

Poster

From the Halls Of Montezuma

A Commentary

By Nicholas von Hoffman

NICK STYLE MON CAP—9on10x13.9

Hooray! We're a winner at last and Jerry Ford is the first American Prexy since F.D.R. to lead a victorious nation. Boy, was that a long losing streak, but we couldn't have broken it at a better time—just before Memorial Day—and if it wasn't one of your big wins, an Austerlitz or a Trafalgar, nothing buys as much as it used to.

From every standpoint, though, it was a great clutch victory. The kind of war we like—short, cheap and noisy. Sudden-death overtime, extra-inning wars don't make it because if you exceed five fatalities per congressional district these days, the

government has a peace movement on its hands.

How long it's been since we've had a cause we can all believe in! Wasn't it good to see those old-time headlines we haven't laid our tired squinters on for so long? Congress Rallies To Back President—Nation Unites—Leaders Say No Sacrifice Too Great, and the best part of it was that none was required.

Another thing that made it such a big win was that it was purely American. None of that going-to-the-rescue-of-embattled-freedom-loving-allies-as-per-committment stuff. This one was red, white and blue all the way. They grabbed our ship; we told 'em to give

it back or we'd send in the first team and let 'em feel the heavy part of our batting order; they said they'd give it back, and we whomped 'em anyway just for trying. Oh, man, did we run 'em out of the ballpark or didn't we?

This was the biggie. Like Ron Nessen said, a straight-out Captain America war against "piracy on the high seas."

That's your worst kind of piracy, too. Low sea piracy isn't so bad. The reason we don't flatten Quito when the Ecuadorians rip off our tuna ships every month is because that's low sea piracy to which the proper response of a proud and mighty

world power is to pay the beggars off.

The difference between Cambodian high-sea piracy and Ecuadorian tuna boat snatching is the difference in cargoes. Heisting a load of dead fish is only seajacking, which, like airjacking, is a misdemeanor punishable by giving the perpetrators money. Putting greasy, Commie fingers on a Coca-Cola tanker taking vital supplies to our far flung network of PX's is a major, Class A felony punishable by bombing and air-born assault.

The PX system is the free world's first line of defense and the Mayaguez—funny sounding name for an

American ship—was making an emergency run to restock our base at Utapao, where they were down to a 48-hour supply. Communist sappers had recently blown up a major soda pop dump there.

This is also our most humane war. Only a couple of our people dead and a large number unaccounted for, which is important because with Vietnam over we were running low on POW's and MIA's to agitate ourselves about. It was good from the Cambodian point of view, since according to The New York Times they've depopulated their cities, and

See COMMENTARY, B4, Col. 1

COMMENTARY, From B1

therefore should welcome our knocking them down to prevent their people from sneaking back and resuming urban ways.

This war proved something Barry Goldwater has been saying for years: Winning is better than losing. In this case the fruits of victory are that we proved to the entire world that we are stronger than Cambodia, a matter of some speculation in Moscow, and we put Andorra, Switzerland and Rhodesia on notice that any similar acts of piracy by their naval forces, on high seas or low, will be met by the same swift response. We demon-

strated to our allies, especially Thailand, Greece, Turkey and the Sardinian government in exile, that our word can be counted on. We reestablished Henry Kissinger as a credible negotiator—either you sign or we bomb—and by his bold, decisive leadership Jer revealed himself to be a mensch, a regular Harry Truman.

Besides reaffirming that we are a nation of belligerent penguins who can be counted on to go to war when told. We burnished our tarnished international image. No more will the community of nations regard us as trigger-happy, jittery people with a collective ego problem. We're not the 98-pound weakling on the beach

Peking took us for. Moreover, as a strong, powerful, and self-confident Number One World Power we showed patience and restraint. For 36 long hours we pursued every peaceful avenue of diplomacy. Only then did we start kicking Cambodian tail and boy, oh boy, did it feel good!

We broke new ground: This was the first war of phycho-motor reflex. America got her rocks off and Americans everywhere feel better for it. Because of the victory at Koh Tang Island we walk with our heads a little jauntier and ears a little deafer to the cries of Yankee Go Home.

The Big A is back.

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