

# ROGERS ASSURES COOPER ON WAR

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Critic of Action in Cambodia  
Told That U.S. Abides by  
Ban on Ground Troops

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 22 — Secretary of State William P. Rogers met with Senator John Sherman Cooper today in an effort to assure him that the Administration was abiding by Congressional restrictions on American involvement in Cambodia.

Yesterday, Mr. Cooper accused the Administration of violating the spirit of legislation passed last month, forbidding the use of American ground combat troops or advisers in Cambodia.

Following the Kentucky Republican's luncheon meeting with Mr. Rogers, State Department officials reported that there would be a further briefing on the Cambodian situation for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee next week.

Officials also disclosed that in the wake of the controversy over expanded air operations in Cambodia, the Defense Department had issued new instructions to forbid the landing of American military personnel in Cambodian combat.

They acknowledged that some American personnel, from helicopters providing air support for South Vietnamese and Cambodian forces fighting along Route 4, between Pnompenh and the key port of Kompong Som, had been on the ground.

But these instances were described as "mistakes" involving landings of no more than 10 minutes, made to allow emergency repairs and not to provide combat support or advise for the ground operations.

Officials said these landings

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had not been authorized by Washington, but that military personnel in the field had taken "some liberties."

The controversy arose after the Associated Press distributed a photograph last Saturday showing an American racing toward a helicopter that had landed in Cambodia, not far from the heavy fighting along Route 4. Until today, Administration officials had not offered an explanation for that incident.

More directly than before, well-placed officials conceded that a primary purpose of the allied operations along Route 4 had been to relieve the military pressures on the Cambodian Government, although the Administration has sought publicly to explain American air operations in the area as an effort to prevent the enemy from re-establishing base areas close to South Vietnam.

### Vital to Pullout Plans

Officials asserted today that the survival of a friendly government in Pnompenh that would permit allied military operations in Cambodia is considered essential to the program of American troop withdrawals from Vietnam.

The State Department said today that the United States was greatly discouraged by the enemy's overnight attack on the Pnompenh Airport. But the prevailing assessment was that the Cambodian Government was not in danger of imminent collapse.

Officials saw no evidence tonight that the enemy was preparing for a major offensive to try to seize the Cambodian capital.

Robert J. McCloskey, the State Department spokesman, described damage to the Pnompenh airport as "minimal." He said the United States would "give serious consideration" to helping the Cambodian airport replace its losses from the raid, but that it was too early to say precisely what assistance would be needed.

### Raid's Impact Minimized

Pentagon officials minimized the impact of the raid on Cambodian air operations. They said that the Soviet-built planes damaged in the attack had been unusable anyway because of a lack of spare parts. Mr. McCloskey also reported that a C-47 plane used by the American Embassy in Pnompenh had been damaged in the raid.

Officials said that the recent increase in American air operations in Cambodia came largely in response to a request by the South Vietnamese Government.

Informants said that Saigon had asked for American air support to help South Vietnamese and Cambodian units open Route 4. But they asserted that

the level of daily American air activity was still limited to about 20 helicopter sorties and about 15 sorties by fixed-wing aircraft.

Senator Cooper was reportedly given a full briefing on the Cambodian operation by Marshall Green, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs, and Lieut. Gen. John Vogt, who heads the joint staff in the Pentagon. The briefings were understood to have stressed the Administration's effort to abide by Congressional prohibitions against the use of ground combat troops or advisers in Cambodia.

Officials said that Mr. Green and General Vogt would give similar briefings to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee next week and that Secretary of State Rogers was also prepared to testify, if requested.