

ACTION BY GRAVEL VEXES SENATORS

But No Disciplinary Action
Against Him Is Expected

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WASHINGTON, June 30—

Many Senators privately expressed dismay, shock and chagrin today at Senator Mike Gravel's release of parts of the Pentagon's secret study of the Vietnam war. But it appeared that no disciplinary action would be taken against the Alaska Democrat.

Last night Senator Gravel tried to read the documents to the Senate in an all-night speech and, when he was blocked for lack of a quorum, proceeded to call an impromptu meeting of his Senate Public Works subcommittee. He read from the study for three and one-half hours, with his voice sometimes breaking into sobs, and tears occasionally rolling down his face.

His action incurred the displeasure of many of his colleagues, who felt that it reflected on the dignity and composure of the Senate. But in the clublike atmosphere of the Senate, there was a widespread reluctance, extending down from the leadership, to take any formal disciplinary

Continued on Page 16, Column 2

Gravel's Action Vexes Many Senators

Continued From Page 1, Col. 7

action against what was regarded as a maverick member gone astray.

Senator Hugh Scott, the Republican leader, suggested that the Democratic majority should determine whether Senator Gravel had violated a Senate rule forbidding Senators from making public confidential information received from the Executive branch.

But Senator Mike Mansfield, the majority leader, said he would have a "friendly talk" with the freshman Senator from Alaska. He said that he had no intention of pressing formal censure charges.

Indicative of the critical reaction was a parliamentary move by the leadership to prevent Senator Gravel from carrying out a promise to renew his reading on the Senate floor today. It proved to be an unnecessary move because the Senator, for the first time since debate started on the draft extension bill eight weeks ago, did not appear on the Senate floor. His office explained that he was exhausted and would not return to his office until tomorrow.

The Senator said that last Thursday he had received about half of the Pentagon study from a nongovernmental source. He did not identify the source.

The 41-year-old Senator had not finished the first volume dealing with the Eisenhower Administration's role in Vietnam when he stopped reading early this morning.

His office, however, provided copies of the rest of the documents to news agencies, thus furnishing the basis for a new spate of articles describing the contents of the history.

Last night Senator Gravel, an increasingly outspoken dove

who emerged from the obscurity of a freshman in the Senate with a threat to filibuster the draft extension bill, said that he was convinced that he was "in no way jeopardizing this nation's security" in making public the documents. As he read them he eliminated supporting papers that he regarded as sensitive.

But he acknowledged that one reason he had chosen as a forum first the Senate and then his subcommittee—the Public Works subcommittee on the Capitol building and grounds—was that he had been informed by lawyers that he would be immune from prosecution under the constitutional provision protecting members against prosecution for their "official acts".

Senator Gravel convened the subcommittee meeting at about 9:30 P.M. last night, and ended it shortly after 1 A.M. today, saying "I am physically unable to continue any longer." Representative John G. Dow of New York, another Democratic dove, sat in the witness chair while the Senator read.

Rules Out Manipulation

As Senator Gravel began the hearing, he explained, "I will not accept the notion that the President of the United States can manipulate the United States Senate into silence."

"It is my constitutional obligation to protect the security of the people by fostering the free flow of information absolutely essential to their democratic decision-making."

And at the end he said, "What I do today—what we do 'What I do today—what we do this country."

"The greatest representative democracy the world has known," he continued, "the nation of Jefferson and Lincoln, has had its nose rubbed in the swamp by petty warlords, jealous Vietnamese generals, black-

marketeers and grand-scale dope pushers."

If any action was to be taken against the Senator, therefore, it presumably would have to be by the Senate rather than the executive branch, which carefully refrained from any comment on the Senator's disclosure of contents of a report that is still classified as top secret. During one break in the reading of the documents, Senator Gravel confessed to reporters that he feared he might be expelled from the Senate.

At the opening of the Senate today, Senator Scott immediately raised the question of whether Senator Gravel had violated rule XXXVI of the Senate, dealing with the handling of confidential information.

The rule provides that "all confidential communications made by the President of the United States to the Senate shall be by the Senators and the officers of the Senate kept secret." It then provides the punishment that any Senator "who shall disclose the secret or confidential business or proceedings of the Senate shall be liable . . . to suffer expulsion from the body."

Senator Scott carefully refrained from drawing a judgment as to whether the Alaska Senator had violated the rule, saying that was a decision to be reached by the democratic majority. After consulting with his legal aides, Senator Mansfield made clear he was not going to press the question of whether Senator Gravel had violated the secrecy rule.

Asked what action he contemplated taking, the Democratic leader told a reporter:

"I intend to talk to him and discuss the situation and do it in a friendly fashion because I don't want to see any senator, regardless of party, unduly maligned or criticized or hurt except for the most overriding of reasons."