

Ford Presses Plea For Cambodia Aid

Troops Will Not Be Sent

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Washington

President Ford, warning that the "time is running out," appealed to Congress last night to provide additional military assistance to Cambodia.

He said the aid is necessary to assure the survival of the Cambodian government and to permit a negotiated settlement of the war.

At the same time, Mr. Ford pledged that despite the deteriorating military situation in Cambodia, the United States would not send troops back into Indochina.

"All American troops have come home," he said. "They will not go back."

In a prepared statement read at the opening of a White House news conference, Mr. Ford said there is "no hope" for a negotiated settlement of the Cambodian war "unless the Congress provides the necessary means for Cambodia to survive."

If the United States were to cease its assistance now, he said, it would draw into question the "reliability of the United States" and encourage the belief that aggression pays.

"If we abandon our allies," he said, "we will be saying to all the world that war pays. Aggression will not stop; rather it will increase."

"In Cambodia, the aggressors will have shown that if negotiations are resisted, the United States will weary, abandon its friends and force will prevail."

The purpose of the additional U.S. assistance, Mr. Ford said, would be to help the Lon Nol government survive until the rainy season, which begins in June. Then, he said, the possibilities for a negotiated settlement will be infinitely better.

In response to a question,

Back Page Col. 1

From Page 1

Mr. Ford said he does not think that additional aid would continue a "blood-bath" that is already going on in Cambodia. Rather, he predicted a "massacre" if Phnom Penh were to fall to the Communist supported insurgent forces.

"We know from past experience," he said, that an insurgent takeover of the Cambodian capital will lead to murder, bloodshed and an "unbelievable horror story."

The President made his statement amidst growing indications, conveyed to him personally yesterday morning by Senator Hubert (Dem-Minn.) that Congress will not approve any of the \$22 million in additional military aid for Cambodia requested by the administration.

From his statement, it was evident, however, that Mr. Ford is not relenting in his pressure upon Congress to provide the additional aid. It was also clear, despite contrary advice from some members of Congress and reportedly from the U.S. embassy in Phnom Penh, that he is standing firm behind a policy of support for the Cambodian government of President Lon Nol.

The deteriorating situation in Cambodia dominated the news conference, Mr. Ford's 11th since taking office in August, but questions ranged to other foreign and domestic issues. There were these other highlights:

● Mr. Ford left open the possibility that unemployment may top the previously forecast 8.5 per cent, and said he would favor a larger tax cut than he has proposed, rather than increased

federal spending, if a bigger stimulant was needed to end the current recession.

● The President again chided Congress for its slowness in acting on tax-cut legislation, declaring "what we need is speed" and that he is "very disturbed" at the congressional pace. He said he agrees with Treasury Secretary William Simon that middle-income taxpayers should have a larger share in tax rebates than they would receive in a House bill because their increased spending would help stimulate the economy.

● He deplored as "very ill-advised . . . absolutely unwarranted" the terrorist attack in Tel Aviv and said he hoped it would not destroy the prospects for success of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's Middle East peace mission.

● Asked about any CIA connection with attempted assassinations of foreign leaders, Mr. Ford cited current investigations into CIA activities and said further comment from him at this time would be inappropriate.

● Mr. Ford reaffirmed his support of Vice President Nelson Rockefeller and said that despite some conservatives' disagreement with administration policies, the Republican party will have "an excellent chance to prevail in 1976."

● Mr. Ford declined to comment on whether he would like to have former President Nixon take an active role in the Republican party once he recovers from his physical ailments. He said he felt it would be inappropriate for him to comment at this time.

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