

# Delay Likely on

## Washington

Congressional leaders, caught between Easter recess plans, parliamentary rules and considerable opposition to administration requests, virtually wrote off yesterday any chance of Congress acting on emergency military aid for South Vietnam and Cambodia before mid-April.

Senate majority leader Mike Mansfield said that in view of delays within the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, it is "too late" to act on Cambodian aid legislation before the Senate begins an Easter recess, probably next Wednesday.

As a proposed compromise with the

administration's request for \$222 million, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved on Monday an additional \$82.5 million in military aid for Cambodia with the stipulation that all military assistance would end on June 30.

It was not until yesterday, however, that the committee placed the legislation on the Senate's legislative calendar. Under the Senate's rules, legislation must remain on the calendar for three days before it can be considered by the Senate.

Representative George H. Mahon (Dem-Tex.), chairman of the House Appropriation Committee, said he

has no plans to consider an administration request for \$300 million in additional military aid for South Vietnam before the House begins its scheduled recess Wednesday.

In view of the overwhelming position taken by the House Democratic Caucus in opposition to further military aid this fiscal year to South Vietnam and Cambodia, Mahon said he has no intention of taking the initiative in pushing the administration's request through Congress.

The House and Senate are scheduled to reconvene on April 7. Even if the aid legislation should be considered then, congressional leaders con-

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sider it highly doubtful that additional military aid would be approved for South Vietnam or Cambodia or that the congressional attitude would be turned around by the deteriorating military situation in the two countries.

A congressional delay until at least mid-April is accepted as inevitable by Defense Department officials.

Militarily, these officials said, Cambodia could wait until mid-April for additional aid and South Vietnam even longer.

The principal reason for immediate congressional action, they explained, was to show continuing American

support for the two countries.

State Department spokesman Robert L. Funseth said North Vietnam has launched a countrywide, general offensive that has "now reached a level of intensity at least equal to the 1968 Tet offensive and the 1972 offensive in terms of forces involved, targets attacked and the threat it represents."

Privately, high Defense Department officials expressed confidence that the military situation is not completely falling apart in South Vietnam and that the Saigon government, now that it has decided to regroup and concentrate its forces, should be able to defend military regions III

and IV around Saigon and in the Mekong Delta. They were doubtful, however, that South Vietnamese forces would be able to hold on to Da Nang on the Northern coast of South Vietnam.

The President's press secretary, Ron Nessen, declared at a White House news briefing that "speed is important in getting this help" to South Vietnam and Cambodia. The \$700 million in military aid for South Vietnam already voted by Congress, he said, would permit continued shipments of ammunition and fuel until the end of the fiscal year on June 30, but in an amount "less than 40 per cent of requirements."

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