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CAMBODIA

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, the distinguished minority leader has given me a copy of the statement he made last night at the conclusion of the address by the President of the United States. I appreciate the courtesy of the distinguished minority leader. I think that his statement is a temperate one and now would like to make a statement of my own.

Mr. President, the latest casualty figures from Vietnam as of a week ago yesterday amounted to a total of 322,750 casualties. Of that total, approximately 50,000 have been killed in Vietnam and Southeast Asia. The rest have been wounded.

I do not have the official figures from the Department of Defense yet, but it is my understanding that, as of yesterday, approximately another 100 Americans were killed and something on the order of 1,250 were wounded last week.

Mr. President, these figures come to my office every week; I carry them in my pocket to serve as a reminder of the
mistaken war in which we are engaging and the tragedy which has been the norm during the entire tenure of that war.

Mr. President, I listened with grave interest to the speech of the President of the United States speaking to the American people about the situation which has developed in Cambodia. Previous to that speech, Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives met with the President. He gave us an explanation of the situation with reference to the sanctuaries extending from north to south on the Cambodian border. He gave us, too, the reasons why, on the advice of his senior advisers, he had approved the present operation.

I have listened, as have the Presi­dents of the United States, to the concern and interest which have been expressed in recent days by the people of the United States in respect to the conduct of the war in Southeast Asia. I have listened, also, to the frustration which has been expressed by the American people with respect to the war in general. I have listened, too, to the dissatisfaction which has been expressed with respect to the lack of clear thinking and the lack of a clear purpose in the conduct of the war in Vietnam.

Mr. President, too many people have presented an illusion that this is a "golden opportunity" to save American lives and to shorten the war. The stepup into Cambodia can do just the opposite. It may very well increase the fighting and bring it into an Indochinese war, increase U.S. costs by billions, increase U.S. casualties which now number—almost 50,000 dead or wounded or a total of close to 325,000 American soldiers. At the same time, it may well accentuate problems at home and increase the disaffection among our people.

On April 16, I expressed my thoughts on Cambodia at a time when I said that I did not advocate any kind of aid in any form, or the sending of American personnel, to the United States will not be set up in the South Vietnamese themselves, all the South Vietnamese will be the direct beneficiaries of the war. It is a war for the American people to do so. The American government cannot make a decision to withdraw itself.

If there is a way, Mr. President, which will safeguard the interests of the Na­tion, it lies in a prompt and un­der further delay, negotiations now. The spread of the fighting into Laos and Cambodia, it seems to me, has put a settlement beyond the scope of the Paris conference. Therefore, the President, I believe, ought not to let drop the Soviet Union's recent diplomatic suggestion—and it has not—that the Geneva conference may have to be reconvened. It, as far as I am concerned, there might well go forth a call to merge the Paris talks into a revival of the Geneva conference of 1961-62 on Laos, with the membership of the conference appropriately broadened in order to consider the situation of all Indochina and the Southeast Asian mainland. If it is reluctant now to pursue the matter after having suggested it, then let the call be issued by another nation. At any rate, the President must take the initiative to join or the other Geneva conferences to join in a reconvening or to set forth alternatives. We will know then with whom we can hope to proceed to­gether to find a solution by negotiations and with whom we cannot.

It is time, too, for this Nation to de­lineate a clear and unwavering policy in support of the neutralization—the guaran­teed neutralization—of all of Indochina, if not the entire Southeast Asian mainland. It is time to join with other outside powers in bona fide multilateral guarantees of the neutrality of the region. On that basis, this Nation should be prepared to terminate forthwith its military participation in the various con­flicts on the Southeast Asian mainland, to depart militarily therefore and to work in concert with others for the restora­tion and protection of the free nations.

Mr. President, in conclusion I want to say that this has not been an easy speech for me to make. I have great respect for the Office of the Presidency. No individual chosen by the people to hold
that office. I am aware of any President's responsibilities in the field of foreign affairs and as Commander in Chief. I realize that the ultimate responsibility lies with a President. But I am also aware of the fact that as a Senator I have a direct responsibility to the people of my State and that as a Senate we have responsibilities to the entire Nation.

Therefore, I must reiterate my belief that we are embarked on an ill-advised adventure and that there is grave danger the Potus Beak may well turn out to be an albatross before it is done.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a speech which I made in the Senate on April 16, 1970, relative to Cambodia, be printed in the Record at this point.

There being no objection, the speech was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, on yesterday, the press carried reports of an urgent request for military aid from the government which is now in control in the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh. This request comes hardly as a surprise. What is surprising is the rapidity with which it follows the military coup against Prince Sihanouk.

In the circumstances, it would be desirable to sort out what we know about the Cambodian situation and what we do not know. What happened in a decade and the only oasis of peace in Indochina has been turned into a bloody battlefield in the space of one month. The spreading conflict already involves a civil war between the Cambodians who remain loyal to Prince Sihanouk and those who follow the military government which overthrew him. The conflict already involves deep incursions into Cambodia by North Vietnamese and South Vietnamese, an extension of the battlefield which has been previously avoided throughout the Vietnamese war. The conflict already involves the potential of an ugly genocide by government-stimulated mob-action against the several hundred thousand Vietnamese civilians—for the most part farmers, fishermen and traders who come from both North and South Viet Nam and who have lived for decades in reasonable peace in Cambodia.

In short, the Pandora's Box which was held shut by the leadership and diplomacy of Prince Sihanouk is now wide open. For years, Cambodia was in the eye of the Indochinese hurricane; now it is swept up in the full fury of a racial, ideological and militarist storm.

It is scarcely a month since the successor government claimed authority over Cambodia and this government is already in deep trouble. Its urgent appeal for aid is a broadside which has gone to Communist governments and non-Communist governments—apparent to anybody who will give support. It comes from a government whose earliest acts include a declaration of martial law and a suspension of personal liberties in a country which did not have martial law and which previously had provided a greater degree of personal freedom than most countries in Southeast Asia.

While the appeal for aid is directed to the world in general, it is reasonable to assume that it is aimed primarily at this country. Where else would urgent aid of any consequence come from in this situation if not from this nation directly or through nations in the area which are supplied by us?

Some may find it difficult to resist an appeal for aid to this country from any source. Some may find the present military government more to their liking than its predecessor and, hence, more "worthy" of aid. Some may ask whether this Southeast Asian country will topple under the domino theory if we do not respond to the appeal for aid.

Some may note that it is just some arms-aid that is being sought, not American forces.

If these observations sound familiar it is because they are the airen's songs which have beckoned us time and again ever deeper into the morass of Southeast Asia. If there is ever a time to resist them it is when they are just beginning to become audible.

The fact is that we do not know anything of the character or competence of the government in Phnom Penh which has issued this appeal for aid. We do not know how far its authority extends outside the capital or beyond the main roads. We do not know what acceptability it may have among the Cambodian people. We do not know what will emerge in the end in the way of a Cambodian government from the present upheaval.

We do know, or ought to know on the basis of experience that even with a massive infusion of American equipment we are likely to have minimal constructive effect on that upheaval and we will open the door to another destructive impact on our own national interests. We do know, too, or we should know at this late date—after Viet Nam, after Laos—that each deepening of our involvement in Indochina began with an input of well-meaning aid.

I ask unanimous consent to the making a wise start in pointing the national course away from our participation in the tragic war in Indochina. It is to be hoped that there will be no deviation from that course. The way to get out is not to go further in—in any way, shape or form. The road out of Viet Nam for this nation does not lead by way of arms-supply or any other involvement in this new extension of the Indochinese tragedy into Cambodia.