

Symington Seeks Secret Session on U.S. Laos Role

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 28— Senator Stuart Symington said tonight that he would ask for a secret session of the Senate to review the American involvement in the war in Laos.

In a speech prepared for delivery this evening before the Harvard Faculty Club in Cambridge, Mass., Senator Symington, a member of both the Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees, said he had become convinced that "the people, as well as most of their Congressional representatives, have little or no knowledge of the long and tragic war being conducted in that country, and therefore even less knowledge of the amount of money involved."

The Missouri Democrat said he was requesting the session so that Senators would know the facts of American involvement in Laos "before they appropriate more funds for this clandestine war."

Last Such Session in '69

Under Senate rules, a secret session is held on the request of any Senator. The last secret session on Laos was in December, 1969, and it resulted in an amendment to the Defense Appropriations Act prohibiting the introduction of American ground combat troops into Laos or Cambodia.

At the secret session, Senator Symington is expected to present the findings of a report recently submitted by two staff members of the Foreign Relations Committee—James G. Lowenstein and Richard M. Moose—after an inspection trip to Laos.

The Lowenstein-Moose report, which is classified on orders of the State Department, said that the United States was financing 4,800 Thai troops to fight in Laos on behalf of the Laotian Government. Earlier hearings by the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Foreign Commitments, headed

by Senator Symington, disclosed that the Central Intelligence Agency was financing an irregular army of mountain tribesmen in Laos and that American planes were providing combat air support to Laotian Government troops in northern Laos.

Senator Symington cited the Lowenstein-Moose report in explaining why he had become "convinced that Congress is not losing control of this multi-billion defense budget; it has already lost it."

'Administration Lost Control'

"Not only has the Congress lost control through lack of knowledge," he said, but in some cases "the Administration itself has lost control of the military and the latter's request for additional funds."

In support of this contention, Senator Symington cited recent actions of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy that challenged the Defense Department's decision not to request funds this year for a new nuclear carrier. Senator Symington was appointed to the joint committee this year.

That decision on the part of civilian authority apparently was not satisfactory to some members of the military," he said.

First, he said, the Joint Atomic Energy Subcommittee on Military Applications, headed by Senator Henry M. Jackson of Washington, held hearings at which "the military, in effect, explained why they felt this carrier decision was a mistake." Among those testifying at the May 5 hearing were Adm. Hyman G. Rickover, Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Adm. Elmo R. Zumwalt Jr., Chief of Naval Operations.

Then, Senator Symington said, the committee staff issued a report, which had not been cleared with all members of the committee, stating that "the

Joint Committee recommends" that Congress approve the Navy's request for a transfer of funds to start construction of the nuclear carrier. Senator Symington said he disagreed with that recommendation but was never shown a copy of the

report before its release to the press.

According to committee sources, Admiral Rickover was influential in arranging the subcommittee hearing and then in the committee's issuance of the report.