

MAY 27 1970

ROMNEY DEFENDS CAMBODIA POLICY

Presbyterians Are Urged to
Withhold Judgment

By GEORGE DUGAN
Special to The New York Times

CHICAGO, May 26—George Romney, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, today asked the general assembly of the United Presbyterian Church to withhold judgment on the invasion of Cambodia "for a few weeks."

Mr. Romney made it clear that he expected a successful conclusion to the Cambodian venture, but said it was premature at this time to predict the outcome with certainty.

Mr. Romney addressed the annual assembly of the 3.2-million-member denomination in the Conrad Hilton Hotel. The delegates had sent a telegram to President Nixon yesterday requesting him or a representative to come to Chicago to discuss the war.

Debate centered on a committee report calling the invasion of Cambodia "an unjustified and dangerous extension of an already illegal, inhumane and unpopular war."

"Tragic Event"

In his 40 minute speech, Mr. Romney said that American involvement in Vietnam was "the most tragic event in our history" but that it was not of Mr. Nixon's doing.

"We continued to adhere to the containment policy when the world has fundamentally changed," Mr. Romney said. "We made the mistake of seeing red at a time and under circumstances when that did not exist."

"In my opinion," he said, "the mistakes we have made there have helped to create most of the very conditions that we assumed existed there when we went in."

Mr. Romney said President Johnson's escalation of American participation "added to the tragic mistake of becoming involved in the first place."

President Nixon, Mr. Romney said, began a program of getting Americans out of the conflict. Further, the Secretary said, Mr. Nixon took the initiative in seeking a negotiated peace and made it clear that the United States would not again become involved in an internal, foreign conflict.

'Fundamental Change'

"This," Mr. Romney said, "is a very fundamental change in American foreign policy."

The Vietcong, Mr. Romney said, made it clear, they would increase their activity in Cambodia "to disrupt our troop withdrawal."

They could have done this, he said, by staging massive raids from the Cambodian sanctuaries, or they could have kept up hit-and-run tactics from these sanctuaries.

"Assume," he said, "we are at war with Russia—and assume they had sanctuaries in Canada and we did nothing about it. Then how would you feel?"

"There isn't any question," he declared, "but that the Cambodian action has set back the North Vietnamese more than any other action of this tragic conflict."

Report on Six Received

Late last night the assembly voted, 485 to 250, to "receive," for study by congregations, a controversial report entitled "Sexuality and the Hur Community." The long stresses "understandir than the tradition"

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