

[Reprinted From Yesterday's Late Edition]

Excerpts From the Interview

Following are excerpts from President Nixon's television interview last night with John Chancellor of the National Broadcasting Company, Eric Sevareid of the Columbia Broadcasting System and Howard K. Smith of the American Broadcasting Company, as recorded by *The New York Times*:

Q. Mr. President, in your report on the Cambodian operation yesterday, you said you were going to emphasize the route of negotiated settlement again. A. Have you had any signal from Hanoi that they are more willing to talk than they have in the past and, B. Do you have any new proposals to put to them to make a negotiated settlement more attractive?

A. We have had no signals from Hanoi directly or indirectly that their position of intransigence has changed. They still insist that their conditions for a negotiated settlement is complete withdrawal of our forces and the throwing out of the government in South Vietnam as we leave.

On the other hand we believe that they will be interested in the fact that we are appointing a new chief of delegation, because in several occasions, not particularly from them but from third parties who have talked with them, they have indicated that they felt that we should appoint a new chief of delegation. We have now appointed one and we hope that they act.

Now as far as new proposals are concerned, I think it's important for us to know what our proposals are because we have made some very forthcoming proposals. First, we have offered to withdraw all of our forces if they withdraw theirs and to have that withdrawal internationally supervised. Second, we have offered to have cease-fires throughout the country and have those cease-fires again internationally supervised. And third, and most important, we have offered to have free elections throughout the country, internationally supervised.

3 JUL 70

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, JULY 3, 1970

[Reprinted From Yesterday's Late Edition]

[Reprinted From

With President Nixon on

Yesterday's Late Edition]

[Reprinted From Yesterday's Late Edition]

American Foreign Policy

U. S. Offer Outlined

We have offered to have the supervisory bodies be ones that, in which, the Communists can participate as well as those representing the present Government in South Vietnam.

And, we have offered, on our part, and the South Vietnamese Government has offered on its part to accept the results of that election, even though those results might include Communists in some positions or Communists in some power. We believe that these offers are very forthcoming and I should also say that in private channels we have elaborated on these offers.

Finally, I should also point out that we have not made our proposals on a take it or leave it basis.

There is only one matter that is not subject to negotiation and that is the right of the South Vietnamese to determine their own future.

Q. Do you feel that you can give categorical assurances now that we will not send ground troops back into Cambodia no matter what?

A. Well, Mr. Sevareid, as you recall, I indicated when this operation was begun two months ago—incidentally, it seems much longer; a lot has happened in those two months; and a very great deal has been achieved, in my opinion. But I indicated then that once we had completed our task successfully—of cleaning out the sanctu-

aries—that then it would not be necessary, and I would not consider it advisable, to send American ground forces back into Cambodia.

I can say now that we have no plans to send American ground forces into Cambodia. We have no plans to send any advisers into Cambodia. We have plans only to maintain the rather limited diplomatic establishment that we have in Pnompenh and I see nothing that will change that at this time.

When you say can I be pinned down to say that under no circumstances would the United States ever do anything, I would not say that. But I will say that our plans

do not countenance it, we do not plan on it and under the circumstances, I believe that the success of the operation which we have undertaken as well as what the South Vietnamese will be able to do, will make it unnecessary.

Q. Mr. President, one of the things that happened in the Senate last week was the rescinding of the Gulf of Tonkin resolution by the Senate. Now, Mr. Katzenbach in the previous Administration told the Foreign Relations Committee that resolution was tantamount to a Congressional declaration of war.

Legal Justification

Now, if it is rescinded, what legal justification do you have for continuing to fight a war that is undeclared in Vietnam?

A. Well, first, Mr. Smith, as you know, this war, while it was undeclared, was here when I became President of the United States. I do not say that critically, I'm simply stating the fact that there were 549,000 Americans in Vietnam under attack when I became President.

The President of the United States has the constitutional right—not only the right but the responsibility—to use his powers to protect American forces when they are engaged in military actions. And under these circumstances, starting at the time that I became President, I have that power and I'm exercising that power.

Q. Sir, I'm not recommending this, but if you don't have legal authority to wage a war, then presumably you could move troops out. It would be possible to agree with the North Vietnamese. They'd be delighted to have us surrender so that you could. What justification do you have for keeping troops there other than protecting the troops that are there fighting?

A. Well, a very significant justification. It isn't just the case of seeing that the Americans are moved out in an orderly way. If that were the case, we could move them out more quickly. But it is a case of moving American forces out in a way that we can at the same time win a just peace. Now by winning a just peace what I mean is not victory over North Vietnam, we're not asking for that. But it is simply the right of the people of South Vietnam to determine their own future without having us impose our will upon them, or the North Vietnamese, or anybody else outside impose their will upon them.

Now, when we look at that limited objective, I'm sure some would say, well, is that really worth it? Is that worth the efforts of all these Americans fighting in Vietnam the lives that have been lost. And I suppose it could be said that simply saving 17 million people in South Vietnam from a Communist take-over isn't worth the efforts of the United States.

Pullout 'Very Easy'

But let's go further. If the United States after all of this effort, if we were to withdraw immediately—as many Americans would want us to do—and it would be very easy for me to do it and simply blame it on the previous Administration. But if

we were to do that, I would probably survive through my term, but it would have, in my view, a catastrophic effect on this country in the cause of peace in years ahead.

Now I know there are those that say well, the domino theory is obsolete. They haven't talked to the dominoes. They should talk to the Thais, Malaysians, to Singapore, to Indonesia, to the Philippines, to the Japanese and the rest. And if the United States leaves Vietnam in a way that we are humiliated or defeated not simply speaking in what are called jingoistic terms but in very practical terms this will be immensely discouraging to the 300 million people from Japan, clear around to Thailand in free Asia. And even more important, it will be ominously encouraging to the leaders of Communist China and the Soviet Union who are supporting the North Vietnamese. It will encourage them in their expansionist policies in other areas. The world will be much safer in which to live.

Q. Excuse me, Mr. President, I happen to be one of

those who agrees with what you're saying but do you have a legal justification to do, follow that policy once the Tonkin Gulf resolution is dead?

A. Yes, sir, Mr. Smith, the legal justification is the one that I have given and that is the right of the, the President of the United States under the Constitution to protect the lives of American men. That is the legal justification. You may recall of course that we went through this same debate at the time of Korea. Korea was also an undeclared war, and then, of course, we justified it on the basis of the U.N. action. I believe we have legal justification, and I intend to use it.

'A String of Dominoes'

Q. Mr. President, I'm a little confused at this point because you seem in vivid terms to be describing South Vietnam as the first of the string of dominoes that would topple in that part of the world and turn it into a Communist part of the world, in simple terms. Are you saying that we cannot survive; we cannot allow a regime or government in South Vietnam to be constructed that would say, lean toward the Communist bloc? What about a sort of Yugoslavia? Is there any possibility of that kind of settlement?

A. Mr. Chancellor, it depends upon the people of South Vietnam. If the people of South Vietnam, after they see what the Vietcong—the Communist Vietcong—have done to these villages that they have occupied: the 40,000 people that they've murdered—village chiefs and others—the atrocities of Hue—if the people of South Vietnam, of which 850,000 of them are Catholic refugees from North Vietnam after a blood bath there when the North Vietnamese took over in North Vietnam—if the people of South Vietnam under those circumstances should choose to move in the direction of a Communist government, that, of course, is their right. I do not think it will happen. But I do emphasize that the American position, and the position also of the present government of South Vietnam, it seems to me, is especially strong because we are confident enough that we say to the enemy—all right, we'll put our case to the people and we'll accept the result. If it happens to be what you describe a Yugoslav type of government or a mixed government, we'll accept it.

Q. What I'm getting at sir, is if you say on the one hand that Vietnam, South Vietnam is the first of the row of dominoes, which we cannot allow to topple, then can you say equally, at the same time, that we will accept the judgment of the people of South Vietnam if they choose a Communist government?

A. The point that you make, Mr. Chancellor, is one that we in the free world face every place in the world. It is really what distinguishes us from the Communist world.

Now, again, I know that what is called cold war rhetoric which isn't fashionable these days, and I'm not engaging in it because I am quite practical and we must be quite practical about the world in which we live, with all the dangers that we have in the Mideast and other areas that I am sure we will be discussing later in this program, but let us understand that we in the free world have to live or die by the proposition that the people have the right to choose. Let it also be noted that in no country in the world today in which the Communists are in power have they come to power as the result of the people choosing them. Not in

North Vietnam, not in North Korea, not in China, not in Russia and not in any one of the countries of Eastern Europe and not in Cuba.

Reds Not Elected

In every case, Communism has come to power by other than a free election. So I think we're in a pretty safe position on this particular point.

Now, I think you are therefore putting, and I don't say this critically, what is really a hypothetical question: it could happen, but if it does happen that way, we must assume the consequences. And, if the people of South Vietnam should choose a Communist government, then we will have to accept the consequences of what would happen as far as the domino theory in the other areas. In other words, live with it. We would have to live with it and I would also suggest this—when we talk about the dominoes, I am not saying that automatically if South Vietnam should go, the others topple one by one. I am only saying that in talking to every one of the Asian leaders, and I have talked to all of them, Dr. Lee Kuan Yew—all of you know him, from Singapore, of course, and to the Tunku from Malaysia, the little countries, and to Suharto from Indonesia, and of course to Thanom and Thanat, two major leaders in Thailand. I've talked to all of these leaders and every one of them to a man recognizes, and Sato of Japan recognizes, and of

course the Koreans recognize that if the Communists succeed, not as the result of a free election—they aren't thinking of that—but if they succeed as a result of exporting aggression and supporting it in toppling the government, then the message to them is, watch out, we might be next.

That's what it really is. So you see if they come in as a result of a free election, I don't think that's going to happen, the domino effect would not be as great.

Q. Mr. President, what caused the change in plan about the South Vietnamese troops remaining in Cambodia? On April 30, you said they'd come out about when ours came out and they're apparently building big bases and intend to stay. What happened in the meantime to change this?

A. Well, when I spoke on April 30th, Mr. Severeid, I pointed out that we would be out, as you recall, and we have kept that promise despite some speculation to the effect that we would have advisers in and this, that and the other. All Americans are out, and, answering your earlier questions, we have no plans and have no expectation in any manner to go back in. Now with regard to the South Vietnamese, I pointed out on April 30 that our air support would stop and there'd be no advisers with the South Vietnamese, that any activities of the South Vietnamese after we left would have to be on their own.

Defends Saigon Action

Now, what they are doing in South Vietnam, and I checked this just before the program tonight as to the numbers, there are approximately 40,000 North Vietnamese in Cambodia at the present time. There are approximately 8,000 South Vietnamese. What they are doing is cleaning out some of the sanctuary areas that were not completed when we left. They are not building substantial bases. What they are really doing is simply providing the bases on which they can stop the North Vietnamese from coming back into the sanctuary areas.

And I think that's their responsibility and their right.

Q. Sir, talking about troop withdrawals — on June 3 you said that if the other side took advantage of our troop withdrawals and intensified their attacks, you would be prepared to take strong effective measures to meet that situation. Now, in view of the explosions of wrath on the campus at the Cambodian affair, do you think you could re-escalate, even temporarily, the fighting as you seem to say you might if you had to?

A. Well, Mr. Smith, when we talk about re-escalating the fighting, and if we have to be precise about what we mean: First, I've already indicated in answer to Mr. Severeid's first question that we have no plans to go back into Cambodia. And incidentally, I am not as bearish as some commentators have been about the future of Cambodia.

If I could digress a moment, I think this is a question that our listeners would be interested in. Cambodia's chances of surviving as a neutral country are infinitely

better now than they were on April 30. And they are better, first, because the North Vietnamese have a 600-mile supply line rather than a 40-mile supply line back to the sanctuaries which we have destroyed.

'Still a Fragile Situation'

They're better also because the Cambodian Government has far more support among the people, and the reporters from Phnompenh have generally reported that. They're better, too, because the Cambodian Government also has support from the 11 Asian nations representing 300-million people. And I think also they're better for the reason that the South Vietnamese have been very effective when they've taken on the North Vietnamese in the Cambodian area. They pose a rather considerable threat to them.

I do not suggest that it is still not a fragile situation. It is difficult. But it is possible for them to survive.

But now, coming back to your question, first: When you talk about re-escalation, we do not plan to go back into Cambodia. We do plan, however—and I will use this power. I'm going to use—as I should—the air power of the United States to interdict all flows of men and supplies which I consider are directed toward North and South Vietnam. That's in my role of defending American men.

Q. Mr. President, in view of the Cooper-Church amendment passed yesterday in the Senate, do you feel now obliged to suspend the negotiation with Thailand paying and equipping their troops that they were going to send into Cambodia? I think this is forbidden as far as the Senate is concerned.

A. Fortunately, our founding fathers had great wisdom when they set up two houses of Congress. Oh yes. Let me say with all due respect to both the House and the Senate, as you know, I started in the House and also served in the Senate, and I have great respect for the Senate. I served there two years as a Senator and presided over the body for eight years as Vice President. But I think the performance of the Senate over the past seven weeks, going up and down the Hill, Cooper-Church has not particularly distinguished that august body, and the Cooper-Church that came out was not a particularly

precise document and was somewhat ambiguous.

Now, fortunately, it now goes to the House and the House will work its will on that amendment, and then it goes to conference, and, of course, the conference, which most of our viewers don't think of as being a very important body, that's probably the most important legislative entity that we have in our Government because there they take the differences between the House and Senate bill, things that were done, for example that went too far in one direction or too far in another and they work them out.

And I believe that the conference of the Senate and the House, when they consider all of these factors, will first be sure that the power of the President of the United States to protect American forces whenever they come under

attack is under no way jeopardized, even Cooper-Church recognizes that, to an extent.

And, second, that they will recognize that the Nixon doctrine which provides that the United States rather than sending men will send arms when we consider it as our interest to do so, arms to help other countries defend themselves, I believe that the conference will modify Cooper-Church.

Q. How do you take it yourself, this action of yesterday—the Senate majority. Do you take it as a rebuke, a warning, an expression of mistrust in your word as to what you're going to do in Cambodia, or what. How did it hit you?

A. The action of the Senate is one that I respect. I respect, I know the men in the Senate, and I—take the two authors, Cooper - Church. They're good men. They are very dedicated to peace. So am I. There's one difference between us. I have responsibility for 440,000 men and they don't.

House Action Awaited

I intend to do what is necessary to protect those men and I believe that as far as the Senate is concerned, that while I will listen to them, I will pay attention to what they have said, I'm going to wait until the House acts, until the conference acts and I believe that the action—the joint action of the House and Senate—will be more responsible—I will say respectfully, than the action of the Senate

was.

I don't consider it a rebuke and I'm not angry at the Senate.

Q. Do you feel that in the modern world there are situations when a President must respond against a very tight deadline when he cannot consult with the legislative branch?

A. Well, another good example of course is the Cuban missile crisis. President Kennedy had a very difficult decision there and two hours and a quarter before he ordered the use of American men, to blockade Cuba, he told the Senate and the congressional leaders.

I can assure the American people that this President is going to bend over backwards to consult the Senate and consult the House whenever he feels it can be done without jeopardizing the lives of American men. But when it's a question of the lives of American men, or the attitudes of people in the Senate, I'm coming down hard on the side of defending the lives of American men.

Q. Mr. George Ball wrote an article in last Sunday's New York Times magazine that the Russians were bold enough to move into the Middle East because we were bogged down in Indochina. Do you accept that concatenation of the two events?

A. You cannot separate what happens to America in Vietnam from the Mideast or from Europe or any place else.

I think that some of the columnists and commentators, and some of us in political life have a tendency to look at the Middle East too much in terms of the Israeli-Arab struggle.

I think the Middle East now is terribly dangerous, like the Balkans before World War I,

where the two super powers, the United States and the Soviet Union could be drawn into a confrontation that neither of them wants because of the differences there.

'Our Interest Is Peace'

Now what should United States policy be? I'll summarize it in a word: 1. Our interest is peace and the integrity of every country in the area. 2. We recognize that Israel—Israel is not desirous of driving any of the other countries into the sea—the other countries do want to drive Israel into the sea. 3. Then, once the balance of power shifts where Israel is weaker than its neighbors, there will be a war. Therefore it is in United States interests to maintain the balance of power—and we will maintain that balance of power.

That's why as the Soviet Union moves in to support the U.A.R., it makes it necessary for the United States to evaluate what the Soviet Union does: and once that balance of power is upset, we will do what is necessary to maintain Israel's strength vis-à-vis its neighbors.

Not because we want Israel to be in a position to wage war—that isn't it. But because that is what will deter its neighbors from attacking it.

The diplomacy is terribly

difficult because Israel's neighbors, of course, have to recognize Israel's right to exist. Israel must withdraw to borders—borders that are defensible.

And when we consider all those factors, and then put into the equation the fact that the Russians seem to have an interest in moving into the Mediterranean, it shows you why this subject is so complex and so difficult.

But we're going to continue to work on it. And I can assure you the fact that we're in Vietnam does not mean that the United States is not going to give every bit of its diplomatic and other energies to this subject as well.

Q. Very briefly, Mr. President, would you say that the situation in the Middle East is as dangerous to the United States as the situation in Vietnam?

A. Yes. The situation in Vietnam, fortunately, has reached the point where we are embarked on a plan which will get the United States out, and which would bring a just peace. It will succeed. That I know.

Second, the situation in the Mideast is more dangerous, more dangerous because it involves—and this is not the case in Vietnam—a collision of the super-powers.

see Mankiewicz and Braden,

8 Jul 70, filed Comment.