

## Portentous signs

Congress fiddles while two whole countries drown. The argument, embraced by dovish Sen. Mike Mansfield and formerly Hawkish Sen. Henry Jackson alike, is that Indochina is doomed soon to go behind some kind of Communist-manipulated curtain.

Looked at from a short-term perspective, there is much to be said for the realism of the congressional capitulators. The American people are tired of paying bills to buy fuel for South Vietnamese helicopters. But neither the congressional majorities nor the run-of-the-mill American voter has any understanding of the Communist conception of the interrelatedness of fronts.

The Communists probe here and probe there. When their tanks or their fellow-traveling "sleepers" in local leftist parties discover a soft spot, the comrades move swiftly to exploit it.

What is particularly troubling to the Pentagon, which has to think of security in its broadest aspects, is the fear that the coming collapse in Cambodia and South Vietnam will trigger a go-for-broke Communist offensive all across the globe.

The signs are already portentous. The French and the British have evacuated their diplomats from the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh. Will it be Jerusalem tomorrow?

At the very time the Communists in South Vietnam were moving through the Central Highlands to the sea in Southeast Asia, the Egyptians pulled the rug from under Secretary of State Kissinger's effort to get a pre-stage peace agreement in the Middle East. All that Egypt's Sadat had to do to obtain Israeli relinquishment of strategic Sinai passes and the Abu Rudeis oil field was to promise a state of non-belligerency.

Moving on to the Atlantic world, what we are now witnessing in Portugal has all the stigmata of a classical internal Communist takeover. The "free" election that has been promised to the Portuguese people for a continually-receding date in April gets less and less free all the time. The extreme rightist factipns are now on the lam from Lisbon to Spain and Brazil.

What will Congress do if there is a threefold collapse across the world by June?

Well, we lived through the June, 1940, fall of France. But we sure paid for it later.