

Doves in Senate Hold Off Criticism of Snag at Paris

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By JOHN W. FINNEY DEC 18 1972

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 17—The secret talks had reached an impasse. The negative turn in the Paris peace negotiations provoked a common reaction of disappointment among Senators today, but it was still unclear whether the disappointment would lead to renewed criticism of the Administration's Vietnam policies.

For the moment, the Administration appeared to have kept the issue under political control, through Henry A. Kissinger's lengthy public statement yesterday in which he explained how

the secret talks had reached an impasse. Republican Senators close to the White House suggested that keeping the matter under control had been one of the political purposes behind the decision to have the President's national security adviser break the secrecy and give a public accounting of the state of the negotiations.

Most Reaction Is Cautious

"Disappointing" was the word used by both supporters and critics of the Administration in characterizing the Kissinger briefing. But even among the doves, there was apparently little immediate inclination to criticize the Administration openly.

But the question being raised by supporters and critics alike was whether a Democratic controlled Congress would be as tolerant and docile if no peace agreement was reached by the time Congress reconvened on Jan. 3.

The immediate reaction of Senator George McGovern, the defeated Democratic Presidential candidate, was that the Administration had "misled many people into believing the war was virtually over" and that now "we must look again to the possibility of Congressional action to terminate any further

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American involvement in Indochina."

Mr. McGovern, who now returns to his back-row desk in the Senate, will not be calling the signals as much as will the Majority Leader, Mike Mansfield, who is probably the most resistant and influential critic of the war in the Senate.

Senator Mansfield expressed personal feeling of "great depression" and suggested obliquely that there would be a renewed attempt in the Senate to force an end to American involvement in the war.

If the peace talks have not been resumed by the time the new Congress convenes, Senator Mansfield said, "I anticipate at the Senate, which has been very responsible in keeping silent during the negotiations, will give prior consideration to this matter."

"What we all want is out-right," Senator Mansfield said. "I think the final conclusion of this war rests either with the President or with Congress."

Scott Foresees Tolerance

Senator Hugh Scott, the Republican leader, predicted that Congress would tend to be "tolerant" at the outset, "particularly in view of the fact that Kissinger has been very candid in explaining the difficulties." Senator Scott said he is disappointed personally, but, in defense of the Administration, he emphasized that the essential fact to be borne in mind is that the whole exercise is to make certain that war will not break out again in the next year.

"What we are striving for is a solid peace rather than a patchwork of hostilities which is too tenuous around the edges."

To Senator J. W. Fulbright, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, "the basic

issue is whether we insist on maintaining a dominant influence in the area or whether we are willing to disengage completely."

Senator Fulbright said the Kissinger briefing had gone as "a very great disappointment" because "I accepted his statement in October as indicating that peace was near." Now, he said, "I am very fearful the war will go on." As for an effort to legislate an end to the war, Senator Fulbright said he believed that the Administration still commanded a majority of votes.

Moves Blocked in House

In the last two years the Senate, often by narrow margins, repeatedly passed end-the-war amendments, only to see them blocked by the Administration in the House. Last fall, when the Paris negotiations apparently picked up a hopeful momentum, the antiwar movement in the Senate collapsed.

Senator Scott predicted that the immediate Senate criticism would center on President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam, for blocking agreement. Senator Robert J. Dole of Kansas, who is retiring as chairman of the Republican National Committee, saw an initial patience in Congress, but "real pressure building up" against the Administration.

On the Columbia Broadcasting System television program "Face the Nation," Senator Dole predicted that the antiwar movement in Congress would fail once again because there were "many of us who still believe if we are to have peace in any part of the world, it'll be negotiated by the executive branch, not Congress."

Senator William B. Saxbe, Republican of Ohio, reported that his constituents "couldn't care less about the war." He said that he had attended a luncheon today of about 50 businessmen from the Colum-

bus area and "not one word was mentioned about Vietnam although it was the major story in the morning newspapers."

At the same time, Senator Saxbe criticized the Administration for "misreading North Vietnamese attitudes — what amazes me is that it took them so long to find out."

Senator Peter H. Dominick of Colorado, a leader among conservative Republicans and a member of the Armed Services Committee said that he doubted that the antiwar movement would have "the emotional impetus to keep going," now that American ground forces had been withdrawn from Vietnam.

But Senator Mansfield said that he sensed "a volcanic upheaval" against the war building up in the electorate. "The issue goes a lot deeper than many people think," he said in an interview. "The people's hopes were raised and they were led to believe peace was within reach. But now we are back in the same old tunnel and the lights have been dimmed again."

Senator James L. Buckley, Conservative-Republican of New York, said in a statement: "It continued to be clear that force is the only language which Hanoi understands."

Not a Ripple in Saigon

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Dec. 17—Henry A. Kissinger's announcement that an agreement had not yet been reached created no audible or visible ripples today in Saigon, the center of it all.

Neither the United States Embassy nor the South Vietnamese Government made any official comment on the disclosure. At Tan Son Nhut airport, outside Saigon, most soldiers and officers took the Sunday off, as usual. The few who were in their offices grumbled that now they probably could not go home soon or move to Nakhon Phanom Air Base in Thailand, as many in the United States military headquarters are scheduled to do after a cease-fire.