

EUROPEANS COOL TO NIXON'S MOVE

Regret Widely Expressed—
Britain Is Exception

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LONDON, May 9—President Nixon's decision to mine ports and bomb rail lines in North Vietnam won little support in Europe today. Most comment, official and unofficial, expressed regret that he had chosen to open a new phase of military action in the war.

A major exception was the British Government, which, in a Foreign Office statement, stopped short of endorsing the President's actions but said "countermeasures by the United States were, in the circumstances, inevitable."

In a brief but occasionally sharp debate in the House of Commons, Harold Wilson, the Labor party leader, pressed the Conservative Foreign Secretary, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, to condemn both sides in the war.

Sir Alec refused to go beyond the Foreign Office statement and said that the way to avoid a wider war was to set in motion processes of conciliation. He announced that he was summoning the Soviet Ambassador tomorrow to urge again that Moscow agree to a reconvening of the Geneva conference, which ended the French Indochina war in 1954.

Warning to British Shipping

He also announced that all British ships were being warned to stay out of Vietnamese waters and said there might be two or three British ships in the area.

Editorial comment was generally unfavorable. The Times of London warned that "the world may be witnessing a test of wills as severe as when President Kennedy ordered the Soviet missiles out of Cuba in 1962," and said: "The President's reasons are clear and up to a point must command sympathy. Yet the question has to be asked, Has President Nixon chosen the right way out? Surely it is much too late to keep the weapons of war out of North Vietnamese hands."

In France, the Foreign Minister, Maurice Schumann, said "The war is feeding upon itself" and asked, "Where does this escalation lead?" Asserting that his Government has always preferred a political to a military settlement of the Vietnamese conflict, he said, "France can only deplore once more that things should have gotten where they are now."

Le Monde Critical

The Paris newspaper *Le Monde* said in an unusually sharp editorial: "American Presidential declarations on Vietnam have always had something unreal about them. It is not an ocean that separates the California shore from Indochina but an inscrutable abyss, to wit, the contempt with which the White House speaks of its adversary."

Criticism of the President was strongest in Sweden, whose Government and people have long opposed United States involvement in Vietnam. Premier Olóf Palme declared on television, "How many people must die, how many illusions must be shattered, how great must the destruction be before the United States realizes that negotiations aiming to guarantee the independence of the Vietnamese people is the only way to peace?"

The Social Democratic newspaper *Aftonbladet* asked: "Is Nixon mad? Is he trying to bring about the final collapse of the whole world?"

The Spanish Government issued no statement. But Spanish newspapers stressed in their news accounts the danger of a hostile Soviet response. In its story, the Madrid newspaper *A.B.C.* said: "Nixon, like his predecessors, is obsessed with the prestige of the Presidency. And this attitude tends to push powerful figures to extremes because they end up by losing their sense of the proportion of problems."