

Viet Pullout Vote By Senate Demos

A New Challenge To Nixon

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Washington

Senate Democrats, sharpening their conflict with President Nixon over the war, voted 36 to 12 yesterday to demand an immediate cutoff of all funds for United States combat operations in Indochina, subject only to North Vietnamese agreement to release U.S. prisoners.

Only nine Southerners and three Northerners voted "no" as the Democratic caucus approved a policy statement on the war sponsored by Senators Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts and Frank Church of Idaho.

House Democrats endorsed a virtually identical statement Tuesday, 154 to 75, so Democrats in both chambers are now squarely on record as favoring an immediate Vietnam pullout without giving the President the discretion to impose any conditions other than prisoner release.

MEANING

Senate majority leader Mike Mansfield of Montana, who voted for the Kennedy-Church resolution, emphasized that it doesn't mean there will be immediate legislative action on bills to cut off war funds.

Mansfield said bills of this

type must first be introduced, referred to the foreign relations committee and reported to the floor. He said this will take several weeks at the least, leaving time, before any floor vote, to see whether peace can be reached at the U.S.-Hanoi negotiations resuming Monday in Paris.

"I can see no way by which action could be taken between now and the inauguration (on January 20)," said Mansfield.

But the statements by

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both the committee and the two Democratic caucuses have made clear that they are gearing up to try to legislate an end to the war, without regard to inclusion of protective provisions for the South Vietnamese government, if negotiations drag on.

Adoption of the Kennedy-Church language came after a lengthy debate in which Gale W. McGee of Wyoming and other opponents of the resolution argued that it might lead North Vietnam to stiffen its demands in the hope that Congress will stop the war without imposing any conditions to insure the future of the South Vietnam regime.

Henry M. Jackson of Washington, who also voted against the Kennedy-Church language, offered a resolution of his own, asking Mansfield to seek a meeting with the President to obtain a full explanation of the status of the negotiations and the reasons for the massive upsurge in U.S. bombing of North Vietnam two weeks ago, since reduced.

Jackson's resolution also authorized Mansfield to invite the President to make an explanatory address to a

joint session of Congress, before January 20, on the bombing and negotiations.

VOTE

Opposed by Church and Mansfield, the Jackson proposal was beaten, 24 to 23. Church said the main reason for opposition to the Jackson plan was the feeling that the procedure outlined by Jackson was an irregular, suppletory one which, in effect, pleads with the President to give Congress information to which it is entitled by right.

Aside from Jackson, McGee and freshman Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia, Senators Harry Flood Byrd (Ind.-Va.), James B. Allen (Ala.), Bennett Johnston (La.), John Stennis (Miss.), James Eastland (Miss.), Robert C. Byrd (W. Va.) and John Sparkman (Ala.), all said they voted against the Kennedy-Church proposal.

Senators John L. McClellan (Ark.) and Sam J. Ervin Jr. (N.C.) were identified by colleagues as the other two who opposed the resolution — making a total of 12.

RESOLUTION

After referring its preamble to "reprehensible bombing of North Vietnam," the Kennedy-Church resolution adopted by the caucus yesterday reads in its operative section:

"Now therefore it is resolved that the Democratic members of the Senate hereby declare it to be Democratic policy in the 93rd Congress that no further public funds be authorized, appro-

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priated or expended for U.S. military combat operations in or over Indochina and

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that such operations be terminated immediately, subject only to arrangements necessary to insure safe withdrawal of American troops, the return of American prisoners of war and an accounting of the missing in action."

The language is identical to that of the House Democratic caucus except for the phrase at the end on accounting for the missing in action, which Kennedy and Church added.

FLOOR

After the caucus action, the dispute over Vietnam spilled over onto the Senate floor.

Senators Edward W. Brooke (Rep.-Mass.) and Alan Cranston (Dem.-Calif.) reintroduced their Vietnam disengagement act, cutting off funds for all Indochina combat operations within two months of the bill's enactment, subject only to release of prisoners.

Senators George McGovern (Dem.-S.D.) and Mark Hatfield (Rep.-Ore.) sponsors of the first major fund-cutoff amendment three years ago, also introduced a new measure cutting off funds immediately for all U.S. bombing and combat operations in Indochina and requiring complete withdrawal of all U.S. forces within two months of enactment, subject to prisoner release.