

Mansfield Calls Byrd Plan New Tonkin Gulf Proposal

By JOHN W. FINNEY JUN 10 1970

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 9—The Senate Democratic leader, Mike Mansfield of Montana, led an attack today against an Administration-supported proposal on Cambodia. He contended that the effect of the Administration proposal would be to produce another Gulf of Tonkin resolution, giving the White House a blank check.

Senator Robert P. Griffin of Michigan, the assistant Republican leader, countered that the Mansfield attack on the Administration move, which is a modification for the Cooper-Church amendments was inappropriate, unfair and unreasonable.

Supporters of the Cooper-Church amendment, designed as a curb on the President's war-making powers, believe that comparing the Administration-supported modification and the Tonkin Gulf resolution is their best argument for tipping the balance in the closely divided Senate.

The Cooper-Church amendment, to a foreign military sales bill before the Senate, would forbid the President, in the absence of congressional approval, to spend any funds for "retaining" American forces in Cambodia past July 1, for providing combat air support or military advisers to the Cambodian Government, or for paying soldiers of other nationalities supporting the Cambodian Government.

Withdrawal One Factor

Senator Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia, an assistant Democratic leader, with the co-sponsorship of Senator Griffin, has proposed to modify this amendment by specifying that the prohibition against retaining forces in Cambodia "shall not preclude the president from taking such action as may be necessary to protect the lives of United States forces in South Vietnam or to facilitate the Vietnam or to facilitate the withdrawal of United States forces from South Vietnam."

The Byrd-Griffin modification has been endorsed by President Nixon as reaffirming the constitutional powers of the President as Commander in Chief and thus going "a long way toward eliminating" his objections to the Cooper-Church amendment.

A vote on the Byrd-Griffin modification — probably the critical one in the prolonged Cambodian debate in the Senate — is set for Thursday afternoon. At this point the outcome is unclear with neither side willing to claim with certainty that it has the votes.

2 Join Mansfield

Joined by Senator John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky and Senator Frank Church, Democrat of Idaho, Senator Mansfield opened an effort on the Senate floor to brand the Byrd-Griffin modification as "another Tonkin Gulf resolution" that would give advance approval to any actions taken by the President under his authority as Commander in chief.

The Tonkin Gulf resolution of 1964 gave congressional support to the President's "determination" to take "all necessary measures" to repel further Communist aggression in Southeast Asia.

The resolution was adopted with only two dissenting votes, but since then there has been a widespread Congressional reaction against the resolution, particularly as it was cited by President Johnson as authorization for deepening American involvement in Vietnam.

If the Byrd-Griffin modification is adopted, Senator Mansfield said, "we will have cleared the way for another Vietnam in Cambodia and, perhaps, for still others elsewhere."