

# Mr. Nixon's Speech

President Seems to Be Trying  
To Prove Time Is on His Side

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WASHINGTON, June 3—The unprecedented "success" that President Nixon proclaimed tonight for the American military venture into Cambodia is not subject to statistical proof or challenge. For his calculations dealt essentially not with what has happened but with what will result in the future: fewer casualties for American troops, more training time for South Vietnamese troops and a firmer understanding of Mr. Nixon's resolve in the mind of the enemy.

News  
Analysis

As the President himself observed, the real debate here and across the land—which the Cambodian venture exacerbated—is not about his goals of reduced casualties, faster withdrawals and a negotiated peace but about "the best means" to achieve that peace.

On that question Mr. Nixon held to his basic "plan" and peace terms. He promised to reduce the number of American troops in Vietnam to 260,000 over the next year, which would take most Americans out of ground combat at that time. But he gave the enemy no indication of how he would proceed thereafter, thus holding to the effort to make Hanoi negotiate for a total American withdrawal.

## If Hanoi Refuses . . .

If, on the contrary, Hanoi not only refuses to negotiate by that time but also steps up the attack on the forces that remain, Mr. Nixon indicated he would again resort to intensified measures "as my action five weeks ago demonstrated."

It is the problem of what happens a year from now that has been at the center of the debate that the Cambodian operation again brought to the fore last month.

The Administration apparently believes that the military damage inflicted in Cambodia and throughout South Vietnam in recent months should persuade North Vietnam to negotiate. If not, Mr. Nixon's policy suggests, then American air and support forces will remain in South Vietnam in sufficient strength to enable the Saigon Government to withstand anything the enemy might attempt.

In other words, the President is trying to prove to Hanoi that time is on his side.

Mr. Nixon's critics contend that the opposite is true. They point not only to the dissension and war weariness in the United States but to the many signs that the South Vietnamese will not soon be able to carry on alone.

Unless Mr. Nixon gives a deadline for total withdrawal,

his critics argue, Saigon will not prepare to go it alone while Hanoi will never believe that he means to depart.

And if Hanoi sees a diminishing will in the United States as well as a diminishing American force on the battlefield, it will return to the attack a year from now to force the final American exit.

At that point, the critics argue, Mr. Nixon will be stuck with his own logic and concern about "credibility," forced to retaliate with the bombing of North Vietnam or other escalation and to risk an even more bitter division of American society.

## A Host of Questions

With this fear in mind, the critics have raised a host of questions that Mr. Nixon has carefully avoided since the start of the Cambodia operation on April 30:

❑ Does not the logic of current policy imply a need to assure the survival of a friendly government in Cambodia? And if that government is militarily challenged, must not the United States support the South Vietnamese and Thai troops that rushed to save it?

❑ Will the South Vietnamese Army's operations in Cambodia contribute to an early American withdrawal or further weaken its ability to take hold in its own country?

❑ Has the Cambodian operation really won time for the allied side or has it, by advertising the divisions in the United States and the restraints on the President, only persuaded Hanoi that the total exhaustion of American will and resources is near?