

# A Furor in Congress on Cambodia

Washington

Defense Secretary Elliott L. Richardson maintained yesterday that the President had clear constitutional authority to continue bombing in Cambodia in order to clean up a "lingering corner of the war."

On Capitol Hill, meanwhile, there was a mounting challenge, particularly among members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to the administration claim of presidential authority to continue military actions in Cambodia.

## ISSUE

Senate majority leader Mike Mansfield, taking direct issue with the Richardson argument, said President Nixon would have no constitutional authority to order bombing raids in Cambodia once all American forces are withdrawn from South Vietnam.

Senator J. William Fulbright (Dem-Ark.) was preparing a letter to Secretary of State William P. Rogers demanding an explanation of the purpose and authority for the continued bombing.

The White House made clear Tuesday that the bombing in Cambodia would be continued until the Communist forces in that country agree to a cease-fire.

## POWERS

In providing a legal justification in the past for the bombing in Cambodia, the administration has relied upon the president's inherent powers as commander-in-chief to take steps to protect American troops in Vietnam.

Speaking to reporters before an appearance before the senate Armed Services Committee, Richardson argued that the President's constitutional authority is not dependent upon the presence of American forces in Vietnam.

"What we have now is a situation in which there is a kind of lingering corner of the war still under way and so the United States is simply continuing to give the kind of support there that we were giving up to the point where a cease-fire was negotiated (in Vietnam)."

*N.Y. Times Service*