

Morton Shows Poll Backing Nixon Move

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WASHINGTON, May 25—Countering Democratic charges that Americans are losing confidence in President Nixon, the Republican National Chairman released poll figures today indicating that a majority of the voters approve of the President's decision to send American troops into Cambodia.

Representative Rogers C. B. Morton of Maryland, the Republican chairman, reported that a telephone survey of 1,053 persons taken last week showed 53 per cent in support of the President's decision, 32 per cent against and 15 per cent with no opinion.

"I conclude from this," Mr. Morton said, "that the country, the people in the nation, are far more in approval of the President than some of the loud noise we have been hearing."

The question asked in the survey was: "President Nixon has decided to assist South Vietnam with American support in actions against North Vietnamese Communist forces in Cambodia. Do you approve or disapprove of this decision?"

Mr. Morton said he did not feel that the question had been "slanted, one way or the other," although, he said, it had been "hard to word" because the term "invasion of Cambodia is a tough one for me to use."

Questions on Protests

The Republican poll also indicated that 19 per cent of those questioned approved of "student protesters" against the President's Cambodia decision while 72 per cent disapproved. Asked whether they approved of "closing down colleges and universities as a result of student protests over the war in Vietnam," 23 per cent said they approved and 70 per cent said they disapproved.

"We've got to be tolerant of the students," Mr. Morton said.

"So much of these demonstrations is an outburst springing from the fact that they have very little actual knowledge of the situation."

The party chairman said that he and the President were "extremely anxious to have the polls completely objective" and that this one had been conducted "at extreme arm's length" by the Chilton Company of New York, an opinion research organization.

Mr. Morton later reported that the questions had been drafted by David R. Derge, vice president of the University of Indiana, who served as research director of the Nixon-Agnew campaign committee in 1968.

A differently phrased question on the President's Cambodia decision, made public today

by the Louis Harris Survey, produced a considerably closer result, with 50 per cent saying Mr. Nixon was right and 43 per cent saying they had "serious doubts" about the move.

The Harris question, asked in personal interviews with 1,281 persons, was: "Taking everything into consideration, do you think President Nixon was right in ordering the military operation into Cambodia, or do you have serious doubts about his having done this?"

Mr. Morton predicted that the move into Cambodia would not be a political handicap to the Republican party in the fall elections.

"If this operation reduces casualties and gives us a corridor

of time and space in which to continue troop withdrawals," he said, "I don't see how it can be anything but a plus."

"Suppose Hitler had established a supply base and a sanctuary in Switzerland during World War II," he continued. "What would we do about it? I think we would have destroyed it. That would not be a violation of Swiss neutrality because that would have been violated when it was put there."

Mr. Morton predicted that American troops would be withdrawn from Cambodia by the President's June 30 deadline and that the exercise would thus be "too much in the past" by November to constitute an election issue.