

Congress Agrees On Asia 'Limits'

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Washington

Senate-House conferees agreed yesterday on the final portions of a three-part legislative package placing the most comprehensive restrictions yet on U.S. policy in Southeast Asia.

They approved a new version of the \$66.6 billion defense appropriations bill barring U.S. ground combat troops from Laos and Thailand—but recognizing the President's authority to protect the U.S. withdrawals from Vietnam by taking such action as the limited raid into Communist sanctuaries in Cambodia.

The House approved the new version by 234

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to 18 after being assured by Representative George Mahon, (Dem-Tex.), chairman of the House conferees, that it still was substantially the same as the previous one.

"We think the new proviso sufficiently nullifies any restrictions on the President," he said.

In the Senate, where an earlier bill has been blocked because the loophole could have opened the way for U.S. ground-combat troops in Laos, Thailand and Cambodia, one war critic said he backs the new version.

"If it is confined to mercenary troops," Senator Frank Church (Dem-Idaho) said of the loophole, "I think we have won our fight."

The package would bar introduction of U.S. ground-combat troops into Laos, Cambodia and Thailand and would place restrictions on U.S. assistance to those countries, including the underwriting of aid and troops furnished by other countries such as South Vietnam.

At the same time, it would leave open President Nixon's constitutional authority as commander in chief to take necessary steps to protect U.S. troop withdrawals from Vietnam such as limited du-

ration raids into the Communist sanctuaries of Cambodia.

The provisos in the package are spread through three bills: a supplementary foreign-aid authorization bill containing \$255 million for Cambodia; the \$19.9 billion military procurement authorization bill; and the \$66.6 billion defense appropriations bill.

There are three main elements in the package:

- A ban on funds for introduction of U.S. ground-combat troops for Laos and Thailand, similar to the provision enacted a year ago, in the defense money bill.

- A ban on funds for introduction of U.S. ground-combat troops or provision of U.S. military advisers to Cambodia, a statement that U.S. aid does not constitute a commitment to defend Cambodia and a requirement Congress must receive advance notice of any future U.S. aid transfers to Cambodia. These all are contained in the supplemental foreign-aid bill.

- A ban on use of U.S. funds "to support Vietnames or other free world forces in actions designed to provide military support and assistance to the government of Cambodia or Laos."