goal of ending the American involvement in the war.

Addressing the nation on television and radio at a time of widespread restlessness about his war policy, the President said that the invasion of Laos had proved even more damaging to North Vietnam's offensive capacities than the move into Cambodia a year ago.

Increasing the Rate

"Consequently, tonight I can report that Vietnamization has succeeded," Mr. Nixon said.

Working with charts that portrayed his scheduled withdrawal of a total of 365,000 of the 540,000 men that he found in Vietnam when he took office, he pointed with pride to the fact that he was increasing the rate of reductions.

The withdrawals announced tonight represent a rate of about 14,300 a month between May and November. This compares with an average rate of 12,500 over the last year; the rate in early 1970 was more than 14,000.

The President said the figures should make it clear that the American involvement was coming to an end and that the day when the South Vietnamese could fully handle their own defense was in sight.

Final Date Ruled Out

But he refused to accede to demands that he set a date for that final disengagement, saying it would throw away an American bargaining counter and allow the enemy to plan his attacks for a time of greatest vulnerability.

Obviously sensitive to the public anxieties about the invasion of Laos, about the rate of American disengagement, about the substantiation of atrocities in the Calley trial and about the credibility of his Administration, Mr. Nixon touched on all those points during a vigorous defense of his objectives and tactics.

The objective remains hanging on long enough he said, to give the South Vietnamese "a reasonable chance to survive as a free people."

A hasty withdrawal, he explained, would amount to "con-

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sciously" turning that country over to the Communists. Thus, he agreed, the United States faces the choice of ending the war on a note of despair or on a note of hope.

'Not Meanly, but Nobly'

The President portrayed himself as determined to close out the war "not meanly, but nobly"—without abandoning friends, without abandoning the nation's principles and avoiding the plunge "from the anguish of war into a nightmare of re-creation."

"In my campaign for the Presidency," he said, "I pledged to end American involvement in this war. I am keeping that pledge. You should hold me accountable if I fail."

He pleaded for patience to realize a respectful end and asked the country not to be diverted by the news of "isolated acts of cruelty."

He did not directly refer to First Lieut. William L. Calley Jr. or his sentence of life imprisonment for the killing of South Vietnamese civilians, but he insisted that most Americans had fought unselfishly and valiantly and that he meant to redeem their sacrifices in Vietnam.

Laos Action Defended

Mr. Nixon also asked the nation to look at the Laos invasion "in perspective" and to accept his judgments in place of the "understandable speculation" that all policies receive. He obviously meant in this way to ask his listeners to take his word over those of television and newspaper reporters and analysts.

He acknowledged heavy casualties among the South Vietnamese in Laos but did not directly call the invasion a success. Nor did he compare the results to the more sweeping objective that had been announced here at its inception. But he said the South Vietnamese had shown that they could fight effectively without American advisers in their midst, that they could inflict heavier casualties than they took and that they could disrupt and consume enough of the enemy's supplies to damage seriously his ability to sustain any major offensives against South Vietnam.

The President's last big troop reduction was announced a year ago, in a markedly different political atmosphere. He spoke on April 20, 1970, as a leader who had surmounted the antiwar protest movement, rallied the support of what he called "a silent majority" of Americans and won the time for what he predicted would be a just peace.

He said the time had come for moving confidently to a longer-range program for replacing Americans with well-trained South Vietnamese. That, he said, would permit the withdrawal of 150,000 men over a period of a year.

Purpose of Annual Goal

One reason for setting an annual goal instead of quarterly schedules was to halt withdrawals during the dry season in southern Indochina in May and June without disclosing any delay. The reductions were then accelerated through the year to fulfill the pledge of a

monthly average of 12,500.

Mr. Nixon foresaw some difficulties last April, but by and large his tone was optimistic. Pacification of South Vietnam was succeeding, he said, and the people were definitely developing the capacity to defend themselves.

"And we can say with confidence that all American combat forces can and will be withdrawn," he added, without specifying when.

The speech was well received by a public that, clearly, did not expect a wholly different theme to be enunciated 10 days later.

On April 30, Mr. Nixon, stating that enemy actions had suddenly posed a clear danger to the Americans who would remain after the cut of 150,000, announced the attacks into Cambodia to cut supply lines and overrun North Vietnamese bases.

The operation was concluded within two months, but not until opponents of the war effort and of the President's gradual approach to withdrawal had resumed their agitation in Congress and elsewhere.

Mr. Nixon claimed success in Cambodia, and promised an even faster disengagement as a result, but he had to accept new limitation on the use of ground troops in Indochina.

Emboldened by his sense of success in Cambodia, he risked still further agitation at home when he approved American aerial participation in the South Vietnamese invasion of Laos two months ago. He has had a much harder time defending the outcome of that operation, which appears to have inspired widespread skepticism about his whole approach.

Deadline Demanded

The President lost ground not only in the popularity polls but also in polls that asked Americans whether they trusted his portrayal of war developments. His Democratic challengers increasingly demanded a deadline for total military disengagement.

Then, in the same way that the shootings at Kent State and Jackson State Universities had complicated the Cambodian affair, came the verdict in the case of First Lieut. William L. Calley Jr. The court-martial's conviction of the lieutenant for the premeditated murder of South Vietnamese civilians and the life sentence it imposed set off an angry public reaction from many dovish citizens who felt that others were equally guilty of "war crimes" in Vietnam and from many hawkish citizens who felt that individual soldiers were taking the blame for doing their duty in a hellish war.

Both reactions produced new demands that the disengagement be accelerated, even at the greater risk of a Communist political success in South Vietnam. The President was asked with new urgency to weigh his goal of a non-Communist government in Saigon against the risk of rising bitterness, frustration and recrimination at home.

His speech, which the White House had originally scheduled for a week hence, was Mr. Nixon's effort to regain the initiative and the confidence of the public.