

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee issued a staff report about the American invasion of Cambodia on Saturday, and today's New York Times says the report challenges the military reason given by President Nixon for ordering the invasion of Cambodia and suggests that the military advantages of the invasion expected by the Nixon administration are outweighed by the risks of a broader war in Indochina.

The report was prepared by two consultants to the Foreign Relations Committee on the basis of an inspection trip they made to South Vietnam and Cambodia at the beginning of May. The Times says the report consists more of observations than conclusions and does not take stands in direct opposition to the administration but questions the assumptions and conclusions of President Nixon's speeches on April 30th and June 3rd.

The Times notes that while the President said on April 30th that he ordered the military operation in Cambodia because "the enemy is concentrating his main forces in the sanctuaries where they are building up to launch massive attacks on our forces and those of South Vietnam," the consultants to the Foreign Relations Committee said, "Neither in our briefings in Washington before we left on our trip, nor in the briefings and discussions we had in Vietnam on May 2nd and 3rd, was there mention of an increased enemy threat to United States forces in Vietnam from the sanctuaries, or of an increase in the size of enemy forces in Cambodia." The report says the "commonly expressed intelligence estimate before the American intervention was that North Vietnamese, NLF and Khmer Rouge forces had moved into defensive positions and were dispersing westward, away from the South Vietnamese border." \*

The consultants also said they received extensive military and intelligence briefings in Saigon from the United States Military Assistance Command and the chief of staff of the South Vietnamese Joint General Staff, and they said that "on the basis of those conversations it appeared to us that the United States and South Vietnamese military regarded Sihanouk's fall as an opportunity to strike at enemy sanctuaries along the border." The report adds that South Vietnamese forces had begun making forays into Cambodia before the government of Prince Sihanouk was overthrown, but after the change of governments the scale of South Vietnamese operations increased and in some cases the operations were coordinated with the Cambodian government of Premier Lon Nol.

The report concludes, "It was the view of almost everyone we met that Cambodia has now been linked inextricably to the war in Vietnam, and that the terms of reference of that war have been permanently changed because its geographic area has been expanded."

\*See NYTimes 22 May, "Pentagon says drives disrupted foe."