

Nixon's Cambodia Report to NATO

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President Nixon told the North Atlantic Treaty Organization yesterday that the capture of Communist weapons and equipment in Cambodia has "exceeded expectations."

He thanked the NATO countries for "understanding and support displayed in regard to our actions."

The President took the unusual step of addressing a personal letter on the Cambodian situation to Manlio Brosio, secretary-general of NATO.

The letter was then read to the other 14 foreign ministers of the alliance by Secretary of State William Rogers the spring ministerial meeting now in session here.

In his letter, the President renewed his assurances that all American forces will be

out of Cambodia by the end of June, and that withdrawals of American forces from South Vietnam will go forward "according to the schedule announced on April 20."

The President told NATO: "We still prefer to end this war by negotiation. However, I am convinced that we will not have serious discussions so long as the enemy believes that he can ignore our warnings and reject our flexible proposals for a settlement. We are not increasing our demands. As I have pointed out, our operations in Cambodia are necessary in order that both Vietnamization and withdrawal of U. S. forces may proceed."

The chief "support and understanding" which President Nixon has received

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from the other NATO allies has been one of restrained comment, which only barely conceals an almost across-the-board concern and pessimism over the Cambodian intervention.

The President is presumably aware of how deeply disturbed other governments have been, because this is the first time in the 21-year history of NATO that an American president has written a letter to the secretary-general to explain or discuss a policy or an action.

Mr. Nixon, in his letter, gave this summary of the success of the Cambodian operation in statistical terms:

"In the operations to date, the quantities of weapons and materials captured exceeded expectations and are far

larger than those seized in comparable operations in South Vietnam in past years. As examples, I can report capture, as of May 25, of over 1800 crew-served weapons, nearly 11,100 individual weapons, nearly 7.7 million rounds of small arms ammunition, over 26,000 mortar rounds, over 15,800 large and small rocket rounds, 4517 tons of rice and over 2800 mines. Nearly 7300 of the enemy have been killed at a cost of 201 U. S. and 451 South Vietnamese killed."

The President said the material is enough to equip more than 30 battalions at a strength of 400 to 500 men each and that the American operation "will set back their military efforts against our own forces and those of our allies in South Vietnam for many months."