

U.S. Terms Cambodia Airlift Possible

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 14 —

The United States left open the possibility today that it might provide logistic and airlift support for the South Vietnamese forces in Cambodia if required by the deteriorating military situation there.

The Defense Department spokesman, Jerry W. Friedheim, said, at a news briefing that Secretary of Defense, Melvin R. Laird "has not foreclosed and will not foreclose the possibility of logistic support for troops seeking to prevent the re-establishment of enemy sanctuaries in Cambodia."

Mr. Friedheim also said he could not foreclose the possibility of a major United States airlift to Pnompenh, the Cambodian capital, although no such operation is under way "at the moment."

He refused to discuss a report in The New York Times today that Mr. Laird had rejected a recent request by the Joint Chiefs of Staff that United States planes and helicopters be permitted to ferry ammunition and South Vietnamese reinforcements for units operating deep in Cambodia.

Possibility Held Open

The thrust of Mr. Friedheim's remarks appeared, therefore, to hold open the possibility of such American support for the South Vietnamese in Cambodia in the future in the event of emergencies.

Other Administration officials said that the "option" of assisting the South Vietnamese in Cambodia had always existed. It was the first time the possibility had been publicly discussed by a Government spokesman, however.

Mr. Friedheim and other spokesmen insisted that there were no plans to commit American ground troops or advisers to Cambodia under any circumstances. Such action is barred by law.

The briefing followed reports that Cambodian and South Vietnamese forces were facing difficulties in coping with increased Communist activity.

Intelligence sources said the bulk of North Vietnamese troops infiltrating south over the mountain trails were flowing into Cambodia. Concern with that infiltration led to strikes in Cambodia by United States B-25 bombers for the

first time since the allied incursions against the Cambodian sanctuaries last spring.

In the view of some officials here, the Communists, for all practical purposes, have established new sanctuaries in northeastern Cambodia below the Laotian border. They said that about two divisions of North Vietnamese that operated in the Fishhook sanctuary area last spring have moved into the new sanctuaries.

Officials said that the possibility of an American airlift to Pnompenh could be related to growing fuel shortages. Highway 4, the only link to the sea, is controlled by the Communists, barges carrying fuel from Saigon on the Mekong River were sunk.

Mr. Friedheim noted that United States aircraft had flown supplies to Pnompenh under the military assistance program.

Cambodia's airlifts is extremely limited. A small privately owned airline, the Cambodian Transport Service, was organized last November to fly internal routes.

Week's G.I. Casualties Are Lowest Since 1965

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Jan. 14 (AP) — The United States command said today that 27 Americans were killed and 83 wounded, a combined figure that was the lowest since the week ended Oct. 23, 1965. The 27 battlefield deaths were the lowest in this category in four weeks.

The latest United States summary showed that in a decade of fighting, 44,268 American servicemen were killed in action in Indochina and 293,612 wounded.

South Vietnamese headquarters announced that Saigon forces suffered 277 killed and 688 wounded last week, raising her totals since the war began to 118,460 killed and 253,186 wounded.

Both allied commands reported 1,117 North Vietnamese and Vietcong killed last week, to bring the total since January, 1961, to 693,065 dead.