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**Anthony Lewis** FEB 10 1975

# The \$7 Billion Effect in Cambodia

**L**AST DECEMBER, just before it recessed, Congress put a ceiling of \$275 million on military aid for Cambodia in the current fiscal year. The act used unusually firm language, prohibiting spending beyond the ceiling for "any operation, project or program of any kind, or for providing any goods, supplies, materials, equipment, services, personnel or advisers."

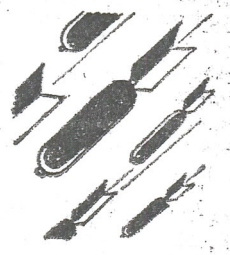
Six weeks later, the administration is back asking for more: an additional \$222 million in military aid.

Philip Habib, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, told a House Appropriations subcommittee the other day that the added money was essential — to save the Lon Nol regime, and with it American credibility.

Habib is a skillful and experienced diplomat. But his case for more aid can be convincing only if one is oblivious to very recent history. It is crucial to look at the record: the record of American words and action, and the results in Cambodia.

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**T**HE WORDS: Overt U.S. involvement in Cambodia began with the "incursion" announced by President Nixon on April 30, 1970. On June 3, 1970, he gave assurance that the U.S. was not undertaking a long-term military role in Cambodia. After July 1, he said, the only American military activity in Cambodia would be "air missions" against the Vietnamese Communists' movement of men and supplies — and then only when necessary to protect "the lives and security of our forces in South Vietnam."



On June 30 Nixon repeated that assurance. He added that there would be "no U.S. advisers with Cambodian units." And, finally, he said the U. S. would give military aid to Cambodia "in the form of small arms and relatively unsophisticated equipment."

The actions: American military activity in Cambodia after July 1, 1970, was not limited to air missions against Vietnamese forces, or limited to the purpose of protecting U. S. troops in South Vietnam. There was a massive intervention from the air in the Cambodian civil war — bombing that continued after all American forces left Vietnam in 1973, until Congress stopped it.

Aid was not limited to "small arms and relatively unsophisticated equipment," nor were military advisers kept out.

The United States has spent nearly \$7 billion thus far on bombs and aid to Cambodia.

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**T**HE RESULTS: Some 700,000 Cambodians have been killed or wounded. That is 10 per cent of the population. According to estimates by the Senate refugee subcommittee, 3,389,000 Cambodians have been made homeless by the war. That is nearly half the population.

As for the Lon Nol regime, its chances of survival have never been worse than they are now.

Can anyone who looks at that record believe that American intervention has helped the people of Cambodia? Would more intervention be likely to bring them peace, or Asia political stability? Yet those are the arguments that Congress is being asked to accept.

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