

WAR-CURB MOVES IN SENATE SCORED BY WHITE HOUSE

Constitutional Responsibility
of Nixon as Commander
in Chief Is Stressed

INFRINGEMENT CHARGED
MAY 16 1970

Plan of Cooper and Church
on Troops in Cambodia Is
Termed Unacceptable

By JAMES N. NAUGHTON
Special to The New York Times

KEY BISCAVNE, Fla., May 15—The White House strongly asserted today its view that a move in the Senate to cut off funds for future military involvement in Cambodia would be an infringement of the President's constitutional powers as Commander in Chief.

Ronald L. Ziegler, the White House press secretary, said that "it is our feeling there should be no restraint on the powers of the President as Commander in Chief" as "stated under the Constitution."

He said that the Administration could not accept the language of such legislation, proposed in the form of an amendment to a foreign military sales bill by Senator John Sherman Cooper, Republican of Kentucky, and Frank Church, Democrat of Idaho. The Administration holds this view, he said, even though the amendment is in keeping with Mr. Nixon's pledge to have all United States forces out of Cambodia by June 30.

Aide Cites Article II

Article II of the Constitution gives the President the responsibility for protecting United States troops in the field, Mr. Ziegler said and the Cooper-Church amendment would be "an infringement on that constitutional responsibility."

There were reports yesterday that Administration spokesmen were arguing that the amendment could impair the President's credibility aboard, but Mr. Ziegler's remarks were regarded as a strong reassertion that the real issue was one of a constitutional conflict.

Mr. Ziegler said the White House opposition to the Cooper-Church amendment did not indicate any intention of keeping United States forces in Cambodia beyond June 30 or any plans for another incursion into Cambodia.

He stressed an Administration belief that "options in terms of Presidential responsibility" to protect United States forces should not be taken from the President.

The President spent the day here in discussions with aides at his home on Key Biscayne. He and his family are expected to return to Washington Sunday.

G.O.P. Seeks Compromise

By JOHN W. FINNEY
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 15 — The Senate Republican leadership cast about today for a compromise on an amendment to restrict the use of troops in Cambodia that could win over uncommitted Senators in

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White House Sees Senate Move On Cambodia as Infringement

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a closely divided senate.

Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, the Republican leader, told reporters that there appeared to be 12 to 15 Senators undecided or uncommitted on an amendment to cut off funds for retaining American forces in Cambodia, with the committed Senators about evenly divided.

The vote on the amendment, offered as rider to a foreign military sales bill, is not expected before Tuesday.

The Republican leaders met with White House, State Department and Defense Department aides for more than an hour today considering various substitute amendments, all designed to make clear that no prohibitions laid down by the Senate would prevent the President from taking steps in Cambodia to protect Amer-

ican troops in South Vietnam. While no agreement was reached on a substitute, Senator Scott offered one as a "serious contender." It would specify that no funds authorized by the bill could be used to introduce American ground combat troops into Laos, Thailand or Cambodia without the consent of Congress, unless the President determined that such a step was necessary "to protect the lives of American troops remaining within South Vietnam."

Since none of the funds in the military sales bill are used for ground troops, the Scott amendment would impose no fiscal restrictions on the president. Furthermore, it could have the effect of repealing an amendment to last year's Defense Appropriations Act specifying that no ground combat troops were to be introduced into either Thailand or Laos without Congressional approval.