



# Nixon's Win Policy In Vietnam War

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Saigon

**T**HE CAMBODIAN venture was distinguished from the start by an enormous gap between what the President said and what actually happened. And veteran apologists for the Vietnam war have proclaimed that Mr. Nixon talked tough in order to justify more rapid withdrawal from the war.

But a comparison of the President's rhetoric with the facts here in Saigon yields the opposite impression. Mr. Nixon stressed the most horrific dangers imaginable in order to gain time with the American public for application of what amounts to a win policy.

The President's most egregious distortions are to be found in his April 30 speech announcing the Cambodian operations. The underlying argument was that the incursion into Cambodia was necessary to prevent the enemy from taking advantage of American withdrawals to stage a massive offensive which would cause heavy American casualties, bring national humiliation to the United States, and expose South Vietnam to horrible massacres.

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**H**OWEVER the very notion of a large-scale enemy assault from Cambodia is dismissed in the highest military circles here with a barnyard epithet. The other side just doesn't, and didn't, have the capability.

Almost all the best analysts here are agreed, moreover, that Communist strategy now emphasizes small-unit guerrilla action rather than massive attacks.

The gap between the facts and the President's rhetoric, to be sure, may not be a good base for moral judgment. But the distortion does reveal Mr. Nixon's fu-

ture intentions. It identifies those he was trying to con. The intended victims were not Barry Goldwater, Strom Thurmond, and the rest of the President's right-wing clientele. For Mr. Nixon does not have to read them lessons about the baleful malevolence of the Communists and the danger of national humiliation.

On the contrary, the intended dupes were those of us who have been doubtful about the Vietnam war. The idea was to justify the Cambodian venture as a purely defensive measure. The aim was to smother anybody who might question the President's policy in public concern for the safety of American troops. And there lay the logic of Mr. Nixon's Pentagon denunciation of dissenting students as "bums."

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**B**UT WHY should Mr. Nixon be so concerned to discredit the doves? The answer is that he is withdrawing American troops from Vietnam not as rapidly as battlefield conditions will safely permit, but as slowly as domestic constraints will allow.

He and all his advisers in Saigon want American troops here to beat down the enemy as long and as hard as possible. They want to weaken the other side to the point where it will be possible for a pro-American, anti-Communist government to survive in South Vietnam.

Without saying so, President Nixon has been going for what amounts to a win policy. And unless he changes that fundamental intent, it is going to be very difficult for him now to exploit the narrow opportunities that exist for disengagement from a war that promises to go on and on and on.