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Mr. Nixon's Feelings

By Barry Goldwater

WASHINGTON—There is only one way the Congress of the United States can end the war in Vietnam—by forcing a surrender of almost all American objectives in Southeast Asia.

This is a fact of international life which is very often misunderstood by sincere people who honestly want to see the bloodshed and the hostilities in Indochina brought to an end.

Indeed, the only way that a reasonable cease-fire and the return of American prisoners of war can be arranged is through the process of negotiation. The Congress is not empowered to nor is it capable of conducting these negotiations. The only action possible would be to render American military forces completely impotent by cutting off their funds and thus paving the way for a Communist victory of Hanoi's own making.

At this time, the Senate and House Democrats who are threatening to tie President Nixon's hands are threatening to prolong the war. They might just as well send a message to the Communist bosses in Hanoi telling them to "hang in there" until Congressional patience is exhausted.

We already know how delicate are negotiations in Paris. The Administration's critics, however, have ignored this and are embarking on a negative, counter-productive course born of an almost psychopathic desire to embarrass President Nixon and deny him the credit for ending a war which began under one Democrat President and was escalated enormously under another Democrat President.

When Democrat caucuses in Congress threaten to cut off funds if a settlement is not reached by a certain date, they are deliberately encouraging Hanoi's representatives at the peace negotiations to hold off agreement on any kind of a settlement until after that date. I can understand the frustration which is so rampant in Congressional circles because of Hanoi's backing and filling on provisions for arranging a cease-fire. I can also understand the unhappiness caused by the renewed bombing of North Vietnam on orders of President Nixon.

But it stands to reason that the frustration and unhappiness on Capitol Hill cannot begin to equal the frustration and unhappiness in the White House. And it does Mr. Nixon's critics no credit to run around suggesting that President Nixon is gleefully bombing North Vietnam out of a spirit of hatred or revenge.

Anyone who makes this kind of suggestion has to be a Nixon-hater of so rabid a breed that he has lost all sense of proportion and decency.

Those of us who have watched and consulted with the President during the entire Vietnam mess which Lyndon Johnson left on his doorstep can attest to the President's deeply-held wish for a speedy end to the hostilities, the bloodshed and the imprisonment of American fighting men. It is the intensity of his feeling which has given Mr. Nixon the courage to go ahead with the course of action he knew (perhaps better than any other living American) would bring down on him a new torrent of criticism and abuse from many directions, both at home and abroad. And it was the intensity of his desire for an end to the bloodshed that gave him the courage to act in a way he realized would enrage the liberals and the doves and the demagogues on Capitol Hill.

In this whole situation a few basic factors need to be outlined and underscored:

- President Nixon and his advisers have more information than anyone else, in or out of Congress, about the true status of the peace talks and what factors are involved in motivating the Communists to drop their impossible dream of complete control of Indochina.

- That President Nixon and his advisers know better than anyone else, in or out of Congress, how best to bring about a speedy agreement for a cease-fire and the return of American prisoners.

It stands to reason that the President felt renewed bombing of North Vietnam was not only the best but the only way to get the peace talks back on the road to ultimate agreement.

I believe the President and Henry Kissinger recognized in the changing demands of the Hanoi representatives a belief that they could go on arming for the destruction of South Vietnam as long as this task required and without interference from American bombers. I believe the President and Mr. Kissinger recognized in the attitude and the actions of the Hanoi negotiators a belief that they could act militarily without interference in the belief that American public opinion and Congressional sentiment would never sanction a resumption of the bombing of military targets in the Hanoi and Haiphong areas.

Had our negotiators permitted this Hanoi attitude to go unchallenged the peace negotiations would have dragged on until either we gave in on every Communist demand or until the doves in Congress forced an American surrender on Communist terms.

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