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Senate Kills End-the-War Amendment

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The Senate reversed itself yesterday and rejected, by a 45 to 42 vote, an end-the-war amendment that it had adopted two months ago.

The vote marked a collapse of the antiwar movement in the Senate and left the Administration firmly in command of the war issue in Congress.

The Senate went on to approve, by a 46 to 41 vote, the foreign aid authorization bill that it killed last July after an end-the-war amendment was attached.

The bill authorizes \$1.8 billion in various forms of military aid, some \$300 million less than requested by the administration.

The end-the-war amendment, sponsored again by Senator Edward W. Brooke (Rep-Mass.), was the same as the one adopted last July by a 50 to 45 vote, but the political outlook has changed in the intervening three months.

The Senate later had attached the same amendment to a military procurement bill by a vote of 49 to 47, but the amendment was dropped in a Senate-House conference.

EFFORT

The Brooke amendment represented the strongest effort advanced by Vietnam critics in the Senate over the last two years to impose a troop withdrawal policy upon the President. Through a cutoff of funds, the amendment would have required the withdrawal of all forces and the termination of American hostilities in Indochina within four months after its enactment, subject only to the concurrent release of prisoners of war.

At least outwardly, the Brooke amendment, on its third time before the Senate, was defeated by absenteeism among its past supporters, including Democratic Senators George McGovern of South Dakota, the Democratic presidential nominee, Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota; William B. Spong Jr. of Virginia;

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and Harrison A. Williams Jr. of New Jersey.

Privately, however, Senate doves acknowledged that they had little enthusiasm for organizing a new battle over the war issue and pushing through the Brooke amendment. One Democratic dove, for example, advised McGovern that it was more important that he continue his presidential campaign in California than to return for the vote.

Among the doves there was a common feeling that the war issue in Congress has been overtaken by the presidential campaign and the issue of an immediate troop withdrawal policy would be decided by the electorate in the November campaign.

HOUSE

There was also a feeling of frustration and futility over pushing through an end-the-war amendment only to have it blocked once again by the House, which by margins of 50 and more votes has consistently rejected all such amendments passed by the Senate.

For its part, the administration, sensing that it finally had the upper hand on the war issue in the Senate, was well organized to defeat the Brooke amendment.

Vice President Spiro Agnew was ordered by President Nixon Monday night to interrupt his campaigning to return to the Senate, just in case there was a tie vote which the Vice President could break in favor of the administration. The administration also prevailed upon two Republicans who voted for the Brooke amendment in the past — Senators Marlow W. Cook of Kentucky and Ted Stevens of Alaska — to pair with absent Senators, thus withholding their votes.

Once again, the administration could also lean upon an influential Democratic Senator — John Stennis of Mississippi, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee — to lead the floor battle against an end-the-war amendment. It was Stennis who offered the motion, adopted by the 45 to 42 vote, to strike the Brooke amendment which the Senate Foreign Relations Committee had incorporated in the foreign aid authorization bill.

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