

Despite Press Blackout, Third of Those Present Vote "No" on Atomic Arms

House Insurgents by Surprise Maneuver Force Vote on Nuclear Give-Away

In an unexpected last-ditch battle, a small valiant group in the House last Tuesday forced a vote on the nuclear give-away agreements by an amendment to the foreign aid bill. The amendment, submitted for the group by Bennett (*D. Fla.*), would have forbidden the use of foreign aid funds to finance the nuclear training or nuclear equipment of allied armies under the new agreements. All of these agreements, except that with Greece, had become law by midnight July 26 without a vote since the Rules committee had refused to report out any of the resolutions seeking to veto them.

Taber (*R. N. Y.*), ranking Republican on House Appropriations, tried to raise a point of order. Durham (*D. N. C.*), ranking Democrat on the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, threw his prestige against the amendment, telling the House that the nuclear armament of the West Germans and other NATO allies "is not a matter which can be fully discussed in open session."

Only Four Percent Voted "No" Last Year

Despite this invocation of military hush-hush, almost one-third of those present voted for the amendment and against the nuclear give-away. The vote was 137 to 61. It was not a roll-call. Two Republicans and 59 Democrats (about half the Democrats on the floor) voted against the financing of nuclear armament. This shows a rising tide of concern. Last year, on a roll-call vote, on the Atomic Energy Act amendments first authorizing these agreements, the opposition was snowed under 345 to 12. The vote against the nuclear give-away was less than four percent last year; it was better than 30 percent this year.

The procedure adopted by the insurgents in the House could also be used in the Senate where no one had the nerve to introduce a resolution. Humphrey threw in the sponge on the fight with a weak speech July 17 which ended by approving the pending agreements, including that for the nuclear rearmament of Germany.

But there seems to have been an extraordinary outpouring of letters from all over the country despite a pretty complete press blackout. (The *New York Times*, unlike the *Washington Post* and the *Baltimore Sun* did not even mention the

vote on the anti-nuclear give-away amendment).

An index of popular pressure was the changed attitude of Senator Javits. Earlier he brusquely told a delegation from the New York Committee for A Sane Nuclear Policy that it did not know what it was talking about. On Friday July 24, however, Javits rose in the Senate to say that "thousands" of his constituents had written him about the agreements.

On the one hand, Javits said he had come to the conclusion that the agreements would strengthen "our military defense posture." On the other hand, he sympathized with the concern expressed and promised "the most scrupulous attention" to future developments. "I pledge myself," he said, "to act as a vigilant sentinel" and added that Senator Humphrey "who has analyzed this subject very carefully, takes pretty much the same position that I do." The position seems to be that of vigilant sentinels over a barn from which the horse has already been stolen. They could still do what the insurgents did in the House, when the foreign aid bill reaches the Senate. The Senate may not vote on it until the end of August.

A Freshman Vote Led by Meyer

A group of freshmen in the House, as yet unbroken by its steamroller leadership, deserve the credit for forcing the only vote so far this session on a step so momentous as the nuclear rearmament of Germany. Meyer of Vermont was ably seconded by Johnson of Colorado, Clem Miller of California, Wolf of Iowa. Old-timers like Wier of Minnesota and the eloquent Mrs. Edith Green of Oregon (she called it a "share-the-doom" program) joined in, as did the war hero and air ace McGovern of South Dakota and (a new recruit in Tuesday's debate) Kowalski of Connecticut, a West Pointer and regular Army man, who said all Poles—Communist or not—share a common fear of a resurgent Germany armed with nuclear weapons.

Florida's Bennett was one of a small number of Southern Democrats who voted against the give-away last year. He emphasized that today's allies may easily become tomorrow's enemies and added, "A fanatically anti-Communist ally can use weapons developed with these secrets to bring about a war which we are attempting to avoid."

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