

# U.S. to Pull 40,000 Out Of Vietnam by Christmas

By **ROBERT M. SMITH**

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 12— President Nixon announced today that the United States would withdraw 40,000 troops from Vietnam between now and Christmas.

The White House press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, told reporters in Hartford that the President had made the announcement there at a briefing held for news executives from the Northeast. Mr. Nixon also made a four-hour tour of Connecticut with the Republican candidates for the United States Senate and the governorship. [Page 38.]

Mr. Ziegler, traveling with the President, said that the Administration had originally intended to withdraw only 10,000 more troops by Christmas but had increased the figure because of the success of Vietnamization—the program of turning the burden of the fighting over to the South Vietnamese forces—and because of the effectiveness of the allied operation in Cambodia last spring and of what he termed “the posture” of the South Vietnamese forces.

The figure of 40,000 represents no additional withdrawals beyond those already an-

nounced. It is part of the quota of 150,000 set by the Administration to be filled by next spring. What Mr. Ziegler emphasized was the President's decision to increase by 30,000 the number to be pulled out between now and Christmas.

Because of the force requirements imposed by the Cambodian operation, no United States troops were withdrawn from Vietnam during May and June. The withdrawals were resumed in July, and a total of 50,000 have left the war zone since then. If 40,000 more are removed by the end of the year, a total of 60,000 will still have to be withdrawn by May 1, 1971, to meet the schedule originally set.

Meanwhile, Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird said at a Pentagon news conference that he hoped to do away with draft calls by July 1, 1973.

He said he had directed the Secretaries of the Army, Navy and Air Force and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to draw up a list of “priority steps” that could be taken at once to move toward all-volunteer armed forces. At his news

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conference Mr. Laird also made these points:

¶Small numbers of North Vietnamese troops have been encountered lately in Cambodian sanctuaries but the South Vietnamese forces, backed by American air support, should be able to handle the situation "very adequately."

¶The United States has started to replace arms and ammunition expended by the Jordanian armed forces during the recent battles with Palestinian guerrillas.

¶Should the Soviet Union build and operate a missile-submarine base in Cuba, it would be viewed as a "very serious challenge." Last month the United States indirectly warned the Soviet Union against building any such base, on which there was some earlier intelligence data.

## Election Motive Denied

Mr. Laird rejected a reporter's suggestion that the timing of the Administration's discussion of steps to eliminate the draft was aimed at influencing the Congressional elections in three weeks. He said the objective of achieving an all-volunteer force had been announced at the start of the Nixon Administration.

The withdrawal announced by the President today will bring the troop level in Vietnam to 344,000 by the end of the year, according to Mr. Ziegler.

The 70 news executives attending the foreign-policy briefing were addressed by two high-ranking Administration officials, whose remarks may not be reported until Wednesday under the guidelines laid down by the White House. The President arrived at the Hartford Hilton after they had spoken and made some remarks of his own.

Among the news executives at the briefing were officials from The New York Times, The Daily News, Newsday, WCBS, WNBC and WABC.

Other newspapers represented were The Hartford Times, The New Haven Register, The Washington Evening Star, The Baltimore Sun, The Bergen Record, The Evening News, Newark, The Christian Science Monitor, The Boston Globe, The Boston Herald Traveler and The Worcester Telegram.

The briefing followed similar sessions in San Clemente, Calif., New Orleans and Chicago.

## G.O.P. Candidates Appear

Mr. Nixon went to Connecticut, according to White House spokesman, to take part in the briefing and to dedicate an Italian community center in Stamford. He also managed to have at his side and speak glowingly of the Republican candidate for Senator, Representative Lowell P. Weicker Jr. and the Republican candidate for Governor, Representative Thomas J. Meskill.

Discussing the troop with

drawals, Mr. Nixon said:

"On April 20, I announced the progress under the Vietnamization program would permit a reduction of 150,000 Americans in our authorized troop ceiling between then and the spring of 1971. The first 50,000 increments of these withdrawals has already been completed ahead of the Oct. 15 date which I set on June 3.

"The continued progress of the Vietnamization program has made possible an accelerated rate of withdrawal within the over-all schedule announced previously.

"Accordingly, I have instructed Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird to reduce the authorized ceiling of our forces in Vietnam by another 40,000 between now and Christmas. As a result of this decision, there

will be authorized 205,000 fewer Americans in Vietnam by Christmas of this year than when I took office." Mr. Nixon returned to Washington, arriving at Andrews Air Force Base at 5:39 P.M.

Mr. Laird, in speaking of the Middle East at his news conference, hinted that American forces had been prepared to intervene had the Government of King Hussein been in jeopardy of being overthrown by outside forces.

Asked to explain recent reports that the United States came close to the "brink" of warfare in the Middle East, Mr. Laird recounted the alert of American combat forces and the movement of naval reinforcements to the eastern Mediterranean.

"I don't believe that it be-

balance at this time would have to be considered as a very serious act."

Declaring that the House of Representatives' recent cut of about \$2-billion in the current defense budget was a mistake that seriously jeopardized "the national-security posture," he promised an all-out effort to persuade the Senate to restore the bulk of the funds.

hooves us to discuss the specific actions or events that could have taken place had the Syrian Army and the army of Iraq overrun Jordan," he said, adding that the forces of King Hussein were successful in blunting the threat.

Mr. Laird said there was "no evidence that Soviet missile submarines had utilized a Cuban base. He distinguished the forward American Polaris bases at Holy Loch, Scotland, and Rota, Spain, from a possible Soviet base at Cienfuegos, Cuba, by saying that the former were in existence well before the two nations began talks on the limitation of strategic arms.

A new Soviet base in Cuba, he said, would shift the strategic balance, and a "change in