

WASHINGTON REPORT

Congressman Edwin D. Eshleman

16th District—Pennsylvania



President Nixon deserves better than to face demonstrations and other activities which demand that he undo in nine months all the mistakes that the Johnson Administration created in Vietnam over five years. The fact is that remarkable progress has been made in nine months. A reversal in policy has taken place. We talk now of when the fighting will end rather than when we will begin to see an end to the fighting. American troops have come home and more are on the way. The South Vietnamese government finally has been made to see that it must assume the principal burdens of the war. These are achievements. They deserve recognition as credible attempts to end the conflict in Vietnam.

Naturally, the Nixon achievements in regard to Vietnam do not satisfy those who wish only to see the United States unilaterally and unconditionally withdraw its troops from Vietnam. Two groups talk in such terms, the Communist negotiators in Paris and certain reckless war critics here at home. The similar position of these groups serves to give our enemy hope that the United States does not have a common resolve. Therefore, the Communists are encouraged to prolong the negotiating and the fighting.

No better way exists to stall meaningful peace negotiations than to provide the Communists with the assurance of American withdrawal by a set future time. Nothing is less helpful to the national interest, let alone the national security, than to encourage our enemies throughout the world to believe that irresponsible political pressure on our home front can prevent our military from fighting to stop aggression or from protecting our men in combat. Nothing can doom our role as the world leader of free nations faster than to run out on our obligations in a wholesale fashion.

Those Americans, who are seeking to fan the smoldering public discontent over the war into a fire, are doing the country no service. The individual Congressmen who are trying to enlist the Congress into making

an unconditional legislative surrender are compounding the Vietnamese tragedy by making it far more difficult for the President to negotiate a final settlement. Those people who are

seeking to turn the war into a partisan issue should be roundly condemned for their attempt to buy votes with the painful drama of Vietnam.

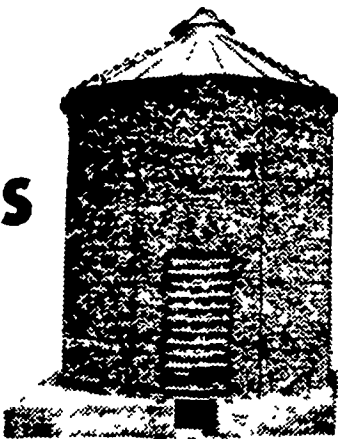
No one questions the desire of all Americans for peace in Vietnam. But perhaps some pointed questions should be leveled at those who, in the name of peace, undermine the President's program for attaining a war settlement. The President has matched his desire for disengagement in Vietnam with

deeds. He deserves the moratorium on public criticism of war conduct which he thinks is vital to U.S. efforts to negotiate peace.

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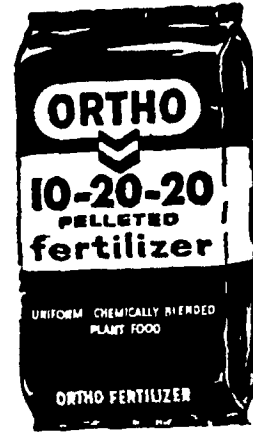
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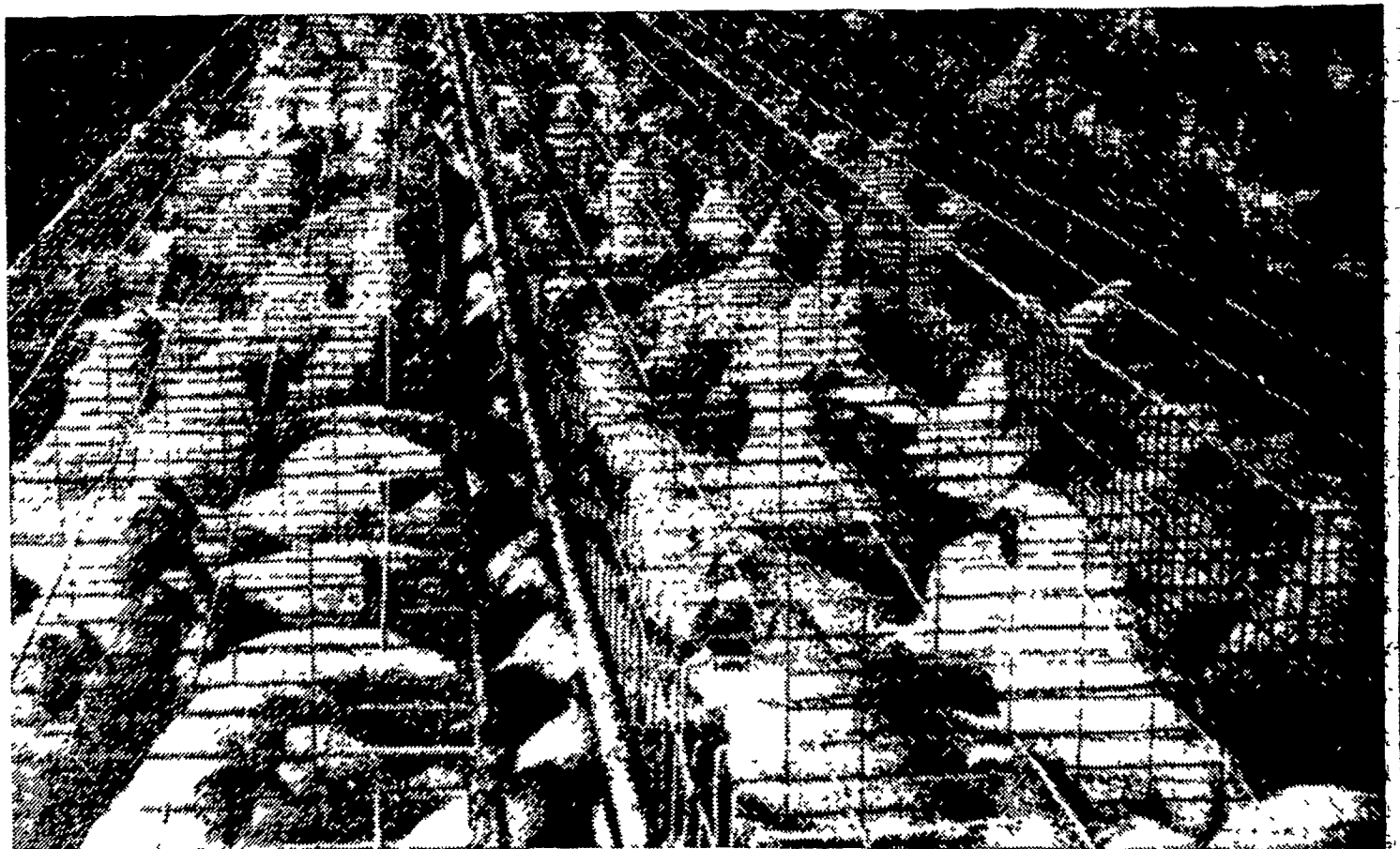
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