

New Indochina Parley Urged

Sen. Robert C. Byrd, (D-W. Va.) called yesterday for reconvening the 1954 Geneva conference to deal with the overlapping crises in Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia.

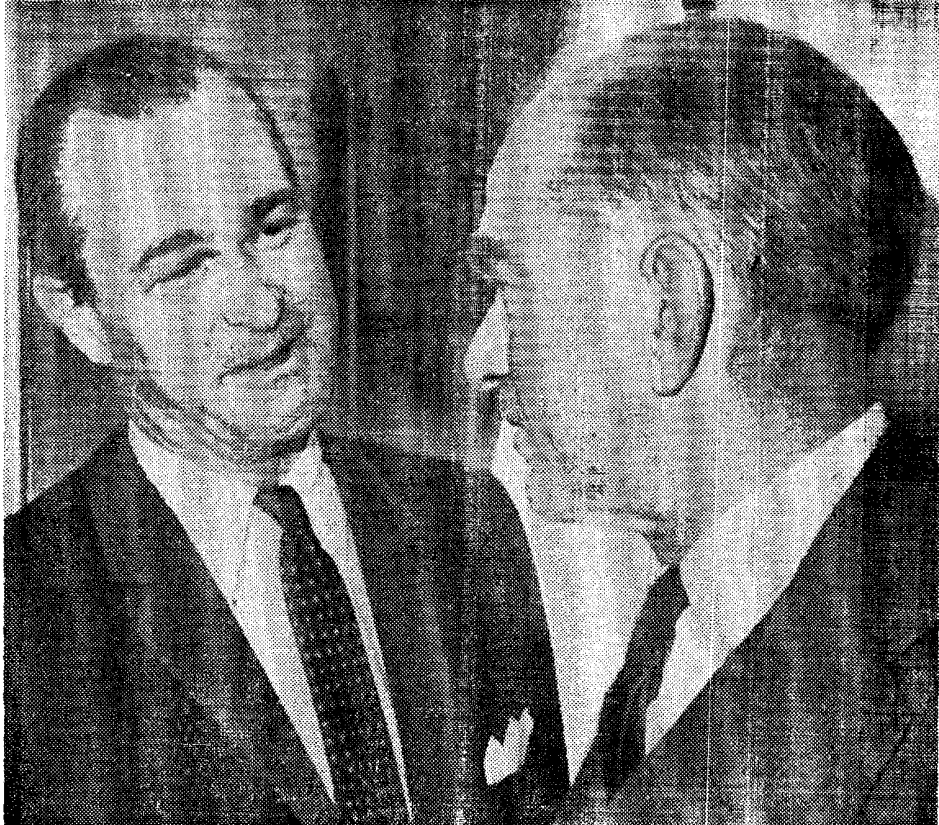
It is "sheer folly," said Byrd, "to think we could settle the current hostilities in Laos without mentioning Vietnam." Similarly, he noted, the spillover of the Vietnamese war into Cambodia shows the inter-relationship of tensions throughout what was formerly French Indochina.

The Nixon administration has made a "commendable political gesture" in trying to reopen discussions on Laos through the 1962 Geneva accord on Laos, said Byrd, but the focus is too narrow.

The earlier, 1954, conference ended the French Indochinese war in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Byrd told the Senate that "We in the Western world have long labored under the mistaken belief that the problems of Southeast Asia can be attacked by Laotian, Vietnamese or Cambodian solutions."

Sen. J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.), who is challenging administration policy in Laos, told newsmen he is now convinced that CIA operations there are a result of long-standing U.S. policy established by the National Security Council.

Fulbright spoke to reporters after the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which he heads, heard testimony behind closed doors from Richard Helms, director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Fulbright said he continues to be disturbed by the use of the CIA



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CIA Director Richard Helms (left) is greeted by Sen. J. W. Fulbright.

in paramilitary operations. But the decision to use the CIA in that covert capacity in Laos, he said, was not made by the CIA itself.

U.S. policies in Laos were challenged yesterday by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), chairman of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Refugees, from the standpoint of their impact on the civilian population.

In a letter to Secretary of

State William P. Rogers, Kennedy said that over the past few months, "Reports indicate the number of refugees in Laos has escalated to at least one-quarter of the country's population."

In a long questionnaire to Rogers, Kennedy asked a detailed series of questions about the costs, concepts and operation of U.S. policy in Laos which affect civilians.