

Ellsberg Says Escalation Was Part of Nixon's Plan

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By R. W. APPLE Jr. AUG 23 1972

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MIAMI BEACH, Aug. 22 — Dr. Daniel Ellsberg said today that escalation of the war in Southeast Asia was part of President Nixon's strategic planning almost from the moment he took office in January of 1969.

Dr. Ellsberg, who is under Federal indictment for having given the secret Pentagon papers to several newspapers appeared at a joint news conference with Representative Paul N. McCloskey Jr. of California, an antiwar maverick Republican. They said they wanted to make Mr. Nixon's war policies clear before the Republican National Convention renominated him.

Dr. Ellsberg said the President's secret plan to end the war, which he discussed during the 1968 campaign, had two elements: Gradual withdrawal of American ground troops, and simultaneous escalation of certain aspects of the war to prevent the collapse of the regime in Saigon.

Disclosing the contents of a memorandum he prepared in December, 1968, at the request of Henry A. Kissinger, Mr. Nixon's national security adviser, Dr. Ellsberg said it detailed seven optional courses in the war. But Mr. Nixon had number seven, unilateral withdrawal, eliminated from the list almost at once, he asserted.

On many occasions during the campaign, Mr. Nixon made it clear that he heatedly opposed unilateral withdrawal.

The former Pentagon official said that the President embarked "on a conscious policy that precluded any possibility of peace then or now" by using escalation to cover the reduc-

tion of ground troops and to convince Hanoi and its allies that he was "not going to be constrained" by the limitations imposed by his predecessor, Lyndon B. Johnson.

Dr. Ellsberg said that Mr. Kissinger warned the Soviet Ambassador, Anatoly F. Dobrynin, shortly after Mr. Nixon took office, that the bombing of North Vietnam would resume if a settlement of the war was not achieved at the Paris talks.

During the first 10 weeks of his Administration, Dr. Ellsberg said, Mr. Nixon took three overt steps to convince the enemy of the "credibility" of American support for Saigon, none of which were announced at the time.

The steps, according to Dr. Ellsberg, were these: a prolonged Marine ground operation in Laos, called Dewey Canyon I; raids by B-52 heavy bombers in Cambodia, and a reconnaissance mission by Navy frogmen in Haiphong harbor, which the North Vietnamese were permitted to detect.

Word of the first two has since leaked out, but the operation by the frogmen, of which Dr. Ellsberg was unable to supply any details, has remained unknown until today.

The intensified bombing of North Vietnam and the mining of its ports, Dr. Ellsberg said, were an integral part of Mr. Nixon's Vietnam scenario from the start.

Mr. McCloskey, who ran against Mr. Nixon in several primaries, had hoped to introduce some of Dr. Ellsberg's assertions into the platform debate. But he was unable to gain access to the convention floor to bring the matter up.