

Nixon's Daring 'Brinkmanship' May Boomerang

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WASHINGTON—By Senate standards, it was political brinkmanship that could backfire.

But President Nixon's lieutenants impressed even their opponents last week by daringly seizing the legislative initiative from Senate does.

The anti-war forces were as mad as they were impressed, however, because the Administration moves defied Senate traditions as much as they hurt the anti-war campaign.

Too Clever?

"The Administration finally pulled its socks up and got cleverly adept," said one Senate figure. "The only problem is that sometimes you can be too clever."

The reference was to twin Republican moves to force votes ahead of schedule on:

- Repeal of the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin resolution. This maneuver was successfully carried off by Sen. Robert J. Dole, (R-Kan.), on an 81-10 roll call on Wednesday.

- Kidnaping of the "end-the-war" amendment of Sens. George S. McGovern, (D-S.D.) and Mark Hatfield, (R-Ore.). Sen. Gordon Allott, (R-Colo.), the GOP policy chief, called this up in his own name in the hope that the timing would insure its defeat.

It was the latter, which they saw as legislative piracy, that infuriated many anti-war Senators. There was no precedent, they maintained, for the opponent of a Senator's project taking it over in this way.

Opposed

Allott publicly opposed the amendment that he "adopted," unlike Dole, who favored repeal of the Tonkin resolution.

Senate Democratic Leader Mike Mansfield, (Mont.), dryly called the Allott move a "political play." McGovern called it a "cynical power play". Foreign Relations Chairman J. William Fulbright, (D-Ark.), original author of the resolution who had the Tonkin repealer snatched out of his control, shared that view.

Not since the brazen antics of the late Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy, (R-Wisc.), had a similar thing taken place, Fulbright suggested.

Respect

Fulbright exhorted his colleagues that the Senate is a "unique body" in that it has a tradition of respect for the rights of other members — outside its set rules.

"If we go too far in one direction, we get a reaction from the other, unless the opposition is completely elimi-

nated and destroyed," Fulbright told Allott.

Fund Throttle

One reaction, it was clear, could be application of the same grab technique and its use against Allott or the Administration on some project dear to them. Already, it was learned, some majority staff experts were looking over Administration bills to see if they could be tacked on to other legislation for political

—Turn to Page 18, Col. 7

Nixon 'Brinkmen' May Have Been Too Clever

—From Page 1

embarrassment — if that became necessary.

Consideration also was given to introduction of a new amendment to halt use of funds after April, 1971, for supporting more than 250,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam, unless with Congressional sanction. This would be the number remaining after withdrawal of the 150,000 set by President Nixon.

But that would be more likely to come on later legislation, as the senate agreed to end its struggle Tuesday over the modified Cooper-Church amendment, which was designed to block use of

funds for any Cambodian combat without prior consultation with Congress.

And Tuesday is June 30, the date by which President Nixon promised to have American troops out of the Cambodian sanctuaries and back in South Vietnam.

A result of all the maneuvering has been to make the Cooper-Church show down somewhat antic ??????. But in the process the administration, noted previously for lackluster legislative leadership, found it could be as daring on Capitol Hill as Nixon was in Cambodia. The final payoff on both gambles remains to be counted.