

'What's Happening In This Country?'

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Citing 50,067 American war dead and a mounting casualty rate, key Senate Democrats yesterday damned what they called the "bloodbath" in Southeast Asia and Congress' slowness on efforts to end the war.

"There is no end in sight," wailed Senate Democratic leader Mike Mansfield, his arms flying in an emotional speech on the floor.

"What's happening in this country?"

"Disaster is overtaking us," said Senator Frank Church, (Dem-Idaho), pointing to the list of 50,067 United States war dead. "American mothers just cannot produce enough sons."

"This 'bloodbath' — which is here and now — must be stopped," said

See Back Page

news conference in which he set the withdrawal deadline, said the South Vietnamese were under no obligation to abide by it but added "I would expect that the South Vietnamese would come out approximately at the same time that we do because when we come out our logistical support and air support will also come out with them."

AIR

Since then, however, White House press secretary Ronald Ziegler has refused to say whether U.S. tactical air cover will continue to be provided the South Vietnamese. Laird has announced he will recommend continuing B-52 attacks in Cambodia, although he has promised that no American advisers will remain in Cambodia after June 30.

Backers of a pending amendment to cut off funds for the Cambodian operations after June 30 say they want to seal Mr. Nixon's pledges into law.

The amendment, however, would indirectly permit U.S. air support to the South Vietnamese and is vague on the question of whether ground advisers would be allowed to stay. Its main provisions would prohibit American military and air support to the Cambodian government and would cut off funds for "retaining United States forces in Cambodia" after June 30.

There was no vote in prospect on the measure as debate entered its ninth day. A vote scheduled for today is on an inconsequential amendment to declare that the Senate is "in concert" with Mr. Nixon's plan to withdraw from Cambodia on June 30.

Prom Page 1

Senator Edward M. Kennedy (Dem-Mass.).

The speeches, containing some of the harshest language from the Senate's anti-war bloc since the debate over Cambodia began, shattered the calm of a dull afternoon of debate on technicalities involved in legislation to cut off funds for the U.S. incursion into Cambodia.

Mansfield, his voice rising to a high-pitch, pulled a casualty list out of his pocket. Standing in the aisle, his face pale and grim, he recited the record.

"Fifty-thousand and sixty-seven dead, 328,073 dead and wounded and we're quibbling about the President's war-making power. What about our powers? What about our obligation to these young men.

"... There is no end in sight. What's happening in this country? We are in an economic recession, we have high interest rates, the stock market is plummeting... there is division among our people... and we quibble about the President's war-making power.

"I, for one can stand no longer this mounting and increasing list which has cost this nation so much," Mansfield declared.

PLEA

Church, who has been managing the anti-war amendment, followed him with a soft-spoken plea for an end to U.S. involvement.

"If even there was a blueprint to suck us dry, it is this one," he said. "... It is time for free men to begin to stand up to the certain responsibilities the constitution places in us."

In a statement, Kennedy dismissed as "cynical political rhetoric" the administration's argument that U.S. disengagement would lead to a "bloodbath" in Southeast Asia.

"This 'bloodbath' started long ago — and we are part of it — and it will continue daily so long as the war continues, so long as negotiations to end that war are avoided and delayed."

DOUBTS

Kennedy told newsmen that President Nixon had promised without reservation to withdraw American troops from Cambodia by June 30, but that weekend statements of Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird and White House spokesmen "indicates some waffling on this issue."

He said there was now some doubt whether U. S. airmen flying support missions or American ground advisers would remain after July 1.

Mansfield said if South Vietnam forces stay in Cambodia indefinitely, as its leaders have indicated, "it means we will be involved in a 'cute' way" through indirect methods long after the June 30 deadline.

The President, at a May 8