

Nixon Wins MAY 17 1972 In Senate

Vote on War

SFChronicle

Washington Post Service

Washington

The Senate gave President Nixon a 47 to 43 victory yesterday in its first major vote on the Vietnam war since the President ordered the mining of Haiphong harbor eight days ago.

The action, taken on a floor amendment offered by Democratic Whip Robert Byrd (Dem-W. Va.), revised a pending end-the-war proposal embodied in the State Department authorization bill.

The Byrd amendment endorsed Mr. Nixon's demand that the Communists must conclude an internationally supervised Indochina-wide cease-fire before the United States will end its combat operations and withdraw its remaining ground troops from Vietnam.

Senators Clifford P. Case (Rep-N.J.), Frank Church (Dem-Idaho) and other sponsors of the original end-the-war proposal told the Senate that the Byrd amendment would completely nullify their own proposal, which is designed to force total U.S. military withdrawal from Indochina four months after North Vietnam agrees to release U.S. prisoners, regardless of whether the fighting between North and South Vietnam then continues.

They argued that a cease-fire requirement could keep the United States in Indochina indefinitely to

See Back Page

From Page 1

protect the government of President Nguyen Van Thieu.

But Byrd, Senator John Sherman Cooper (Rep-Ky.) and others responded that the Senate should not foreclose President Nixon's chance of obtaining a cease-fire on the eve of a trip to Moscow.

Both California Senators, Democrats Alan Cranston and John Tunney, voted against the Byrd amendment.

Encouraged by the relatively close vote in which, however, they benefited from absenteeism among administration supporters, the end-the-war bloc immediately began regrouping behind an alternative amendment drafted yesterday by Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield.

The new Mansfield amendment requires all U.S. ground forces to be withdrawn from Vietnam by August 31 and cuts off funds for them after that date. In addition it cuts off funds for all U.S. military operations of any type throughout the whole of Indochina—land, sea and air operations—as soon as the Communists agree to release U.S. prisoners and conclude a cease-fire arrangement with the United States. There is no requirement that South Vietnam be a party to such therefore, or other non-Indochina, would lack any leverage to delay U.S. withdrawal.

In yesterday's debate, the basic conflict once again rapidly focused on the question of the future of South Vietnam. Regardless of the details of language, it was clear that Case, Church and other key sponsors of end-the-war proposals want to write them in in such a way as to force the United States out of Indochina, even if this means that the war between North and South continues with the risk that the South ultimately fails. They see the cease-fire requirement as a device which is designed to make North Vietnam give up the war and accept the indefinite continuation of the old Thieu government.