

Case and Church Offer Bill To Bar Reentry Into War

By Spencer Rich

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The Vietnam peace settlement dominated the halls of Congress yesterday, as Sens. Frank Church (D-Idaho) and Clifford P. Case (R-N.J.) introduced legislation to bar U.S. re-entry into the war without congressional assent, and presidential national security adviser Henry A. Kissinger briefed members of the Senate and the House on the peace agreement he just negotiated.

The Church-Case bill forbids the use of any funds to reengage U.S. forces in land, sea or air combat anywhere "in or over or from off the shores" of Indochina once U.S. forces and prisoners are withdrawn from South Vietnam 60 days from today.

The possibility of further U.S. bombing should North Vietnam breach the agreement has been a subject of speculation on Capitol Hill for the past several days. Church and Case were moving to close up what they considered a possible constitutional hole that could allow the president to act without congressional approval.

Kissinger gave senators an hour-long briefing, at the invitation of GOP Leader Hugh Scott and Democratic Leader Mike Mansfield and with the President's blessing.

Emerging senators said the question of U.S. reentry hadn't been discussed directly, but from Kissinger's responses to several questions they felt somewhat reassured.

A senator who asked not to be identified quoted Kissinger as saying that the possibility of reintroduction of U.S. combat forces is "extremely unlikely; I cannot foresee circumstances that would cause that."

The same senator said Kissinger indicated that the

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United States no longer puts much stock in the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization: "The essence of what he said was that he would not favor repealing SEATO but didn't regard it as one of our more vital treaties."

"I do not anticipate any further reentry of U.S. forces," said Mansfield, after the briefing however,

that he supports the Church-Case bill.

Sen. Joseph Biden Jr. (D-Del.) said the general tone of Kissinger's presentation and responses had allayed his fears of possible reengagement, and Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey (D-Minn.) said Kissinger's exposition was "reassuring" that the peace settlement would work.

Sen. Charles H. Percy (R-Ill.) said after the briefing that China and Russia signaled Hanoi to end the war when they refrained from "the usual kind of denunciation" of the U.S. mining and bombing of the north. Hanoi sensed "a real lack of aggressive diplomatic support," Percy said.

In a brief statement to reporters before entering the Senate meeting room, Kissinger commented on the possibility of reconstruction aid to North and South Vietnam, saying the administration "will discuss it fully with congressional leaders before we make any commitment."

Mansfield said this statement had been amplified in the briefing. "There will be genuine consultation before any program is considered," he said.

Another senator said Kissinger explicitly stated that no commitment on financial aid to North Vietnam had been made—only a promise to consider it at an appropriate time. It was clear to all parties to the Paris agreement that any such aid would have to go through the legislative process, Kissinger was quoted as saying.

Sen. George Aiken (R-Vt.) remarked that "there's going to be opposition" to helping Hanoi, "especially in the House."

Kissinger answered questions from House members for an hour and 15 minutes, and was given a standing ovation by the 100 or so members present.

House members coming out said over and over again they had heard "nothing new." They said that Kissinger promised to consult

Congress before committing any economic or military aid to Vietnam, but that he would not put a figure on how much more money the United States would have to spend there.

Kissinger was asked what the United States would do if the cease-fire failed, and according to Rep. W. B. Poage (D-Tex.) Kissinger voiced assurances that all parties would abide by the cease-fire.

Poage said, "He seems to believe everybody will abide by it because they're all good people. But I don't believe they're all good people. We wouldn't have had this war if that was true."

Rep. Robert F. Drinan (D-Mass.) characterized Kissinger's answers as "diplomatic and evasive."

And Rep. Hugh Carey (D-N.Y.) said, "We've had V-E Day and we've had V-J Day. Today we had V-K Day, a real victory for Kissinger day. You couldn't argue with V-E Day or V-J Day; I guess you can't argue about V-K Day either."

In introducing the no-reentry bill, Case said, "Withdrawal of U.S. forces and prisoners ends this war . . . any reinvolvement of U.S. forces would be a new war," and shouldn't be undertaken without the congressional authorization required by the Constitution.

GOP Whip Robert P. Griffin (Mich.) immediately leaped to his feet, and an increasingly bitter exchange began among the three men.

"It would be foolhardy in the extreme to pass a bill of this nature and say to the enemy that you can disregard and ignore the agreement being signed, with assurance in advance that you can do so with impunity," said Griffin, the second-ranking Senate Republican and an administration loyalist.

He warned that the legislation could guarantee the collapse of the peace settlement in advance, and suggested that earlier antiwar legislation—of which Case

NO CONTINUATION