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STATEMENT ON THE SENATE FLOOR
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THE FIFTH VERSION OF THE SO-CALLED
"END THE WAR AMENDMENT"

Mr. President:

I have read the original so-called "End the War Amendment" -- more appropriately, the "Lose the Peace Amendment" -- all the intermediate changes and versions, and now the latest, the 5th edition, of the proposal sponsored by the Senators from Oregon and South Dakota.

It is interesting to note that through this series of alterations the sponsors have changed their amendment from a declaration of capitulation in Vietnam to a recognition and acceptance of what President Nixon has been saying and doing in Vietnam for 19 months.

With a few more changes, now, it would correspond closely with the Presidents's expressed policy in South Vietnam, and his program for Southeast Asia.

Until we reach that point, there is only one question to decide -- should the President, as Commander-In-Chief, continue to direct this country's disengagement from a war the previous two administrations got us into, or should that job be delegated to a committee of 535?

Mr. President, I recognize that we will debate whatever remains of the "End the War Amendment" next week, but before then we should discuss -- if only briefly -- the amendment as it is now and ask: What was the purpose of the original amendment which has now gone through a complete metamorphosis?

Tomorrow's so-called "End the War Amendment" may be different than today's, so it should be clearly understood that I am only discussing the fifth version of the amendment -- the one before us today. I do not know the future intentions of the principal sponsors and whether additional changes are planned.

What today's amendment says, as I read it, says the President must have the troop level in Vietnam down to 280,000 by next April 30. This comes so close to the plan President Nixon announced on April 30 that one wonders if the

drafters had their source material switched.

Regardless of the surface similarity to the President's program, we now come to the meat of the fourth amended amendment which declares, "after April 30, 1971, funds herein authorized or hereafter appropriated may be expended in connection with activities of American armed forces in and over Indochina only to accomplish the following objectives:"

Those objectives are stated to be:

- 1) Withdrawl of all American forces by December 31, 1971
- 2) Release of prisoners of war
- 3) Provision of asylum for endangered Vietnamese
- 4) The supply of aid to South Vietnam

This statement of objectives with its December 31, 1971 deadline is followed by a proviso that in the face of a "clear and present danger" to American armed forces the President may suspend the withdrawl deadline by up to 60 days, or until March 1, 1972.

SUBSTANTIAL QUESTIONS RAISED

All of the objectives are worthwhile and commendable but the cited leaves unanswered questions.

-What happens under this fifth version if the North Vietnamese attack in such a way and at such a time as to make impossible either the orderly termination of military operations or the safe and systematic withdrawal of remaining forces by December 31, 1971 or March 11, 1972? And what precisely would constitute a clear and present danger to American forces?

2 -- Where do we provide asylum for thousands and perhaps millions of South Vietnamese refugees, how do we know whose lives will be endangered until it is too late?

3 -- What assurances do we have that the enemy will release their American prisoners under any circumstances?

4 -- What assistance could we provide South Vietnam if our precipitate withdrawal turned that country over to the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese?

WHY SO MANY CHANGES

Mr. President, I am hopeful that answers to these and other questions will be forthcoming and I trust we will get into another matter of critical importance which underlies and surrounds the McGovern-Hatfield Amendment.

It is a question that has not been satisfactorily answered. It is the question of propriety, custom and precedent surrounding the campaign to raise money and conduct a lobbying effort on behalf of the amendment.

Certainly those who donated money in response to the May 12 NBC television solicitation, newspaper advertisements and spot commercials on radio and television did so in the belief that there was a plan to end the war.

Now, however, many contributors must have discovered that the plan they thought they were supporting keeps changing. So far, it has changed four times.

The original intent and representation was to end the war June 30, 1971, by ending our fighting on December 31, 1970, and withdrawing our troops six months later. What has happened to change the plan to 280,000 troops by April 30, 1971, and withdrawal of all forces by December 31, 1971 or March 1, 1972?

If the amendment's sponsors did not intend to press for an end of the war by June 30, 1971, why did they draft their amendment to promise that date? And why did they raise half a million dollars on the strength of the date included in their first amendment? If they did not mean June 30, 1971, do they mean December 31, 1971, or do they now mean March 1, 1972?

CREDIBILITY COMPARED

Credibility has become a prominent catch-word in Washington over the past several years, and I believe it is important to recognize that President Nixon's credibility on ending the war and winning the peace is unimpeachable.

Just look at the record. He took office in January, 1969 with 542,000 Americans fighting a war commenced and expanded by the two previous Administrations.

In June, September and December of that year he announced withdrawals of 25,000, 35,000 and 50,000 troops and by April 15 of this year those 115,000 men had been withdrawn.

When he announced the initiation of the Cambodia operations on April 30, he said that all American forces would be withdrawn from that country by June 30. And on June 30 American forces were out of Cambodia.

President Nixon has not equivocated over dates or numbers. He has made clear, reasonable commitments, and he has kept them. When the President speaks of numbers and dates, there is no question of those numbers and dates.

I believe the President's record offers a marked contrast to that of the so called "End the War Amendment." This amendment started out having ALL American forces out of Vietnam on December 1, 1970. Then it said December 31. Then it said June 30, 1971. Now it says have 280,000 men in Vietnam on April 30, 1971 and have them all out by December 31, 1971 -- or is it March 1, 1972?

I cannot believe that the "Lose the Peace Amendment" was introduced with the expectation that it would ever become law. Any observer of Washington knows that the Senate and the House will never pass it and NO President, Democrat or Republican, would ever sign it. But, since it has been advocated so vigorously and at such expense and with such considerable efforts to lobby and pressure members of the Senate. We are entitled to know why it was introduced and why it has been subjected to such fundamental, continuing and substantial alteration.

Mr. President, perhaps it is expecting too much to expect answers to these questions, but I do believe they are questions most Americans are asking.

I am looking forward to next week's debate, regardless of what form the "Lose the Peace Amendment" may take at that time.