

# Joint Chiefs Said to Devise Costly Cambodia War Plan

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 12—The Joint Chiefs of Staff are said to have designed a costly program of "pacification" and other unconventional warfare for Cambodia to protect South Vietnam's western flank as Americans continue their withdrawal from Indochina.

They have also proposed a series of budget devices to augment the funds that Congress will be asked to provide for expanding the Cambodian Army over the next five years.

The Chiefs submitted their program last month to Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird, according to Congressional sources. Mr. Laird, who has been bargaining with the Chiefs since June about the cost of the effort, is described as still reluctant about the latest version, which would double spending to about \$500-million a year by 1977.

The final decision, however, will rest with a senior policy review group run by Henry A. Kissinger, the President's adviser on national security affairs.

How to protect Cambodia from the North Vietnamese

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forces and deny them the use of Cambodian territory for attacks against South Vietnam's population centers has become a major problem for Pentagon planners. As the American forces in Vietnam are reduced to 50,000 men, at the most, and come to rely on air power for operations in the rest of Indochina, the planners are looking to indigenous forces to carry the burden in ground combat.

With a first-year grant of \$185-million in military aid and \$70-million in economic aid, the Cambodian Army has already been expanded from 30,000 men in April, 1970—when American forces invaded the North Vietnamese "sanctuaries" in Cam-

bodia—to a current strength of about 180,000. The Cambodians are said to have fought well, but most of them are no match yet for the 60,000 North Vietnamese in their country, mostly east of the Mekong River.

## Saigon's Troops Unpopular

South Vietnamese troops have periodically moved into Cambodia to help out, but they are no more popular among Cambodians than the Communists forces from the north and will in any case be needed for the defense of their own territory.

When the Joint Chiefs of Staff first considered the problem last June, they proposed a 1971-72 military aid program of \$350-million, Congressional informants report. Secretary Laird said that he could not afford that much and that Congress would not support such an increase.

The chiefs said that with \$200-million in military aid they could not increase the size of the Cambodian Army, but for \$275-million they could expand it to 225,000 men. Mr. Laird's budget pruners said that such an increase in strength could probably be achieved with \$252-million.

But as finally submitted to Congress, the Cambodian aid program called for \$200-million in military aid, \$110-million in economic assistance and \$15-million worth of agricultural commodities, for a total of \$325-million. This was a net increase of \$61-million over last year's allocations.

## Alternate Plans Offered

Nonetheless, in explaining their elaborate military plans to Mr. Laird, in a memorandum dated Aug. 30, the Joint Chiefs indicated that they could get around the limit on military spending and proceed with the build-up.

According to informants, the Chiefs offered four different ways of generating an additional \$52-million so as to add

40,000 troops to the Cambodian Army and also raise the "paramilitary" force of armed civilians to 143,000.

The first way would be simply to transfer \$52-million from the economic aid program to military spending, which can be done later in the fiscal year simply by the Administration's notifying Congress. The second way would be to use the economic aid fund for the purchase of all "common use" items such as trucks and jeeps, which have military as well as civilian value, thus freeing other military funds.

A third way would be to increase procurement for the United States Army by \$52-million and give the matériel to the Cambodians, for "re-payment" later. The fourth way would be to make some exceptions in Defense Department supply regulations, declaring additional equipment to be "excess" and delivering it to the Cambodians.

The Pentagon planners said they were looking ahead to further increases in the Cambodian Army, so that it would number 256,000 men by mid-1973 and more than 300,000 men by 1977. The paramilitary units, they believe, must be augmented to nearly 200,000 by mid-1973 and more than 500,000 in 1977. This would mean arming about 10 per cent of Cambodia's population of 7 million, or nearly half the adult male population.

The Joint Chiefs would provide for a mechanized brigade, an artillery brigade and coastal patrol units, as well as ground troops and extensive logistic support. They would look to the Agency for International Development to help finance the paramilitary defense forces, including the police. The Central Intelligence Agency would be asked to mount additional programs and to provide airlift support.

The program of activity drawn up by the Joint Chiefs is divided into four headings, labeled "Pacification," "Unconventional Warfare," "Psychological Operations" and "Civil Affairs." The country would be divided into eight pacification areas and this program would be supervised by a new United States Deputy Ambassador—as in South Vietnam—in a new embassy structure.

The Pentagon would also establish a three-nation military committee with the Cambodians and South Vietnamese, in which the Defense Department would be represented through Gen. Frederick C. Weyand, the deputy commander of American forces in Vietnam.