

Blockade Tip-Off Went Unnoticed

By Sydney Kossen
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WASHINGTON — President Nixon's congressman delivered a little noted speech on the floor of the House two weeks ago, telling of preparations then being made by the U.S. Navy to mine Haiphong and other North Vietnam harbors.

Rep. John Schmitz (R-Calif.) quoted a news dispatch, not White House sources.

The Orange County conservative has, at best, arm's-length relations with the administration.

Ashbrook Fan

"I commend the President for the decision to employ aerial mines," Schmitz said today, but he intends to continue campaigning for conservative Rep. John Ashbrook of Ohio for the Republican presidential nomination.

In his April 24 speech, Schmitz — a Marine Corps reserve lieutenant colonel — also told his colleagues there might be an easier way to paralyze the vital North Vietnam port.

"As an alternative to sealing off the harbor with mines, I might suggest that the most humane act of all could be to use one 500-pound bomb on the dredge which is necessary to keep the Haiphong harbor open," Schmitz said.

Blockade

"... Without the dredge in operation, the harbor would silt up in a very short period of time."

The congressman, a qualified military helicopter and jet attack pilot, recalled that during World War II, American forces kept the Japanese from using the Hai-

phong harbor by sinking one ship in the channel.

Few except the official House shorthand reporter were listening as Schmitz mentioned the news report that a naval ammunition ship had been loaded last month with aerial mines at the Subic Bay U.S. Navy Base in the Philippines and was expected to join other fleet units off Vietnam.

"This," he said in the speech, "is a logical step since we have several types of planes which can plant air-deliverable mines, thereby bringing to an end the North Vietnamese capability to send heavy artillery, T-54 tanks and anti-aircraft weaponry against our remaining troops in the south, the South Vietnamese troops defending their country and our aircraft operating in the north."

Schmitz, a John Birch Society member, is the only one of California's 18 Republican congressmen on the Ashbrook-pledged slate in the June 6 Golden State primary.