

Nixon Move Raises Hopes in Vietnam And Some Doubts

By CHARLES MOHR

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, May 9—American military officers and South Vietnamese officials today approved President Nixon's decision to mine North Vietnamese harbors, but doubts were expressed that the step would force an early end to the enemy's offensive within South Vietnam.

"I just wrote the first letter I ever wrote to a President," said one American colonel who advises a combat unit of South Vietnamese troops. "It said thank you and congratulations."

"Morale around here went sky-high," said Captain Kenneth Worrell of the Air Force, who spent the day in a light spotter plane directing air strikes against North Vietnamese troops near the besieged town of Anloc northwest of Saigon.

"Maybe if they do not receive supplies we will not have to fly so often to knock them out," he added.

Saigon Hails Decision

A spokesman for the South Vietnamese Foreign Ministry called Mr. Nixon's decision "a timely one aimed at putting an early end to the Vietnam war." He added:

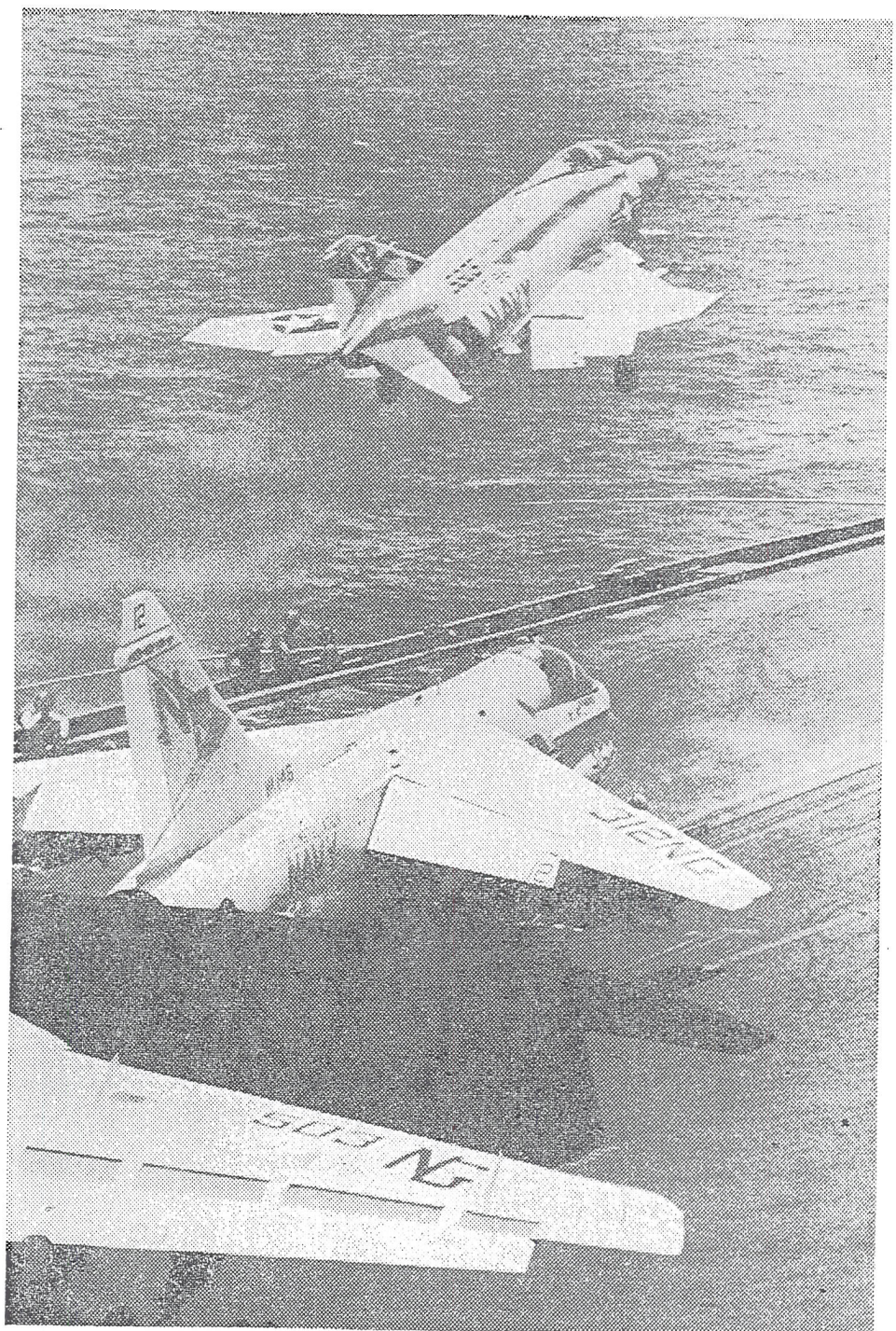
"The Government of the Republic of Vietnam is appreciative of the determination of the Government and people of the United States to support the Republic of Vietnam in her fight for freedom and against the International Communist scheme to conquer South Vietnam by force."

The mining of North Vietnamese harbors ordered by President Nixon seems a good move to many frustrated men who have been on the defensive for 40 days and thus tend to welcome action of almost any kind.

Doubts were expressed, however, that it would effectively seal off North Vietnam from supplies since the country borders China or that it would quickly cripple the offensive capability of the large enemy units fighting in the South.

Supplies for the units fighting near Anloc and in the Central Highlands travel a long route through Laos and Cambodia and expert sources believe that large amounts have been stockpiled.

One American intelligence officer, however, said he expected the mining to have "an almost immediate effect" in Military Region I in the vicinity of Hue. He explained that the North Vietnamese in that area were employing many tanks and trucks requiring large amounts of fuel.



ACTIVITY STEPPED UP: Naval attack plane being launched from carrier Constellation off South Vietnam. President's order will increase attacks to interdict foe's supplies.

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