

# NIXON WILL IGNORE CALL BY CONGRESS FOR VIETNAM CUTS

Signs Money Bill Including  
Request for Early Pullout  
Linked to P.O.W. Action

HE REBUKES THE DOVES

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House Then Rejects June 1  
Halt in Funds for War but  
Trims Pentagon Budget

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 17—President Nixon, in a rebuke to Congressional doves, announced today that he would disregard an amendment setting forth the policy that United States troops should be withdrawn promptly from Indochina, subject only to the release of American prisoners of war.

That restriction was contained in a military procurement authorization bill that the President signed into law today.

The House of Representatives, responding to a Presidential warning that such legislative restrictions could hinder the search for a negotiated settlement, handed the Administration a victory by refusing to cut off funds for military operations in Indochina after June 1.

## Two Days of Debate

By a 238-to-164 vote the House rejected an amendment to the defense appropriations bill that would have provided that none of the funds could be used to finance military, combat or support operations in or over Indochina after June 1 if American prisoners of war had been released by then. The amendment was offered by Republican Edward P. Boland, Democrat of Massachusetts.

After two days of debate the House went on to pass the bill, which provides \$71-billion in new funds for the Pentagon—about \$2.5-billion less than requested by the Administration.

The vote was the first direct test of Congressional reaction to Mr. Nixon's announcement last week that 45,000 troops would be withdrawn in the next two months but that a residual force would be maintained in South Vietnam until there was a negotiated settlement of the war.

The relatively one-sided vote indicated that the Administration was still in control in Congress on the Vietnam issue, particularly in the House, which has been more hawkish than the Senate.

Since the last test in the House in October—when a non-binding amendment on troop withdrawal was defeated by a vote 215 to 193—the doves have lost strength, largely because of many members, reluctance to cut off funds for the war.

The apparent effect of the President's statement challenging the withdrawal policy laid

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down by Congress was to harden the lines between the executive branch and the doves and to encourage a new Senate move to impose a policy of complete withdrawal on the President.

When the defense appropriations bill reaches the Senate, a move is expected to attach an amendment specifying that the President can use the funds only to withdraw troops from Vietnam.

Mr. Nixon's statement, issued by the White House press office a few hours before the House vote, was made as he signed the bill authorizing \$21.4-billion in weapons production and research by the Pentagon. To it Congress had attached a modified version of a troop-withdrawal amendment sponsored by Senator Mike Mansfield, the majority leader.

The amendment, still in the Senate-passed bill, calls for total withdrawal in six months, contingent on the release of prisoners. As modified in a Senate-House conference, it declares it to be "the policy of the United States to terminate at the earliest practicable date all military operations of the United States in Indochina and to provide for the prompt and orderly withdrawal of all United States military forces at a date certain, subject to the release of all American prisoners of war."

Mr. Nixon, in his statement, did not take direct notice of the fact that the modified amendment represented a statement of national policy rather than just an expression of Congressional opinion. But he made it clear that he did not feel bound by it.

"To avoid any misconceptions," the President emphasized that the Mansfield amendment, in his opinion, "expressed a judgment about the manner in which the American involvement in the war should be ended" but "does not represent the policies of this Administration."

The amendment, he continued, "is without binding force or effect, and it does not reflect my judgment about the way in which the war should be brought to an end." Signing the bill containing the Mansfield amendment, therefore, he said, "will not change the policies I have pursued and that I shall continue to pursue toward this end."

"Our goal—and my hope—is a negotiated settlement providing for the total withdrawal of all foreign forces, including our own," the President said, "for the release of all prisoners, and for a cease-fire throughout Indochina."

"In the absence of such a settlement, or until such a settlement is reached, the rate of withdrawal of U.S. forces will be determined by three factors: by the level of enemy activity, by the progress of our program of Vietnamization and by progress toward obtaining the release of all of our prisoners wherever they are in Southeast Asia, and toward obtaining a cease-fire for all of Southeast Asia."

## 'Hinder Rather Than Assist'

Mr. Nixon added that "legislative actions such as this hinder rather than assist in the search for a negotiated settlement."

Basically the same argument was used by the Administration's supporters in opposing the Boland amendment, Representative Gerald R. Ford, the House Republican leader, said it would stop troop withdrawals and jeopardize efforts to free the prisoners.

On the Democratic side of the aisle, Representative George H. Mahon of Texas, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, said the President should be supported in his withdrawal policies and warned that the Boland amendment would have "disastrous consequences" just at a time when "we are near the end" of the Vietnam war.

Arguing that his amendment would "implement" the policy contained in the Mansfield amendment, Mr. Boland said a fund cutoff was necessary because the President, in his latest troop-withdrawal announcement, had "offered no encouragement about ending the United States military role" but had talked in terms of maintaining a residual force.

"The way to bring the war to an end and secure the release of prisoners of war," Mr. Boland added, "is to set a date for American withdrawal."

To applause from the Democratic side, Mr. Boland found it "incomprehensible and indefensible" for the president to say he would "ignore a law passed by congress."

Senator Frank Church, Democrat of Idaho, who will lead the move in the Senate to impose a fund cutoff, protested in a statement that "the Mansfield amendment is now part of the law and, as such, is not subject to dismissal by the President."

Noting that Mr. Nixon had accused that the amendment was not binding, Mr. Church asked: "What is he going to do next? Dispatch Henry Kissinger, his foreign policy adviser, to Capitol Hill to disband the Congress?"

"It is the height of fashion these days in Southeast Asia to establish one-man rule, one-man elections, and disband people's assemblies. It has happened in South Vietnam, in Cambodia and in Thailand today. But ours is a government of law."