

SENATE ASKS CURB ON WAR PAY GOING TO VIETNAM ALLIES

Votes to Forbid Allowances
Higher Than Those Paid
American Soldiers
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WASHINGTON, Aug. 20 — The Senate voted today to bar the United States from paying larger allowances to allied troops in Vietnam than it pays to American soldiers.

Special allowances have been given three countries—Thailand, South Korea and the Philippines—for troops that they sent to Vietnam. It was disclosed in testimony before a Senate subcommittee that the allowances granted to these troops exceeded the allowances paid to United States military personnel in Vietnam.

The allowance for G.I.'s, for example, was put at \$65 a month, but "twice that for Thai and South Korean troops," the committee was told.

The Senate, which has been caught up in wrangle after wrangle on amendments to the military procurement bill, took only 50 minutes to debate the proposal, offered by Senator J. W. Fulbright, Democrat of Arkansas. The Senate then passed the amendment by unanimous voice vote.

The only Senator speaking against the proposal was Strom Thurmond, Republican of South Carolina. Mr. Thurmond urged that "nothing be done to cause these 69,000 troops from free world countries to be withdrawn."

Agnew to Visit 2 Recipients

Two of the three countries that received overseas or per diem allowances from the United States for the troops in Vietnam—Thailand and South Korea—are to be stops on Vice President Agnew's forthcoming trip to Asia.

In presenting his amendment, Senator Fulbright pointed out that a Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee discovered in

hearings last fall and winter that the United States was paying allowances to allied troops that were about double the allowances paid to its own servicemen.

State and Defense Department testimony before the subcommittee on United States security agreements and commitments abroad disclosed that while Thailand was paying its majors \$98 a month in base pay, the United States was paying them \$180 more in overseas allowances. Thailand was paying its privates \$26 a month; the United States was paying them \$39 more a month.

According to testimony at

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the hearings, the Philippines was paying its captains \$125 a month, and the United States was paying them \$150 more a month. The Philippines paid its master sergeants \$53 a month, and the United States was paying them \$76 a month.

Senator Fulbright also pointed out that each South Korean soldier leaving South Vietnam got 40 cubic feet of personal cargo space on the ship taking him home. The Koreans use the space, the Senator said, to take home American beer, C-rations, cigarettes and American electrical products.

"It is time," Senator Fulbright said, "to stop making mercenaries out of allies, and allies out of mercenaries. You should not pay overseas or combat pay to a foreign soldier more than to an American soldier."

Senator John Stennis, Democrat of Mississippi, who heads the Armed Services Committee, agreed: "I'm impressed with it, and if some adjustment can be made consistent with our honor, I'd like to see it done."

Senator Stennis promised he would try to get the House of Representatives to go along with the provision in the joint conference committee that will have to try to work out an agreement between the two houses on the final military procurement bill.

But Senator Stennis made two admonitions: That the United States would have to observe any commitments it might have already made, and that some delicacy might be necessary since American forces are leaving Vietnam. As he put it, "We are withdrawing, and I don't feel we should go in there with a meat axe."

Goldwater Backs Amendment

Senator Barry Goldwater, Republican of Arizona, said he agreed with the amendment and asked whether it would be "improper to ask either the Department of State or the Department of Defense to make reports on what foreign troops are paid."

"You talk about getting reports," Senator Fulbright replied. "It took six months to get this one report" for the subcommittee last fall. The Senator noted, at another point, that "Congressional approval was neither sought nor given" for the allowances.

Senator Fulbright also said that the quarterly reports the Defense Department did submit to Congress grossly underestimated the actual outlays.

He said that a report done by the General Accounting office for the Foreign Relations Committee found that the United States had given the Philippines \$40.8-million from the fiscal year 1966 through the second quarter of 1970, while the Pentagon reported having provided only \$17.3-million.

Urging that the Senate not take hasty action against allies, Senator Thurmond said: "We induced them to help us. They are helping to bail us out."

This brought Senator Charles H. Percy to his feet. "We are there helping them," the Illinois Republican declared. "They are there protecting themselves. We are not in danger."

Senator Fulbright said several times that the allied troops were not in Vietnam to fight but were only there for their propaganda value.

"The Filipinos didn't do an iota of fighting," he charged. "We paid them very well to go down there and sit on their behinds."

In regard to the Thais, he quoted what he said was the remark of an American soldier: "The only way you can get the Thais to fight is to put a PX between them and the VC."