

Nixon's Hopes for Saving the Peace



— Jack Anderson

DESPITE WARNINGS that the leopard-spot truce in South Vietnam is impossible to defend and that a military takeover by the Communists is inevitable, President Nixon is determined to preserve the fragile peace he has fashioned.

He hopes to persuade Hanoi to adopt political means to achieve the goal of reunification. In return, he is prepared to help the North Vietnamese rebuild their country.

The President has told associates privately that he expects Vietnam to become reunited in a few years. With this in mind, his objective is three-fold: (1) to keep the reunification process political and, therefore, peaceful; (2) to gain Hanoi's trust by offering generous relief and rehabilitation; and (3) to encourage North Vietnam to remain independent of China, Russia and the United States alike.

The President foresees a Yugoslavia-like North Vietnam that will become less hostile as it grows more independent. He is ready to make a huge investment in this theory by providing ample aid, so Hanoi won't have to be dependent upon China and Russia.

It will be worth the cost, the President contends, if peace can be preserved in Indochina. For a renewal of the conflict and a military takeover by the Communists, he fears, would cause bitter recriminations and deep divisions among the American people.

PRESIDENT NIXON has set friends straight about his views on politics and personalities. In private conversations, he has made these points:

- He doesn't favor former Treasury Secretary John Connally over Vice President Spiro Agnew as his successor but has encouraged both men to seek the presidential nomination. The President indicated he would wait until the verdict of the primaries before he will make his choice. Those privy to his views suspect that the President will withhold his endorsement until the last minute in order to maintain political leverage.

- The President is pleased with Bill Rogers' performance as Secretary of State and won't replace him with Connally or anyone else as long as Rogers wants the job. Rogers has acted as a buffer between Congress and the White House, leaving the President and Henry Kissinger free to formulate foreign policy with a minimum of congressional interference. This is precisely, smiled the President, what he asked Rogers to do.

- Contrary to press speculation, the President never became disenchanted with Henry Kissinger during the agonizing last days of the peace negotiations. Kissinger handled the negotiations superbly and never made a move without authorization, said the President.