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United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 94<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 121

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 1975

No. 57

## THE SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a statement I made before the Senate Democratic conference on yesterday; article 12 of the Paris Accords of 2 years ago; remarks by Senator JOHN L. McCLELLAN, chairman of Committee on Appropriations; letters from the President addressed to the chairman of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary and to the Speaker of the House, and various administration proposals which are in line with the President's suggestions of Thursday last, when he delivered his state of the world address before a joint session of Congress.

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

### STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD

This Conference of the majority has been called pursuant to the President's recent address to the Joint Session of Congress. The President's comments, last Thursday, on the State of the World, covered the globe. Much of what he said dealt with situations which are stable or are unfolding in an orderly manner. Much of it, therefore, was non-controversial. There are, for example, no differences between the parties or the Branches on the objective of international peace. All of us want a peaceful world. All of us want to see an improvement in the conditions of life in this nation and elsewhere. We are prepared to move together with other peoples to that end. There is no place to hide in isolation; there is no other way. All of us want, moreover, an international environment in which, hopefully, freedom and human decency will have a chance to survive and grow.

I ask this Conference, therefore, to accept in good faith the generalities of our foreign policy as expressed by the President last Thursday and by many Presidents before him. He speaks them for all of us, for both

parties and for both branches. I ask the nations of the world to do the same. President Ford is a good man, a decent man. His intentions are of the best. He speaks the nation's finest sentiments when he talks of international cooperation in the search for progress and peace. Indeed, he owes no apology—this nation owes no apology—to any other on that score.

When that has been said, however, we are back to where we started. We confront the inescapable. We are face to face once again with the agony of Indochina. On that situation there are differences. There are deep differences within this government, differences which cannot be glossed over with the words of inspiration or aspiration. They are not so much between the parties as they are differences between the branches. At long last, however, it is apparent that even these are being overtaken by events and are disappearing. Thanks to the Paris agreements of 1973, the guns are silent in Laos and what transpires inside that small nation has ceased to stir controversy or calls to war in this nation. Voices are no longer raised in advocacy of the reintroduction of U.S. military forces, directly or indirectly, into Laos. There are no longer significant differences on that score.

What transpired over this past weekend, moreover, has brought us to much the same point in regard to Cambodia. There, thanks to the past insistence of the Congress that our involvement be terminated, there have been no Americans directly engaged in the war for several years. And thanks to the refusal of this Congress to vote one cent more of so-called emergency military aid in the past few weeks, we have brought to an end, at last, what was from the outset an aimless and costly involvement. In so doing, I hope that there will now come to the Cambodian people, with a minimum of further bloodshed and with the return of the legitimate head of that state, Prince Sihanouk, a restoration of orderly government and inner peace. In retrospect, the engulfment of what was once the most peaceful and unified people in Indochina, of this small but culturally distinct and independent nation, in the spreading flames of the Vietnamese war, was one of the most deplorable episodes of the great tragedy of Indochina.

It is a relief to know that the removal of the personnel from the U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh over the weekend took place without untoward incident. I hope that that event will be seen not as an ending but as the first step in a new beginning of what should have been from the onset and can still be a constructive relationship in peace between the people of Cambodia and the people of the United States.

With Laos and Cambodia now essentially out of the arena of disagreement in this nation's foreign policy, there remains the question of Vietnam. It is, as it has always

been, the core of the issue of Indochina. During the past few weeks, however, the structure of the question has been altered in a most drastic fashion. It has reached a point, to speak candidly, where there is grave doubt that anything at all of our past policies is salvageable. We have already witnessed a massive military collapse in South Vietnam. An immense and exhausting effort of many years has disappeared in the dust and smoke of crumbling strongpoints. In the wreckage billions of dollars in man-hours and materials have disappeared, not to speak of the lives and suffering of tens of thousands of Americans and the agony of millions of Vietnamese civilians and soldiers on both sides.

To be sure, there is no profit at this time in hashing over the might-have-beens of the past. Nor is there value in finger-pointing. That is not to say, however, that we should not, at a time of greater detachment, seek to understand and to learn from this phenomenon and our part in it. Let me say for now, however, that at this late date to see the cyclonic change in the military situation in South Vietnam as something that could have been withstood if only Congress had put up a few hundred million dollars more in military aid during the past few weeks, is a distortion so immense that it borders on—I choose the word carefully—it borders on the irrational.

That brings me to the immediate issue which confronts the members of this Conference and the Senate. I refer to the Administration's request for more aid for Vietnam. In his address last Thursday, the President asked for \$722 million in military aid and an "initial sum" of \$250 million in economic and humanitarian aid for Vietnam for a total of \$972 million. In addition, Congress was urged to act on this request by April 19, that is, by Friday of this week. Finally, a clarification was also sought of the President's authority to use U.S. force, if necessary, to evacuate U.S. personnel and certain Vietnamese from South Vietnam.

The Leadership expects the Armed Services Committee and the Foreign Relations Committee to inquire into the latter question without delay to the end that the Senate and the President may be provided with guidance as to the Congressional intent. I would hope, too, that the appropriate subcommittees of the Judiciary would look into the matter of immigration policy as it may be involved. As for the Leadership's view, it would seem desirable only to enter certain caveats in regard to this point at this time. It is one thing to use U.S. force, briefly, to safeguard and to remove Americans from a dangerous area as was done in Phnom Penh over the weekend. It would be quite another matter if the presence of such forces in a danger zone for the removal of non-Americans should produce new U.S. combat casualties and become the basis for a reinvolvement in the military conflict in Vietnam in any way, shape or form. Let me say as clearly as I can that the Majority Leader, speaking personally, regards that war in the sense of U.S. military involvement as over for this nation. Congress has spoken in no uncertain terms on that point. Legally, the war cannot and must not be resumed without the express consent of the American people speaking through the Congress and the President jointly. The sooner everyone in this government, in every branch and service recognizes that Constitutional reality, the better for all concerned. To find any pretext to the contrary is to raise once again the specter of Watergate—the specter of gross illegal behavior on the part of officials of the United States, sworn to uphold the Constitution and the law. I do not expect any such pretext.

As for the President's request for emergency military aid, the Leadership expects that it will receive expeditious consideration. Any President is entitled to that con-

sideration when he presents a matter on the basis of urgency. In good conscience, I must say, however, that, in my opinion, the Senate will find it extremely difficult to dispose of this request for aid under a deadline of April 19. After all, what is sought is about \$1 billion in additional funds which belong to the American people. That is no mean sum to take out of their livelihood, especially at this time. One must consider, too, that substantial as it is, the request amounts to but a fraction of the cost of what has been abandoned and lost by the Vietnamese forces in the last few weeks of retreat. In my judgment, therefore, there are many questions to be asked, lest funds be provided with which to rush pell-mell into another costly exercise in futility.

Speaking as one Senator, I must say that my votes for many years have consistently reflected a belief that the blanket supply of military aid in Southeast Asia has represented the wrong policy in the wrong place. I am very doubtful that, emergency notwithstanding, the present request for military aid represents anything other than a continuance of that policy. Nevertheless, the question has been opened anew by the President and I trust that it will be examined anew by the Senate.

As for immediate humanitarian assistance, it would seem to me that once the violence is curbed, this nation should do what it can to ease the massive suffering which has been visited on all three Indochinese countries by this prolonged and agonizing struggle. We owe that much to the people there—not to a chosen few but to all who have suffered—we owe it to them as a part of the human family and we owe it to ourselves, to our own national sense of decency.

In my judgment, however, we can do what needs to be done and what can effectively be done only through an instrumentality or group of instrumentalities which are apolitical in structure and so recognized throughout the world. Several such instrumentalities come immediately to mind as, for example, the International Red Cross and the Salvation Army.

It would seem to me, furthermore, that a prerequisite of any kind of aid-program, if it is to have a constructive impact in this critical situation, would be a good faith effort by the Saigon government to open urgent negotiations seeking to establish a tripartite National Council of National Reconciliation under Article 12 of the Paris Peace Accords of 1973. On that basis, perhaps, the achievement of the cease-fire for which the President is seeking to enlist the cooperation of other nations may be attainable. At this point, there is no room for adamancy on the part of any individual in the Saigon government. It would be well to remember that what is at stake is not the reassertion of Saigon's control over the thousands of square miles of territory which its forces have abandoned. What is at stake is the prevention of a final Gotterdammerung at Saigon.

We are coming to the end of a long, long road in Indochina. There is light at the end of the tunnel. The light is that of our final disengagement from Indochina. It is the light of the separation of this nation from a devastating war in which no vital interest of this nation was ever at stake—a war for which we have paid and will continue to pay into the next century.

As we move towards the end of that involvement, we reopen the possibility of restoring a national unity more deeply shattered than at any time since the Civil War. If that possibility is to be brought to fruition, in the end, it is the President and the Congress, jointly, and no others, who must make the decisions of policy to guide this government. The President has offered to

work with the Congress in this connection. He has the reciprocal assurances of the Democratic Conference. There is too much at stake to proceed in any other fashion. Differences there are and will be but adherence to the Constitution and laws of the nation shows the way to their reconciliation. The Leadership of the Senate Majority will strive to follow that course in the difficult weeks which are unfolding before the nation.