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LIMIT ON LAOS AID VOTED BY SENATE

\$350-Million Ceiling Set in Compromise Amendment

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 4—The Senate voted today to place a \$350-million ceiling on military and economic assistance to Laos.

The ceiling, in an amendment to the military procurement authorization bill, was a compromise version of a proposal made by Senator Stuart Symington of Missouri. As chairman of a Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee, Senator Symington has disclosed that the United States, operating principally through the Central Intelligence Agency, has been supporting the Laotian Government against enemy forces.

Senator Symington had originally proposed a \$200-million ceiling, but as a compromise raised the figure to \$350-million—the amount the Administration recently stated was planned for economic and military assistance in Laos in the current fiscal year. Not included in this total is United States air support for government and C.I.A. supported troops in northern Laos, which is expected to cost \$140-million.

Amendment Wins Easily

The Symington amendment was adopted by a 67-11 vote.

In effect, it would authorize the Administration's planned program in Laos, including C.I.A. support of a paramilitary force of Meo tribesmen and more than 4,000 Thai "volunteers" fighting in Laos. But to Senator Symington, the significance of the amendment was that for the first time it would establish the principle that Congress could impose limits on how much the executive branch could spend in Laos and in turn bring the expenditures out into the open.

In the past, funds for Laos have been concealed in various appropriations bills and only a few members of Congress were aware of what was being spent. In arguing for his amendment, the Senator protested that for the last 10 years the executive branch has been fighting a secret war in Laos, using funds appropriated "largely without the knowledge—and therefore obviously without the consent