6-21-1965

Congressional Record - Closing of Glasgow AFB

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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for negotiations which might end the hostilities in Viet Nam. He has met with silence or rebuffs at every turn. U Thant has endeavored in a quiet way to use the facilities of the United Nations. A proposed Commonwealth Group which would go to Moscow, Peking, Hanoi and Washington has been advocated and rebuffed. A representative of the British Government has gone to Hanoi. Mr. Mr. Harriman has gone to Moscow; all with no success.

It is my understanding that in the immediate past Ho Chi Minh has extended an invitation to President Nkrumah of Ghana to come to Hanoi but instead of Mr. Nkrumah going, he is sending Ghana’s High Commissioner in London. Mr. President, the time for wishful thinking is past; the time for accepting the reality is now. Indeed it has been time for quite awhile. We are in, not for forays of our bombers over Viet Nam but instead, for an ordeal of indefinite duration and increasing sacrifice which will persist until the problem can be resolved at the Conference table.

Our policies so far have been mostly in the nature of holding operations, except for forays of our bombers over Viet Nam. The air raids have apparently failed to stop the infiltration of regular and irregular North Vietnamese units into South Viet Nam but instead, in my opinion, have hardened the position of the government and the people of the North and increased their commitment to this war. As evidence thereof, the estimates of the number of active armed Viet Cong has risen sharply since the beginning of the year, despite their reported severe losses.

As the war in Viet Nam increases in tempo, we should keep in mind the possibilities of Communist pressure against us in other parts of Asia and perhaps other parts of the world. I have in mind the uneasy truce which exists in Korea; the possibility of operations against Thailand and Laos and elsewhere.

THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, the situation in Viet Nam, in the words of President Johnson, Secretary McNamara and others, is likely to get worse before it gets better. What the Secretary will report to the President as a result of his week in Viet Nam is, of course, not known; but it appears that the groundwork has been laid for a further intensification of the military effort in Viet Nam. Obviously, if this continues the American presence is going to assume the predominant role in that conflict.

There is talk of a reserve call up, extended enlistments, added defense appropriations and the like. It is even anticipated on our side that the war may go on for 4 or 5 or even 10 years and Ho Chi Minh, President of North Viet Nam, has stated in the last day or so that he is prepared for a war of 20 years duration.

It is interesting to note and not surprising that what is occurring in Viet Nam is now being called “an American war” by one columnist and another columnist states that in South Viet Nam: “It is real war there at last.”

The President has gone down many tracks in an effort to enter into “unconditional discussions” to pave the way
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—SENATE

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, today, there are reports on the news ticker that Prince Souvanna Phouma of Laos has urged Britain to arrange a reconvening of the Geneva Conference. In this connection I ask unanimous consent that the report referred to also be printed at the end of the President’s remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 3.)

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, finally, I would suggest that there is reluctance or reservations or inabilities on the part of one of the co-chairmen of the Geneva groupings of 1961, then in view of the gravity of the situation, the other would appear to me to be eminently justified in issuing the call for a reconvening of the conference on its own. The Geneva agreement of 1961 clearly provides for consultations when there are difficulties. It would probably be entirely in order, in the light of the great difficulties at this time, for any participating nation, and particularly, one of the co-chairmen, the call. I do not see how any State which recognizes the urgent necessity for peace and has eyes to see the present course in Vietnam is tending, can refuse to heed to call for a meeting of this kind. But in any event, there would still be some opportunity for the others to make a contribution to the restoration of peace if the conference is convened.

Perhaps the hour is late, but the old saying “better late than never” applies here and it applies with the greatest of force.

I thank the distinguished Senator from Wisconsin [Mr. Proxmire] for his patience and consideration in yielding to me.

EXHIBIT 1

GENERAL KY WANTS TO "REORGANIZE THE REASON": Winson's Co-chairman requested by Prince Norodom Sihanouk for the purpose of considering ways and means by which to signatories will at least guarantee Cambodia's independence and territorial integrity and this matter only. If Cambodia can be inculcated from the growing conflict, that, in itself, would be a highly significant achievement for peace in Indo-China and Southeast Asia.

But I must say in all frankness, at this time, that a conference based on the consideration of the entire question and called by the co-chairmen would appear to me to be a more desirable alternative. I want to be clear, however, that if such a conference is not possible or feasible at the moment, I believe it is still desirable that a conference on Cambodia alone under the authority of the co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference of 1961 should be called.

There has long been a desire for such a conference on the part of Prince Sihanouk. He made his position on the question very clear some weeks ago in a letter to the New York Times and I ask unanimous consent that its text may be included in the record at the end of my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit No. 2.)

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nista, as well as that which is reserved for my government, after having removed from our region the influence and especially the presence of the free world, and the United States in particular.

In an editorial which will appear shortly in this same review, I concede again that after the disappearance of the United States from our region and the victory of the Communist camp, I myself and the people’s Socialist community that I have created would inevitably disappear from the scene.

I know the Chinese well enough to understand that they cannot be bought and that it is perfectly useless to bend them, or to play their game occasionally in the hope of extracting some ulterior advantage. If I acted thus, I would be despised, and rightly so, by the Chinese people, who would not alter their plans one iota so far as my country is concerned.

But there is one thing that you Americans seem incapable of understanding. And that is that Cambodia has broken off with the United States of America not because it is a “pawn of Peking,” as you write, but for reasons of dignity and national honor that we have * * * placed on Cambodia, you display obvious spite in saying that the fault is mine and that because I allow myself to be “maneuvered by Peking,” the meeting may not take place.

As for the prospect of an international conference taking place on Cambodia, you let it be known that the fault lies with me because I allow myself “to be run by Peking,” that the meeting will not take place.

But then you immediately point out that this conference was intended “in part to provide a way for exploratory conversations on Vietnam.” And this is repeated and emulated by all press of the free world. We Cambodians have come to the conclusion that the neutrality of Cambodia and our territorial integrity do not concern you at all and that this conference is simply, in your eyes, a good way to sound out the ultimate intentions of the Vietnamese and the Chinese in regard to South Vietnam and that you will link our problem to that of Vietnam, by refusing to give any guarantee whatever to Cambodia if the Communists remain transigent on Vietnam.

The People’s Republic of China, the Soviet Union, and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam have stated clearly their determination not to accept the government of Saigon as partner in any international meeting. We, ourselves, are well aware that the government of Saigon has lost control of almost four-fifths of the Vietnamese border with Cambodia, and we are also aware of the fact that Saigon persists in claiming the coastal Khamres Islands, while the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam and Hanoi acknowledge our ownership.

Nevertheless—and in an effort to arrive at a solution in such a difficult context—I advised the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson, who had sent me on May 11 an urgent message, that Cambodia would accept the conference on two conditions:

First of all, that the conference should concern itself with the Cambodian problem to the exclusion of the Vietnamese or Laotian problem. Then, that the interested powers: Great Britain, U.S.S.R., the United States, France, and the People’s Republic of China, should agree in advance on a solution which would satisfy all, on the problem of the representation of South Vietnam.

I pointed out to Mr. Wilson that there were four possibilities: (1) that South Vietnam should not be represented at the conference; (2) or should be represented by the National Liberation Front; (3) or be represented by the Government of Saigon; (4) or finally be represented bilaterally: one seat to the NLF, which is supported by the Socialist camp, and another seat to the Government of Saigon, which is backed by the free world.

I informed the British Prime Minister that Cambodia stands ready in advance to accept whatever solution regarding the representation of South Vietnam would be mutually approved by the great powers of the East and the West.

This will prove to you, I hope, that we are not the puppets of Peking and that we do not put “spokes in any wheels” in order to defeat a project that the United States has put so long on “ice” and which now they discover has so many merits.

NORodom SIHANOUK,

Head of State of Cambodia.


EXHIBIT 3

LONDON.—Premier Prince Souvanna Phouma of Laos urged Prime Minister Harold Wilson today to help arrange new international talks on Indochina to negotiate for peace in Vietnam.

The neutralist Laotian leader, here on a 2-day official visit, met Wilson and other British Ministers at lunch in 10 Downing Street. Diplomats reported Souvanna stressed that so long as the Vietnam war goes on the security of nearby Laos and Cambodia will remain in jeopardy.

North Vietnamese supply lines to the Vietcong in the south run through Laotian territory controlled by the Red-led Pathet Lao. This has attracted U.S. bomber attacks on Laotian territory bordering South Vietnam.

Informants said Souvanna, noting the failure of all efforts to date to bring about a Vietnam peace parley, suggested the British and Soviet cochairmen reconvene the 1964 Geneva Conference on Indochina. This dealt with Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos in separate settlements. Souvanna, who conferred in Paris yesterday with President Charles de Gaulle, claimed French backing for his idea.

Wilson and Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart were sympathetic to Souvanna’s suggestion but were doubtful whether it would prove to be effective, the sources said.