

Split in Congress Widens As Result of Nixon Speech

NYTimes

By JOHN W. FINNEY APR 28 1972

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 27—President Nixon's speech last night appears to have hardened the lines and raised the emotions in the Vietnam debate in Congress. For the first time, some prominent Republicans, such as Senators George D. Aiken of Vermont and Robert P. Griffin of Michigan, began to suggest that critics of the Administration were giving encouragement to the enemy — a point made obliquely by the President in his speech last night.

Senator Aiken, the ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and in the past a dove, said in an extemporaneous speech on the Senate floor, "All I ask of the critics of President Nixon is please do not encourage this war to go on, please do not take the side of the enemy." He suggested that the Administration had not been able to complete troop withdrawals by midsummer because of "the encouragement given" to North Vietnam "to escalate and prolong the war."

The critics, such as Senators J. W. Fulbright and George McGovern, meanwhile, discerned evidence in the President's speech that the Administration was committed to an indefinite military involvement in Vietnam to prop up the Government of President Nguyen Van Thieu in Saigon.

"The President said we are bombing in response to the North Vietnamese invasion," Senator McGovern said in a statement, "but the bombing

Continued on Page 17, Column 1

Split on War in Congress Is Widened by Nixon's Talk

Continued From Page 1, Col. 6

began much before the invasion.

"The President says we bomb to save our troops and to permit their withdrawal. But if we would state a total withdrawal date, both our troops and our prisoners could come home in safety.

"The President says we are bombing to save freedom in South Vietnam, but South Vietnam lives under a dictator — General Thieu.

"The President places the welfare of that dictator ahead of the release of our prisoners. The President says we bomb to prevent a bloodbath. But his immoral and outrageous bombardment is the bloodbath.

"The President says we bomb to save South Vietnam from Communism. But each bomb creates more Communist sympathizers, more determined to hate and fight to the end."

Mr. Nixon's speech, in which he announced that 20,000 additional American troops would be withdrawn from Vietnam by July 1, came as the Senate prepared for another round of Vietnam debate centered on an amendment co-sponsored by Senators Frank Church, Democrat of Idaho, and Clifford P. Case, Republican of New Jersey, that would cut off funds for any American hostilities in Indochina at the end of this year.

At this point, the amendment appears at least a few votes short of a majority, and privately its supporters acknowledged that the effect of the President's speech could be to assure defeat of the amendment.

In the House, Representative

John B. Anderson of Illinois, chairman of the House Republican Conference, predicted that the President's speech would push back "for at least several weeks" an attempt by the Democratic majority to approve end-the-war legislation.

Mr. Nixon, it was disclosed, has written personal letters of thanks to about 60 House Democrats "for putting country ahead of party" in voting on the Vietnam issue last week. The Presidential letter went to most of the 66 Democrats who voted against a resolution, adopted by the Democratic caucus, denouncing the renewed bombing of North Vietnam and calling for legislation promptly withdrawing American troops, subject to release of prisoners of war.

Mr. Nixon set the theme for much of the Republican reaction with the statement in his speech that the Communists' "one remaining hope is to win in the Congress of the United States and among the people of the United States the victory they cannot win among the people of the United States or on the battlefield in South Vietnam."

In the House, the Republican leader, Gerald R. Ford of Michigan, said "the President's determination to hew to the course he has set on Vietnam is tempered by apprehension that Congress may undercut that policy."

"Capitulation can be avoided," Representative Ford said, "if we demonstrate the same brand of courage displayed by the President at this time of crisis. Let the Communists know that Congress wants a

peace which is fair and just

to both sides. Let the Communists know we will never hand them at the negotiating table what they cannot win on the battlefield."

Senator Robert P. Griffin of Michigan, the assistant Republican leader, responded to reporters that Senator McGovern, with his criticism, had done "a great disservice to the United States and the chances of peace." Senator McGovern's comments, he said, "sounded like words that might be uttered by Madame Binh" — meaning Nguyen Thi Binh, the chief Vietcong representative to the Paris talks.

Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, campaigning in Ohio, said he believed the President was "motivated by deep and sincere commitment to peace." He said in a statement:

"The President's decision to resume the Paris peace talks, which he originally broke off, is one that I have been encouraging. I welcome this move and his decision to continue with our troop withdrawal plans.

"I am however, disappointed that the rate of troop withdrawals has been reduced and that there are increasing numbers of American forces, air and sea, in the combat area.

"But the President's pledge to continue intensive bombing for military and political purposes—purposes unrelated to the safety of our troops—is not the way to make known our commitment to end American involvement."

Describing the President's speech as filled with "obsolete cold war rhetoric," Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts said: "The President's timetable for Vietnamization and the withdrawal of American troops is a timetable for war, not a timetable for peace."

While compliment the President on renewing the Paris negotiations, Senator Kennedy said: "The most glaring omission in the President's announcement was the total absence of any indication that he is prepared to make a genuine compromise in the negotiations."

In a brief Vietnam debate on the Senate floor, Senator Fulbright told his colleagues that his reaction to the speech was "one of acute depression and sadness for our country, and that after all these years of destruction of life and property, there is no end to this epic tragedy in sight.

Character of War Changed

"The President has changed the character of the war insofar as American foot soldiers are concerned. He has reduced the loss of American lives, for which I am thankful.

"But at the same time, in changing the character of the war to unlimited air and naval bombardment, he has removed one of the normal human restraints upon the savage cruelty and inhumanity present in all wars."

From the President's speech, Senator Fulbright said, it is apparent that "Americans will continue to fight and die as long as it is necessary for them to do so in order to save the South Vietnamese Government from military defeat."

One of the few Republicans to speak out in guarded criticism was Senator Jacob K. Javits of New York, who said: "The President's decision remains the same because he has not given us the word on a residual force in South Vietnam and implies our continued underwriting of the security of its Government."