

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SATURDAY, MAY 6, 1972

17 CONGRESSMEN ASK A CEASE-FIRE

Republicans Urge Nixon to
Put War Before U.N.

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 5—

Seventeen House Republicans who have tended to support the Administration's Vietnam policies urged President Nixon today to propose a cease-fire in Indochina and to seek a political settlement of the conflict in the United Nations.

In a joint letter to the President, the 17, usually identified with the moderate wing of their party, expressed concern over continued strategic bombing of North Vietnam and expressed doubt that the Administration's policy of Vietnamization would lead to an end of the war.

The letter was initiated by Representative Howard W. Robison of Owego, N. Y., who noted in a statement that all 17 Republican signers have generally supported the President's Vietnam policies, but were "increasingly concerned over the pattern of events in Indochina."

From the letter, as well as from comments made by Mr. Robison during an interview, it would appear that the group was disturbed by two developments—the bombing of strategic targets in North Vietnam and the apparent indefinite commitment of American air power to support South Vietnamese ground forces.

Despair Over Paris Talks

The letter said that "in light of our apparent, indefinite commitment of American air support to South Vietnamese ground forces, we do not see how even a near-total 'de-Americanization' of the ground war in Indochina can bring this conflict and its current carnage to an early end." At the same time, the letter con-

tinued, "we despair of progress being made in this direction at the moribund Paris 'peace' talks."

The group urged that the President undertake "yet another 'end-the-war' initiative" by seeking Soviet cooperation in "a new plan for peace" in his talks this month with Soviet leaders. Such a plan, as outlined by the letter, would include acceptance by both sides of a "cease-fire-in-place" with "the simultaneous transfer of the political issues underlying the conflict to the United Nations."

The letter said that the prospects for achieving a United Nations settlement might have improved now that China was a member of the world body. It noted that Secretary General Waldheim had recently expressed a personal interest in using the world organization to bring about an end to the war.

Rein Asked for Bombing

The Republicans urged the President to forego further use of airpower against targets that are "not directly related to the need to blunt the current invasion of the South."

Among the other signers of the letter were Representatives Hamilton Fish Jr. of Millbrook, N. Y., William B. Widnall of Saddle River, N. J., and Stewart B. McKinney of Fairfield, Conn. Of the 17 signers, 12 voted last year against a proposed amendment cutting off funds for hostilities in Indochina at the end of 1971.

In the Senate, Senator John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky, a leader among the Republican moderates and doves, took the floor briefly to call on the President "to take no action that would adversely affect) the expected favorable outcome of the strategic arms) limitation talks, or SALT, with the Soviet Union.

The Senate, by a vote of 47 to 9, adopted an amendment offered by Senator John V. Tunney, Democrat of California, restoring \$11-million that the Foreign Relations Committee had cut from the \$88-million budget authorization requested for the Peace Corps.