

5 TOP DEMOCRATS ASK NIXON TO SET DATE FOR PULLOUT

Senators Say the War Has
Robbed U.S. of Energy
and Spirit Too Long

TV REPLY TO PRESIDENT

Potential Nominees Assert
Nation Has Amply Fulfilled
Commitment to Saigon
APR 23 1971

Excerpts from the addresses
will be found on Page 6.

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 22 —
Five Democratic Senators, all
potential Presidential nominees,
urged President Nixon tonight
to establish a terminal date for
the withdrawal of all Amer-
ican forces from Vietnam.

Despite differences in word-
ing and emphasis, the five ar-
gued on a national television
and radio network that the war
had robbed the United States
of too much of its energy and
spirit for too long. They as-
serted that the United States'
commitment to Saigon had
been amply fulfilled.

A sixth Senator, Henry M.
Jackson of Washington, said he
had not asked and would not
ask the President to announce
a deadline publicly, on grounds
that "we would be weakening
the bargaining leverage we
should be exerting on the gov-
ernments of North and South
Vietnam." But he clearly im-
plied that Mr. Nixon should
have a date for disengagement
firmly in mind to guide his
course.

Asks Test of Vietnamese

"We have done as much for
the South Vietnamese Govern-
ment as anyone could reason-
ably have asked of us," de-
clared Senator Edmund S.
Muskie of Maine, who is re-
garded as his party's front
runner for the nomination. "It
is not unreasonable now to
ask that Government to test its
own ability to survive."

Besides Senators Muskie and
Jackson, the program included
brief statements on Indochina
from Senators Hubert H. Hum-
phrey of Minnesota, George S.
McGovern of South Dakota,
Birch Bayh of Indiana and
Harold E. Hughes of Iowa. The
Democratic National Chair-
man, Lawrence F. O'Brien,
opened and closed the half-
hour program, which had been
taped and was broadcast in
prime time last night by the
American Broadcasting Com-
pany.

Network Agrees to Request

The network agreed to a re-
quest from Mr. O'Brien for 30
minutes of air time to respond
to Mr. Nixon's April 7 address
to the nation in which he an-
nounced another round of troop
withdrawals and said that he
intended to hew to his policy
of Vietnamization, under which
Americans will be withdrawn
as the South Vietnamese de-
velop their capacities to as-
sume the burden of the fighting.

Five of the candidates im-
plied or stated directly that
Vietnamization would extend
the American commitment be-
yond any reasonable point, and
urged the President to with-

Continued on Page 6, Column 4

Continued From Page 1, Col. 1

draw by the end of 1971, as
called for in the McGovern-Hat-
field Resolution in the Senate.

Senator Jackson's colleagues
asserted that by setting a ter-
minal date for involvement Mr.
Nixon would achieve several
major objectives. Such a course,
they said, would not only end
the killing of American soldiers
and an overextended commit-
ment to the Saigon Government
but would also give American
prisoners of war their surest
chance for a safe release.

Definite Deadline Asked

"The other side has said re-
peatedly that the only way ne-
gotiations can be started for
the release of our prisoners
and the safe exit of our forces
is for all of us to agree to a
definite deadline for the with-
drawal of American troops,"
Senator McGovern said. He
added:

"The logic of that course is

made clear when one realizes
that it is in the selfish inter-
est of the other side to release
our prisoners and to agree to
the safety of our forces during
their withdrawal, once we make
a clear commitment to total
disengagement. What blocks
the negotiating process is the
Administration's insistence that
we keep a residual force in be-
ing, backed by the American
air force in support of the
Thieu-Ky regime in Saigon."

Mr. Humphrey was the first
of the six Senators to speak.
Mr. Muskie spoke last and, in
effect, summarized the argu-
ments of the others. Mr. Hum-
phrey, who conceded that his
heart and mind had changed
about the war, spoke directly
to one of the problems that
most troubles the White House:
the prospect, in Mr. Nixon's
words, of an era of national
"recrimination" that might be
brought about by quick dis-
engagement and a subsequent
collapse in Saigon.

"This is no time for recrim-

inations," he said. "There will
be risks in withdrawing. But
there are greater risks in stay-
ing. For too long, this war has
divided Americans from each
other, distorted our view of
humanity, and diverted us, as
a nation, from getting on a
constructive path of our own."
"There is no honor," said
Senator Hughes, "in prolong-
ing this dreadful war another
week. There is no honor in
sacrificing more American lives,
even at a reduced rate."

Senator Muskie argued that
it would be unfair to pin the
blame for the war on any single
public official, including Presi-
dents Johnson and Nixon.

"This tragedy is the respon-
sibility of every public official
who allowed it to happen," he
said. "Whatever you or I or
any of us now think about the
war, I believe we all agree on
one terrible price it is making
us pay. It is the price of divi-
sion, fear and hatred in Amer-
ica. We must not go on like
this."