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### Congressional Record S. 6717 - Post-War Peace and Aid to Vietnam

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April 5, 1973

In a moment I shall yield to the distinguished majority leader, but before doing so, I ask that the clerk read the pending amendment.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill, insert the following: No funds made available by the Congress to any department or agency of the Government may be obligated or expended for the purpose of providing assistance of any kind, directly or indirectly, to or on behalf of North Vietnam, unless specifically authorized hereafter by the Congress.

Mr. HARRY F. BYRD, JR. Mr. President, I yield to the distinguished majority leader.

Mr. MANSFIELD. I thank the distinguished Senator from Virginia.

Mr. President, I shall support the pending amendment, because it is in line with the statement made by Dr. Henry Kissinger when he met with a group of Senators in this building after his return in January, I believe, and it is in line with statements made by the President of the United States, to wit, that before any action was taken, the administration would present to Congress any proposal which had been tentatively agreed to or which was under the most serious consideration at that time.

But, Mr. President, in accepting or rejecting the amendment, we will not dispose of the question of aid to North Vietnam or, indeed, to all of Indochina. That question will arise and arise again in the Senate until it is faced on the merits of the issue. That is as it should be; and that is as it will be. So, I want to set forth my position at this time on the substance of the question.

I have already expressed my full support of the President's negotiating effort which has brought about a tentative cease-fire in Vietnam and Laos, a withdrawal of U.S. Forces from Vietnam, and the return of the prisoners of war. As an essential of the success of those negotiations, the President asked for an invest-

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ment in peace. A part of that investment, as he made clear, is in the form of aid in the reconstruction of the war's havoc throughout Indochina.

There are those who are against that aid, who would find fault with the President's proposal. There is, in particular, a reluctance to go along with his proposal to provide postwar assistance to North Vietnam. It is an understandable reluctance. Feelings run strong now, as they did with regard to Germany and Japan at the end of World War II and as they do at the end of every war. Feelings aside, the fact remains, Mr. President, that we paid a terrible price, in a futile effort to fight this war to an end: 303,000 Americans wounded in combat, almost 46,000 Americans killed in combat, 10,300 Americans dead as a result of nonhostile action, overall 360,000 American casualties, including more than 25,000 paraplegics, quadriplegics, or disassembled men as they have been called. The monetary cost? We have spent between \$130 and \$140 billion to date; the eventual full cost may be expected to go to \$450 billion and to saddle the people of this Nation with debts well into the next century. Moreover, what of the divisions produced by the war at home? The drug infestation? The inflation? The dwindling value of the dollar? The decline in respect for our political institutions?

Those are some of the costs attributable to the war, and if we can bear them, it seems to me, Mr. President, that we can and should bear part of the more nominal and constructive costs of healing the wounds of Indochina. There, too, in all parts of that war-torn area, the suffering has been real and overwhelming: Hundreds of thousands of men, women and children killed and maimed; vast areas of forest and croplands reduced to deserts; thousands of cities, towns and hamlets leveled; millions made homeless.

Peace is healing. Peace is the putting aside of anger. Peace is reconstructing and building. So on February 27, I expressed the hope and desire to cooperate with the President of the United States in his efforts to embark on a decade of peace, the first step of which would be the negotiated end of the war in Indochina. I indicated at that time that I would support his proposals for peace even though they involved postwar aid to all of Indochina. I offered that support, however, subject to various criteria which I was then trying to delineate in my own mind. One of those criteria, Mr. President, is now clear to me and it is best that it be set forth at this time.

I am inclined to support the President's position on Indochina, provided, in the first place, that a cease-fire is, in fact, reasonably operative throughout Indochina and we are militarily out of that situation lock, stock, and barrel. It is with regret, therefore, that I note that such is not the situation today. Where is the peace? Where is the disengagement? How can we speak of rebuilding when B-52 bombers, day after day, are still making some of the heaviest bombing runs of the war? When we continue to face the prospect of more casualties, more POW's and more MIA's?

Where is this transpiring, Mr. President? In Cambodia, of all places. Cambodia, never was more than vaguely peripheral to the conflict in Vietnam and only by a great stretch of reason could it be connected with the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam. The ill-fated excursion across the Cambodian borders 3 years ago had no discernible effect on the outcome of the conflict other than to add greatly to our costs and casualties and saddle us with still another dependent government. Cambodia's internal political situation never was and is not now remotely connected with any reasonable interest of the people of the United States.

Yet, here we are at this late date digging ourselves deeper into another tragic military involvement, inflicting one more vast compass of devastation on one more hapless land, in support of one more irrelevant government, in one more obscure region of Indochina. In my judgment, to continue to pursue this vein is to cast into doubt all that has been achieved by way of negotiation in Vietnam.

So, Mr. President, I reiterate my inclination to support the President's position, which is a valid one in my judgment, as a measure of decency, as a share of our responsibility for developing international peace, and as a contribution to the healing of the wounds of a terrible war. But I cannot and I will not vote for funds for reconstruction in North Vietnam or South Vietnam or wherever in Indochina if we continue to put out great sums to pay for continual bombing runs over Cambodia which risk the ruin of more American lives. Unless this last-gasp practice ends forthwith, the war in Indochina will not be ended. In the circumstances, I can see little point in supporting any aid program for any part of Indochina.

Mr. PROXMIRE. Will the Senator from Montana yield briefly?

Mr. MANSFIELD. Yes, indeed.

Mr. PROXMIRE. May I ask the majority leader if, by his speech, in which he places a series of conditions on his support for aid to North Vietnam, if—

Mr. MANSFIELD. To Indochina.

Mr. PROXMIRE. Indochina, that is right—not only North Vietnam, South Vietnam, but any aid to Indochina—if he feels that the Byrd amendment as modified, and as such is dramatically improved, would not receive his support? As the amendment reads now, aid to North Vietnam shall be prohibited unless specifically authorized hereafter by Congress.

Mr. MANSFIELD. I have indicated my full support for the Byrd amendment as modified, because it is strengthening and recognizes the responsibility of Congress. It fits in very well with what Dr. Henry Kissinger told us when he met with Senators in this part of the Capitol in late January, at which time he said that any proposals which would be forthcoming would first be sent to Congress for consideration, discussion, debate, and approval or disapproval. The President of the United States has said the same thing. What we are doing is based on what has been said before, but put-

ting it down in the form of an amendment which will have the effect of law.

Mr. PROXMIRE. If the Senator will yield a little further, let me say I am delighted to hear this. Earlier, I had said—but I was misinformed—that I understood the majority leader would move to table the Byrd amendment. That statement of mine was in error and I am happy that it was. I now understand that the distinguished majority leader will support the Byrd amendment.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Yes indeed.

Mr. TOWER. Mr. President, will the Senator from Montana yield?

Mr. MANSFIELD. I yield.

Mr. TOWER. I might note that not only did Dr. Kissinger and the President both say they expected to get the authorization of Congress for any such proposals, but they made it clear to North Vietnam at Paris that Congress approval would have to be forthcoming.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Yes. I think the communique by Presidents Thieu and Nixon at San Clemente the evening before last said in effect—I will have to paraphrase it freely—something to the effect that each President would have to take this matter up with their respective congresses.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the text of the statement I made in the Senate on this subject on February 27, 1973.

There being no objection the statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I commend the distinguished Senator from Vermont for the temperate statement he has made today, which fits in with his call for bipartisanship several days ago.

I note that on page 6 of his speech the Senator states:

"The cease-fire is only the bare beginnings of peace in Indochina."

How true. And just how tenuous that cease-fire is, of course, is manifest in the fact that in South Vietnam, in Cambodia, and in Laos the fighting is still going on.

So I commend the distinguished Senator for his remarks, because what he does is to raise a flag of caution. What he is primarily interested in, as I am—and I am sure the entire Senate and the total American population—is three things: One, a cease-fire in fact as well as in being; two, the continued withdrawal of all U.S. military personnel from Vietnam, a process which is in operation at the present time—and it is my understanding that the number remaining at the moment is somewhere between 11,000 and 12,000—and, three, the return of our POW's and the recoverable missing in action.

Those are the three most important factors. When we reach those objectives, then I think we can begin talking about assistance, if any such proposal is made, under article XXI of the agreement. But I think that in the meantime we ought to give the man downtown—the President—a chance to work these things through, following this tentative settlement—and that is all it is at the moment. We must try to make certain that there will not be a return to warfare in which we will become engaged and that there is an opportunity to establish a basis for a peace in that part of the world not only for the indigenous peoples concerned but for this Nation as well.

The distinguished Senator says on page 7 of his speech:

"There will be plenty of room for debate and discussion over the form that the reconstruction presence in Indochina should take."

Again, the Senator is correct. There will be a right time for a proposal to be made, based on the circumstances which exist at that time. Those circumstances, to get back to what originally was said, depend on a cease-fire in fact, depend on the total withdrawal of all U.S. military personnel and the release of all prisoners of war and recoverable missing in action.

As the distinguished Senator says in his speech:

"But the purpose will be to discourage more war and to encourage more peace."

The Senator is right. I hope that his speech has been listened to and will be read by those who are interested in that part of the world and our role in it and that they will be aware of the fact that the war is not over; that there is only a tenuous truce; that we still have POW's and recoverable MIA's in North and South Vietnam, in Cambodia, and in Laos; that we still have between 11,000 and 12,000 military personnel to be withdrawn, and that the truce at the moment is at best delicate; it is far from being a cease-fire, in fact.

I would hope we would follow the advice of the distinguished Senator from Vermont; that we would withhold our own fire for the moment, at least, and give the President a chance, based on the facts as they exist and in accord with what I have stated this afternoon, to present to the Congress a proposal, a proposal which I am sure Congress will dissect and go into thoroughly, and a proposal on which Congress itself will have to make a judgment, as well as the President.

I thank the Senator for yielding.

Mr. AIKEN. Mr. President, I take this time to thank the majority leader for the remarks he has made and to state that I do not regard the Paris conference as even being a near approach to Utopia. There will be problems and violations of the agreement which has been reached, but we have made one step and I want to make plain that we cannot consider seriously any expenditures for reconstruction, and so forth, until all of our prisoners of war have been released.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I am in accord with the views just expressed by the distinguished Senator. As he knows, for years I have had three objectives, which I have mentioned and which I cannot reiterate too often. I have sought for years to bring about a ceasefire, not only in Vietnam, but in all of Indochina. I have sought for years to bring about the extrication of our forces from Vietnam and Indochina. I have sought for years to bring about the release of the prisoners of war and the missing in action.

These objectives seem—and I emphasize the word "seem"—to be on the way to a final solution, which may well be contingent on the "investment in peace" in all of Indochina. What the President said about an "investment in peace" may well be part of the price of ending this ghastly war, an objective so much desired by all of us and paid for over such a long period of time by over 303,000 Americans wounded in combat, by almost 46,000 Americans killed in combat, by 10,300 Americans dead as the result of non-hostile action, by an overall total of almost 360,000 American casualties in this war.

Concurrent with that human cost is the monetary cost of between \$130 billion and \$140 billion to date, a cost which will eventually amount to between \$350 billion and \$450 billion, and which will saddle the people of this Nation well into the next century.

It is good, indeed, that at long last this longest, most tragic and second most costly war in all our history may be coming to an end. In the words of Dr. Kissinger, in his superb exposition at his press conference in mid-January, it is time that "Together with healing the wounds of Indochina we can begin to heal the wounds of America."

Subject to various criteria which I am working on at the present time, I think we

ought to give the President's proposals, when and if they come up, every reasonable consideration, because our chief objective, as I am sure it is his, is to bring about, finally, peace and stability in Indochina. It would be our hope and desire to cooperate with the President of the United States in his efforts to embark on the "decade of peace" which he has stressed so often during this administration.

I thank the distinguished Senator.