

Republican Governors Call Off Conference

Chairman Cites 'Crisis'; Harriman Scores Policy

By R. W. APPLE Jr.

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 7—The Republican Governors Conference, scheduled to begin this evening in Santa Fe, N. M., was abruptly canceled this afternoon by its chairman, Gov. Raymond P. Shafer of Pennsylvania.

Only four of the 32 Republican Governors were on hand when Mr. Shafer announced that the meeting had been canceled because of student unrest precipitated by the American offensive in Cambodia. He said the "crisis must receive the highest priority attention by all governors."

"We feel a deep responsibility to keep our avenues of communication open with our home communities," Mr. Shafer added.

Other Republican sources said that the conference might have hurt President Nixon politically, because number of the Governors were prepared to express to newsmen at least in private, their conviction that the Cambodian attacks were political folly.

All 50 Governors have been invited to meet the President at the White House at 1:30 P.M. next Monday, and a spot check indicated that nearly all of them were planning to attend.

Impact on Election Seen

A week after Mr. Nixon's speech announcing the offensive, his action has become a central topic of political discussion across the country, and the belief among professionals in states such as Texas, Ohio and Massachusetts is that the Republicans' chances of victory in November's Congressional elections have been drastically curtailed.

The Democrats took the partisan offensive today with an attack on the President's decision by the party's spokesman on foreign affairs, W. Averell Harriman, former chief delegate to the Paris peace talks.

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Because of Unrest Among

Describing the intervention in Cambodia and renewed bombing in North Vietnam as "serious mistakes of judgment," Mr. Harriman urged Mr. Nixon to pull American troops back across the Cambodian border "swiftly and permanently." He said, "There is no conceivable military success in Cambodia worth the awful price we are paying at home and abroad."

"The domestic and international consequences were clearly predictable," said the 78-year-old chairman of the Democratic Council's International Affairs Committee. "Yet Mr. Nixon proceeded on a course bound to divide our country still further, provoke a constitutional crisis, aggravate our economic problems, and cause most of our friends and allies around the world to question our capacity for leadership."

'Demonstrable Proof'

Mr. Harriman said that "the Cambodian venture is demonstrable proof that the President does not have and never has had an effective plan for peace in Vietnam. . . . The simple truth is that there is no way of achieving a political victory in Vietnam through military actions."

The Democrats, torn by factionalism and burdened by debt, see the Cambodian episode as a turning point in their fortunes that may save as many as half a dozen Senate seats — such as those of Joseph M. Montoya of New Mexico and Frank E. Moss of Utah — that had seemed in jeopardy.

Lawrence F. O'Brien, the Democratic National Chairman, will add his voice to Mr. Harriman's attack with a speech in Milwaukee Saturday.

Among the Republican Governors who had canceled plans to go to Santa Fe was Francis W. Sargent of Massachusetts, who has been an outspoken critic of the war. With students in his state in an uproar, an aide said, he did not feel that he should be in New Mexico for the meeting of a partisan political group. Former Gov. John A. Volpe, now Secretary of Transportation, was damaged politically in Massachusetts when he found himself in Tokyo at the time of



United Press International

QUITS IN PROTEST: Anthony J. Moffett, head of the Federal student liaison office, announces decision.

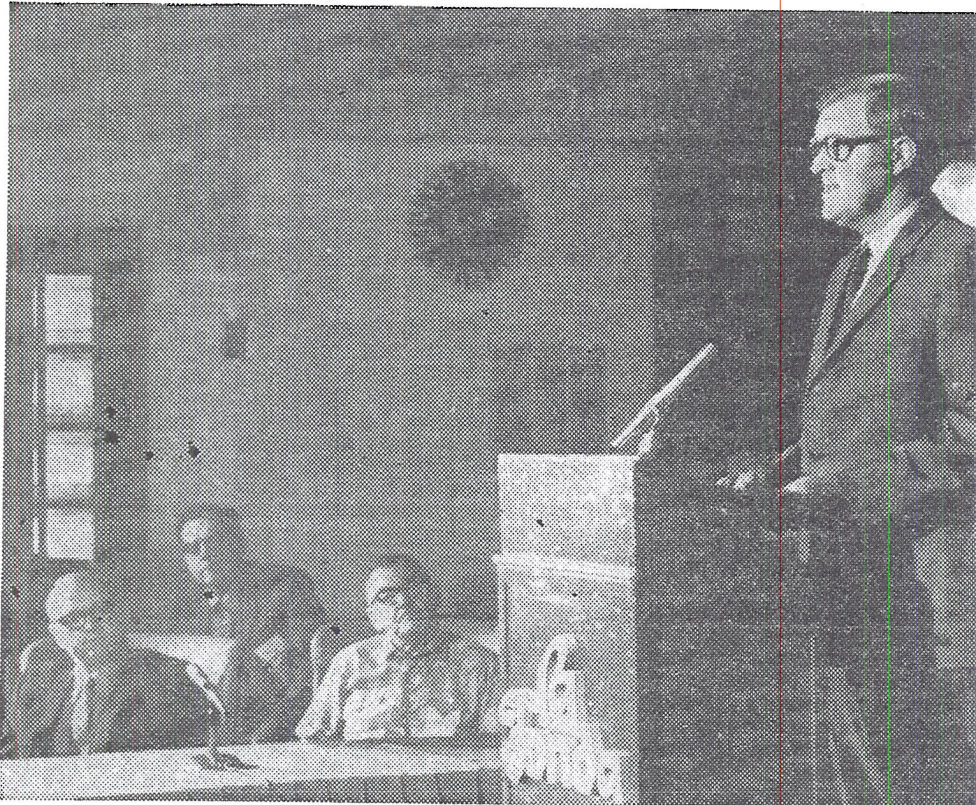
the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil disturbances that ensued.

Few of the Governors have yet made statements critical of President Nixon.

But at a news conference in Santa Fe, Mr. Shafer, who is not seeking re-election, showed far more sympathy toward student protesters than has been exhibited recently by either the President or Vice President Agnew.

He called on those protesting the President's decision to "do it peacefully within the proud scope of freedom allowed in our republic." He said that the vast majority of the dissenters had refrained from violence and praised them "for not resorting to the kind of violence being perpetrated by a radical few."

The Republican Governors meet twice a year. The meeting cancelled today was to have been their spring session.



Associated Press

NO GOVERNORS, NO CONFERENCE: Gov. Raymond P. Shafer of Pennsylvania announces cancellation of conference of Republican governors in Santa Fe, N. M. Many governors planned to stay home in event of disturbances. Conference was to begin yesterday.