coalition to stop funding the war
action agenda:

March 15, 1974

MILITARY AID TO SOUTH VIETNAM

At present, Congress is just beginning the authorization process for aid to Indochina for fiscal year 1975. The bills are being initially studied by the relevant committees and are not expected to reach the voting stage for several months.

However, an immediate focus for anti-war forces has emerged this week around the Pentagon's urgent request for supplemental military aid for South Vietnam.

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THE BILL: DEFENSE SUPPLEMENTAL AUTHORIZATION APPROPRIATION ACT

Senate Number: S2999
House Number: H12565

what it is: a request by the Defense Department for supplemental aid for this fiscal year (FY 1974) for a wide variety of programs, including authority to transfer $474 million in unobligated funds (from previous years) in order to ship more arms to South Vietnam.

THE AMENDMENT: House: unknown at this time.

what it is: eliminates from the bill all supplemental military aid for South Vietnam.

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This is a major breakthrough for anti-war forces and its importance cannot be overstated. It will be the first vote of 1974 on aid to Thieu and its passage could create enormous momentum for an all-out attack on the 1975 budget requests (especially the $1.6 billion for military aid). Its passage would also send shock waves from Washington to Saigon with the message that Thieu's policies of torture, repression, and disregard for the Peace Agreement will no longer go unquestioned by Congress.

The following Senator's have been selected by the Coalition's Legislative Committee as key targets. Their positions on this issue are either unknown or inconsistent, and their votes will be needed for passage of the Kennedy-Pearson amendment. Special attention is urged in their states:

110 maryland ave., n.e., washington, d.c. 202/546-6751
This target list should not be interpreted as exclusive. We expect a major floor fight on this amendment, with intense lobbying by Administration officials, including Henry Kissinger, on all Senators. Therefore, it is vitally important that each and every Senator knows that his vote is being watched.

A similar situation is expected in the House of Representatives. Although specific sponsors for a complimentary amendment have not yet been determined, we expect a major floor fight in the House as well. Therefore, it is also important to let each and every Representative know how you feel about this issue. Urge your Representative to sponsor it in the House!

Votes on the amendment are tentatively expected to be in early April.

THE ARGUMENTS

1. After lengthy hearings, debates, and compromises on the regular 1974 appropriations for South Vietnam, the Pentagon has the arrogance to come back to Congress two months later asking for almost the exact amount which Congress had previously cut! Congress should strongly oppose this attempt to circumvent its will by fiscally irresponsible, back-door financing of arms for the Saigon army.

2. The American people would be shocked to learn that in the second year of "peace" we are continuing to fuel the conflict to the tune of over $2 billion in aid each year. In light of our pressing domestic needs here at home, this massive cost is indefensible.

3. America's real remaining obligations in Indochina today are not to governments but to people -- the millions of war victims, political prisoners, and refugees, suffering under the Thieu government. The worst thing we could possibly do for the peoples of Indochina is to continue funding the arms of war.

Sorry--end of the page. More arguments in next week's Legislative Update.