

Victor Lasky

Nixon's Record And How It Shapes Up

Washington

WELL, it finally happened. Spiro Agnew has found a CBS correspondent he can quote with pleasure.

At a Republican conference here, the Vice President quoted Roger Mudd as having told a Huntsville, Ala., audience:



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"Those of us who are involved in the news world know that, three years ago, this country was on the brink of paralysis. The party in power seemed helpless. In that respect, Nixon came in and did what had to be done."

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MUDD, one of the more able CBS reporters, has not previously been known to have harbored pro-Nixon sentiments.

But what he said was absolutely true. Many people have forgotten

the State of the Nation — and the world — when Richard Nixon took the oath as 37th President of the United States.

The Nation was nearing a social revolution with "long hot summers" becoming annual affairs and violence a way of life on the Nation's campuses. Internationally, the country was involved in a faraway war and it appeared as if we would never get out.

As Roger Mudd pointed out, Richard Nixon "came in and did what had to be done."

And that's what the Republicans are going to be saying from now until the votes are counted on Election Day 1972.

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VICE PRESIDENT Agnew outlined the Nixon Administration's campaign strategy for next year at a conference of Republican leaders from North-eastern states.

"No," he said, "it was never 'Nixon's War.' But make no mistake, it will be 'Nixon's Peace' and his alone."

As if to accentuate the point, the President himself, that very day, announced at a press conference he would withdraw another 45,000 American soldiers from South Vietnam by February 1, retaining a force of 139,000 to strengthen his hand in seeking a negotiated settlement of the war. At the same time, he disclosed that Americans still in Vietnam had already terminated their ground combat role. When he came into office, there were 540,000 Americans in Vietnam.

Of course, the casualty figures tell the story in more human terms. Casualties have gone down from over 300 a week to less than ten a week.

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IT HAD been an unannounced press conference and the President appeared to be in good humor.

"Mr. President," a reporter asked, "could I be quite clear on the withdrawal?"

"You mean 'perfectly clear,' right?" the President replied with a smile.

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OVER ON the Hill, Senator Charles Percy, a Republican from Illinois, got up to praise the President for his "wise" foreign policies. Percy is a member of the liberal group that has not always handed out posies to the President. He ticked off what the Nixon Administration had done:

"The NATO partnership has been strengthened; the Indochina war is being de-escalated rapidly; U.S. relations with Eastern Europe are being improved; a fresh start has been made on the problems of international economic policy; for almost 16 months the guns at Suez have been silent; rapprochement with mainland China has begun; a Berlin settlement is being negotiated; talks on mutually reducing troop levels in central Europe are in prospect; serious talks on nuclear arms limitations give promise of agreement in the not-too-distant future.

"For these reasons," Percy said, "I submit that the Nixon Administration is doing extremely well in foreign affairs and has earned our confidence."

It is a record the Democrats will find very difficult to attack. For in the final analysis, how could they have done better?

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