

SPEXAMINER

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Don't Imperil Early Peace Hopes--Nixon

Examiner News Services

WASHINGTON — President Nixon warned Democratic candidates for the presidency today to be careful to say nothing about the war in Vietnam that might encourage the Communists to delay peace settlement until after the election.

"I have no complaint over the fact that during this period when I have been ending the war I did not begin I have been subject to vigorous criticism," Nixon said in a radio speech announcing submission to Congress of his annual report on U.S. foreign policy.

But Nixon also added that he would expect any presidential candidate to "examine his statements carefully to be sure that nothing he says might give the enemy an incentive to prolong the war until after the election."

Nixon's comments were the latest in a series by high Republican and administration spokesmen against the President's opponents since Sen. Edmund Muskie, a leading contender for the Democratic presidential nomination, criticized Nixon's latest peace proposal Feb. 2.

Haldeman

The strongest statement came Monday from Nixon White House chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman, who said in a television interview that critics of the Nixon peace plan were "consciously aiding and abetting the enemy of the United States" — the legal definition of treason.

The White House later described the statement as Haldeman's personal opinion.

Haldeman said on NBC's "Today" show that before Nixon's plan was announced

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along with a revelation of past secret negotiations presidential critics might have been unconsciously echoing the line desired by the Communists.

"Now, after this explanation," Haldeman said, "the only conclusion you can draw is that the critics now are consciously aiding and abetting the enemy of the United States . . ."

Counter-Charges

Democrats have lashed back with counter-charges against the flood of Republican criticism.

Sen. George McGovern (D-S.D.) called the claim that opposition to Nixon was aiding the enemy "complete nonsense."

"The administration would do well to drop red-baiting rhetoric of that kind and start giving aid and comfort to the American people by ending our involvement in this senseless war," McGovern said.

Democratic National Chairman Lawrence O'Brien said the President "should instruct Haldeman either to name those who he accuses and document his charges — or to retract the statement and issue a public apology."

'Only the President'

"I do not question the patriotism or the sincerity of those who disagree with my policies to bring peace," Nixon said today. "But as I said in 1968, when I was a candidate for President, we have only one President at a time. Only the President can negotiate an end to the war."

Nixon said there should always be free debate and criticism of government actions and policy, but he said presidential candidates have a special obligation.

"A candidate should make any criticism he believes would contribute to bringing an honorable peace," Nixon said. "But I would hope that anyone seeking the presidency would examine his statements carefully to be sure

that nothing he says might give the enemy an incentive to prolong the war until after the election."

Kissinger View

Nixon's National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger, who was the President's negotiator during months of secret talks with Communist representatives in Paris, also discussed political tactics with reporters.

During a briefing on the President's State of the World message, Kissinger said this morning he felt McGovern was willing to accept a Communist government in South Vietnam.

Kissinger said McGovern "holds these views with integrity and patriotism."

Kissinger said McGovern, in urging a speedy end to the war, "has stated the debate in the sharpest and most concrete form."

Kissinger said Nixon was determined to reject any political formula that would turn South Vietnam over to the Communists although the President was willing to negotiate on other issues.

'Red Takeover'

"Sen. McGovern seems to believe that the urgency of ending the war is so great that he would be willing to take this step (which could produce a Communist takeover)," Kissinger said.

"Anyone who knows Sen. McGovern knows that he has held this position with integrity and patriotism for all of his political life," Kissinger said.

"Everyone who knows Sen. McGovern knows he has held these views consistently over a long period of time."

'Disagrees'

Kissinger said the administration "disagrees completely" with McGovern's formula.

Muskie said in his Feb. 2 speech that the Nixon peace plan was a rearrangement of already rejected offers and sought to "win at the conference table what we have not won and cannot win on the battlefield."

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