

Senators Reject Ex-Envoy For Asian Affairs Position

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WASHINGTON, July 11—The Senate Foreign Relations Committee today rejected the Nixon Administration's nomination of an Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs because of his close identification with Washington's policies on Indochina.

The rejection of G. McMurtree Godley, former Ambassador to Laos, was apparently the first such decision by the committee on a key nomination by any administration.

By a vote of 9 to 7, the committee supported its chairman, J. W. Fulbright, who moved that action on Mr. Godley be "indefinitely postponed" and that Secretary of State William P. Rogers be asked to give Mr.

Godley another assignment not dealing with Southeast Asia.

At the same time, after a long debate, the committee approved by a vote of 12 to 3, the nomination of William H. Sullivan, former Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs, to be Ambassador to the Philippines.

The committee action on Mr. Godley, which had the support of members from both the Republican and Democratic parties, was tantamount to rejection of Mr. Godley as the head of the State Department's bureau dealing with the Far East.

What it means is that Mr. Godley's nomination, made public by President Nixon on March 16, will not be recommended to the full Senate for confirmation. An individual Senator could move to force a vote on the nomination, but committee staff aides said this was highly unlikely because of the bipartisan na-

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ture of the rejection. could not remember a similar previous situation.

In a meeting with newsmen later, the Arkansas Democrat stressed that while the committee did not doubt Mr. Godley's qualifications as an Ambassador, it felt that he had been too closely identified with the Indochina policy, which he said, was "an unmitigated failure," for the committee to approve him to a post in which he would have responsibility for policy on Asia.

Mr. Fulbright stressed that he also favored the rejection of Mr. Sullivan's nomination, but that a majority of the committee believed that, as Ambassador to Manila, Mr. Sullivan would have less over-all responsibility and would be "less important" than Mr. Godley, who succeeded him as Ambassador to Laos in 1969.

Mr. Godley, a gruff, outspoken career diplomat, has had a history of assignments to difficult and controversial posts. In 1964 to 1966, he was Ambassador to the Congo, now known as Zaire, during a hectic time in its history.

Both Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Godley, during their assignments to Laos, headed an unusual American operation that involved the use of Central Intelligence Agency commanders with a clandestine army fighting against a mixture of Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese units. Both diplomats were called upon to approve targets for bombing raids against Laotian territory.

Not Typical Diplomat

Mr. Godley, who has said he "thoroughly enjoyed" his four years in Laos, was often described in news accounts as more of a military commander than a typical diplomat. He seemed to enjoy the excitement of the military role he had to play in approving air strikes.

The Foreign Relations Committee, known for its antiwar views throughout most of the course of the Vietnam conflict, indicated to Mr. Rogers last month that the nominations of both Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Godley were in jeopardy, but Mr. Rogers refused the offer of Mr. Fulbright to withdraw their names, a staff aide said.

Although Mr. Godley and Mr. Sullivan were nominated to their posts in March, the committee did not hold hearings until May 9 and 10. At that time, both men underwent extensive questioning, and both supported the Administration's policies in Indochina. Mr. Ful-

bright said then that, while he respected them, he was "disturbed" that they had been so deeply involved in the Asian policy and were to be reassigned to the area.

Mr. Sullivan was recalled for questioning before closed doors of the committee today. He was given what Senator Jacob K. Javits, Republican of New York, called "a grilling."

Late this afternoon the committee reconvened and, in secret voting, Mr. Fulbright proposed that action on both Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Godley be "indefinitely postponed." After several objections were raised, Mr. Fulbright withdrew his motion, and the votes were taken separately on the two men.

Mr. Sullivan's nomination was supported, with Mr. Fulbright, and Senator Stuart Symington, Democrat of Missouri, and Senator George McGovern, Democrat of South Dakota, in the minority in the 12-to-3 vote.

On the vote on Mr. Godley, Mr. Fulbright was joined by the following senators opposing the nomination:

Senator Frank Church, Democrat of Idaho; Senator Symington; Senator Claiborne Pell, Democrat of Rhode Island; Senator Edmund S. Muskie, Democrat of Maine; Senator McGovern; Senator Clifford P. Case, Republican of New Jersey; Senator Javits, and Senator Charles H. Percy, Republican of Illinois.

Vote a Bitter Defeat

The vote was a bitter defeat for the Administration. It was unexpected, since throughout the long delay in action on the two men, Senate sources kept asserting that eventually both would be reported out favorably.

There was no immediate comment from the State Department or the White House.

Mr. Godley, acting on the assumption that he would be confirmed by the Senate, had been working in his sixth-floor office as Assistant Secretary-designate. The latest edition of the State Department telephone book, published in May, listed him as Assistant Secretary.

Originally, the committee had also delayed action on Graham A. Martin as Ambassador to South Vietnam, citing his former experience as Ambassador to Thailand and some reports linking him to recommendations for secret funding by the C.I.A. to aid the Christian Democrat party while he was Ambassador to Italy.

But last month, after the Administration pleaded that an Ambassador was needed in Saigon, the committee approved Mr. Martin's nomination and he was confirmed by the Senate.

Only the Senate majority leader, Make Mansfield of Montana, did not vote on the nomination of Mr. Godley. Those voting for his nomination were;