

Missing in Cambodia

On this page today we publish an article by the wife of an American journalist who has been missing in Cambodia for three years. She offers the startling but unconfirmed word that some of the 20 foreign newsmen known to have been captured in Cambodia have been reported to be alive and still captive in jungle camps. The source is said to be reports brought back by returned South Vietnamese soldiers who themselves had been held in camps near the newsmen. Five on the list of missing are Americans: Welles Hangen, Dana Stone, Sean Flynn, Terry Reynolds and Alexander Shimkin.

There is, of course, not yet a cease-fire in Cambodia, a consumation earnestly to be wished in any case. In conditions of warfare, it is difficult to conceive of either the agreed release of the surviving journalists or a close search for them by disinterested parties acting on the information brought back by the South Vietnamese soldiers. We would nonetheless urge those who may hold

any newsmen to continue to hold them safely and to pass word about them, even if their release must await a cease-fire or political resolution in Cambodia. Prince Sihanouk in particular has an opportunity to demonstrate the decency, and reach, of the insurgency he professes to lead. The reasons why the insurgents may have held the journalists secretly captive are hard to fathom. The reasons for shifting to a more forthcoming policy now are plain.

In the Vietnam cease-fire agreement, provision was made for the return not only of military personnel but of "foreign civilians." We trust the United States will use its influence in Phnom Penh to ensure that a similar provision is included in a Cambodian cease-fire and that it is vigorously followed up. However faint the signs, nothing should be left undone to track down the reports conveyed by Mrs. Hangen and to pursue what further opportunities may open to find the journalists missing in Cambodia.
