

CAMBODIA...the war here & there

WATCHDOG

In the last two weeks the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese have undertaken a military build-up in Cambodia near the border with South Vietnam. They are endangering the sovereignty of the Cambodian people as well as the safety of American forces in S.E. Asia. They flee from the Allied forces into sanctuaries across the border in Cambodia. Thus to protect the lives of American soldiers in Vietnam, it became wholly necessary that President Nixon send allied forces into Cambodia. The mission is solely to destroy the Viet Cong sanctuaries and is not directed against the Cambodian people....

Surely you are aware of all this. The mass media have been blaring it at you for over a week now. To protect Cambodia and to protect Allied forces in South Vietnam, the United States had to make slight incursions across the border. But is this the situation? Has the National Liberation Front conducted a recent build-up, or have they been there for four years? Are the NLF forces endangering the sovereignty of Cambodia, or are popular Cambodian forces trying to overthrow the recent right-wing coup? Are we conducting minor incursions across the border, or is it a full-scale invasion of Cambodia?

Cambodia, sharing a long border with South Vietnam, has been in a precarious position for a number of years now. It hasn't been a secret (except the last two weeks) that North Vietnamese troops have been coming south through Cambodia. Because of this, the U.S. forces have launched artillery attacks as well as bombing raids (as long ago as 1968) on the border areas of Cambodia. Because of these attacks, Prince Sihanouk filed a number of complaints with various organizations, among them the United Nations. Relations between Cambodia and America deteriorated to the point where, finally, diplomatic relations were broken off and the U.S. Ambassadorial team was asked to leave the country.

Complaints because of U.S. violation of Cambodian neutrality continued and other incidents cropped up. In mid-March 1970, a U.S.

munitions ship was taken over by members of the crew and they sailed for Cambodia. On March 16 Cambodia granted the two mutineers, who were responsible for seizing the vessel, political asylum. This was a tremendous loss of face and pride for Washington. Two days later, March 18, the Cambodian Ambassador to the United Nations, Huot Sambath, presented that body with a list of 24 incidents from the month of February. The incidents dealt with U.S. violations of Cambodian neutrality. Some were bombing raids, some were artillery shelling, and one was an incident where an Allied guerilla team burned five Cambodian villages, killing most of the occupants.

Also on March 18 the now-famous coup took place. Prince Sihanouk was deposed by a right-wing military clique headed by Lt. Gen. Lon Nol. One of the first actions the new regime took was to suspend the constitution and take away all constitutional rights. They then declared the country in danger and placed the entire nation in a state of martial law. Within days the country was in a state of turmoil. Cambodians in massive numbers demonstrated against the new government. A number of government buildings were burned, and troops were called out. Army troops fired machine guns into the crowds, killing scores. Two Assemblymen of the new regime, caught in a village the army couldn't occupy, were beaten to death by angry crowds. From this point forward, the revolution was on in Cambodia. The peasants seized a number of villages and routed the government officials.

Then the leaking reports began. Early Wednesday morning, April 29, news stations began reporting that Saigon was flooded with reports of Americans fighting in Cambodia. But the Defense Department made no comment. Then, at about 9 a.m. PDT, the break came. The government was admitting that American arms, supplies and advisors were going into Cambodia supported by air strikes. U.S. advisors in Cambodia! Pondering over it Wednesday afternoon, I thought it sounded familiar... haven't I seen this movie before?

Then came the speech... "to protect our men and to insure

the continued success of Vietnamization..." Richard Nixon declared that he was sending American ground forces into Cambodia. He said U.S. forces would withdraw as soon as the NLF and North Vietnamese headquarters were destroyed. We will withdraw shortly... I've heard that for about six years now. He said we had such a hands-off policy in Cambodia that we just recently set up a consulate there—neglecting to mention that we were thrown out of the country. He also said that he had information which showed we must move troops into Cambodia, but that information must remain secret—like the "Secret Plan" to end the war he talked about when campaigning for President.

Backed by air strikes and massive artillery support, an estimated 8000 Allied troops surged into the Fish-hook area of Cambodia. Massive B-52 bombing raids paved the way before them. The offensive, code-named Complete Victory, called for 148 air strikes the first day. Utilizing about 5000 American troops and about 3000 South Vietnamese troops, the operation calls for smashing the NLF's headquarters, which Allied sources claim is in the area. Also in the area where the Allies are attacking is the site where scores of Cambodians were gunned down by the army just a few weeks prior to the U.S. invasion. The population of the area is heavily sympathetic to former Head of State, Norodom Sihanouk, and has given great resistance to the new regime. Just last week it was reported that the people were holding two battalions of Cambodian soldiers under siege...

Beside the Fish-hook operation, South Vietnamese troops, supported by American advisors, launched an assault into the Parrot's beak section of Cambodia.

The sight in the war zone is a sorry one. The huts and stores which still remain standing are boarded up and silent. Store fronts are marked by bullet holes. Small clusters of men, women and children cluster along the highway. They have no place to go, for their homes have been destroyed...

The decision to send American troops into Cambodia brought reac-

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UCLA reacts with anger

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tion from around the world. While President Nixon took a leisurely cruise down the Potomac, damning indictments came in from all corners of the globe.

Swedish Premier Olof Palme, speaking at a May Day rally, said, "We are facing the risk of the war

being enlarged, and of renewed escalation." He also said the American attack of Cambodia "is clearly aimed at triumph for violence and military power....It is dangerous to listen too much to generals."

Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik said he was very disappointed at the decision. He was very surprised because Francis Galbraith, U.S. Ambassador in Jakarta, had given him assurances that America would not send troops or arms to Cambodia.

The French government sharply criticized the Nixon Administration saying they could only deplore those acts which aggravate, prolong or extend the Indochina conflict.

In Dacca, Pakistan, students burned an effigy of Nixon outside the USIA, while in New Zealand students staged a sit-in outside the U.S. Embassy.

The Hanoi and National Liberation Front delegations to the Paris talks both denounced the move as "brazen aggression." Nguyen Thanh Le, North Vietnamese spokesman, said the U.S. was going "deeper and deeper into the quagmire of its unjust war of aggression....Mr. Nixon has acted in Cambodia like a man who drinks poison to quench his thirst." In another statement the NLF said, "The Nixon Administration will not intimidate the Vietnamese population which is more determined than ever to check American aggression and recover its independence and freedom." Nguyen Thanh Le also said, "The world which admired the United States for its fight against Hitlerian fascism now sees the Nixon Administration trampling on the honor of the U.S. Never has the prestige of the U.S. been so low."

China, Poland, Yugoslavia, Rumania, India, the Soviet Union and other countries all issued damning indictments of the U.S. On the other hand, though, Amer-

ican allies in Asia all proclaimed their praise of the Nixon decision. Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman said, "The world will see that President Nixon's decision is right..." South Korea, South Vietnam and Laos also gave their full support to the move.

From within the American government came many cries of protest over the Cambodian decision. California Congressman George Brown is considering legislation to impeach the President. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has been asking for a meeting with Nixon to discuss crossing the border. Pending the meeting, the Committee deferred action on legislation to stop Nixon by cutting off funds for U.S. military activities in Indochina. Also being bandied around is a proposal to repeal the Gulf of Tonkin resolution.

Responding to world and national reaction, the Government announced that 5000 more American troops would be sent into Cambodia and that South Vietnamese paratroopers, normally accompanied by American advisors, would be landing in Phnom Penh, capital of Cambodia. It was also announced that the intensive bombing raids which occurred last weekend over North Vietnam would be halted pending any further action on the part of the North Vietnamese.

Reaction on college campuses has been swift. The National Student Association has called for a nationwide strike. Demonstrations, arrests, and in many cases violence have come to many schools. Kent State, the University of Maryland, Berkeley, Ohio State, University of Syracuse, Western Reserve University, Princeton, Stanford, UCLA and Claremont (to name a few) have reacted strongly to the expansion of the war. More than 40 universities and colleges have individually called for strikes.

But still the war drags on. Maybe if we march just one more year, they'll listen...maybe one more petition campaign. Maybe if we get enough people out demonstrating—maybe one million this time—they would have to listen. He *can't* ignore one million people...

Or maybe, as someone once put it: *Amerika, your days are numbered!*