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M'GOVERN ASSAILS NIXON WAR POLICY

Terms Hanoi Troops More Representative of People

WASHINGTON, Feb. 21 — Senator George S. McGovern, Democrat of South Dakota, said today that the North Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos more nearly represented the nationalistic aspirations of the Indochinese people than did American forces in Southeast Asia.

Senator McGovern, the only announced candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1972, called again for a total withdrawal of United States forces from Indochina. He said that he had "no idea" what would happen in the wake of a total withdrawal, but he said he was willing to accept the possibility that the North Vietnamese Government might



Associated Press

Senator George S. McGovern on TV yesterday.

take over South Vietnam.

Interviewed on the National Broadcasting Company's "Meet the Press" program, Senator McGovern attributed the relative lack of alarm by the made-cars-sold-in-this-country-American people over the broadening of the war into Laos to "deceptive" tactics by President Nixon. He said Mr. Nixon "was led them to believe that we are there fighting for the self-determination of the people of South Vietnam, that they want us there, that they are behind the Government that we are supporting."

"Barbaric and Inhumane"

"That simply is not true," he said, adding that he believed Mr. Nixon was still "hoping for a military decision" by which to end the war.

What the majority of people in Indochina want, the Senator said, is to be able to "settle their own affairs" without American intervention. He said he believed the North Vietnamese had more popular support in Indochina than Americans because the North Vietnamese were "on the side of expelling foreigners."

"Feeling as I do about this war," the Senator went on. "I could not conscientiously support it. I am not recommending that course for anyone else, but I regard this war as the most barbaric and inhumane act that our country has ever committed.

"I think it is terrible that this country has its bombers ranging all across the face of Indochina, killing innocent men, women and children by the tens of thousands, paying the people of Vietnam and Laos and Cambodia to kill each other

and doing all of this in the name of self-determination for them.

"I can't participate in that kind of thing any more than I could go out here in the street and start shooting down innocent people outside this door," Senator McGovern said.

He declared that although Senator Edmund S. Muskie of Maine was still the frontrunner for the presidential nomination, he believed his own candidacy had "seriously challenged" Mr. Muskie's "almost undisputed lead" of two months ago.

"I think the net effect of my announcement has been to prompt a lot of people who were jumping on board the Muskie bandwagon to take another look," he said.

Senator McGovern said he had received private messages of support for his candidacy from some senators, but he would not identify them.