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September 27, 1971

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

Mr. President:

In an effort to seek out and bring back Americans held captive or missing in Indochina, the issue of Viet Nam will be raised again. It will be raised in the form of an amendment to the pending measure. The Senate will be asked once again to join in seeking a conclusion to this tragedy that continues to wrack and split the nation. It should not take long to consider the amendment because it expresses an action which the Senate has taken already. In every respect, save one, the amendment is identical to the Viet Nam withdrawal amendment adopted decisively just three months ago.

The amendment calls for a total withdrawal from Indochina within six months on condition only that our Americans held-captive or located among the missing-in-action be released. The change is solely an adjustment in time from the nine-months span of the previous amendment to allow for the lapse of three months.

In simple terms, this amendment would fuse the cooperation of the Congress--the legislative branch of our government--to the President's direction of policy in order to bolster this nation's objective of withdrawal from Indochina. It would assure withdrawal on a single condition--that the President reach an agreement whereby our prisoners of war and those missing in action who can be located--the POW's and MIA's--be returned home. The time frame, I repeat, is six months, six months from the date of enactment of this bill.



It is my hope that this effort will be accepted in the spirit in which it is made. Within the context of the independent responsibilities of the Senate, it is an effort to cooperate with the President in bringing about an end, once and for all, to this tragic mistake.

There are good reasons for joining the Congress and the President in a national policy of full withdrawal from Viet Nam. The repeal of the Tonkin Gulf resolution, for instance, struck down last year what many believe was the sole legal foundation for involvement. There is, moreover, the upcoming election in South Viet Nam, the circumstances of which have led others to note the increasing urgency of our withdrawal. Insofar as I am concerned, the most over-riding reason has been and remains the utter waste of this involvement. It is the waste of lives, the waste of tens of billions of dollars as the needs of cities and towns and other urgencies within the nation are compelled to stand aside. It is the waste of spirit as the nation remains torn by the divisiveness of the war.

So there is ample cause to get out. That is what the amendment proposes, a final getting-out of Viet Nam within six months, tied only to the complete release of the POW's and recoverable MIA's. It proposes, in a sentence, a decisive end to this tragic chapter in the nation's history.

In meeting that objective it should be said that the amendment works hand in hand with the tripod approach which has been set down by the President by protecting the three parties most affected. The assurances are there for all: assurances to the South Vietnamese people themselves that they be given a reasonable chance to survive freely and elect their own government; assurances to the POW's and surviving MIA's that they be



guaranteed safe passage home; assurances to young Americans--draftees in large part--who are still being compelled to lay down their lives in Southeast Asia, that there will be a quick end to the killing.

That is the three-fold objective of the amendment and it fits with the tripod of the President's approach. It should be noted in this connection that next Sunday the South Vietnamese go to the polls in an election which, with justification, has come under a cloud. Such as it is, nevertheless, it is an election and it forms the first leg of the tripod of the President's approach which is to give the people a chance to choose a government.

In going to the polls next Sunday, moreover, the people of South Viet Nam do so under an armed-forces umbrella of more than a million South Vietnamese. For the last 17 years, they have been advised, trained and supported by the United States. They stand as one of the world's largest military establishments. There is, thus, no question that the South Vietnamese have that reasonable chance to survive freely. That is the second leg of the tripod which the President has set up as a basis for U. S. withdrawal.

The third is based on the POW's and MIA's who, to me, represent the most tragic aspect of this entire issue. Insofar as I am personally concerned, the fate of these men, at this late date, is the only significant basis for this nation to remain any longer in Viet Nam. To the POW's and MIA's, this amendment offers not an expressed intention or a helicopter-in-the sky but a sober assurance of action on their release and recovery. It is the assurance that inside of six months after a ceasefire, concrete steps



will be taken to locate them and to secure their release. No more pressing issue exists at this late date in the war than that of seeking out and bringing back the men held captive or the recoverable MIA's. Indeed, it must be faced in all candor that the prospects are dim for the return of any of these men unless and until we decide that for this nation the war in Viet Nam is completely over and act accordingly. It is unfair and irresponsible to stimulate the hopes of those men and their families with promises of action where action is not feasible. Unless and until this nation moves in the direction set forth in the amendment, either by Presidential directive or law, I repeat, it is highly doubtful that the POW's or the MIA's will return to this nation. That is the true warranty of the amendment. It is a sober assurance of the release, forthwith, of the POW's and MIA's who survive.

The purpose of the amendment is clear. Except as indicated, its content is unchanged from what the Senate, by vote of 61 to 38, has already adopted. If the Senate votes to restate its position and the House now concurs, it would represent, I think, a constructive action by the legislative branch of government which complements the Administration's policy to the end/<sup>that</sup> the tragedy in Viet Nam will be concluded at last.

I send the amendment to the desk, Mr. President, and ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the Record at this point.



SXXXXXX  
XXXXXXX

H. R. 8687

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Referred to the Committee on ..... and ordered to be printed.

Ordered to lie on the table and to be printed.

AMENDMENT

Intended to be proposed by Mr. MANSEFIELD.....

(Insert title of bill below)

to ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ bill

H.R. 8687, an Act to authorize appropriations during the fiscal year 1972 for procurement of aircraft, missiles, naval vessels, tracked combat vehicles, torpedoes, and other weapons, and research, development, test, and evaluation for the Armed Forces, and to prescribe the authorized personnel strength of the Selected Reserve of each Reserve component of the Armed Forces, and for other purposes,

viz: At the end of the bill add a new title as follows:

TITLE VI - TERMINATION OF HOSTILITIES IN INDOCHINA

Sec. 601. It is hereby declared to be the policy of the United States to terminate at the earliest practicable date all military operations of the United States in Indochina, and to provide for the prompt and orderly withdrawal of all United States military forces not later than six months after the date of enactment of this section subject to the release of all American prisoners of war held by the Government of North Vietnam and forces allied with such Government. The Congress hereby urges and requests the President to implement the above expressed policy by initiating immediately the following actions:

- (1) Establishing a final date for the withdrawal from Indochina of all military forces of the United States contingent upon the release of all American prisoners of war held by the Government of North Vietnam and forces allied with such Government, such date



to be not later than six months after the date of enactment of this Act.

(2) Negotiate with the Government of North Vietnam for an immediate cease-fire by all parties to the hostilities in Indochina.

(3) Negotiate with the Government of North Vietnam for an agreement which would provide for a series of phased and rapid withdrawals of United States military forces from Indochina in exchange for a corresponding series of phased releases of American prisoners of war, and for the release of any remaining American prisoners of war concurrently with the withdrawal of all remaining military forces of the United States by not later than the date established by the President pursuant to paragraph (1) hereof or by such earlier date as may be agreed upon by the negotiating parties.