SENATE TO VOTE ON AID TO INDOCHINA AMENDMENTS

"Maybe the American people don't have to know about troop movements or the location of nuclear weapons, but by God they sure as hell can decide whether they want to support torture or not."  
Senator James Abourezk
New York Times, 9/16/73

To the surprise of many Congressional observers, strong Senate support has developed for amendments to the Foreign Economic Aid bill which cut or limit American aid to the Thieu regime in Saigon. A page one article in last Sunday's New York Times stated that a "major floor fight" will take place over the following issues:

1. Attempts to restore the level of economic aid to Indochina to the $632 million initially sought by the Administration (it was cut to $376 million in committee—a significant move that could affect the Saigon prison system).

2. Senator Abourezk's two crucial amendments:
   A. no funds shall be used to provide "training or advice, or provide any financial support for police, prisons, or other internal security forces of any foreign government. . ."  
   B. no funds "shall be used to provide economic or military assistance to the government of any foreign country which practices the internment or imprisonment of that country's citizens for political purposes. Such determination of eligibility for assistance may be made at any time by either the House Committee on Foreign Affairs or the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, or both. . ."

3. Less sweeping amendments by other Senators that would be considered "compromise" positions, including Senator Kennedy's proposal to bar any police aid to South Vietnam, the Philippines and Brazil.

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The New York Times article also said that "a cutback in South Vietnamese police and prison spending may be approved, if the issue attracts enough public concern." The amendments are now scheduled for a floor vote around Wednesday, Sept. 26 (possibly later--call us collect for exact information later this week).

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT COALITION-AFFILIATED GROUPS WORK TO STIMULATE THAT PUBLIC CONCERN. PLEASE WIRE OR CALL YOUR SENATORS AND BRING THESE AMENDMENTS TO THEIR ATTENTION. ALSO, PLEASE SEND ONE ADDITIONAL TELEGRAM TO SENATOR HUBERT HUMPHREY, THE BILL'S FLOOR MANAGER. HIS SUPPORT COULD INSURE PASSAGE OF THE ABOUREZK AMENDMENTS.