

Nixon reserves A-weapons for any Vietnam 'Dunkirk'

WASHINGTON — Despite President Nixon's disavowals, nuclear weapons will be used in Vietnam, in an extreme emergency, to prevent the destruction of the dwindling U.S. forces.

Contingency plans call for a nuclear bombardment to protect the withdrawal if the last American troops are pushed into a corner, Dunkirk like, by a North Vietnamese offensive.

Competent sources stressed that nuclear weapons would be used only as a last resort

Jack Anderson

after the President concluded there was no other way to save our boys. The same sources thought it unlikely that such a drastic situation would develop.

The Red Chinese, apparently fearing the U.S. might become desperate enough to use nuclear weapons, warned shrilly on February 5 of the dire consequences in the event of a U.S. nuclear attack upon the Vietnamese.

President Nixon responded with a counter warning that the U.S. would use everything short of nuclear weapons to stop a massive North Vietnamese offensive. But in private, he has made clear he would use nuclear weapons, too, if it should become necessary to save our soldiers from annihilation.

The President is determined to complete an honorable withdrawal from Vietnam.

He believes fiercely that a great power not only has the right to make a dignified exit but that a humiliating retreat would ruin him politically.

Withdrawal strategy

The main reason for the move into Laos is to disrupt the enemy buildup and head off an enemy offensive in 1972, when U.S. forces may be down as low as 50,000 support troops.

At a private White House breakfast, the President told Republican congressional leaders last week that the withdrawal is proceeding on schedule. It may be possible to speed up the schedule, he indicated, if the Laos operation succeeds in spoiling the enemy's offensive capability.

Henry Kissinger, the President's national security adviser, told the GOP leaders that the South Vietnamese have cut three of the four largest enemy arteries and half of the secondary supply routes in Laos.

The primary objective of the operation, he said, is to sever the North Vietnamese supply to Cambodia and South Vietnam. Capturing supplies, he added, is only a secondary objective.

The President broke in to report that the South Vietnamese are now providing three-fourths of their own air support over Laos. They are running into increased enemy opposition. But, as we have previously reported, the North Vietnamese are expected to avoid major confrontations and to attack weak, vulnerable points in guerrilla style.

Footnote: General Creighton Abrams, the American commander, has also warned that the Viet Cong may attempt some spectacular attacks in South Vietnam to divert attention from Laos and to give an impression of strength. These would have more psychological than military goals, he suggested.

Nixon's economics

Not until the last moment did President Nixon finally decide against a wage freeze in the construction industry.

At 10 a.m., last Tuesday, the Republican congressional leader put up his mind.

He complained that the defense in the budget is more than 10 percent of the budget.