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Pierpoint urges citizens to influence national leaders

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PIERPOINT URGES
CITIZENS TO INFLUENCE
NATIONAL LEADERS

MISSOULA--

CBS News White House Correspondent Robert Pierpoint Wednesday night urged Americans "to push political leaders" into trying harder to make America a better nation.

Speaking before a summer session crowd of 300 in the Music Recital Hall at the University of Montana, Pierpoint said: "Something is wrong with this country. We can, and we must do better than we have done."

Pierpoint said President Nixon and U.S. Congressmen are trying, "but not too hard," to improve this country and it is up to citizens" to force "elected leaders to trying harder.

Pierpoint, a 13-year veteran of White House news events, criticized President Nixon for ordering American troops into Cambodia, and said it caused a widening of the Vietnam War.

He said Nixon sincerely believes widening the war will shorten it. "I'm not so sure that will work," Pierpoint added.

Pierpoint said the President "believes, as most Americans feel, that involvement in Vietnam was a mistake."

Pierpoint noted that the press of domestic affairs has become greater in the Nixon Administration than it was during the Johnson Administration. He said American cities are decaying and, referring to black Americans, he added: "Hundreds of thousands of Americans no longer believe in the democratic system."

Pierpoint said frustrations of the black man turn to hatred, basically from what the blacks see as American injustices.

Pierpoint, who has covered the activities of the past four Presidents, sharply criticized and warmly praised each President.

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