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Nomination of Dr. Kissinger and Cambodian Situation

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001
STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

NOMINATION OF DR. KISSINGER AND THE CAMBODIAN SITUATION

Mr. President:

The report on Dr. Henry Kissinger which is before the Senate speaks plainly of the appropriateness of this nomination. In Committee, the vote on confirmation was overwhelmingly favorable.

The designee is eminently qualified to be Secretary of State. He has devoted his entire life to the study and practice of international relations. He was student, educator and writer before entering government service. For more than four years, he has been intimately associated with the President of the United States in the actual formulation and conduct of the nation's foreign policy. His views on policy have found expression in the revisions in policy already undertaken by the present Administration. They have been elaborated in his informal associations with Members of Congress. In short, Dr. Kissinger is a known quantum with regard to international relations in this nation and among the nations of the world.

The Secretary-designee is uniquely equipped to convert the concepts of peace which, in recent years, have derived from the Presidency and the Congress into actions for peace. As Secretary of State, appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, he would serve at the point of fusion in these two separate streams of Constitutional authority and responsibility. He would be in a position to guide this government's principal repository of peace-making machinery, the Department of State, in ways responsive both to the President and the Congress.
As I have already said, the vote in Committee for the nomination was overwhelming. I hope that the outcome will be the same when the Senate's roll is called tomorrow.

Thereafter, there is much to be done by the Department of State under the direction of its new Secretary. The first order of business, it seems to me, should be the termination of the war in Indochina. As a practical matter, that means ending the fighting in Cambodia in which we are still participating by proxy. May I say with regard to that situation, that the views of Congress have already been made clear by legislation; Congress wants no part of that war. I hope that Dr. Kissinger will take that legislation and the President's expressions of hope for peace as evidence of a joint determination to disengage this nation, once and for all, from the internal affairs of Cambodia. On that base, it should be possible to build a diplomatic initiative which will bring about an end to the fighting without delay and the beginning of peaceful reconstruction throughout Indochina.

In that connection, I ask that there be placed in the Record at this point a translation of the text of a cablegram dated August 10, 1973. The telegram was addressed to me by Prince Norodom Sihanouk, whose government of national union is gaining increasing recognition throughout the world as the sole legitimate government of Cambodia. In this wire, the Prince set forth a basis for bringing about the termination of the war in his country. He listed the following points:
1. Suspension of U. S. air raids and other military intervention in Cambodia;
2. Suspension of U. S. military aid to the so-called Khmer Republic in Phnom Penh.

If these points are realized—and I would note that point one has already been partially legislated by the Congress and the President—Prince Sihanouk states in his cable that:

1. The past will be forgotten and diplomatic relations will be reestablished by his government with the United States;
2. Safe-passage out of Cambodia will be granted to all the leading Cambodians who have collaborated against him—that means, the political and military group which is based on Phnom Penh and which survives on U. S. aid; and

These proposals of Prince Sihanouk, in my judgment, are in accord with the realities in Cambodia. As such, they form a basis for the negotiation of peace in that tortured, devastated country where we did not have and do not have now any national interest in bombing secretly or otherwise; where we did not have and do not now have any business involving ourselves militarily directly or indirectly. Indeed, the prolongation of the involvement—which continues through military aid up to the very edge of combat—risks American lives and costs enormous amounts of money, not to speak of its contribution to the devastation of what was, under Prince Sihanouk, the most peaceful, orderly and progressive part of the Indochinese Peninsula. The longer the delay in acting on these proposals of Prince Sihanouk, the more the damage to this nation
and to Cambodia. The longer the delay, the greater the likelihood that the chaos
in Cambodia will so deepen as not to be soluable by Prince Sihanouk or anyone
else and the higher the risk of a general breakdown in the tenuous peace through-
out Indochina.

So, looking forward rather than backwards, I would urge the Senate,
most respectfully, to confirm the nomination of Dr. Kissinger. And I would
urge the Secretary of State-designee, if and when he is confirmed, most
respectfully, to consider acting on these proposals of Prince Sihanouk without
del ay. The war in Cambodia, in my judgment, can be ended promptly via the
route of these proposals. In the same stroke, too, we can curtail the drain
on this nation's resources which still goes on in Cambodia. So, too can we
close and bolt the back door to our military reinvolve ment in Indochina.
Urgent

Dear Sir:

I would like to convey to you that I have followed, with greatest interest, intense emotion and deep gratitude, your noble and generous action on behalf of the K H M E R people, who do not merit these terrible misfortunes and unspeakable sufferings inflicted upon them by the American air raids, whose intensity and killing power has been increasing continuously during the past five months.

In principle, these raids should cease on August 15th, but President Nixon - as I know him - will not fail to find means to extend the misfortunes and sufferings, without precedent, of the K H M E R people long after August 15th, 1973.

President Nixon intends to prevent by force the National K H M E R Resistance of which I am the Chief - to liberate Phnompenh. However, you will understand easily that the United Front of the Cambodian National Liberation cannot in any way desist from liberating our fatherland a hundred percent.
We, the Cambodian patriots, do not fight for the Communist cause. Moreover, Nixon's military intervention in Cambodia, in order to bar, so to say, the road against Communism, is a poor pretext, since President Nixon decided to achieve, henceforth, the best terms for the United States with the two Communist [Powers], namely the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union.

We, the Khmer patriots, fight only to restore the independence and national neutrality of our country. In addition, we are fighting at present absolutely alone; that is, without any aid from our Vietcong and North-Vietnamese friends, which makes the American military intervention against us absolutely unjustifiable.

Finally, the United National Front and the Royal Government of National Union solemnly affirm to you, through my voice, that they desire sincerely to achieve peace with honor as soon as possible with the United States, which President Nixon insisted that he was desirous of reaching.

I would like to repeat that the only conditions for the complete realization of this peace with honor are:

firstly, complete and irreversible suspension of the air raids and of every other direct and indirect military intervention by the United States of America in Cambodia;

secondly, complete and irreversible suspension of all the military aid to the so-called K H M E R Republic.
If these two conditions are fulfilled by the United States Government, the Cambodia of the United Front of National Liberation, of the Royal Government of the National Union and of the Armed People's Forces of the National Liberation is ready to forget the painful past and to establish diplomatic relations with the United States of America.

As far as the fate of the Cambodians who have collaborated with the United States imperialism, The Royal Government of the National Union, under the care of the United Front of National Liberation, will allow the Government of Washington to evacuate from Cambodia all the chief collaborators, to whom the United States would offer her hospitality. The collaborators of the second rank will be allowed to benefit from the general amnesty if they make an honorable reparation in favor of the United Front of National Liberation and of the Royal Government of the National Union.

Thus everything will return to order. However, if President Nixon does not accept our very fair, and even friendly proposals, the United Front of the National Liberation, the Royal Government of the National Union and the Armed People's Forces of the National Liberation will be obliged to continue their armed resistance unto the end; even if it should be necessary to continue their battle for three, ten or even twenty years, because national independence cannot be an object of bargaining or of any compromise whatsoever. These are the essential points of the Cambodian problem.
I would like to solemnly repeat that the Royal Government of the National Liberation Union, which is the sole legal Government of an independent and non-aligned Cambodia, will never accept negotiations with the people of Phnompenh if they are pro-imperialist, pro-French, pro-Soviet, pro-Japanese or pro-xyz that is if they call themselves the third force.

In short, the United States now has a perfect chance to establish peace with honor with us and to maintain an Embassy in Phnompenh after the Royal Government of the National Union has been established there, on condition that they accept our fair proposals.

However, I doubt that President Nixon will accept them. Consequently, I ask the Senate and the House of the American People to act in such a way that the United States Government, finally leaves the Cambodians to settle their affairs alone without foreign interference.

Please convey my highest esteem to Mrs. Mansfield and I ask you, Sir, to accept my everlasting gratitude and my highest consideration,

Sincerely yours

Norodom Sihanouk
Chief of State & President of the [Liberation] Front

Translated by Casimir Cyril Petraitis