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Mansfield Urges Pullouts Phased to P.O.W. Release

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WASHINGTON, June 14— Senator Mike Mansfield, the Senate majority leader, proposed today that President Nixon seek an immediate cease-fire agreement in Indochina providing for the phased and rapid withdrawal of American forces in return for the phased release of prisoners of war.

Protesting that the "dragging out of withdrawal" was only adding to the Vietnam "tragedy," the Democratic leader said the time had come to provide for final withdrawal of all American forces coupled with release of all American prisoners by "a specific date in the near future."

Senator Mansfield offered his proposal at a commencement speech at Boston College as the Senate continued its dispirited debate on the McGovern-Hatfield amendment, which would require withdrawal of all American forces from Indochina by the end of this year.

Speaking to each other in an otherwise deserted Senate chamber, Senator George S. McGovern, Democrat of South Dakota, and Senator Mark O. Hatfield, Republican of Oregon, continued to stress their argument that on the basis of North Vietnamese statements in recent weeks, establishment of a withdrawal deadline could lead to an immediate agreement on release of the American prisoners of war.

Jordan Switches Stand

The outnumbered McGovern-Hatfield forces picked up some support today when Senator B. Everett Jordan, Democrat of North Carolina, announced that he would support the amendment when it comes up for a vote Wednesday afternoon.

Senator Jordan voted against a similar McGovern-Hatfield amendment last year, because, he explained in a statement, "I thought the President should have more time to negotiate a peace in Paris."

But now, the Senator said, he has come to the conclusions that the Paris talks are "hopelessly deadlocked" and that "we have everything to lose and nothing to gain by continuing our military intervention in Southeast Asia."

The switch by Senator Jordan, who is usually identified with the Southern Hawks, gave a psychological lift to the McGovern-Hatfield forces, who have been attempting to build some momentum by getting a Senator to announce publicly that he has switched in favor of the amendment. At this point, however, the most the amendment's sponsors can count on is only 41 or 42 votes, thus indicating that they will be defeated by at least a 10-vote margin.

Debate Crystallizes Issue

One result of the Senate debate on the amendment has been to crystallize the issue of whether a troop withdrawal deadline would lead to a release of the prisoners.

While commending the President for cutting troop levels in Vietnam, Senator Mansfield said, "We remain deeply enmeshed" in a war that has spread from Vietnam to all of Indochina.

"What is needed forthwith is a redoubled effort to terminate the military involvement," he said, "but so far as I can see, initiatives which might serve these purposes have yet to be taken in the negotiations at Paris."

Senator Mansfield expressed the hope, therefore, that the President, "with the cooperation of the Senate," would "seek in some appropriate negotiating forum an immediate cease-fire throughout Indochina" that would provide for the following:

¶ A rapid series of phased United States withdrawals in return for a series of phased releases of prisoners.

¶ A coupling of the final release of all United States prisoners with the final withdrawal of all United States forces by a specific date in the near future.

"An agreement on this basis, it seems to me," Senator Mansfield said, "could act to close out this ill-fated involvement." He continued:

"Vietnam was a mistake, a tragic mistake. To persist in it now is to add outrage to the sacrifices of those who have suffered and who have died in this conflict.

"To persist in it now is to do violence to the welfare of the nation. The need is to terminate the mistake, not to prolong it. No national commitments of this nation remain to be discharged to the governments in Indochina. We have armed, trained, financed and fought for those governments. We have done our share—far more than our share—to inject them with the elements of survival.

"What last-ditch effort, as we are withdrawing, is likely to do anything more? Can the dragging out of the withdrawal do other than add to the tragedy?"

Symington to Seek Curb

Senator Stuart Symington, Democrat of Missouri, announced, meanwhile, that he would introduce tomorrow an amendment to the defense authorization bill imposing a \$200-million ceiling on military and economic aid activities in Laos.

The Senator said in a statement that the Congressional ceiling had become necessary because of the way the executive branch had "misled" the American people about the extent of the nation's military involvement in Laos and because of the way the Administration had "circumvented" past Congressional restrictions, such as a prohibition on the use of mercenary forces in Laos or Cambodia.

Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird, testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, opposed any ceiling and aid programs would continue in Cambodia and Laos even after American troops had been withdrawn from Vietnam.

Senator Symington suggested that the United States was spending about \$600-million annually in Laos in economic and military aid and air support for Royal Laotian troops. The only amount publicly acknowledged by the Administration has been \$52-million in economic aid.