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## WHITE HOUSE CITES CAMBODIA'S ROLE

### But Press Aide Doesn't Back Agnew's View Directly

SAN CLEMENTE, Calif., Aug. 25 (Reuters)—The White House said today that there was a strong relationship between the outcome of events in Cambodia and the security of United States forces in South Vietnam.

But President Nixon's press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, did not directly say whether the President agreed with Vice President Agnew's assessment Sunday that it would be impossible to withdraw all United States troops from South Vietnam if Cambodia fell.

Asked if the President shared Mr. Agnew's view that the program of turning the fighting over to the South Vietnamese would be doomed if Cambodia turned Communist, Mr. Ziegler avoided a direct answer.

Mr. Agnew, on his way to Asia, said the United States would do everything it could to protect the Lon Nol Government in Cambodia. Then he added: "There is a 600-mile border that would make it impossible for the Vietnamization program and the disengagement of American troops if Cambodia falls."

### Questioned for 3d Day

For the third day running, Mr. Ziegler was questioned at the Western White House here about Mr. Agnew's statement, which has raised fears among critics of the Administration's Indochina policy.

Mr. Ziegler said the Vice President had made it very clear that the United States had an interest in maintaining a neutral and independent Cambodia.

He said the Vice President had made the point that if all the South Vietnamese - Cambodian border was controlled by the enemy, it would be serious. This is why Mr. Nixon ordered United States troops into Cambodia earlier this year, Mr. Ziegler said.

There is a strong relationship between the outcome of events in Cambodia and the security of our troops in South Vietnam," he said.

He added that the United States had an interest in defending a neutral Cambodia. He said the United States was encouraging other countries in the area to assist the Lon Nol regime and giving limited assistance itself.

### Pentagon Explains Raids

WASHINGTON, Aug. 25 (UPI)—The Pentagon today linked United States air raids in Cambodia with the prevention of an enemy takeover there, but not directly with support of the Lon Nol Government.

The chief Defense Department spokesman, Daniel Z. Henkin, refused to comment on whether the United States was committed to support General Lon Nol's Government or whether its fall would endanger the United States military position in South Vietnam.

But, Mr. Henkin said, "Without regard to any specific government, I would say that if the Communists were to take over all of Cambodia this would present increased threat to our U.S. and allied personnel in South Vietnam.

"We have a Vietnamization program. We are pursuing it. We want to pursue with minimum casualties. Our interdiction missions in Cambodia are linked to that objective."

### Choice Left to Abrams

Mr. Henkin said the United States command ordered planes to fly air strikes against North Vietnamese and Vietcong troops in Cambodia whenever they "do or could" pose a threat to the lives of Americans in South Vietnam.

Judgment of when a threat is posed is left up to Gen. Creighton P. Abrams, United States commander in Vietnam, Mr. Henkin said. He refused to discuss the guidelines General Abrams used, but said there were some limitations.

Reporters asked if it would pose a major threat to Vietnamization for the enemy to reopen supply routes to the Cambodian port of Kompong Som.

"It would be a certainly significant increased threat to our people in South Vietnam," he replied.

"And the only way that could happen," a reporter asked, "would be if the Lon Nol or whatever anti-Communist Government was in power should fall?"

"That's your assessment," Mr. Henkin said. "I wouldn't quarrel with it."