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NEW SENATE FIGHT DUE ON CAMBODIA

Republican Plans Resolution
Condemning U.S. Bombing

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WASHINGTON, May 2 —

With the initiative coming from the Republican side of the aisle, a new challenge is being mounted in the Senate to President Nixon's constitutional authority to continue bombing in Cambodia.

Senator Charles McC. Mathias, a Maryland Republican whom President Nixon praised last night as a "voice of reason and independence in the Senate," announced today that he would introduce later this week a resolution condemning the bombing as unlawful and calling upon the President to cease immediately all military actions over Indochina.

The Senate Democratic Caucus, meanwhile, adopted a resolution calling for legislation stopping further use of funds for American military activity in Cambodia.

The Democratic resolution was advanced with only Senators Henry M. Jackson of Washington and John L. McClellan of Arkansas dissenting. This indicated that the Mathias resolution would win strong Democratic support.

Funds Would Be Cut Off

The Democratic resolution goes further than the Mathias resolution, which would merely express the "sense of the Senate," in that it contemplates cutting off funds for further bombing.

One development prompting the Democratic resolution was the Democratic request a Defense Department request before Congress for authority to transfer \$500-million additional in funds within the defense budget. According to the Defense Department, about \$150-million of this would go to meet additional expenses in Southeast Asia in the first quarter of this year, which would include the bombing in Cambodia.

The concern expressed by the Senate Democrats was that approval of this transfer authority could be construed as a "backdoor" Congressional authorization of the Administration's actions in Cambodia. The Mathias move and the action of the Senate Democratic Caucus reflect what several Senators privately describe as a new mood of assertiveness in the Senate following the Watergate scandal.

For all the statements criticizing the Cambodian bombing, until recently there had been a reluctance in the Senate to challenge the President's authority through a legislative amendment or resolution. In large measure, this reluctance sprang from a judgment that the political climate was not right for such a challenge.

As a result of the increasing disclosures in the Watergate affair, however, there has been a perceptible change in this political judgment and a new sense of independence among the Senate critics about challenging the Presidency. At the same time, many Senators believe that the President will be more cooperative with the Senate on what in the past have been regarded as contentious constitutional issues.

Praise from President

This belief that the relationship between Congress and the Executive Branch is changing was reflected in the observation last night by Senator Mathias that there is "a sense of humility in the land—humility caused by the new evidence of human frailty that President Nixon discussed with the nation on television."

He referred to the speech in which the President discussed the resignation of some of his top aides and said he accepted the responsibility for what happened in the Watergate case.

Senator Mathias, who is up for re-election next year, made the observation at a fund-raising dinner in Baltimore, to which President Nixon sent a message praising the Senator as "an example of dedication to principles."

"Two weeks ago. We probably never would have received such a message from the President," observed one Mathias aide.

The Mathias resolution would express the view of the Senate that the bombing in Cambodia is "contrary to the section in Article I of the Constitution providing that only Congress shall have the power to declare war."