

Some Anger In Congress

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Washington

President Nixon's decision to support a South Vietnamese offensive into Cambodia stirred strong bipartisan protest yesterday among members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee which only two days ago opposed such intervention.

They asserted it will widen the Vietnam war and could undermine United States efforts to withdraw its military forces from Southeast Asia.

But some Republican Senators supported the new move and sought to minimize the importance of the action.

Senator George D. Aiken of Vermont, senior GOP member of both the Senate and the com-

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mittee, said "I don't think the President would do what he is reported to have done and I've never been so disappointed in my life."

Aiken, who has supported the President against Democratic critics of his Vietnamization program, said the action would have an extremely bad effect on GOP efforts to win control of the Senate this year.

"To put it as mildly as possible," Democratic leader Mike Mansfield of Montana said, "It was a grave disappointment."

Chairman J. William Fulbright of the Foreign Relations Committee called it "a great mistake, a great tragedy, directly contrary to what we'd been led to believe."

The Arkansas Democrat added "This would seem to indicate they are going for a military victory."

NEWS

All of the committee members said their first knowledge of the U.S.-backed attack on North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces in Cambodia came from news reports.

But they said that Secretary of State William P. Rogers raised the possibility of such action when he briefed the committee at a closed session Monday. The focus of that hearing was on Cambodia's request for extensive aid in arms and equipment.

Committee members, with the exception of Gale McGee (Dem-Wyo.), spoke strongly at the time against any U.S. move into Cambodia, either by helping that country's government or by assisting South Vietnamese efforts.

'MESSAGE'

Asked if he thinks Mr. Nixon got the message, Aiken said "I think he got a stronger message from somewhere else."

"Somebody advised him to go out and spread the war further, that it would be good for the country and save American lives," the Vermonter added.

Outright support for the move came from Senator

John G. Tower, (rep-Texas), who said "it places anti-Communist forces in an improved military tactical position and it will result in fewer American casualties in the long run."

"The Communists have too long enjoyed unrestricted use of Cambodian territory as a sanctuary. . . ."

"Our action involves no additional American troops and represents no U.S. commitment to Cambodia."

STENNIS

Senator John C. Stennis (Den-Miss.), chairman of the Armed Services Committee, said he supports the effort. "This could be a turning point in the war to the good for us," he said.

But he told reporters "I do not want us to go into a program of massive arms aid to Cambodia."

Senator Charles E. Goodell (Rep-N.Y.), saying he was "particularly shocked and appalled" that the decision was made without consulting Congress, urged the Foreign Relations Committee to report out a bill to assure the United States would become no further involved in the Cambodian conflict.

"Today's action dramatically demonstrates how the strategy of Vietnamization has failed and how it pulls us inexorably into a wider war," Goodell said.

Aiken and Mansfield have joined Senator John Sherman Cooper, (Rep-Ky.) and Frank Church (Den-Idaho) in sponsoring an amendment to pending military sales legislation to bar direct U.S. aid to Cambodia. Cooper said he hopes to broaden the measure to include the kind of action taken yesterday.