

# SENATOR SAM ERVIN SAYS



In the growing furore over the rising cost of living, the President has sought to focus attention on the Congress and has urged the people to assist him in holding down Federal spending.

I am pleased that the President has recognized the urgency of putting this Nation's financial house in order, something I have advocated for many years. I am concerned, however, that the President has dealt with this problem in a manner that would make it appear that if it were not for the Congress many of our country's financial troubles would fade away. The truth is that Congress is not composed of wild-eyed spendthrifts nor is the

President an embattled crusader against wasteful spending. What is going on is really a disagreement between the President and the country over spending priorities and his authority to pick and choose what programs he will fund and what programs he will not fund.

For example, while the President has been urging a reduction in spending, he has also been insisting that it is his prerogative to give billions of dollars in aid to the North Vietnam Government. To my mind and to the minds of millions of Americans this giveaway is foolish and in the long run could be disastrous to the cause for which Americans gave their lives in Southeast Asia. So, last week, by a vote of 88 to 3, the Senate voted to bar any aid to North Vietnam unless the Congress expressly approves it.

When all is said there is enough blame for the Congress and the President too in the matter of fiscal responsibility. The Nixon Administration has achieved a record in running up unbalanced budgets. In fact, during the Nixon years there has not been a single year when the Treasury has come close to balancing the budget. It is estimated that the red ink for fiscal 1969 through fiscal 1973 will total \$111.7 billion, and another \$29.7 billion deficit is in

prospect even if Congress adheres strictly to the President's own fiscal 1974 budget request. If the President had been perfectly candid on this subject, he would have acknowledged that not many months ago he was produly proclaiming that he was a devotee of the Keynesian philosophy. In plain English, that simply meant that he did not object to deficit spending by the Congress.

Since there is much misinformation abroad on this subject, I wish to make it clear that I have not changed my views on economy in government. I did not favor President Nixon's revenue-sharing bill Congress passed and which will cost the taxpayers more than \$33 billion; nor did I favor the President's proposed "guaranteed annual income" bill which Congress did not pass; nor do I favor the President's plan or any other plan to give North Vietnam billions of American dollars which we will have to borrow.

What has been lost sight of in this debate is the fact that Congress is making many efforts to restore fiscal responsibility in government. Last week, I co-authored the Muskie-Ervin Amendment to the dollar devaluation bill which was approved by the Senate. That Amendment would impose a \$268 billion ceiling on Federal spending for fiscal 1974, \$700 million less than the President's own budget request. The bill would also give the President authority to make uniform reductions in spending, except for programs like social security, but provides that any impoundment of monies appropriated by Congress would have to be approved by the Congress within 60 days.

I have objected to the President's decisions to impound certain monies for program he does not like or for programs he does not wish to fund such as highway construction. The 8th Circuit Court of Appeals recently upheld my views in respect to impoundment by saying that the Secretary of transportation could not ignore the law established by Congress in respect to the disbursement of

highway trust funds even though his purpose may have been laudable.

In essence, I will support the President when he undertakes to practice economy in ac-

cordance with the constitutional powers vested in him. I cannot support his actions when they usurp the constitutional authority of Congress.

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