

ROGERS RULES OUT TROOPS TO DEFEND CAMBODIA REGIME

Also Bars U.S. Planes but Says Aid by Bangkok and Saigon Is Encouraged

NIXON DOCTRINE CITED

Secretary Expects Anxieties Over the Incursions to Be Eased by Withdrawals

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WASHINGTON, May 13—Secretary of State William P. Rogers said today that the United States would not become "militarily involved" with troop or air support to defend the Cambodian Government, but was encouraging South Vietnam and Thailand to cooperate with Cambodia in meeting Communist threats.

This policy, he said, is the essence of the Nixon doctrine — "Asians cooperating with each other to handle Asian problems."

Since both Thailand and South Vietnam receive large amounts of United States military aid, Mr. Rogers' remarks pointed toward the possibility of some long-term arrangements for the United States to aid the Cambodian regime of Premier Lon Nol indirectly even if direct engagement was ruled out.

The Secretary put in a surprise appearance at a routine State Department briefing to make his first detailed public remarks on the two-week-old military sweep of Communist sanctuaries in Cambodia and the subsequent wave of criticism in this country and abroad.

Tells of Meetings

Describing his meetings in the last week with five delegations of university students and faculty members, Mr. Rogers said: "The moderates were very confused about whether the Government was going to get bogged down in Cambodia."

"I was impressed by their emotional involvement," he said. "It was an emotional involvement based on a reasoning process. They talked of the real issues, asked intelligent questions."

But he expressed confidence that their anxieties would be dissipated as the Cambodian operation was terminated.

"This is not an escalation," he said. "It is not an attempt to win a military victory. If it were, their anxieties would be well founded. But the President has committed himself to limitations of time and distance, and events will answer these anxieties."

Initial foreign reaction has been "reserved or negative," he said, but this, too, is changing as the limits of the operation become clear.

By the end of June, Mr. Rogers stressed, all American troops will be withdrawn from the Cambodian sanctuaries, as will the American personnel accompanying a South Vietnamese flotilla up the Mekong River to a point 21.7 miles in-

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side Cambodia—the limit of penetration imposed by President Nixon.

Sea and Air Activity

The Secretary left the way open, however, for continuing two other actions to curtail Communist operations in Cambodia: patrolling of international waters to prevent supplies from reaching Communist base areas and air activity—which he did not further define—over the jungle border between Cambodia and South Vietnam.

Both of these measures have long predated the move into the sanctuaries, Mr. Rogers said. He would not commit the Administration to terminating them at the same time as the specific maneuver now under way.

"We don't intend to become involved militarily in support of any Cambodian government," the secretary said several times. Under questioning, he explained that by involvement he meant the use of American troops or air support for other national forces.

"I'm talking about United States troops, or air support or something," Mr. Rogers said. "Now, in terms of assistance, military assistance by way of supplies or otherwise, the President has announced that we are going to provide some assistance consistent with the present authority that we have. Obviously any larger program would require Congressional approval. I don't think we have crossed that bridge. We have no present plans to embark on that kind of program."

Elsewhere in his relaxed 35-minute news conference, Mr. Rogers made clear that he included military advisers when he spoke of limitations on engaging American troops in Cambodia.

He said it was probably premature to discuss all the ramifications of the relationship evolving among Cambodia, South Vietnam and Thailand.

Doubts Threat to Program

Mr. Rogers acknowledged that South Vietnamese military support for the Lon Nol Government might divert energies from the war in South Vietnam, but he dismissed it as a threat to the Nixon program for transferring combat duties to South Vietnamese forces.

Mr. Rogers reiterated the pledge made yesterday by the Secretary of Defense, Melvin R. Laird, that American troops "will be out of combat in South Vietnam by the middle of 1971."

He explained publicly for the first time controversial testimony that he had given to a Congressional committee on April 23, which has been interpreted as meaning that he opposed the move into Cambodia.

According to Congressional sources, Mr. Rogers had said "we recognize that if we escalate and if we get involved in Cambodia with our ground troops that our whole program is defeated."

Points Out the Context

Mr. Rogers did not challenge the accuracy of the quotation, but pointed out that it was in the context of questions about sending United States troops to support the Lon Nol Government.

"I was not referring to the possibility of incursions, of temporary activities," he said. "If I had been able to read over the transcript, I would have made it clear that I meant any 'deep' involvement, involvement of any length."

Mr. Rogers also confirmed that he had discussed the Administration's problems of relating to young people with Walter J. Hickel, Secretary of the Interior, before Mr. Hickel wrote his stern letter to President Nixon last week.

"There was no discussion of any letter or any problems he may have had seeing the President," Mr. Rogers said, "but I agreed with his concern about the attitude of young people, the importance that young people have confidence in their Government and the question of whether we were communicating enough with them."

"Communication is such a fashionable word these days, but I'm not sure that anyone really knows what is meant by the word," he added.
