

President Assails Congress on Bombing Halt, Warns Hanoi

But Vows to Go to Hill For Any New Action

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President Nixon pledged yesterday that the United States "will stand firmly" behind Cambodia with all aid short of combat support, and charged that Congress "eroded the structure of peace" by forcing him to halt American bombing in that beleaguered nation.

In a statement issued by the White House in the President's name, just 12 hours after the official, historic cutoff of all American combat in the Indochina war, the President's tone was angry, defiant and reprimandatory.

The President repeated, with even more bitter language, the blame he placed on Congress for frustrating his strategy in his letter delivered on Aug. 3 to Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield and House Speaker Carl Albert.

By issuing yesterday morning a highly critical attack on Congress for inter-

fering with his strategy in Indochina, the President kept that subject separate from his more conciliatory address last night on Watergate, in which he appealed for national unity.

But there was a connecting link to sting his critics in Congress. The President, for the first time last night, spoke of damage inflicted by Watergate on the conduct of foreign affairs, saying "our foreign policy is being sapped by uncertainty," and he declared that "those who would exploit Watergate . . . will not succeed."

The Nixon administration counts the bombing halt imposed on it in Cambodia as "a casualty of Watergate."

In the White House statement yesterday morning, Mr. Nixon issued a new warning to North Vietnam

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against launching any new "aggression in Southeast Asia." This time, however, the President said he will go to Congress for any action required to meet a new military challenge in Southeast Asia.

White House press spokesman Gerald L. Warren, who read the President's statement to newsmen, underscored Mr. Nixon's intention to consult with Congress about any future military action in Indochina in response to newsmen's questions.

"It should be clearly understood in Hanoi," the statement said, "that the President will work with Congress in order to take appropriate action if North Vietnam mounts an offensive which jeopardizes stability in Indochina and threatens to overturn the settlements reached after so much sacrifice by so many for so long."

The President, nevertheless, spoke in grimmer terms than he has used since he reluctantly signed the combat cutoff legislation July 1 about the consequences that he expects from that action.

Normally in international affairs, government leaders who are forced by domestic pressures to order actions contrary to their policies try to minimize the differences, to avoid compounding the world impact. President Nixon, however, Aug. 3 and even more so yesterday, sought to maximize and polarize his differences with Congress.

His authorized statement said, in part:

"He is concerned that by its action, the Congress has eliminated an important incentive for a negotiated settlement in Cambodia and weakened the security of Cambodia's neighbors in Southeast Asia and has

eroded the structure of peace in Indochina laid down in the (Paris cease-fire) agreements of Jan. 27.

"Most importantly, this congressional act undermines the prospect of world peace by raising doubts in the mind of both friends and adversaries concerning the resolve and capacity of the United States to stand by international agreements when they are violated by other parties."

The statement stressed that President Nixon "most reluctantly" agreed to the cutoff of American bombing support for the central government of Cambodia, and only because the alternative was a cutoff of funds for widespread government operations to which the bombing deadline was attached.

In the ensuing six weeks, the President said, American combat air support has helped to leave the Khmer Republic (the anti-Communist Cambodian government) in better shape to support itself against "the insurgents and their North Vietnamese sponsors."

Despite all efforts to achieve a negotiated cease-fire, the statement said, "the Communist side remains intransigently opposed to any compromise."

President Nixon pledged

that "the United States will stand firmly with the Khmer Republic in facing the current challenge and will continue to provide the maximum amount of economic and military assistance permitted by present legal constraints."

In response to questions about the statement, Warren officially acknowledged that it signifies that there currently is no ongoing U.S. diplomatic activity on Cambodia. He said he had nothing new to say about plans for presidential national security adviser Henry A. Kissinger to visit Peking or to pursue Cambodian negotiations there. Kissinger's trip has been postponed to an unspecified date.

Administration officials said that U.S. assistance to Cambodia is running at the rate of \$207.7 million a year in 1973 for military aid and special support assistance, plus \$97 million in economic aid.

Defense Department officials said U.S. pilots now will fly from six to a dozen C-130 Hercules transport planes a day into Cambodia, mainly from Thailand, with

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American supplies. This raises some risk of further shooting involving Americans, despite the legislative ban on U.S. combat after

Aug. 15. But officials expressed confidence the pilots can avoid getting shot at. Pentagon spokesman Jerry W. Friedheim said: "We intend to be out of these hostilities and we intend to stay out of them."

Rep. Robert W. Kastenmeier (D-Wis.) was among those unconvinced that all shooting is over for Americans. In a letter to Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger, Kastenmeier said Congress intended to cut off reconnaissance flights as well as bombing missions. He said, "It makes no sense to continue the reconnaissance flights, an act, hostile in its very nature, which can only provoke a confrontation, invite retaliation and endanger the lives of those American pilots involved in this operation."

Sen. George McGovern (D-S.D.) said, "I'm rejoicing that the bombing has come to an end." McGovern, interviewed on CBS' "Morning News" (WTOP), said the combat cutoff is "the culmination of 10 years of work by many who have labored in the peace movement," and he added, "We must understand the lessons of this sad venture and then determine that the same tragic mistakes will never be repeated."