

# U.S. Aides Want More Help for Cambodia

By **IVER PETERSON**  
Special to The New York Times

PNOMPENH, Cambodia, Nov. 26—United States military and civilian officials here have lately begun talking privately about a deeper American commitment to Cambodia.

The arguments reveal three basic themes—a moral obligation to Cambodia, the necessity to continue supporting the Vietnamization program in South Vietnam, and the need for strong United States backing for the Pnompenh Government in any future negotiations between the Cambodians and the Communists.

These views do not reflect a shift in official United States policy, but rather a deepening personal commitment to Cambodia's cause that has come with 14 months of hard work since the American Embassy was re-established here in September 1970.

This personal involvement is due in part to the very real expansion of America's financial support of Cambodia. The United States pays most of Cambodia's war budget and about half of her civil budget—a total of at least \$250-million a year.

## Opinions Have Changed

Last winter, when the new American mission was still in temporary quarters and anti-war Congressmen in Washington were warning against enlarging America's commitment in Indochina, the talk in official circles here was about "not repeating the mistakes we made in Vietnam" by jumping in too fast with too much, and about the strictly limited nature of America's interest in Cambodia.

"I can tell you we have it straight from the President,"

a high-ranking officer said last February, "that we are in here just as long as the Cambodians fight it on their own. If Cambodia starts to fall apart, we'll be able to pick up and leave."

In recent conversations here, however, some officials have begun to cite a commonly held Cambodian view that the invasion of the Communists' Cambodian border sanctuaries by the United States and the South Vietnamese armies in May, 1970, precipitated the Cambodian war, and that the United States must share the responsibility of seeing Cambodia through it.

## Aid Inspections Mentioned

On the military side, embassy officers have begun talking about the desirability of expanding slightly the United States role in delivering American military aid to the Cambodian Army.

They insist privately that they are satisfied with the 50-man limit imposed on the military equipment delivery team by President Nixon last August, but say they would like to see inspection of the military aid as it is distributed to Cambodian units in the field. This function is now forbidden under the Congressional ground rules against advisers in the field.

The United States military and the Cambodian Army's chief of staff last summer explored the possibility of bringing in South Korean advisers for Cambodian troops in the field, but dropped the idea when the language problem became apparent and when the Koreans asked for too much money in subsistence allowances.

These ideas are advanced as ways of strengthening South

Vietnam's western flank against the Communists.

The recent battles north and west of Pnompenh are viewed by American Embassy officials as a credit to the Cambodian Army rather than an indication that the Communists are getting closer.

"They have always been out there," an intelligence officer said of the North Vietnamese Army. "The difference is that now the Cambodians are fighting them."

On the diplomatic level, several civilian officials have mentioned the need to support Cambodia in the negotiations she will presumably hold with Hanoi for the removal of Communist forces once the South Vietnamese war comes to an end.

The officials note that Cambodia has no real quarrel with North Vietnam and has insisted throughout only that the North Vietnamese Army leave her territory.

Cambodia's negotiating position as a neutral country is further enhanced by the fact that she maintains diplomatic relations with several Communist countries, including the Soviet Union, Poland and East Germany.

But to strengthen her hand in talks with Hanoi, the United States officers argue, some kind of American military backing will be necessary, beyond the support for the Cambodian Army. Airpower located in United States bases in Thailand is mentioned, and so is an American aircraft carrier in the Gulf of Thailand off Cambodia's southern coast.

"It wouldn't have to be the outright use of American warplanes," an official said, "just their availability."