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Congressional Record - Foreign Aid

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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What we have done so far is to bring out two bills; and we have increased the military allowance by something on the order of \$318 million. Yes, we placed the emphasis once again on the area of destruction, weapons or military might.

Last night I voted against the economic-humanitarian bill which was before us. I did so with some trepidation and with some real concern, because that was a good bill, but I thought I saw the possibility of the old concept of foreign aid being recreated, the old pattern being revived, so I resolved by doubts and voted against that bill. On the basis of the way the Senate has acted so far today, I have no apologies and no regrets for my vote on yesterday. I see here the makings of what amounts to the same old game of foreign aid under new shells.

As I said 2 weeks ago, this is a watershed. What the Senate, what the Congress, what this country will do abroad is at stake in this decision.

I feel very sorry for the Laotians. I feel very sorry for the Cambodians. I feel very sorry for the Vietnamese. But I feel more sorry for the American people, I feel sorry for the American lives which have been lost, 56,000; for the wounded, 303,000; for the totally disabled, 35,000; and for the POW's and missing in action, I think we must bring this holocaust which the foreign aid program has underwritten to a halt somehow, some way; the cost has been beyond all proportions.

One American lost in war in that part of the world was one American too many, and \$1 spent in war in that part of the world was \$1 too many. What have we got out of it? Drug addiction, low morale, and increasing crime, just to mention a few of the results of this misadventure in a region where we had and have no vital interest.

So I would hope that the Senate would consider what it did 2 weeks ago tomorrow night—in my judgment, a wise action—and not undo it tonight. We are again on a threshold which reaches toward a new summit or a threshold of once again retreating into the same old pattern, after 25 years of programs which have steadily degenerated, and after the expenditure of \$143 billion of the people's money.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I have said very little during the course of this debate because it would only be repetition of what has been said before. I do not intend once again to list the litany of the losses—approximately 360,000 casualties—which this country has suffered in Vietnam. I do not intend to call again the attention of the Senate to the fact that we have helped create about 1 million refugees in Vietnam, 700,000 in Cambodia, and 500,000 in Laos. I do not intend to mention, except in passing, what this war has cost this country in treasure and what it is costing us now in problems.

The Senate, 2 weeks ago tomorrow night, marched up the Hill. I wonder what the Senate will do when the final rollcall comes.