

Churchmen Decry War Policy And Bombing of North Vietnam

By GEORGE DUGAN

Some of the nation's religious leaders have voiced grave concern over President Nixon's war policy in Southeast Asia and the bombing of North Vietnam.

For example, the biennial national convention of the American Jewish Congress called on the Nixon Administration yesterday to "stop all acts of war and to proceed immediately with the complete removal of the United States military presence in Southeast Asia."

The convention condemned what it described as President Nixon's "desperate act of brinkmanship in mining the harbors of North Vietnam and creating the possibility of a confrontation with the Soviet Union and China."

Last week, the Episcopal Diocese of New York, meeting in annual convention, voiced "profound shock" at the President's latest moves in Vietnam.

The Right Rev. Paul Moore Jr., new Bishop of the Diocese, said that the President's actions had "struck chills of terror and grief into my heart."

"Destroying a Country"

"We have been destroying a whole country to save it for a government few respect," Bishop Moore declared. "And now without the consent of Congress, we are tearing open vast new areas, we will be killing thousands more people and bringing the world to the brink of large power confrontation."

In midweek, eight church leaders issued a statement in Washington declaring that they would not give Mr. Nixon the support for his Vietnam policy that he requested on May 8.

The statement was signed by the Rev. Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, general secretary of the World Council of Churches; Dr. Cynthia Wedel, president of the National Council of Churches; Dr. William P. Thompson, chief administrative officer of the United Presbyterian Church; and the Rev. Dr. Robert V. Moss, president of the United Church of Christ.

Also, the Right Rev. JOHN E. Hines, presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church; Mrs. Claire Harvey, president of Church Women United; Bishop A. James Armstrong of Dakota Area of the United Methodist Church, and the Rev. Dr. Robert S. Bilheimer, international affairs director of the National Council of Churches.

"The level, ferocity and danger of present military measures bear no justifiable relation to United States objectives," the statement declared.

The church leaders said they had "repeatedly sought and

been denied the privilege of direct discussion with the President."

Division on Vietnam Policy

Special to The New York Times

DENVER, May 14 — The American Baptist Convention ended its annual meeting here today without acting on two opposing statements on Vietnam that had prompted considerable debate.

Statements for and against President Nixon's decision to mine North Vietnamese harbors were referred for study yesterday to the General Council, the executive body of the 1.5-million-member denomination, after the absence of a quorum halted voting on them Friday.

Earlier in the five-day session, the convention elected a new president, the Rev. Dr. Gene Bartlett, to succeed Mrs. Ruth Rohlf, and a new general secretary, Rev. Dr. Robert C. Campbell, to succeed the Rev. Dr. Frank E. Johnston.

Dr. Bartlett is pastor of the First Baptist Church in Newton Centre, Mass., and former president of Colgate Rochester Divinity School. Dr. Campbell is dean and professor of New Baptist Seminary of the West in Covina, Calif.

Under a streamlining plan adopted by the 3,200 delegates, the general secretary, who heads the general council, will have more power.

Describing his role under the reorganization, Dr. Campbell told a news conference, "To put it briefly, the general secretary is less a secretary and more a general."

Citing justice as his key concern, Dr. Campbell acknowledged that social action by the Baptist church would cause the church to lose some members, but he said it would also gain some.

It approved a joint effort with the Progressive National Baptist Convention, which is chiefly black, to raise \$7.5 million for educational and other needs of minority groups.

It supported school busing and redistricting to achieve quality educational opportunities for all people.

The delegates, who met at the Convention Complex here, changed the denomination's name from the American Baptist Convention to the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. to avoid confusion by nonmembers who consider "convention" to mean "meeting" rather than "churchly body." The substitute word "churches" reflects the autonomous character of local churches in the denomination.

In other actions, the convention made the following decisions:

It decided to meet biennially.