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NIXON DEFERS DECISION ON FURTHER TROOP REPLACEMENTS (650)
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IPS WHITE HOUSE REPORTER

SAN CLEMENTE, CALIFORNIA, AUG. 24 / 69 PRESIDENT NIXON HAS DEFERRED HIS FINAL DECISION ON THE NEXT STATE OF U.S. TROOP REPLACEMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM UNTIL AFTER HIS RETURN TO WASHINGTON IN SEPTEMBER.

THE REASON, THE WHITE HOUSE SAID IN MAKING THE ANNOUNCEMENT SATURDAY, IS THAT THE PRESIDENT WANTS TO MAKE A FURTHER ANALYSIS OF THE INCREASE IN THE LEVEL OF ENEMY ACTIVITY IN SOUTH VIETNAM IN MID-AUGUST.

MEANWHILE, THE WHITE HOUSE SAID, THE INITIAL REPLACEMENT OF 25,000 U.S. COMBAT TROOPS IN SOUTH VIETNAM IS PROCEEDING. THE INITIAL REPLACEMENT OF U.S. TROOPS WITH SOUTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS WAS ANNOUNCED JUNE 8 ON MIDWAY ISLAND BY PRESIDENT NIXON AND SOUTH VIETNAMESE PRESIDENT THIEU. AT THAT TIME, MR. NIXON HAD SAID FURTHER TROOP REPLACEMENTS WOULD BE CONSIDERED.

"DURING THE MONTH OF AUGUST," MR. NIXON SAID, "AND AT REGULAR INTERVALS THEREAFTER, WE SHALL REVIEW THE SITUATION, HAVING IN MIND THE THREE CRITERIA I HAVE PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED."

THE THREE CRITERIA WERE, HE SAID, "FIRST, THE PROGRESS INSOFAR AS THE TRAINING AND EQUIPPING OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE FORCES; SECOND, PROGRESS IN THE PARIS PEACE TALKS; AND, THIRD, THE LEVEL OF ENEMY ACTIVITY."

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WHITE HOUSE PRESS RONALD ZIEGLER REFERRED SATURDAY ONLY TO "FURTHER EVALUATION" OF THE THIRD CRITERION AS A REASON FOR DEFERRING THE DECISION.

"THE PRESIDENT IS SATISFIED WITH THE GROWING ABILITY OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE TO ASSUME A GREATER SHARE OF THE RESPONSIBILITY IN THE MILITARY ACTIVITY IN SOUTH VIETNAM," MR. ZIEGLER SAID.

HE HAD NO RPT NO COMMENT ON THE STATUS OF THE PARIS TALKS. THE PRESIDENT HAD CONFERRED WITH AMBASSADOR HENRY CABOT LOUGE, CHIEF U.S. REPRESENTATIVE AT THE TALKS, FOR AN HOUR FRIDAY, BUT NO RPT NO DETAILS WERE MADE AVAILABLE.

"THE PRESIDENT IN MAY OUTLINED HIS PEACE INTENTIONS," MR. ZIEGLER SAID. "PRESIDENT THIEU HAS PUT FORTH PEACE INITIATIVES. IT IS FELT THAT IT IS TIME FOR A RESPONSE TO THESE INITIATIVES" BY THE NORTH VIETNAMESE DELEGATION IN PARIS.

IN DEFERRING HIS TROOP REPLACEMENT DECISION, MR. NIXON WANTS TO ASSESS NOT RPT NOT ONLY THE RECENT LEVEL OF ENEMY ACTIVITY BUT ALSO "THE POTENTIAL LEVEL," ACCORDING TO MR. ZIEGLER. HOWEVER, HE ADDED, "WE DO NOT RPT NOT WANT TO SUGGEST THAT WE HAVE INFORMATION THAT THERE IS THE PROBABILITY OF A NEW ENEMY OFFENSIVE."

PRESS REPORTS HAD EXPECTED AN ANNOUNCEMENT ON FURTHER U.S. TROOP REPLACEMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM THIS WEEK. THE SATURDAY WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT PUSHES FURTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS INTO SEPTEMBER. MR. NIXON IS SCHEDULED TO RETURN TO WASHINGTON FROM HIS FOUR-WEEK CALIFORNIA VISIT AROUND SEPTEMBER 7. THE NEXT TROOP ANNOUNCEMENT

WOULD COME "WITHIN WEEKS OR DAYS" OF THE RETURN, ACCORDING TO MR. ZIEGLER.

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MEANWHILE, THE PRESIDENT CONTINUES WITH A REGULAR WORK SCHEDULE AT THE WESTERN WHITE HOUSE. ON MONDAY HE MEETS WITH HIS URBAN AFFAIRS COUNCIL. ON TUESDAY HE MEETS WITH HIS ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY CONTROL COUNCIL. ON WEDNESDAY HE WILL BE HOST TO FORMER PRESIDENT AND MRS. JOHNSON, FOR A 61ST BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR THE FORMER CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND THEN A DEDICATION OF A GROVE OF GIANT REDWOOD TREES TO BE NAMED FOR MRS. JOHNSON. ON THURSDAY MR. NIXON WILL MEET WITH HIS QUADRIAD -- HIS FOUR TOP ECONOMIC ADVISERS.

THE PRESIDENT ALSO HAS FOUND TIME TO RELAX DURING HIS WORKING VACATION IN HIS HOME STATE. HE HAS PLAYED GOLF NEARLY EVERY AFTERNOON, USUALLY WITH HIS SON-IN-LAW, DAVID EISENHOWER, AND HIS ATTORNEY GENERAL AND CLOSEST CONFIDANT, JOHN MITCHELL. SATURDAY NIGHT HE ATTENDED AN EXHIBITION FOOTBALL GAME IN THE LOS ANGELES COLISEUM.

AT THE MID-POINT IN HIS CALIFORNIA STAY, THE PRESIDENT APPEARS HEALTHY, SUN-TANNED AND RELAXED -- AND EVEN THE HARRIED WHITE HOUSE STAFF AND THE WORKING PRESS HAVE FOUND TIME TO GET DOWN TO THE BEACH. ITEM