8-13-1966

Operation Bold (Blast Off Libby Dam)

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — SENATE

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS, 1967

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair lays before the Senate the unfinished business.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore resumed the consideration of the bill (H.R. 15941) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1967, and for other purposes.

Mr. LONG of Louisiana. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The clerks will call the roll.

Mr. LONG of Louisiana. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded. The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill is open to amendment.

Mr. RUSSELL of Georgia. Mr. President, for myself and for the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts [Mr. SALTMAN], I send to the desk an amendment and ask to have it reported. The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The amendment will be stated.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Page 3, line 21, after "1967": Insert: "Provided further, That notwithstanding any other provision of law, until June 30, 1967, the President may order any member in the Ready Reserve of an armed force, who has not served on active duty other than for training, to active duty for not more than 18 consecutive months: Provided further, That in order to achieve fair treatment as between members in the Ready Reserve who are being considered for active duty under this section consideration shall be given to—

(a) family responsibilities; and

(b) employment necessary to maintain the national health, safety, or interest"

Mr. RUSSELL of Georgia. Mr. President, this amendment is short, concise, and clear. It grants the President of the United States the authority to order to active duty any member of the Ready Reserve of any of the Armed Forces of the United States who has not served on active duty other than for training hereafter.

At the outset I wish to say that this amendment is not intended in any way to reflect on the members of the Reserve forces of this country. Unfortunately, news accounts of my statement or my interviews with reporters after the committee reported the bill, indicated that I said all of the 133,000 men who had not been trained, the so-called REP's in the Reserve enlisted program, were seeking to escape the dangers and hardships of war, and that it was some kind of scandal.

I never made such a statement and I did not intend to infer that such was the case.

I did state and I repeat here that there have been individual cases that amount to a scandal where people have undertaken a desire for active duty in the regular forces by finding places in the Reserve units. They are in a great minority, and their action can in no wise be attributed to the great mass of Reserve forces.

I recall distinctly in this same interview that I stated I was not reflecting on the entire Reserve; that I had always supported the Reserves. Unfortunately, that portion of my statement was omitted from the news account.

The Reserve organizations of this country are not responsible for the conditions which exist today. They have been a bulwark of strength in every period of danger that this Nation has ever met and the overwhelming mass of them are ready and willing to serve in this or in any other emergency that threatens the security and welfare of our Nation.

Mr. President, this amendment is offered for two reasons. In the first place, I am seeking to bring about as nearly as possible, an equality of service to our Nation in time of war.

This has been done under existing conditions when the Reserves assigned to units are not subject to call except on the basis of unit call-up. I have always supported universal military training. I believe that every young man in this Nation who is physically able to do so should serve for 6 months of active military training; and until we do adopt such a policy, Mr. President, we will not be able to avoid the allegations of favoritism, and the difficulties which arise because some are able to go to college and others are not.

I am very proud of the fact that on one occasion in my career, perhaps the hardest legislative fight in which I was ever engaged, was the one in which the Senate adopted by the margin of 1 vote a bill providing for universal military training for every young American when he became 18 years old. The bill died in the other body. I still say that without that type of legislation, we will never find an equitable method of distributing service under the military forces of the United States and in the uniform of the United States.

All of us are familiar with the fact that the physical and mental requirements for duty in the Reserves and in the National Guard are higher than they are for Selective Service. Therefore, the men who are isolated from the war by virtue of being in the Reserve units are, on the average, superior mentally and physically to those being drafted and sent to Vietnam.

Mr. LAUSCH. Mr. President, will the Senator from Georgia yield for a question?

Mr. RUSSELL of Georgia. I am happy to yield to the Senator from Ohio. I have always thought that the Reserve forces, as the Senator explains, should be an integral part of our national defense. I am also happy to yield to the Senator from Georgia.

Mr. LAUSCH. Mr. Senator, you have been here during the entire time the Reserve forces have been in existence. Do you think the Reserve forces have served the country in a manner that could be esteemed? I would like to quote your statement that the Reserve forces have been a bulwark of strength in every period of danger that this Nation has ever met. Would you like to comment on the Reserve forces?
Mr. President, throughout the years, I have participated in the enactment of very law which has increased the military strength of this nation. I have supported legislation at times when the war was not as it is today, which required that young men who had already done their duty be forced to go back to war. In times of peace, I remain in the Reserve components of the Military Establishment for 4 years or more. At one time the requirement for availability was 8 years. That is the backbone of the Reserve power today, despite what anyone in his misguided enthusiasm may say about it.

The distinguished Senator from South Carolina, says that all they have to do is to call up a unit. Mr. President, even if it were advisable to do so, that statement is not correct. Under the laws of the United States, we cannot call up a unit. If it were advisable to do so, I do not think it would have made much difference, but after we have waged this war for so long, a declaration of a national emergency would make us look ridiculous in the eyes of the world—to declare a state of emergency in regard to a third-rate power like North Vietnam.

My amendment is an opportunity to contribute to the cause of equality. I do not know whether the President of the United States will use it or not. I have never discussed it with him. But that does not excuse me from trying to remove an inequality in the law. The National Guard Association may be opposed to this, but they have a floor of 380,000, and there are 421,000 in the National Guard today. They are 41,000 above the strength in the first place.

Mr. YOUNG of North Dakota. Mr. President, will the Senator from Georgia yield?

Mr. RUSSELL of Georgia. I yield.

Mr. RUSSELL of Georgia. I always try to deal absolutely fairly with the Senate. I have no assurances that this amendment would be applied at all. I have never discussed it with the President or with the Secretary of Defense. As to the callup of troops, it may not be used at all.

If they do apply it, in my opinion, they will call men from the Reserve units whose military occupational specialty—that is, the MOS—is in short supply in Vietnam, and the men who have these specialties will be able to help there. In addition, men who have any other special skills, such as the Senator from Louisiana pointed out, in the construction of port facilities might be called up. They might call up some men who had skill in engineering. I cannot conceive of doing that with a large number of foot soldiers or infantrymen. I am quite confident that they would not, but it would open up this field to a point which, if there were any personnel who had a specialty which could assist the men who are in Vietnam, I would call them up and send them over to help.