

NIXON'S AIDE SAYS PEACE-PLAN FOES HELP THE ENEMY

Haldeman, on TV, Charges
Critics Consciously Aid
the Communist Side

FEB 8 1972

VIEW CALLED PERSONAL

Ziegler Says Opinion Isn't
Necessarily President's—
Democrats Annoyed
NYTimes

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 7—A leading White House official, H. R. Haldeman, charged today that critics of President Nixon's latest Vietnam peace plan were "consciously aiding and abetting the enemy of the United States."

The severity of Mr. Haldeman's remarks, in a television interview, provoked a series of rejoinders from several Democratic politicians and some support from the Republican side. By midday, however, the White House, apparently embarrassed, said that Mr. Haldeman's comments were "his own personal point of view" and not necessarily those of Mr. Nixon.

Mr. Haldeman, who acts as a coordinator of White House affairs and has been described as Mr. Nixon's chief of staff, filmed the interview on Friday, Jan. 28—three days after Mr. Nixon had made public his secret eight-point peace plan—for the National Broadcasting Company's "Today" show.

Senators Criticized Plan

The interview was arranged before Mr. Nixon's Jan. 25 television address, Barbara Walters of the "Today" staff said in a telephone conversation. She said that she had first suggested the interview to Mr. Haldeman in September and convinced him at a Washington meeting in December to make his first television appearance. She said that this was not a case of the White House seeking television time to attack its critics.

Miss Walters said that interview ran for 70 minutes, was edited to 35 to 40 minutes, and then was divided into three parts — the first of which appeared this morning. The segments involved in this morning's program actually took place at the end of the interview, she said, but were run first for their dramatic effect.

At the time of the interview, several senators had criticized aspects of the President's plan. These included Senator George McGovern of South Dakota, an aspirant for the Democratic nomination for President, and Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts, who is considered a potential aspirant despite his repeated disclaimers.

But Senator Edmund S. Muskie of Maine, who is regarded as a leading contender for the Democratic nomination, had not yet made his strong criticism of the plan, which subsequently provoked a strong response from Secretary of State William P. Rogers on Feb. 3.

In the N.B.C. interview, conducted by Miss Walters, Mr. Haldeman was asked what kind

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1972

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of criticism upset Mr. Nixon. Mr. Haldeman, a long-time Nixon aide, said that Mr. Nixon was "naturally concerned by the kind of criticism that can get in the way of what he's trying to do and that would be unfair criticism."

Then he said that before Mr. Nixon made his eight-point peace plan known, "you could say that his critics—people who were opposing what he was doing—were unconsciously echoing the line that the enemy wanted echoed."

"Now, after this explanation—after the whole activity is on the record and is known," he continued, "the only conclusion you can draw is that the critics now are consciously aiding and abetting the enemy of the United States, and I think that kind of criticism is deeply disturbing to him, because it gets in the way of getting done what he so deeply believed must be done in trying to bring this war to an end through the negotiation route."

Mr. Haldeman, who has had a reputation for being one of the most conservative-oriented advisers in the White House, said that the eight-point plan "makes all the points that the critics of the President have sought—except one, which is turning South Vietnam over to the Communists, putting a Communist government in South Vietnam."

"The only conclusion you can

drawn now" he went on, "is that the President's critics are in favor of putting a Communist government in South Vietnam and insisting that that be done, too. That's something we aren't going to do."

Miss Walters said to Mr. Haldeman that she didn't think Senate critics were helping the enemy, but Mr. Haldeman replied:

"In this particular posture, I think they are consciously aiding and abetting the enemy."

Miss Walters asked if he thought Mr. McGovern was doing so, and he answered: "I wouldn't want to characterize any individual in this respect. I am expressing a personal feeling that I think applies where it applies."

The Senate Majority Leader, Mike Mansfield of Montana, who has praised the President's latest peace effort, said that Mr. Haldeman's remarks would be counterproductive.

"What it does is to put this issue back on the front burner," he said. "What it does also is to build up Muskie."

Mr. Mansfield affirmed, in criticizing the Haldeman remarks, that "the First Amendment still stands and freedom of speech is still allowed. As far as I am concerned, any Senator will be protected in his right of free expression."

Senator McGovern said: "These are all motheaten charges used by past administrations in the mistaken belief they can turn criticism into an issue. They are deliberately ex-

ploiting this for political purposes."

Richard H. Stewart, Mr. Muskie's press secretary, assuming that Mr. Haldeman had attacked the Senator, said he saw "no reason to dignify Mr. Haldeman's statement" by responding to it.

Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, Democrat of Minnesota, another Democratic aspirant, who has not criticized the eight-point plan, called Mr. Haldeman's remarks "irresponsible."

"It doesn't help the situation for a Presidential assistant or a Secretary of State to make comments on the patriotism of a member of Congress or anyone else," he said in Tampa, Fla., where he is campaigning for the primary election there in March.

Senator Alan Cranston, Democrat of California, said, "The old Nixon is emerging again," recalling charges that Mr. Nixon earlier in his career had questioned the loyalty of Democrats.

But the Senate Minority Leader, Hugh Scott, said that if some Democratic candidates used strong language they could expect such language in reply.

'Room for Criticism'

Ronald L. Ziegler, the White House press secretary, said under questioning at his regular news conference that Mr. Haldeman spoke only for himself. "Bob is not a spokesman for the President and he is the first to say that," Mr. Ziegler said.

Mr. Ziegler said, "The President has always felt that there is room for honest criticism and everyone has the right to express their own views."

In a separate development, Clark Kerr, former chancellor of the University of California

in Berkeley, and now head of a peace organization called Committee for a Political Settlement in Vietnam, said that his group was "duty bound" to support Mr. Nixon's plan. He called on Hanoi to negotiate seriously and not to expect that the American peace movement would "push the Administration further."

He particularly applauded the plan's inclusion of a broadly based electoral commission, to include Vietcong members, which would supervise elections for a new Saigon government that would be created as part of a settlement.

Late in the afternoon, Senator McGovern repeated in essence his previous proposals—that the United States unilaterally announce an end to American involvement in the Vietnam war by May 1, end its recognition of President Nguyen Van Thieu, and end insistence on the release of all prisoners before a total American pullout.

He said that this "would rid us of a senseless war."

Lindsay Criticizes Haldeman

Mayor Lindsay took issue in New York yesterday with Mr. Haldeman's remarks charging that critics of the President's plan were helping the enemy.

The Mayor, an aspirant for the Democratic nomination for President and a long-time critic of the American policy in Indochina, said:

"I simply cannot agree with that. It was the wrong thing to say. It is entirely inconsistent with what our country stands for—free dissent and free expression."

"If a democracy can't survive that kind of difference of opinion, there is something wrong with that democracy."