

One Week Earlier

Rogers Said U.S. Wouldn't Invade

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Washington

Secretary of State William P. Rogers told Congress on April 23 that if United States troops go into Cambodia "our whole (Vietnamization) program is defeated," it was disclosed yesterday.

Rogers' assurance that "we have no incentive to escalate" and that no American troops would be sent to Cambodia was given to a

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House appropriations subcommittee behind closed doors.

Five days later, on the night of April 27-28, U. S. military advisers and aircraft accompanied a South Vietnamese attack over the Cambodian border. Two days after that, on April 30, thousands of American troops crossed into Cambodia on the current assault against Vietnamese Communist sanctuaries.

TESTIMONY

The Rogers testimony shows, Representative Clarence D. Long (Dem-Md.), said yesterday that the Nixon administration "has broken faith" with Congress.

In addition, Long said, "I feel in my own heart that the President acted hastily — not just without consulting Congress — but without consulting all his advisers. The haste in which this was done suggests panic."

"If Rogers was acting in
See Back Page

From Page 1

good faith — and I believe he was — if I were Rogers I would resign," Long said.

"What place is there in a government," Long asked, "for a foreign policy adviser who is not consulted until a few minutes before you make a decision? This was not just a military decision; it had a major international diplomatic consequences."

Rogers, in a brief comment to newsmen at the capitol where he attended a U.S.-Mexico interparliamentary conference, said that when he testified on April 23 he said "a decision had not been made. It was made the following morning."

The clear implication from all sources is that Rogers had been overruled.

The disclosure did more than put Rogers in a highly embarrassing position for a Secretary of State. It lengthened the shadow cast in Congress over the extent to which Congress can accept policy positions expressed by the Secretary as the actual direction in which the Nixon administration will go.

Senator J. William Fulbright (Dem-Ark.), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, previously has said — and Rogers has firmly denied — that his committee also was "misled" by Rogers' testimony on Cambodia in a closed hearing on April 27.

From Capitol Hill sources, it was learned that on April 23, before the House group, Rogers was asked if the United States, in Cambodia and in Laos, was repeating the course that led to the massive U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

Rogers said the Nixon administration policy is headed in just the opposite direction, through the program of U.S. troop withdrawals. He said that "if we find that we think that troops are necessary — and I'm not talking about just across the border where somebody goes over, I'm talking about any sizable use of troops — we would consult Congress to the fullest extent possible."

"We have no incentive to escalate," said Rogers, adding, "Our whole incentive is to de-escalate. We recognize that if we escalate and get involved in Cambodia with our ground troops, that our whole program is defeated."

"Our whole motivation is the other way . . . I have said many times" that "I think the one lesson that the war in Vietnam has taught us is that if you are going to fight a war of this kind satisfactorily you need public support and congressional support."

"We are quite aware of the fact," Rogers said, "that we need both."

Representative Long said Rogers' whole position before the House group was that sending U.S. troops into Cambodia "would cancel out our program of withdrawal from South Vietnam."

State Department press officer Robert J. McCloskey was asked if it was Rogers' continuing position in the administration that "introduction of American troops into Cambodia would be inadvisable?"

"No comment," McCloskey replied.