

Cry, the Beloved Country

By ANTHONY LEWIS

LONDON, May 1—American students are told that they must respect institutions. Their President deplores "mindless attacks on all the great institutions which have been created by free civilizations."

But the same President orders a massive armed attack in a foreign country without going through the procedures laid down by the Constitution for making war or even asking Congress for less formal support.

The students hear their President express regret that "we live in an age of anarchy both abroad and at home."

Without Consultation

But the President sends American troops into Cambodia without the slightest deference to the processes of international order: not consulting with his allies, not informing other Southeast Asian countries who with his encouragement were organizing a conference on Cambodia, not asking the Government whose territory he ordered bombed and invaded.

The students are told that it is wrong to be cynical about democracy—to think, in Kingman Brewster's words, that the

Presidential election was a "hucksterized process" without a real choice.

But they see the man who campaigned on a pledge to get America out of the Vietnam war enlarging that war in a way that even his predecessor did not risk. And they see, despite elections and changes of government, the undiminished influence of the military men who promise "victory."

Resort to Violence

They hear the Vice President say that students who resort to violence constitute "the criminal left that belongs not in a dormitory but in a penitentiary."

But their Government, effectively closing the door to diplomacy, resorts to violence; and the President dismisses the non-violent alternatives as "plaintive diplomatic protests."

They are told that they should be mature: they must moderate their language, channel their emotions into constructive paths and stop seeking instant solutions.

But the President of the United States, in a maudlin personalization and simplification of complex political issues, makes war a test of his own

and the nation's manhood.

"This is not an invasion of Cambodia," President Nixon said. If the young judge those who run American society by the standard of truth in that statement, should anyone be surprised at cynicism or unbearable frustration on the campuses of the United States?

It has been hard for most of us middle-class, middle-aged Americans of liberal instinct to accept the apocalyptic vision of many students. We believed in reason.

But the President's course in Cambodia would make the most optimistic rationalist despair for his country. Nothing for years has cast so dark a shadow on America's future.

The sudden assault on Cambodia has shocked our country's oldest friends abroad—that is painfully evident in London, and reports from the rest of the world are similar. But the reason for despair, as always in the Vietnam war, lies more within America than without.

Divisive Move

By this action President Nixon has calculatedly chosen to widen the division among the American people, to inflame in-

stead of heal. What other reason can there be for the President of the United States to lower himself to contrasting American soldiers with "those bums who are burning college campuses"?

Troubled Conscience

Shrill indignation may have momentary public appeal; it may light up the White House switchboard with supporting telephone calls. But a President cannot govern a country in such terms. Even within his Administration, one would guess, the consciences of thoughtful men will be troubled as they were in the last compulsive years of Lyndon Johnson.

Not even the greatest power on earth can fight with troubled conscience, in a war without end, for purposes undefined. We thought we had learned that. We thought Richard Nixon had learned it. To find out otherwise is shattering because the dangers of American instability are so great.

There is only one way the United States can demonstrate strength in Indochina. That is by getting out. For nations as for men, maturity, dignity, character and wisdom are to be shown not by rage but by restraint.