

LETTERS TO THE

McCloskey's Challenge

Editor — This is in response to your editorial of March 30, in which you concur with State Republican Chairman Putnam Livermore's statement that for me to challenge President Nixon's re-nomination is "ridiculous." I agree.

I don't want to run against the President; it is presumptuous to even consider such a challenge. The only thing that makes it necessary is the possibility that such a challenge might cause the President to re-evaluate his present policies in Southeast Asia.

After two and a half years in office, the President will have withdrawn less than one half of the American forces in Vietnam. During 1969 and 1970, moreover, he nearly doubled the bombing raids over Laos. He has stated repeatedly that he will make "unlimited use of air power" to prevent America's "humiliation and defeat."

The unlimited use of air power means the continued slaughter of the rural villages of Laos and Cambodia, people with whom we are not at war and against whom we harbor no dislikes. The massive use of cluster bomb units, napalm and Cobra gun ships means the indiscriminate murder of children, women and old people, since by their very nature these weapons do not distinguish between a few enemy soldiers and the local population where they seek refuge.

You state that these actions are "responsible" on the President's part. I respectfully disagree. To me they are a shameful chapter in American military history, inconsistent with our leadership toward peace under law.

If we have reached the point where 1000 sorties a day over Laos and Cambodia and the killing of Asian non-combatants is necessary to save American pride and to obtain "peace with honor," then I feel I have no choice but to reluctantly give up that political support in San Mateo county to which you refer and which you feel is

available only to those who support a policy which flies in the face of the principles of the Hague Convention and Nuremberg.

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Representative McCloskey seems to have misread the editorial in question. It did not remotely touch upon bombing raids, gunships, the slaughter of Laotian and Cambodian peasants, or any other horrors of the Vietnamese war which we have often deplored. Our editorial observed, and we now repeat, that in calling for a national debate on impeachment of the President, and in sponsoring revolt against the national leadership of his own party, Representative McCloskey is contributing nothing toward a speedy end to that war but is most likely to estrange his political support in San Mateo county.—Editor.