

SFC 9 MAR 71

A Defense Of Nixon's Credibility

Washington

The White House stoutly defended President Nixon as telling the American people the truth about the war in Southeast Asia yesterday in the face of evidence he is encountering a widening credibility gap.

Press secretary Ronald Ziegler said Mr. Nixon has no intention of "misleading the American people regarding our operations in Indochina."

"We have not and will not pursue a communications policy where we in any way attempt to mislead the American people about what we are doing," Ziegler added.

Ziegler was responding to reporters' questions about a Gallup Poll which compared Mr. Nixon's credibility on the war unfavorably with that of President Johnson at similar points in their administrations.

The poll showed that 69 per cent of those surveyed — or almost seven out of every ten Americans — believe Mr. Nixon is not telling them all they should know about the fighting in Indochina.

Of equal concern to the White House was an 18-point drop from last August in public confidence on Mr. Nixon's handling of the war. The survey showed that 46 per cent of those polled disapproved of his policies, 41 per cent approved and 13 per cent had no opinion.

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