

Arms for Cambodia Voted; Congress Bars Troop Use

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 22—The Senate passed legislation today authorizing a \$255-million military aid program for Cambodia but embodying restrictions to keep the President from sending ground combat troops or military advisers to Cambodia.

The compromise legislation, which authorizes \$525-million in supplementary foreign aid for countries in Asia and the Middle East, was sent to the House, where it was quickly adopted by a voice vote and sent to President Nixon.

Adoption of the foreign aid authorization bill, by a vote of 41 to 20, ends months of Congressional debate over the issue

of imposing Congressional restrictions on the President's warmaking powers and removes one legislative obstacle in the way of adjournment.

But a new argument broke out over whether a provision on Cambodia would be removed from the defense appropriations bill.

The Senate incorporated in the foreign aid bill a version of the amendment on Cambodia originally sponsored by Senators John Sherman Cooper, Republican of Kentucky, and Frank Church, Democrat of Idaho. The Senate provision prevents the Presi-

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dent from using any funds to introduce ground combat troops or military advisers into Cambodia and stipulates that the military aid program does not constitute a defense commitment to the Cambodian Government.

With the tacit support of the Administration, the Senate provision was accepted by conferees of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and incorporated in the compromise foreign aid legislation.

However, also with tacit Administration support, conferees of the House and Senate appropriations Committee were writing what members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee regarded as a loophole into the defense appropriations bill.

As passed by the Senate, the defense bill embodied a prohibition against the introduction of ground combat troops into Cambodia—as well as into Laos and Thailand.

But in conference, members of the Appropriations Committee wrote in a provision that stated that this prohibition would not prevent the President from taking any steps he deemed necessary to promote the safe and orderly withdrawal of American troops from Cambodia or to obtain the release of Americans held as prisoners of war.

Senator George D. Aiken of Vermont, ranking Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee, argues today on the Senate floor that there had been an understanding that the provision on Cambodia would be removed from the defense bill if the Senate would pass the foreign aid authorization bill.

The language in the defense bill, he says, not only nullified the restrictions on Cambodia in the foreign aid bill but also could be interpreted as a Congressional mandate for a Presidential expansion of the war in Southeast Asia.

But Representative George H. Mahon, Democrat of Texas, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, denied in an interview that there ever had been any understanding with the House committee that the language on Cambodia would be deleted from the defense bill.

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