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Congressional Record - Cambodia

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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Senate

TUESDAY, MAY 8, 1973

CAMBODIA

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, the bombing activity now underway in Cambodia is being undertaken without the consent or the advice of the Congress. The administration is now asking for the transfer of funds to continue the bombing to the end of the present fiscal year and is doing so despite the fact that there is no legal, constitutional or other justification for such action.

Furthermore, we have been told that even if the Congress voted against the request of the Pentagon to transfer money for continued bombing in Cambodia that, notwithstanding such an action, the U.S. bombing of Cambodia would continue.

I would point out that recent court decisions have stated the approval of funds for the carrying out of activities of war implies approval of the policy inherent therein. In other words, approval of the Pentagon request to transfer funds which are allegedly being held in "escrow" at the present time would indicate approval of the bombing policy now underway in Cambodia.

Furthermore, we have been informed that the continuation of this policy would be of an indefinite nature. What the approval of this policy implies, in my opinion, is, in effect, a back door Tonkin Gulf resolution. I, for one, will not vote for the transfer of funds contained in the supplemental appropriations bill and I would hope that the Congress would uphold its constitutional authority and not bow to the type of procedure which confronts us in the Appropriations Committee at the present time, which will confront the House of Representatives on Thursday of this week and which, if approved in the Senate Appropriations Committee, will be before the Senate shortly thereafter.

What we are doing in Cambodia is wrong because it only intensifies the tragedy of Indochina. What we are doing in Cambodia is illegal because it is not sanctioned in the law or the Constitution. What we are doing in Cambodia cannot be legitimized because it is a continuation of a war which was supposedly ended. What we are doing in Cambodia would not "undermine the essential agreement of the January agreement in Paris" because the "central achievement" was to get all Americans out of Vietnam and all our POW's released. This has been accomplished.

What we are doing is creating more refugees, killing more people, and if we follow the Pentagon's line of reasoning we are, in effect, "destroying Cambodia to

save it." Even now, the press is blocked out by the American Embassy in Phnom Penh. Therefore, they do not have access to whatever meager information that Embassy would be able to compile.

The answer to the situation which confronts us in Cambodia is to stop the bombing now—today—and to do what we can to bring about the return of Prince Norodom Sihanouk so that he will be able to bring about a return to neutrality and unity in that war-stricken woebegotten country.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Does the Senator from Pennsylvania desire recognition?

Mr. SCOTT of Pennsylvania. No, Mr. President; I yield back my time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. PROXMIRE) is recognized for not to exceed 15 minutes.

Mr. PROXMIRE. Mr. President, first of all, I join the distinguished majority leader in his statement concerning Cambodia. I was present at the hearings at which the Secretary of Defense explained the position of the administration on Cambodia. I certainly intend to support Senator MANSFIELD in whatever position he desires to take and others take in opposing the bombardment of Cambodia and to prevent more funds from being used by the President to continue the unnecessary bombardment of Cambodia.