

AID FOR CAMBODIA IS SET BACK ANEW IN CONGRESS VOTES

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House Committee, by 18-15,
Defeats Compromise Plan
With June 30 Cutoff

SENATE CAUCUS IS FIRM

Democrats Overwhelmingly
Oppose Any Aid to Saigon
or to Phnom Penh

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WASHINGTON, March 13—

The effort to rush military assistance to Cambodia received a double setback in Congress today when the House Foreign Affairs Committee rejected a compromise and Senate Democrats voted overwhelmingly against any additional aid.

By a vote of 18 to 15, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives defeated a proposal that would have made available \$82.5-million in military aid provided that the United States committed itself to ending its involvement in Cambodia by June 30. The Administration insured the defeat of the proposal by coming out against it at the last minute.

At a party caucus, Senate Democrats voted 38 to 5 against further military aid to Cambodia and 34 to 6 against further assistance to South Vietnam in the current fiscal year, ending June 30. A similar resolution was adopted yesterday by House Democrats by a vote of 189 to 49.

Defeat Increasingly Likely

It was increasingly apparent that Congress was unlikely to provide any of the \$222-million requested by the Administration for the Lon Nol Government in Cambodia. There was also growing doubt that Congress would approve \$300-million for South Vietnam.

The Administration has hoped that, after voting against aid for Cambodia, some members of Congress might at least feel free to support additional aid for South Vietnam. However, the issues have become intertwined, augmenting the already considerable resistance to further help for Saigon.

The White House press secretary, Ron Nessen, described President Ford as "terrible disappointed" at today's action of the House committee, but said White House officials "don't get the feeling that this is the final parliamentary move."

Mr. Nessen said the President still hoped Congress could be persuaded by the testimony of a Congressional delegation that recently returned from Indochina and by television pictures of the deaths in the Cambodian conflict.

Blocked in the House committee, which normally supports the White House on foreign policy, the Administration now rests its hopes on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. It will meet Monday to consider a proposal providing \$125-million to Cambodia from existing arms stockpiles without the need for a special appropriation.

In view of the one-sided posi-

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tion taken by the Democratic majority, it appeared unlikely that the Senate would approve such a compromise. After the caucus vote, Mike Mansfield, the majority leader, observed that any Cambodian aid "appears in difficulty" in the Senate.

As opposition mounted, the six-week effort to obtain aid for Cambodia was turning into a race against the Easter plans of Congress.

The Senate plans to begin a two-week recess on March 21 and the House a nine-day recess on March 26. With the issue stalled in committees, it

was doubtful that Congress could complete action before the recesses begin.

The Administration has said that if Congress does not approve additional aid before the end of the month, it will be impossible to continue the flow of supplies to Cambodia, where stocks are expected to be exhausted by mid-April.

Reluctance to Bar All Aid

Officials have said that the United States has a moral obligation to help the Lon Nol Government until it can reach a settlement with the Communist-supported insurgents. But Congress seemed to be writing an end to the involvement in Cambodia, which began with the Nixon Administration's incursion in 1970.

Congressional committees appeared reluctant to reject all aid outright. For example, the House Foreign Affairs Committee, by a vote of 24 to 9, defeated a proposal to reject the President's request and to direct the United States to seek an immediate cease-fire in Cambodia.

At the same time, however, attempts to push a compromise through the House and Senate were running into mounting difficulties. Between the recess plans and the growing opposition, the likelihood was emerging that Congress would decide the issue by inaction.

In the opinion of some Republicans, the Administration was contributing to its difficulties by the way it was handling the issue in the House committee.

The original strategy rested on a coalition of members traditionally favorable to the White House and of liberals seeking an orderly negotiated settlement. It was this coalition that drafted the compromise, approved yesterday by a subcommittee, for \$82.5 million in aid provided that specific steps were taken to end the war by June 30.

Testimony by Ingersoll

But testimony by Robert S. Ingersoll, the Under Secretary of State, had the effect of splitting that coalition.

Mr. Ingersoll objected to the provision that would have ended all aid on June 30. Such a cutoff, he observed, "would not encourage the other side to negotiate."

With that position, the Administration began to lose the support of Lee M. Hamilton, Democrat of Indiana, and Pierre S. du Pont, Republican of Delaware, who drafted the compromise, and Donald M. Fraser of Minnesota, a leader among the Democratic liberals.

"You are just not coming to grips with the problem," Mr. du Pont told Mr. Ingersoll in an exasperated tone. "You may prefer another course, but you are just not going to get that chance. This is the last clear chance."

Orderly Surrender Urged

When Mr. Fraser said he could not support additional aid so long as the United States "continues to pursue this war to the last Cambodian to achieve an unattainable stalemate," Mr. Ingersoll asked:

"Are you asking for surrender then, Mr. Fraser?"

"Yes, under controlled circumstances, to minimize the loss of life," Mr. Fraser replied.

"It is difficult for the United States to ask another sovereign government to surrender," Mr. Ingersoll said.

With the defeat of the compromise, Mr. du Pont sought to ask the Committee to recommend that the House reject the requested \$222-million. But he was blocked by Wayne L. Hays, Democrat of Ohio, who moved to adjourn. One purpose of the adjournment was to give the Administration time to reconsider its position.

In the opinion of Michael J. Harrington, Democrat of Massachusetts, the delay was "just postponing the inevitable." He said that, between the committee's rejection of the compromise and the position taken yesterday by House Democrats, it was clear that any aid for Cambodia would be defeated on the House floor.