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Mr. Nixon's Courage

By BARRY GOLDWATER

WASHINGTON—Once again President Nixon has shown more political courage in Indochina than all of his opponents and critics put together.

The intensive air assault on North Vietnam was an action taken deliberately to speed the withdrawal of American troops and provide a chance for the South Vietnamese to have some freedom of choice after their departure.

And the action was taken with the full knowledge that it would bring down on the President another torrent of abuse and criticism similar to those which have followed every other decisive move made by Mr. Nixon in Southeast Asia.

There is little doubt that the President put off the assault until after Congress adjourned to deprive his political opponents of a ready made forum from which to criticize. And I submit that we have come to a sorry stage when the Commander in Chief of our armed forces must put off necessary moves because of opposition by a small handful of willful men.

Mr. Nixon, unlike his predecessors, Presidents Johnson and Kennedy, did what was required in the best interests of the United States and the cause of freedom. He refused to shirk his duty in Cambodia, in Laos and recently in the bombings to the North. He took the actions to save American lives, to save South Vietnamese lives and to facilitate the very disengagement that his critics have been demanding.

Some of the statements issued in criticism of the President have been downright ridiculous. For example, Chairman J. William Fulbright of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee says the raid proved the Nixon Administration was still determined to try and win a military victory in Vietnam. Not that the whole idea of a U.S. victory is in any way ignoble, the fact remains that Senator Fulbright knows better. What does he expect us to do after the air raids to the North? Surely even Senator Fulbright cannot expect us to follow through with an invasion of the North using a handful of residual troops.

And the charges of escalation which have been raised by Republican Congressman Paul McCloskey of California (an announced primary opponent of the President's) and Democratic candidates for President such as Edmund Muskie, George McGovern et al, make even less sense. All the thoughtful citizen has to do is to ask himself why the charges of escalation which were raised following the invasion of Cam-

bodia and the action in Laos have resulted in accelerated troop withdrawals and a U.S. casualty rate which is almost down to zero. Another test of this charge is for the concerned citizen to ask himself that, given the American public's cast and apparent distaste for the Indochina war, what could Richard Nixon or any other President possibly hope to gain by escalating the conflict?

Just consider what this would mean. If President Nixon were bent on a policy of escalation he would be embarked on a road which escalates the heartache, the inconvenience, the financial burden and the unhappiness of the American people.

I say again what the American people are witnessing today is another example of courageous leadership. President Nixon is determined to do what is best for the American people, even if it hands a temporary advantage to his die-hard opponents. In the case of the bombing raids to the North, the President has decided that it is time to destroy enemy arms and equipment where they exist in the greatest numbers. In this I shall support him to the hilt, even if it becomes necessary to hit parts of Hanoi and the port of Haiphong.

Perhaps one of the hardest things for any President to do is to recognize and accept the fact that if he is to lead he must take action which the times and circumstances dictate and these must include unpopular actions. It is a test of greatness for any President to divorce himself from considerations of personal and political popularity in the exercise of his office. In the past, this country has seen too much of Presidents who spent all their time trying to please all segments of the political spectrum. This is a path to vacillation, ineffectiveness and often times failure.

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