

thirds of all of the United Nations, could not and would not be expelled from the United Nations as long as we had anything to say about it, and that as far as our attitude toward Communist China was concerned that that would be governed by Communist China's attitude toward us.

In other words, we would like to normalize relations with all nations in the world. There has, however, been no receptivity on the part of Communist China. But under no circumstances will we proceed with a policy of normalizing relations with Communist China if the cost of that policy is to expel Taiwan from the family of nations.

Mr. Lisagor.

#### TROOP WITHDRAWAL GOALS

Q. You said also in your foreign policy report, that even if the North Vietnamese negotiate seriously in Paris, there will be serious problems left in Laos and Cambodia, and that on the battlefield there would be some hard options to be made about deploying allied troops. Could you clarify those statements, because it suggests that we're going to be there a much longer time than your earlier answer did.

THE PRESIDENT. Well, Mr. Lisagor, our goal is a complete American withdrawal from Cambodia, Laos, and South Vietnam. As you know, that is the proposal I made on October 7th [1970]. I made it, however, on a mutual basis, that we would withdraw, but that the North Vietnamese would withdraw at the same time.

Now, as to what happens after we withdraw, we cannot guarantee that North and South Vietnam will not continue to be enemies. We cannot guarantee that there will not continue to be some kind of guerrilla activities in Laos or even in Cambodia. As far as our own goal is concerned, our proposal is clear and we ask the enemy to consider it: A mutual withdrawal of forces, our forces and theirs. If that happens, we will be glad to withdraw, and then these other nations will have to see whether or not they can handle their own affairs.

Mr. Theis.

#### EXECUTIVE PRIVILEGE

Q. Do you see any limit on the exercise of executive privilege?

THE PRESIDENT. The matter of executive privilege is one that—it always depends on which side you're on. I well recall—and, Mr. Theis, you were covering me at the time when I was a Member of the House—that I raised serious questions as a member of an investigating committee about the executive privilege that was at that time, looking back in retrospect, properly insisted upon by President Truman. And, as President, I believe that executive privilege is essential for the orderly processes of government.

Now, let me just point out, however, what it does not cover. I was very surprised to note the suggestion the

Secretary of State was not available enough for testimony. I checked it out. Over the past 2 years, State Department officials have testified 499 times before the House and the Senate. The Secretary of State himself has testified personally 14 times in 1969 and 15 times in 1970. He has had 167 private meetings in addition to all that with individual Senators or in groups of Senators at the State Department or at his home. As a matter of fact, I don't know how he's had time to talk to me with all the time he is talking to the Congress.

#### U.S. ACTION AND THE OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE

Q. Mr. President, you said earlier that there will have to be a residual force staying in South Vietnam as long as the North Vietnamese continue to hold prisoners.

You've also said on previous occasions that you will not hesitate to take any strong action in order to protect whatever troops remain in South Vietnam, whatever of our troops remain in South Vietnam.

Does this, in effect, mean that despite your Vietnamization plan that you will have to have, in a sense, an indefinite commitment to South Vietnam with troops there indefinitely determined only by Hanoi and their actions?

THE PRESIDENT. I would suggest that you ladies and gentlemen all have always pretty much underestimated what I am capable of doing in terms of withdrawing forces and so forth.

Let me just put it all in perspective, as I can. We have had a great deal of discussion about Laos at the last press conference and I can see that it's still an interest here, and the question of Cambodia still troubles many of you.

I recall at the time that we went into Cambodia, and all of you out there looking on television will remember what I said, I said the purpose of our going into Cambodia was to cut American casualties and to ensure the success of our withdrawal program.

Many of the members of the press disagreed with me. They thought that was not an accurate description of what would happen. They were entitled to that view. Night after night, after I announced the decision to go into Cambodia, on television it was indicated that that decision would have the opposite effect; that it would increase American casualties and that it would mean that it would prolong the war.

Now we can look at it in retrospect. Casualties are one-half of what they were before Cambodia and our withdrawal program has continued and actually we were able to step it up some during the last of 1970.

Now, in Laos, the purpose of the Laotian operation was the same as that of the Cambodian operation. This time no American ground forces, only American airpower.

I said then, and I repeat now, the purpose is not to expand the war into Laos; the purpose is to save American lives, to guarantee the continued withdrawal of our own forces, and to increase the ability of the South Viet-