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Senate

MONDAY, AUGUST 14, 1967

ESCALATION OF VIETNAM WAR

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, bombing within 10 miles or 1 minute away from China's border is a very dangerous extension of the war. It brings us that much closer to the brink of a possible confrontation with China which could be made probable through a miscalculation, an error, or otherwise.

The closer we get to China increases the possibility of such a confrontation and also enhances the chances that the internal difficulties which beset China today, and have for some months past, will be either forgotten or put aside and all factions in China will be drawn together as one. Let no one fool himself as to what a confrontation with China would mean, because it would bring about a drastic revision at home through a tax increase well beyond the 10 percent proposed. It would call for price and wage controls. It would bring about a stepped-up draft call and make mandatory a callup of the Reserves and the National Guard.

There have also been suggestions on the last day or so that the mining or quarantining of Haiphong could be something we could do with a minimum of mines and manpower. Should we undertake this highly questionable move, it would create the possibility of a confrontation with the Soviet Union. The implications of these two moves could bring about retaliatory measures in Korea, Berlin, and elsewhere. It would be well for all of us to consider the possibilities, probabilities, and implications inherent in the first tactic now underway and the second which has been suggested by high-ranking military and congressional leaders.

It is my understanding that proposals have been made by some to the effect that bombing of the north should be stepped up to get at the point of origin of men and supplies. In my judgment, it would be far more preferable to consolidate and concentrate our activities to South Vietnam and to follow through on the Cooper formula to interdict the flow of men and materiel along the Ho Chi Minh trails at the point of penetration at the 17th parallel in Laos and Vietnam and to extend the defensive barrier along the parallel across the demilitarized zone into Laos.

It appears to me that our latest move and latest suggestions, if implemented, would only serve to stiffen Hanoi's spine, keep her further away from the conference table, and make the possibility of a negotiated peace much more difficult to achieve.