

Senate to Get Modified Proposal for War Pullout in '71

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WASHINGTON, June 3 —

The legislative battle lines started to take shape in the Senate today on efforts to force a troop withdrawal from Vietnam by the end of the year and to require a 10 per cent cut in defense spending.

Senators George S. McGovern, Democrat of South Dakota, and Mark O. Hatfield, Republican of Oregon, announced that they would introduce tomorrow a modified version of their amendment of last year requiring withdrawal of all American forces from Indochina by Dec. 31, 1971. In a bid for broader support in the Senate, their modified amendment would make the withdrawal deadline somewhat dependent upon action by North Vietnam to release American prisoners of war.

Senators William Proxmire, Democrat of Wisconsin, and Charles McC. Mathias Jr., Republican of Maryland, announced meanwhile that they would introduce tomorrow an amendment imposing a \$68-billion ceiling on defense spend-

ing in the coming fiscal year — or about \$7-billion less than planned by the Pentagon.

The two amendments will provide the rallying points in the Senate first for critics of the war in their attack on Administration policy in Indochina and then for critics of the Pentagon in their attack on the defense budget. It was doubtful that either attack on Administration policy would succeed, however.

The first battle, starting next week, will come on the McGovern-Hatfield amendment, which the two Senators will seek to attach to the draft extension bill now before the Senate. The amendment is expected to be brought to a vote after about a week of debate.

Last year a similar amendment, which would have cut off funds for retaining troops in Vietnam after Dec. 31, 1971 — was defeated in the Senate, 55 to 39. Now, the amendment's supporters believe they have possibly 44 or 45 votes — about half a dozen short of a majority.

To meet some of last year's objections in the new amendment, the withdrawal deadline,

which could be modified in the course of the debate, has been kept at Dec. 31 but has been extended to cover American forces in all of Indochina, not just South Vietnam. At the same time, in a concession to the President's authority as Commander in Chief, the sponsors have deleted an earlier specification that in the nine months before the deadline funds could only be used for the withdrawal of troops.

The sponsors have also added a section to the amendment making the withdrawal deadline contingent upon Hanoi's action in releasing American prisoners of war.

The new section provides that if within 60 days after enactment of the amendment, North Vietnam has not made arrangements for release of the prisoners of war by Dec. 31, 1971, then the withdrawal deadline will be extended by 60 days. It also provides that instead of a withdrawal Congress may "authorize such further action as is recommended by the President to secure the release and repatriation of American prisoners of war."

The rationale offered by

amendments' sponsors is that the new section, with its more flexible deadline, would test Hanoi's good faith in offering to discuss release of prisoners once a deadline for an American withdrawal had been set. At the same time, the modification weakens the White House's objection that any Congressional withdrawal deadline would undermine chances to negotiate a release of the prisoners.

The Proxmire-Mathias amendment represents a new tack for the critics of the Pentagon. In the past they have sought to cut appropriations, the funds that Congress votes for the Defense Department. This year, in what they feel is a more effective approach, they are seeking to limit the actual expenditures of the Defense Department.

In a statement, the two Senators explained that the reason for their new approach is that in the last four years, while Congress has cut appropriations below Administration requests, the Pentagon actually has spent \$10.4-billion more than Congress has appropriated for military programs. While Congress cuts the military appropriations, they pointed out, the Pentagon dips into its huge backlog of unspent funds, now totaling some \$35-billion, to offset the Congressional cuts.

For this fiscal year, for example, Congress appropriated \$68.7-billion, but the Pentagon plans to spend an estimated \$73.4-billion. "If Congress is to control military spending," the two Senators said, "the military should spend what Congress appropriates instead of spending more."

In arguing for a \$68-billion ceiling in the coming year, the two senators said that with the winding down of the Vietnam war and reduction in military manpower, "the Pentagon budget should be coming down, instead of going up, as the Pentagon proposes.

"This is the only way to reorder priorities and provide for four great domestic needs," they said.

Senators Proxmire and Mathias intend to offer their amendment to the military procurement authorization bill, scheduled for Senate consideration in July.