

U.S. AIDES EXPECT LOSS OF CAMBODIA

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Orderly, Humane Surrender
Seen as the Best Hope
by Embassy Officials

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PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, March 6—The United States Embassy believes that the best that can be hoped for here is little more than a negotiated surrender in which the only subjects open for discussion would be details, humaneness and orderliness of the Communist-led insurgents' take-over.

This account of the embassy's attitude is based on information provided by persons with access to its views and on conversations embassy officials have had with diplomats and other visitors.

The assessment is distinctly at odds with the Ford Administration's public statements in Washington, which continue to cite the possibility of a compromise settlement or a negotiated solution—phrases that suggest a coalition government and diplomatic give-and-take rather than a negotiated surrender.

Airport Shelled Again

As the fighting continued the Phnom Penh airport was shelled heavily for the second successive day while Government forces tried in vain to reach the sources of the fire. [Page 3.]

On the peace prospects, neither the embassy as such nor its officials would comment on the subject, but it is understood that the Ambassador, John Gunther Dean, has communicated the embassy's pessimistic views to Washington.

The gap between the embassy and the State Department—or at least the department's public stance—would appear to have widened as embassy officials have become steadily disillusioned about what can be accomplished by continuing the United States involvement in the five-year Cambodian war.

After Ambassador Dean, who played a key role in the coal-

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Americans in Cambodia Pessimistic

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tion settlement in Laos in 1973, came to Cambodia a year ago, he spoke enthusiastically to visitors about his hopes for a settlement here in the same pattern.

Since then he has worked to strengthen the Government of Marshal Lon Nol in the hope this might build a reasonable negotiating posture. But as he came up against reality here, he began talking to visitors of a solution like that in Algeria, then of an "orderly" settlement and finally of a "controlled solution."

Mr. Dean, according to those familiar with his views, described a controlled solution as a settlement that would give the American-backed side a chance for something at least cosmetically better than an outright military take-over by the insurgents.

Impact of the Offensive

Reliable informants say that the embassy's attitude has narrowed even more in recent weeks as the insurgents' two-month offensive has further eroded the Government's position.

A senior official, in a recent discussion with a visitor about whether the \$222-million in extra military aid the Administration is asking would make any difference in the long run, said that about all the embassy could hope for was conditional surrender.

Asked if he meant by that simply such details as the fashion in which Government soldiers would turn in their arms, how many insurgent battalions would enter the capital in the first days after the surrender, the handling and protection of foreigners and others, the running of governmental administration and similar matters, the American replied, "I'm no expert on the handing over of

cities, but yes, I guess that's about all that's left."

The visitor cited the widespread reports in diplomatic circles that the embassy had been sending increasingly pessimistic messages to Washington and asked why, if this was so, the Administration was still talking of compromise and coalition. "I guess that Washington still hasn't made up its mind," the American official replied.

The embassy, those knowledgeable about its views say, sees the erosion of the Government's position as inexorable and irreversible, and it apparently feels that though more military aid may keep it

propped up a while longer, defeat is inevitable.

At the moment Phnom Penh is being kept alive solely by an American airlift because other supply routes from the outside—the Mekong River in particular—have been cut by the insurgents. Even the airlift is endangered now because the insurgents have moved rocket launchers and, more important, artillery close enough to shell the airport.

The shelling, stepped up in the last two days, has disrupted though not yet stopped the airlift, but it has been only chance that big cargo planes have not been more than superficially damaged.

It is against this deteriorating military background that the Administration has asked for the extra military aid on the ground that it will give the government a chance to reach a compromise settlement. At the same time Secretary of State Kissinger has been quoted by Congressmen and others as saying that there is no point in pursuing negotiations at this stage because the insurgents will not negotiate as long as they have the upper hand.

Last Saturday, when Congressional fact-finding delegation visited Phnom Penh, the Cambodian Ambassador to Washington, Um Sim, who was here at the time, told newsmen, "Kissinger will never negotiate now because he has nothing to exchange."