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2 NIXON BACKERS TO SEEK PULLOUT

Cook-Stevens Plan Hinges
on a Prisoner Accord

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WASHINGTON, June 18 —

Two pro-Administration Republicans will pose a new Senate test of President Nixon's Vietnam policies next week by proposing a troop withdrawal in nine months if agreement is reached on release of prisoners of war.

The troop withdrawal proposal, an amendment to the Selective Service bill, will be offered by Senators Marlow W. Cook of Kentucky and Ted Stevens of Alaska—two Republicans who normally support the Nixon Administration—and will be voted on by the Senate on Tuesday. The amendment is co-sponsored by two Democratic critics of the Administration, Senators Thomas F. Eagleton of Missouri and Vance Hartke of Indiana.

Whether the Cook-Stevens amendment could command a majority in the Senate is regarded as doubtful. But the fact that it was being submitted, and by two pro-Administration Republicans, indicated that the Senate battle over the President's Vietnam policies was not over despite the defeat this week of the McGovern-Hatfield "end-the-war" amendment.

More Flexible

The Cook-Stevens amendment is somewhat more flexible and pro-Administration in its requirements than the amendment by Senators George McGovern of South Dakota and Mark O. Hatfield of Oregon, which would have required the withdrawal of all forces by the end of the year. In contrast, the Cook-Stevens amendment would cut off funds for troop deployment in Indochina nine months after enactment but suspend the deadline if the President was not able within 60 days to obtain a "firm commitment" from North Vietnam for the release of all prisoners of war.

The nine-month deadline was based on an estimate given in April by Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird at a private dinner with some Republican Senators. He had estimated that it would take nine months to withdraw American forces and their necessary equipment from Vietnam.

On the Columbia Broadcasting System's "Face the Nation" program broadcast Sunday, Mr. Laird lengthened the period to 12 months. After the program, he explained to a reporter that he was including the time required for removing excess military equipment that could be given to allies.

While giving the President more flexibility on the prisoner of war issue, the Cook-Stevens amendment would still impose a mandatory deadline for withdrawal. For the reason, it will undoubtedly be opposed by the Administration, which argues that the withdrawal schedule must be dictated not only by the release of prisoners but also by the ability of the Saigon Government to survive without American troops.

The effort of the Vietnam critics in Congress is now directed at imposing a definite deadline that is not linked to the survivability of the Saigon Government.

Another Amendment

Should the Cook-Stevens amendment fail, Senator Lawton Chiles, Democrat of Florida, is prepared to offer another version of a withdrawal amendment he had offered that was defeated on Wednesday. The new Chiles amendment sets a withdrawal deadline of June 30, 1972, but provides that the President can waive the deadline if he determines that North Vietnam has not entered into satisfactory arrangements for release of prisoners.

With a switch of only five votes required from the vote on the earlier amendment, the new Chiles amendment is given some chance of succeeding. Six Senators who voted against the earlier version — Republican Senators Cook, Len B. Jordan of Idaho and James H. Pearson of Kansas and Democratic Senators Jennings Randolph of West Virginia, Lloyd M. Bentsen of Texas and Ernest F. Hollings of South Carolina — have reportedly given some indication that they may vote for the new version.

Meanwhile, Senator John O. Pastore, Democrat of Rhode Island, told reporters that he was considering offering a sense-of-the-Senate resolution calling for complete withdrawal by July 4, 1972.

As an expression of Senate opinion not binding on the President, there is a possibility that such a resolution would be adopted by the Senate.

Senators McGovern and Hatfield introduced today a series of 24 amendments to the Selective Service bill, setting withdrawal deadlines ranging from Jan. 15, 1972 to December 30, 1972.

As debate on extension of the Selective Service law ended its sixth week, the Senate defeated an amendment by Senator Mike Gravel, Democrat of Alaska, providing that men could be drafted only when a state of war had been declared by Congress. The vote was 58 to 12.