

SENATE UNIT BACKS AID FOR CAMBODIA

MAR 18 1975

Panel on Foreign Relations
Approves \$82.5-Million for
Arms but Sets Cutoff

NYTimes

By JOHN W. FINNEY

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 17—The Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved today a measure that would provide \$82.5-million in additional military assistance to Cambodia but with the provision that the aid be terminated on June 30.

The effect of the Senate committee's action, by a 9 to 7 vote, was to give a temporary assist to the Administration in its efforts to obtain Congressional approval for additional military aid to Marshal Lon Nol's Government. It remained doubtful, however, that the House and Senate would approve any more military assistance to the Cambodian Government.

The legislation adopted by the Senate committee today was similar to a proposal rejected last week by the House Foreign Affairs Committee after the proposal ran into opposition from the State Department.

Through a transfer of existing funds, the Senate committee bill would permit the Administration to provide an additional \$82.5-million in military assistance to Cambodia in the final three months of this fiscal year, ending June 30. The Administration, which has been warning that the Lon Nol Government would fall without additional aid from the United States, had requested \$222-million in addition to the \$275-million in military assistance already approved by Congress.

At the initiative of Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, Democrat of Minnesota, the committee inserted a provision specifying that all military assistance to Cambodia must end on June 30.

It was the insertion of such a provision that led the State Department last week to oppose a similar compromise under consideration by the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The house committee went on to reject the proposal by a vote of 18 to 15.

Faced with an impasse in the House committee, the Administration relented somewhat today. Charles W. Robinson, the Acting Secretary of State, sent a letter to Representative Thomas E. Morgan, Democrat of Pennsylvania, chairman of

A Relief Official in Cambodia Denounces U.S. Military Aid

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PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, March 17—A high international relief official who has worked with Cambodian refugees for more than a year under the American aid program spoke out yesterday against United States policy here.

"Military aid must be stopped now to end this senseless war," she said.

She is Dr. Gay Alexander, a Scot who is medical director for Catholic Relief Services, the biggest American-funded relief group operating in Cambodia. She asked to have her views recorded in an interview because "one must do one's best to try to stop this situation." Dr. Alexander was evacuated today along with other relief officials as part of a reduction of relief agency personnel ordered by the United States Embassy.

This was the first time that any official working in a United States Government-financed program here had spoken for publication against American policy.

Catholic Relief Services has the biggest program of all the humanitarian groups here — spending perhaps \$10-million a year to feed, shelter and provide medical care for hundreds of thousands of refugees.

"They use and manipulate the ordinary people of this country," Dr. Alexander said. "They hold back rice for the highest bidder, while hundreds are dying of malnutrition every day. Economic aid with no

U.S. strings attached should continue, but military aid must be stopped now."

A number of relief officials and other foreigners in Phnom Penh, including Americans, have in private expressed opposition to American policy here. No one with the status of Dr. Alexander, however, made such a public declaration here in the five years of warfare.

Some of the heads of other relief organizations here, which also subsist on United States funds and which include CARE and World Vision, apparently do not share Dr. Alexander's views. They have lobbied privately with Congress for more military aid. They argue privately that without more military aid, economic aid alone would be useless, because if the Lon Nol Government does not get more arms assistance, it will soon collapse and the Cambodian insurgents will take over.

Dr. Alexander said that she had written a personal letter last year to the American Ambassador, John Gunther Dean, telling him of the reports she had heard about government corruption and of her concern over these activities and their destructive effect on the Cambodian people. "I never got an answer or an acknowledgment," she said.

The American Embassy said it had "no comment" on Dr. Alexander's views or on her letter to the Ambassador.

the House committee, asking to reconsider the proposed \$82.5-million compromise.

The letter made clear, however, that the Administration's real aim was to get the issue to the House floor.

Mr. Robinson, the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, who is acting Secretary of State in Secretary Kissinger's absence, said the Administration had "serious objections" to the provisions in the House committee bill that would halt military aid to Cambodia on June 30 and direct the Administration to seek a negotiated settlement of the war by that date.

In asking the committee to send the compromise to the House floor, Mr. Robinson said the Administration viewed the proposal "as the only legislative vehicle to bring this issue before the full House, permitting full consideration of Administration views."

Some of the Administration's impatience for Congressional action was relieved today when

the State Department said that through an accounting error, \$21.5-million in additional military aid for Cambodia had been discovered.

The Administration had been asserting that all military aid funds for Cambodia had been spent and that if Congress did not vote additional funds before the end of the month, the Lon Nol Government would run out of ammunition in mid-April.

The State Department reported today, however, that the Defense Department, in an audit of the military aid program, had discovered that Cambodia had been overcharged \$21.5-million for weapons and ammunition in the last fiscal year. A department spokesman said the Cambodians would receive the additional aid for which they were overcharged.

In a news conference tonight in South Bend, Ind., President Ford condemned the Defense Department for "sloppy book-keeping," but he said the unspent aid funds would be used.