

# Democrats Vote to Bar War Funds

By Spencer Rich  
Washington Post Staff Writer

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 U.S. combat operations in Indochina, subject only to North Vietnamese agreement to release U.S. prisoners.

Nine Southerners and three others voted "no" as the Democratic caucus approved a policy statement sponsored by Sens. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Frank Church (D-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.

Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.), 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—which will take several weeks at the least, leaving time, before any floor vote, to see whether peace can be reached at the negotiations with Hanoi resuming Monday in Paris.

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

The Foreign Relations Committee agreed Tuesday to take no action on fund-cutoff legislation until inauguration day, lest it imperil the negotiations.

But the statements by 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 if the negotiations drag on, without regard to inclusion of protective provisions for the South Vietnamese government.

Adoption of the Kennedy-Church language came after a lengthy debate. Gale W. McGee (D-Wyo.) and other opponents argued that the resolution 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 Vietnamese regime.

"We are not going to take any specific (binding) legislative action right away anyhow," McGee told the caucus, "so why issue a policy statement now that could harm the negotiations?"

Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), a freshman senator, said his "no" vote was based on "timing strictly," because the Kennedy-Church language "could have an adverse effect on the negotiations."

Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.), 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 Jan. 20.

Opposed by Church and Mansfield, Jackson was beaten 24 to 23. Church said the Jackson procedure was irregular and supplicatory, pleading with the President to give Congress information to which it is entitled by right.

A private conference between the President and Mansfield, Church said, wouldn't adequately substitute for testimony by Henry A. Kissinger and/or William P. Rogers before the Foreign Relations Committee. Kissinger and Rogers have declined to testify.

Mansfield concurred in Church's explanation, and also said he didn't want the burden of being an intermediary.

Besides Jackson, McGee and Nunn, Sens. 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. Sens. John L. McClellan (Ark.) and Sam J. Ervin Jr. (N.C.) were identified by colleagues as the other two opponents—making a total of 12.

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

"Now therefore it is resolved that the Democratic members of the Senate hereby declare it to be Democratic policy in the 93d Congress that no further public funds be authorized, appropriated or expended for U.S. military combat operations in or over Indochina and that such operations be terminated immediately, subject to arrangements necessary to insure safe withdrawal of American troops, the return of American prisoners of war and an accounting for 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.

After the closed-door caucus vote, the dispute over Vietnam spilled over onto the Senate floor.

Sens. Edward W. Brooke (R-Mass.) and Alan Cranston (D-Calif.) reintroduced their Vietnam disengagement bill, cutting off all Indochina combat funds within two months of enactment, subject only to release of prisoners.

Sens. George McGovern (D-S.D.) and Mark Hatfield (R-Ore.), sponsors of the first major fund-cutoff amendment three years ago, 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.

Referring to accelerated U.S. bombing of North Vietnam, McGovern said, "in the 12 days from Dec. 18 to Dec. 30, Mr. Nixon undertook the cruelest and most insane act of a long and foolish war. He carried it out without a trace of constitutional authority. . . I suggest that we have seen enough in the last several weeks to know that the President's hands must be tied if we are to forestall even greater recklessness and desperation from the White House in the future."

However, McGee and Bob Dole (R-Kan.) warned the Senate that fund cutoff attempts now could undermine negotiations.

One GOP source said that White House reluctance to make a public statement is based on an agreement with Hanoi not to make any public revelations on the status of the talks, but that after the current round of negotiations is over, "the President may go on TV."