

## CONGRESSIONAL RECORD - SENATE DEBATE

JUNE 21, 1972

## FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1972

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill (S. 3390) to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, and for other purposes.

## AMENDMENT NO. 1262

Mr. McGEE. Mr. President, when I submitted my amendment yesterday, I inadvertently submitted the wrong figure on the amendment. I ask unanimous consent that the figure be changed from \$345.5 million to \$320 million.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. McGEE's amendment, as modified, is as follows:

On page 9, line 25, strike out the figure "\$275,000,000" and insert in lieu thereof "\$320,000,000".

Mr. McGEE. That is the figure to which I wish to address my comments at this time.

The amendment, Mr. President, would seek to restore some funds to the assistance program for the Government of Cambodia. "Cambodia" has almost become a dirty word in the minds of some Members of this body, and I wish we had a substitute phrase for it. But it remains a proud name for the people of that beleaguered country—a country that, because of its location and its geography, finds itself caught up in the vortex of the fighting in Southeast Asia.

Therefore, some time back, we in this country recognized the immediacy of the problem of funds for Cambodia.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Will the Senator yield for an inquiry from the Chair? On the unanimous-consent request for reducing the 345 to 320, it was not clear whether the Senator intended to reduce it from 345.5 to 320.5, or to 320.

Mr. McGEE. I reduced it from 345.5, and I reduced it to 320.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Even?

Mr. McGEE. Even.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. I thank the Senator.

Mr. McGEE. The Cambodian question is one of now trying to assist that coun-

try simply to hold on to its own national identity. Caught up as it has been with the encroachment by military personnel from North Vietnam, caught up as it has been by the historic difficulties that it has always been involved with in terms of South Vietnam, it was probably unavoidable that, in itself, it should become a battleground, as it did for some time, or at least as a supply base, a base of operations.

Because the Cambodian Government itself had recently gone through some significant changes, when Prince Sihanouk was finally put out of the country, and still remains out of the country, and they have striven to hold their own type of government together, it seems to me, Mr. President, to make it more important that we give whatever informal assistance we can on this important plane to the activities going on in Vietnam at this time.

I would hasten to add, Mr. President, that this does not seek to involve the Cambodians in someone else's conflict. It does not seek to tie them to the United States or anyone else as an ally. It simply recognizes one of the harsh, harsh facts of the political-military situation in that part of the world, which is that there is an absence of national boundaries in many areas, an overlap of similarly-based population, linguistic and cultural groups, particularly among some of the Montagnard tribal groups, and that all of this has tended to make it impossible to isolate the fields of battle along traditional geographical lines.

The fact that Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos likewise were all the victims of the colonial powers' administrative convenience throughout history has attended and abetted the difficulties of separating their national distinctions.

That is by way of explaining why, given the importance we have attached to Vietnam, given the symbolism that we associate with a peaceful settlement in that area, it seems to me to be incumbent upon us to provide such technical military assistance, supplies, and equipment as will enable the Cambodians better to preserve their own national identity, if that is at all possible.

I realize this poses many problems. The Cambodians have had little opportunity to perfect their own techniques. They have had very short existence in developing the qualities of administrative independence in a new country. But the fact also remains that this is their aspiration, and that they would have a better chance at it were it not for the long and difficult war that has been raging among their neighbors.

I think this is the least that we owe. American troops are not there, and an American commitment is not there; this is simply trying to recognize the facts of life.

I would think, Mr. President, that any Member of this body should strive to understand, with some sense of the cravings of the Cambodians not to be Vietnamese, not to be Laotian, not to be Thai, but to try to be their own independent selves, and yet, as a very weak nation, unable to prevent their neighbors from using their territories as bases of operations, and thus be

that whatever we can do, whatever we can supply that may help them to survive this ordeal, will certainly go down in history as a very worthwhile and understanding contribution on our part.

I would also make one other point, Mr. President: It has to do with the course of very recent events in Southeast Asia. What is happening there now seems to be more promising, seems to hold greater opportunity for the chance of a peaceful settlement in the area. I think it does not exaggerate the present facts as we know them to suggest that those prospects are better now than at any time in a great many months. We all have been groping for light at the end of the tunnel, to borrow a well-worn phrase. That goes back to the very earliest years in Vietnam. But now, after the President's visit to Peking, in the wake of his visit to Moscow, with Mr. Kissinger at this moment in China and obviously there talking about a resolution of the difficulties in Vietnam, with the President having survived the risk that was taken in bombing in Haiphong and intensifying the bombing raids on the north, with the affairs both between Peking and Washington and Moscow and Washington not having been complicated by this development, it would seem to me that this combination of things augurs well for the prospects of a hopeful settlement of this long, tortured struggle in Southeast Asia.

Even the events on the battlefield seem to be taking a slight turn for the better. The North Vietnamese have not realized their fondest hopes of the south caving in. Apparently, they have run out of steam in their offensive that was launched a good many weeks ago. They have not seized the great provincial capitals that they had as their targets—a design, I suppose, that was more for psychological purposes than any other. They even have failed in this respect until now. I am sure that they have reserves left for other thrusts, for other attempts to discombobulate the Government of South Vietnam.

But let it be said, in all fairness, that the Government of South Vietnam and the people of South Vietnam have responded far above the levels that many of their critics were predicting, and that not only is the line being held against the invaders from the north, but also, counteroffensives have been launched and they have succeeded in recovering some significant chunks of territory.

This is indeed a new profile in that part of the world. This is indeed a new prospect that perhaps we are witnessing on the brink of other gains, of new breakthroughs.

Having said those things, Mr. President, I think we need to remind each other in our sober moments, as we reflect on this question, that what we are talking about is not two sets of invaders trying to grab somebody else's testimony, but one set of invaders from the North. No troops from South Vietnam are in North Vietnam. There are no military forays by the South Vietnamese into the territories that were under the control of North Vietnam. It all has been a one-way move, from Hanoi, north of the DMZ, to the territories of the South. But in

that form of aggression, the North has likewise taken over large sections of its neighbor Laos and occupied considerable sections of its neighbor Cambodia. The result is that both Laos and Cambodia have their own difficulties, due to no fault of their own except their geography, their proximity to the areas of significant action.

What I am saying is that, as we seem to be approaching the best chance we have had until now to resolve peacefully this difficulty, it is even more important that we help Cambodia, with this kind of assistance, to try to stay on its feet—to try to stay afloat, as it were—to retain its posture of nationhood. That is pretty important in that part of the world as a symbol for others who seek the dignity of independence, as well as for the Cambodians themselves.

That is really what is behind the amendment I have offered to increase the committee's allowance of \$275 million.

I have some other things that I want to discuss on this question a little later in the morning, but I did want to set forth the timing element as a critical one in our continuing this program at the level of \$320 million, for the timing is of the greatest importance.

As the prospects for peace improve, our tendency, understandably, is to begin to let down. But it is at that moment that the need probably is even more acute and requires that we sustain our efforts to help these people until we can readjust and negotiate and resettle the great issues of that section of the world. It is imperative that we not lose ground or cause a small country to have to collapse for want of support at the very time that we will be at the negotiating table, trying to achieve an honorable agreement. So much, then, rides on our taking the action that my amendment would propose.

The Committee on Foreign Relations, of which I am a member, chose, in its wisdom, to authorize \$275 million for this purpose. The President was requesting a much higher figure—nearly \$350 million. We hear all kinds of dispute as to how much money really is necessary. At a time such as this, in an area of the world that has cost us tens and tens of billions of dollars, I do not think this is the moment to try to fudge over whether it is \$275 million or \$320 million; that, rather, it is important that we allow the benefit of the doubt, even as the talks are underway and as the face-to-face confrontations between the statesman of the President, Mr. Kissinger, and the leaders of the government in Peking are taking place.

So the appeal is not only for the restoration of some of these funds but also for acknowledging the factor of the timing as a reason to give the benefit of the doubt to the larger figure for the time being.

Mr. President, that is all I will take time to say at this time. I will have more to say a little later this morning.

I yield the floor.

#### QUORUM CALL

Mr. SPARKMAN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. On whose time?

Mr. SPARKMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the time be charged equally to both sides.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The second assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ROBERT C. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALLEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### TEN-MINUTE RECESS

Mr. ROBERT C. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a recess for 10 minutes, that the distinguished Senator from Wyoming (Mr. McGEE) be recognized following the recess, and that the time for the recess be equally charged against both sides.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Thereupon, at 10:18 a.m. the Senate took a recess for 10 minutes.

The Senate reassembled at 10:28 a.m., when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. ALLEN).

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The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. McGEE. Mr. President, in discussing the question of economic military assistance to Cambodia for the next fiscal year I think it important to review the recent history of that country.

It thus casts the need for my amendment into the perspective of the events that surround us right now. Most of us recall that in March 1970, Prince Sihanouk was deposed by unanimous vote of the Cambodia Parliament. At the time he was dismissed he was on a trip to Moscow and Peking to protest the occupation of eastern Cambodia by the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong. He was seeking Russian and Chinese support in bringing a halt to the arrogant behavior of the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong military units, which were stealing rice and cattle and abusing the population in general. These acts reached such proportions that even Sihanouk, who from his earlier statement was sympathetic toward China and Moscow, could no longer tolerate the violation of his country's borders.

The Cambodian Government which replaced Sihanouk immediately insisted on the withdrawal of all foreign forces. They called out the military reserves and they appealed to the United Nations to use its influence to have the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong remove their forces from Cambodia. However, before that month of March was ended, these alien forces were moving westward and occupying large additional areas of Cambodian territory. It was at this time that Government forces were

desperately equipped—ill-equipped is an understatement. However, in that crisis, volunteers—Cambodian volunteers—rushed to join the Government cause, and during the summer of 1970 the enemy's drive was contained.

The line between enemy and Government controlled territory remains about the same now as it was in the summer of 1970, almost 2 years ago.

Since Sihanouk's ouster, we have often heard dire predictions that the Cambodians were no match for the North Vietnamese and that the Government forces would soon be defeated.

I remember hearing from this floor, Mr. President, predictions that they would not last 6 days. The more temperate ones said they would not last 6 weeks. But the Cambodian Government still lasts, and that ought to cause the Members of our body here to move slowly in pronouncing the demise of a people that seems somehow determined to survive.

In the midst of all this, the Cambodian Army has grown from 35,000 men in March 1970, to about 200,000—almost entirely volunteers. Realizing the horrors of a protracted war against the North Vietnamese, the Cambodian people have chosen to stand up and to defend their country. At the same time that they were engaged in a full-scale military struggle, the Cambodians have recently taken important steps to rid themselves of the vestiges of the previous monarchy. On April 30 of this year, they voted overwhelmingly in favor of a new democratic constitution, and on June 4 they elected Lon Nol as the first President of the Khmer Republic. These steps indicate the determination of the Cambodians to develop their country in a democratic fashion while at the same time defending themselves against foreign intruders.

The United States has supported the Cambodians in a very limited way. We have provided no U.S. troops or advisers. There are no Americans dying in Cambodia. And I think the most encouraging point is that the Cambodians have not requested such assistance. We have provided only basic arms and equipment and considerable training which has been conducted in South Vietnam. We have also financed the essential imported commodities, which the Cambodians, themselves, were unable to fund because of extensive war damage to their economy.

The situation in Cambodia is an admirable example of a small country which is making an all-out effort to defend itself against a foreign invader. The United States is supplementing the Cambodian effort. It is their war—not ours.

But I hasten to add that what is happening to them is largely a spillover of events that to us have been basically important now for a great many years.

Under the circumstances which I have described and, given the contribution which the Cambodians are making to the protection of the withdrawal of our forces from South Vietnam, I believe that our aid is thoroughly justified, both from the standpoint of our national interest and in the interest of regional security in

Southeast Asia. We must not lose sight of the fact that there are at the present time more than 50,000 United States servicemen in South Vietnam at a time when the North Vietnamese are continuing their all-out effort to crush the South Vietnamese Army. We are spending billions of dollars to try to thwart that act of aggression, the North Vietnamese offensive action. Then, in this situation, it makes no sense at all to reduce the very austere support to maintain the Cambodian Government's 200,000-man army in the battle against the North Vietnamese. The supply lines for the four NVA divisions which are attacking An Loc, for example, and in the Mekong Delta, run directly through Cambodia. Once more, this is the inescapable geographic factor I have alluded to before. The Cambodian Army is engaged in joint operations with the South Vietnamese in the border region, and is holding a key provincial capital at Svay Rieng in the Parrot's Beak. Furthermore, the Cambodians not only threaten the North Vietnamese supply lines, but also pose a threat to the NVA units which are now attempting to return to bases inside Cambodia to rest and refit after the severe casualties which they have taken around An Loc.

Thus it ought to be obvious to us that the pressures that the Cambodians themselves can keep on the flanks of the invaders from North Vietnam redound to our own advantage and our chances to preserve and protect the security of our flanks as we withdraw our remaining troops.

Second, Mr. President, the stopping of the North Vietnamese offensive, at a time when the President has just completed his historic trips to Peking and Moscow, creates the conditions for greatly increased prospects for a just negotiated settlement of the war. The next year is the crucial period which offers a hope for a peaceful end to this long conflict, and it is no time for the United States to be reducing its support to the Cambodians, who have a very important stake themselves in a fair negotiated settlement. Thus we should do nothing during this crucial period to discourage our friends in little Cambodia or to lead them to believe that we have lost faith in their ability to defend their own country against foreign invaders. The very modest aid which we are providing the Cambodians represents only the imported items such as basic arms, ammunition, and economic commodities which they themselves cannot produce. They are supplying all of the manpower and most of the economic material for their armed forces. We are only supplementing their own national effort in defending themselves.

At this crucial moment, it would be sheer folly to reduce our assistance by a few millions of dollars, when we are spending billions to dignify the status of independent nations in that part of the world, even as we help the South Vietnamese to meet their own requirements. Rather, now is the time to maintain and support our friends in Southeast Asia, at the same time as we attempt, with all of the skills and wisdom that we can command, to negotiate a just, equitable, and responsible settlement to the war.

try simply to hold on to its own national identity. Caught up as it has been with the encroachment by military personnel from North Vietnam, caught up as it has been by the historic difficulties that it has always been involved with in terms of South Vietnam, it was probably unavoidable that, in itself, it should become a battleground, as it did for some time, or at least as a supply base, a base of operations.

Because the Cambodian Government itself had recently gone through some significant changes, when Prince Sihanouk was finally put out of the country, and still remains out of the country, and they have striven to hold their own type of government together, it seems to me, Mr. President, to make it more important that we give whatever informal assistance we can on this important plane to the activities going on in Vietnam at this time.

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