

SF Chronicle

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# Tough Nixon Warning-- Hanoi Must Make Choice

## Bombing Of North To Go On

United Press

Floresville, Tex.

President Nixon said last night that North Vietnam would overrun the South without firepower from U.S. ships and planes. He pledged not to stop bombing and shelling the North so long as the Communists continue their offensive.

"The North Vietnamese are taking a very great risk if they continue this invasion of the South," Nixon said. "I'll just leave it there and let them take their choice."

The remarks, following an informal barbecue supper at the ranch home of Treasury Secretary John B. Connally, were among the most hawkish Mr. Nixon has made since he began his program of troop withdrawals from Vietnam almost three years ago.

"If the United States leaves Vietnam and permits a Communist takeover, the office of the president will lose respect and I'm not going to let that happen," Mr. Nixon said.

The dinner guests — 200 wealthy and politically influential Texans — spontaneously rose after Mr. Nixon's remarks and drank a toast with French champagne "to the courage of the President."

### OFFENSIVE

Mr. Nixon said intelligence reports from Vietnam indicate that the North Vietnamese offensive which began March 31 can be expected to continue for at least another four or five weeks.

But the President said the North Vietnamese "have utterly failed in their efforts to rally the people of South Vietnam to their cause."

Mr. Nixon predicted that South Vietnamese ground troops will be able to turn back the offensive, "provided the United States will continue to provide the air and sea power that we have been providing."

But he said an end to the air and sea power "would

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mean, of course, a Communist takeover."

Connally, the only Democrat in Nixon's Cabinet, introduced the President at the lawn dinner on his Pico Ranch as "as disciplined a man as I have ever known, mentally and physically."

### GUESTS

The 200 invited guests, who ate steaming platefuls of barbecue beef, black-eyed peas and corn on the cob under a yellow striped tent, were mostly conservative Democrats who were supporters of Connally the three times he ran successfully for Texas governor, and of former President Lyndon B. Johnson.

The Texas trip emphasized Mr. Nixon's wish to capture the state's 26 electoral votes at stake November 7. Also, Connally has been mentioned as a replacement for Vice President Spiro T. Agnew on a November GOP ticket with Mr. Nixon.

Mr. Nixon showed anger when he mentioned criticism from some Democratic presidential candidates and from some parts of the news media against the renewed U.S. bombing of North Vietnam.

"Instead of the critics criticizing brave Americans flying dangerous missions and hitting military targets and military targets only, they ought to direct some of their criticism to the critics who are keeping the war going," Mr. Nixon said.

At one point, he told his critics to "tell it to Hanoi."

The guests — most of whom were moneyed Texans who regularly contribute to political candidates — applauded the President's stand.

In response to a question of why he did not order bombing raids on dams and dikes in North Vietnam, Mr. Nixon said they "would result in an enormous number of civilian casualties. That is something that we want to avoid and it is something that is not needed."

Connally had invited his guests to pepper Mr. Nixon with questions in a format reminiscent of a White House news conference.

### ANSWERS

Mr. Nixon also said:

- It is "just nonsense" to say the Vietnam war is the cause of social unrest and other domestic problems.

- Trade with the Soviet Union and Communist China can be expected to start slowly but will pick up in the years ahead.

- He disagrees with Democratic critics who call for cuts in business tax deductions for depreciation and reductions of the oil depletion allowance. He said he

favors "not only present depreciation rates but going further."

- If Congress fails to approve his proposed moratorium on new school busing orders "the only response we have left is to pursue a constitutional amendment."

### DOERS

Frank A. Bennack Jr., publisher of the San Antonio Light and one of the guests, described those invited as "doers—people who make things happen in business and political circles." Mr. Nixon's visit came six days before the May 6 Texas primary, but was expected to have little bearing on the elections, since the state does not have a presidential preference vote.

No Texas candidates were invited, including Connally's younger brother Wayne, who is running for lieutenant governor.

Most of the crowd swooped in over grazing Santa Gertrudis cattle and landed in more than 20 airplanes on Connally's private landing strip. The planes ranged from a DC-3 to corporate jets.

Mr. Nixon and his wife Pat came in a Marine helicopter that landed in a cow pasture.

Yellow chrysanthemums floated in the swimming pool and the guests sipped cocktails and strolled under the spreading branches of live oak trees around the two-story fieldstone ranch house.

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AP Wirephoto

President Nixon and Secretary Connally on the ranch





UPI Telephoto

Mr. Nixon joked with mariachi musician Armando Castaneda while Secretary Connally talked with Mrs. Nixon and Mrs. Connally

The guest list included H. Ross Perot, Dallas computer millionaire; George Christian, former White House press secretary to President Johnson; George Brown, a wealthy oil driller; Bob Kleberg of the famed King Ranch; banker Tom Frost Jr.; industrialist H. B. Zachary; and millionaire John Murchison.

**BAND**

A strolling band of mariachi musicians played Mexican tunes for the guests. An

American flag atop the ranch house stood out stiffly in a brisk breeze. It was a warm night for the dinner.

"The secretary was praying for rain to help the crops and Mrs. Connally was praying for sunshine for the party," Mr. Nixon said after Connally apologized for a few brown spots in the pasture caused by a lack of rain. "It shows who has the influence."

The Nixons spent the night at the ranch, sleeping in the Connallys' own bedroom.



UPI Telephoto

A Vietnamese father cradled his wounded child in his arms as they waited treatment in Hue Saturday