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Was It Piracy?

Editor — The military operation to retake the container ship captured by units of the Cambodian navy was an act of incredible childishness. There was no clear case of piracy; the ship was unintentionally within the territorial waters of a Cambodian island. There was no determined diplomatic effort to settle the matter. According to The Chronicle, "Both Mr. Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger were convinced from the start of the crisis on Monday that force would have to be used." Ironically, the Cambodian decision to allow the ship to proceed came one hour after the six hour operation was launched.

American and Cambodian lives have been sacrificed to the peculiar notion that the Communists have to be "taught a lesson." Wouldn't it be better to learn something ourselves from the events of this spring?

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Editor — The script is too neat.

A retreating United States, subject to international criticism for the rout in Saigon, suddenly is attacked. The Marines parachute to the rescue and America's virility is re-established. An indecisive President emerges as a super Batman with one swift pow.

A cynical citizen might suspect the whole episode was planned at CIA headquarters in Virginia. Or perhaps the Pentagon Plans Office is getting its material from Hollywood.

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