

U.S. Comes Full Circle in

By George C. Wilson
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Nixon administration in a little over seven months has come full circle in its public pronouncements about its intentions in Cambodia.

Sunday, while talking to newsmen aboard an airplane en route to Guam, Vice President Agnew said, "We are going to do everything we can to help the Lon Nol government" in Cambodia because "the whole matter of Cambodia is related to the security of our troops in Vietnam."

On Jan. 3, 1970, Agnew seemed to be saying just the opposite.

During another Asian tour then, Agnew explained to newsmen why the Nixon administration had supported the congressional resolution barring use of ground combat troops in Laos or Thailand without congressional approval:

"I think that was simply a resolution to indicate that the President wouldn't move

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unilaterally to engage us in any conflict—further conflict in Asia beyond the Vietnam situation—without returning to the Congress for approval of such action.

"I think it also indicated," Agnew added, "that we would not become involved in any other combat activities with our troops in Asia unless some very extreme, provocative and substantial action took place that might make it necessary for him to seek re-evaluation by the Congress."

Central questions in the current political and public debate over the Indochina war are these: Is Agnew being more candid now about the administration's intentions in Cambodia? Is the Nixon Doctrine really just a name for day-to-day improvisation and not a structured doctrine at all? Has the President's Southeast Asian policy changed radically in seven months?

Spokesmen at the White House, State Department and the Pentagon insist there has been no change in administration policy. The expressed rationale is that President Nixon has made it clear all along that his actions in Cambodia have been and will be dictated by regard for allied lives in South Vietnam.

However, past public statements projected no such wide-open policy for American involvement in Cambodia. What follows is a sampling of Nixon administration statements on Cambodia since Jan. 3, when Agnew predicted a policy of non-involvement "in any other combat activities," unless the President and Congress agreed the situation was "very extreme."

"Well, in Cambodia we recognize the neutrality, sovereignty and independence of Cambodia. We had nothing to do, directly or indirectly, with the events that transpired in Cambodia." (A reference to No-

rodorn Sihanouk being deposed as head of state in Cambodia on March 18, 1970 by Lon Nol.) "We would hope that the events that transpired in Cambodia will not cause the war to be widened in any way . . . Cambodia has not made any request for military assistance . . . We don't anticipate that any request will be made."

Secretary of State William P. Rogers news conference, March 23, 1970.

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"I think it's important to bear in mind as we turn over these responsibilities to the South Vietnamese that it is better for us to do it on a step-by-step basis rather than follow the policy of the last administration—while we were increasing troops every month, then making public announcements that the boys would be home by Christmas. I think that destroyed the credibility of the Department of Defense, and I don't want that kind of thing to happen as far as

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this administration" is concerned.

"... I have said often that I will not recommend troops going to Laos or to Cambodia or to any other place without the consent of the Congress of the United States... I have said time and again that as long as I am in this job I would never recommend to the President of the United States the use of American military forces in a combat role, combat responsibility, without the consent of the Congress of the United States. Now I feel that very strongly."

Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird, April 15, 1970, on the Irv Kupcnet Show, WMAQ-TV, Chicago.

Asked at a Pentagon news briefing on May 6, 1970, why Congress was not consulted in advance about the Cambodian invasion, Laird said: "It was not necessary because this Cambodian operation is a part of the Vietnam program."

"... Massive amounts of military assistance could not

be readily and effectively utilized by the small Cambodian army against the immediate threat. With other nations, we shall do our best to provide the small arms and other equipment which the Cambodian army needs and can use now for its defense. The aid we will provide will be limited to the purpose of enabling Cambodia to defend its neutrality—not for the purpose of making it an active belligerent on one side or the other... We shall avoid a wider war..."

Laird at Fort Gordon, Ga., May 5,

"We are not going to get involved with the Cambodian army or with military operations in Cambodia. This "(Cambodian invasion)" is not an operation to widen the war. This is an operation to help hasten the end of the war."

President Nixon, in Cambodia address to the nation, April 30, 1970.

"... I would expect that the South Vietnamese would come out approximately at the same time that we do because when we come out

our logistical support and air support will also come out with them..."

"... The United States, as I indicated in what is called the Guam or Nixon doctrine, cannot take the responsibility in the future to send American men in to defend the neutrality of countries that are unable to defend themselves..."

President Nixon, news conference, May 8, 1970.

Asked at his news conference on May 13, 1970, whether "what you're ruling out, only, is that we will not get involved directly, militarily, in supporting the Lon Nol government," Rogers replied, "That's correct."

"I don't believe our government has a commitment to Cambodia. Our commitment is to our own forces..."

Laird, Godfrey Sperling breakfast group, May 14, 1970.

"The only remaining American activity in Cambodia after July 1 will be air missions to interdict the movement of enemy troops and material where I find

that is necessary to protect the lives and security of our men in South Vietnam..."

President Nixon's Cambodian report to the nation, June 3, 1970.

"... The President's policy on air interdiction is that at the present time and after our troops leave Cambodia, our Air Force will be used, be permitted to interdict the supply lines and communication lines in Cambodia... It is obvious, of course, that there will be times when, in the process of interdicting supply lines or communication lines of the enemy, that that will be of direct benefit to the present government in Cambodia. But I think the main thrust of our policy is to use our Air Force for the purpose of interdicting supply lines and communication lines to protect Americans in South Vietnam... Obviously it may have a dual benefit; it may serve our purposes and at the same time serve the Cambodian government..."

Rogers pres conference, June 25, 1970.

Aid to Cambodia Underscores Policy

By Chalmers M. Roberts
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Nixon administration's determination to prevent total Communist control of Cambodia is verbally illuminated by Vice President Agnew's words and financially backed by a new \$40 million arms aid program.

The aid program of "up to \$40 million" in small arms, ammunition, communications equipment, spare parts and training was formally announced yesterday by the State Department.

This is expected to be a first installment for the current fiscal year, which began July 1, and is in addition to \$8.9 million worth of similar aid in the last part of the previous fiscal year.

The aid program fits Agnew's pronouncement on Sunday that "we're going to do everything we can to help the Lon Nol government" in Cambodia because "the whole matter of Cambodia is related to the security of our troops in Vietnam."

The Nixon administration had avoided any prior commitment to the Lon Nol regime. The usual formulation has been that used by Secretary of State William P. Rogers last June 25, that the survival of

the Lon Nol regime itself would be "helpful" but not necessarily "essential." Rogers added that "it is preferable to have the present government or at least a free government, a neutral government, continue in Cambodia."

But as Communist attacks have continued, and with no alternative government in sight except a Communist one, American backing for Lon Nol has increased. Agnew's words made it official.

Yesterday State Department spokesman Robert J. McCloskey contended that Agnew's remarks had not altered American policy, the same position taken a day earlier by a Western White House spokesman.

Agnew tied the success of the Vietnamization program in South Vietnam to the outcome in Cambodia. But officials here yesterday denied that Vietnamization depends on the survival of the Lon Nol regime.

At the Capitol, Agnew's remarks, plus the new aid program, produced differing reactions. Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) commented:

"It appears to me the increase in aid, the increase from 11 to 50 of the U.S. mission, the close air support in

all parts of Cambodia—all these could be a prelude to advisers to administer the aid and then others to protect the advisers. I can only hope it doesn't get out of hand like it did in Vietnam."

But Sen. GOP assistant leader Robert P. Griffin (Mich.), saying Agnew was "acting as spokesman for the President," commented that "it would be very dangerous to our situation in Vietnam if there were a Communist takeover in Cambodia. We support the idea of a neutralist government in Cambodia. We all agree that American troops shouldn't go in to support the Lon Nol government, but to help it defend itself—by supplying small arms, for example—is certainly consistent with protecting our troops in Vietnam."

This was the rationale offered in granting the "up to" \$40 million arms aid that also includes maintenance of the T-28 propeller planes in the Cambodian air force and possibly replacements for lost planes.

Officials would not disclose the number of Cambodian troops who will receive the equipment, chiefly up to the level of mortars and trucks. The money will come from military aid funds already au-

thorized by Congress and from money now available under a continuing resolution.

The \$40 million figure was described as "our best planning figure" but it was conceded "what happens" will affect the total for the year. A companion multimillion-dollar economic aid program for Cambodia is still in the planning stage, it was said.

There will be no training of Cambodians by Americans in Cambodia, it was said. But much of the training will be done in third countries. It already has begun in South Vietnam and may also take place in Thailand. The Thais are awaiting Agnew's visit to find out whether the administration has figured out how to finance Thai forces that might be sent into Cambodia to aid Lon Nol.

In all this Mansfield said he could "see the renewal of the pattern of Vietnam. It's a very gloomy picture."

The extent of American involvement, it is now conceded within the administration, will turn on the extent and success of Communist pressure on the Lon Nol government and whether sections of Cambodia, especially those close to Vietnam, are turned into staging areas for attacks across the border in the coming months.



Clumped together against the rain, Cambodian soldiers await orders to move against the enemy.

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