

ROGERS ASSURES SENATORS ON ROLE IN CAMBODIA WAR

Says U.S. Has No Intention
of Expanding the Scope of
Its Military Activities

MEETS FOREIGN PANEL

Members Appear Mollified
—Plan to Hold Public
Hearings Is Dropped
JAN 29 1971

By JOHN W. FINNEY

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 28 — Secretary of State William P. Rogers assured a restive Senate Foreign Relations Committee today that the administration had no intention of expanding the scope of American military activities in Cambodia.

Mr. Rogers also said at a closed meeting of the committee that the Administration did not plan to seek relaxation of the Cooper-Church amendment, which bars the introduction of ground combat troops and military advisers into Cambodia.

[In Phnompenh, official sources said that United States servicemen sent to Cambodia to supervise the use of military equipment would wear civilian clothing and be unarmed. The sources would not rule out, however, the possibility that the men would give some advice to Cambodian troops.]

The Rogers assurances to the committee appeared to mollify those members who had been raising critical questions suggesting that the recent expansion of air operations over Cambodia violated the spirit if not the letter of the Cooper-Church amendment, which Congress attached last year to a supplementary military aid bill.

Senators Reassured

After the hearing, the two co-sponsors of the amendment — John Sherman Cooper, Republican of Kentucky, and Frank Church, Democrat of Idaho — both agreed that thus far the administration had not violated the Congressional restrictions.

Much of the same opinion was expressed by Senator J. W. Fulbright, the chairman, and other committee members, such as Jacob K. Javits, Republican of New York; George Aiken, Republican of Vermont and Edmund S. Muskie, Democrat of Maine.

In the face of the Rogers assurances, given during a three-and-a-half-hour briefing, the committee had clearly retreated from the harshly critical position it had begun to assume toward the Administration on the Cambodian issue.

The committee quietly dropped tentative plans for public hearings. Senator Fulbright explained that Mr. Rogers was "extremely nega-

Continued on Page 2, Column 5

Continued From Page 1, Col. 8

tive" about appearing at a public session. There also appeared to be no immediate interest within the committee to broaden the Cooper-Church amendment to include a prohibition against American air support for Cambodian forces.

But in retreat, some of the committee members were trying to draw a new line against a deepening American involvement in Cambodia by arguing that a continuation of the pattern of recent weeks would lead to a violation of the spirit if not the letter of the Cooper-Church amendment.

Senators Cooper and Javits contended that if American military activities were not held to a "bare minimum," they would violate the spirit of the Cooper-Church amendment, which they said was intended by Congress to prevent an expansion of the war.

The evident concern of many of the committee members was that the Administration, despite its expressed intentions and reassurances, was being carried by events and its actions into a deeper involvement in Cambodia. By holding up the Cooper-Church amendment as an expression of Congressional intent, they at least hope to exercise a restraining influence on the Administration.

As he walked out of the hearing room in the Capitol, an obviously perturbed Senator Cooper said to a reporter: "I am going to go to see the President."

According to Senator Javits, Mr. Rogers said that the Administration "did not intend to broaden the nature of military activities beyond the present compass."

The Secretary also reportedly said that while the Administration contemplated continued use of air power in Cambodia, the expectation was that it would not be of the scale recently used in clearing Route 4, that runs between

Pnompenh and the port of Kampong Som.

It was this use of American air power in close support of Cambodian and South Vietnamese troops that aroused Congressional concern.

But Mr. Rogers did not foreclose the possibility that the Administration would resort to close air support should the military situation demand. Talking before television cameras after the hearing, the Secretary said:

"We are going to continue use of air power in the way the President feels is necessary to protect American lives."

Under questioning, Mr. Rogers was reportedly careful not to take direct issue with suggestions yesterday by Senator John C. Stennis of Mississippi, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, that it might be necessary to relax the Cooper-Church restrictions so that ground air controllers would be "inconsistent" with the present restrictions.

In what some Senators regarded as a new element of semantic confusion, Mr. Rogers argued that because no ground controllers would be sent into Cambodia, the United States would not be engaged in combat air support there.

"We are not going to use close air support in the exact definition of that term because close air support means we would have to have coordinators and communicators on the ground in Cambodia," Mr. Rogers told reporters. "So that in the sense we will not have close air support."

A similar statement by Mr. Rogers before the committee prompted Senator Church to observe after the hearing that the Administration was "playing with words."

Complaint by Church

"The fact is," Senator Church told reporters, "that our helicopters are hovering above the ground like hummingbirds, firing at every target of opportunity."

"If you get so technical that

everything is redefined each time the policy changes," Senator Church said, "then I do think the committee has a basis for legitimate and genuine concern" about observance of the amendment.

Faced with what he called an "endless kind of maze" of semantics, Senator Fulbright questioned how Congress could write legislative prescriptions that would cover all possible military actions in Cambodia.

"If they do not choose to follow Congressional advice," he said, "there is no practical way to make them follow it."

One suggestion offered by Senator Javits during the hearing was that there should be virtually daily consultation between the Administration and the Senate committee on military developments in Cambodia. Then, he argued, the committee would be in a position to complain or act legislatively if it felt the Administration was violating the intent of the Cooper-Church amendment.

Secretary Rogers gave no commitment that there would be such close consultations nor was one specifically asked.

Despite the misgivings expressed by several Senators that the Administration was in danger of repeating in Cambodia, the example of Vietnam, Mr. Rogers told reporters "all the imperatives are in the other way."

"I don't think there is any possibility that we would get involved in a way that would require ground combat troops in Cambodia," he said.

Protecting G.I.'s Agnew Says

KANSAS CITY, Jan. 28 (AP) — Vice President Agnew said today United States aid to Cambodia was designed primarily to protect American troops in South Vietnam as President Nixon's troop withdrawal timetable continues.

Mr. Agnew stopped here on his trip to seek support for the Administration's proposal to share revenue with the states.