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*As We See It*

# 'Closed Session' Demand Is U.S. Stalling Tactic

THE CENTRAL Intelligence Agency, it is reported from Washington, has warned President Nixon that the Vietcong's peace proposal, presented in Paris last month, was designed to embarrass the President and encourage the opponents of South Vietnam's President Thieu.

Ah so. Thanks to the analytical brilliance of the CIA, we can now see the report for what it is: A diabolical scheme to make Mr. Nixon stick to his promise.

The President's promise was that U.S. troops were staying in Vietnam only until all U.S. prisoners of war were released and until the South Vietnamese had a "reasonable chance" of defending themselves.

So the Vietcong proposed that U.S. withdrawal and the release of prisoners be si-

multaneous, and that the U.S. "cease backing the bellicose group headed by Nguyen Van Thieu at present in office in Saigon, and stop all maneuvers, including tricks on elections, aimed at maintaining the puppet Nguyen Van Thieu."

Considering that the administration insists that it's playing no favorites in the October elections in Vietnam, that it has never played favorites, Mr. Nixon has met that Vietcong demand.

And more than once the President has told us that the Saigon government has a reasonable chance. After the invasion of Cambodia last year, he said the Vietnamese army "can hack it." After the invasion of Laos he announced that "Vietnamization has succeeded."

What we fail to understand, then, is why the best response that Ambassador David Bruce could make at Thursday's session of the Paris peace talks was a request for a "restricted session." All the meetings are restricted in that they are closed to outsiders. What Mr. Bruce wanted, he said, was a forum without the need to make public statements, "except to the degree we mutually agree upon."

Since no one is required to make a public statement, the proposal amounted to a request that the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese don't say anything. As such, it is nothing more than a stalling tactic. Mr. Nixon needs it.

The President, we imagine, is not spending his vacation at San Clemente chasing golf balls or watching sunsets. He was already under heavy pressure from the American public to end our involvement in this disastrous war. The disclosures of the Pentagon papers increased the pressure. And now the Vietcong proposal.

Mr. Nixon, we imagine, is worrying hard. How can he get off the hook? With honor, of course.



*"We only committed slaughter;  
you committed indiscretion."*