

NIXON DECLARES 'SILENT MAJORITY' BACKS HIS SPEECH

Shows Stacks of Telegrams of Support and a Small Pile of Hostile Ones

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 4 — Rummaging happily through sheafs of laudatory telegrams on his desk, President Nixon said today that his nationwide address last night on Vietnam had already produced tangible evidence of support from "the great silent majority" of Americans.

The President summoned photographers and reporters to his office late this morning to display a desk piled high with telegrams numbering, he said, in the "high thousands." The major theme running through the messages, he said, was simply: "We silent Americans are behind you."

Clearly encouraged, the President acknowledged that one of the major burdens of the address had been to get public support for his policies, and he seemed delighted at what he interpreted as a reassuring response.

'Can Have More Effect'

"I would put it this way flatly," he declared: "This demonstration of support can have more effect on ending the war sooner than anything else."

There had been some Republican efforts around the country before the speech to broaden the support, but there was no clear indication what effect these efforts had on the response.

A Gallup telephone poll indicated that 77 per cent of those who had listened to the speech last night favored Mr. Nixon's policies.

But the speech has drawn considerable criticism from students and Congressmen, among others. Critics in the Senate announced plans for "educational" hearings by the Foreign Relations Committee. These will probably be the setting for a clash between the Administration and its critics.

Senator J. W. Fulbright, chairman of the committee, said he wanted to "develop the real facts" about the war for Mr. Nixon's "great silent majority."

In his major speech last night, the President ruled out an abrupt withdrawal, but pledged an eventual removal of all combat troops, linked to "Vietnamization" of the war.

Although he placed heavy emphasis on "Vietnamization" last night, Mr. Nixon suggested this morning that the "diplomatic track"—the negotiations in Paris — still offered some hope.

"The train will move on that

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NIXON IS ELATED BY BIG RESPONSE

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track," he added, "at a much faster pace in direct relation to the support of the people in the United States."

Asked whether some of the messages had been unfavorable, Mr. Nixon held up a stack about four inches high that was dwarfed by the clutter of favorable telegrams.

Meanwhile, a White House source said this morning that the President believed he could get the United States out of Vietnam in an honorable fashion "if the people stick with him four to six months." The President himself mentioned no such timetable in his address, but the source — who asked not to be identified — repeated it twice.

"If Hanoi believes that American public opinion will stick with the President," the official said, "Hanoi will be more inclined to negotiate seriously." This has been common Administration doctrine despite the absence of any visible progress in Paris.

The source also attempted to define what Mr. Nixon meant by the phrase "silent majority." He characterized it as a large and normally undemonstrative cross-section of the country that until last night refrained from articulating its opinions on the war.

Mr. Nixon's other aides were equally quick to seize the flood of messages as evidence that thousands of Americans had been moved to give some visible sign of their support for the President's cautious withdrawal strategy. The White House Press Secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, said that he and his staff had remained at the White House far into the night taking telephone calls and reading messages, and reported that "over 90 per cent" were favorable.

What neither the White House nor anyone else could furnish was an indication of how many telegrams had come from people already committed to the President's policies and how many from people who had been swayed by the President's address.

Nor was it possible to tell how many telegrams had been inspired by appeals from Mr. Nixon's political allies. The Republican National Committee's weekly newsletter, called Monday, included a request to all party officials "remind everyone you meet today to hear the President's address tonight."

"Ask them to let him know they support his vital plan for stopping the bloodshed in Vietnam," the newsletter said. It has a circulation of 13,000 and is sent to party officials throughout the country. It was mailed Saturday.