

Pullout Message

Washington

Here is the text of a statement issued by the state department last night regarding evacuation of U.S. citizens from Phnom Penh, Cambodia:

"In view of the seriously deteriorating military situation around Phnom Penh, the evacuation of all U.S. mission personnel is taking place. We regret this development because of its obvious implications for the government of the Khmer republic.

"This evacuation is taking place in an effort to ensure the safety of U.S. citizens in Cambodia. To the extent we have the capability in the airlift we are also undertak-

ing to evacuate third country nationals working for the U.S. government, U.S. press services, voluntary agencies, etc., as well as Cambodian employees of the U.S. mission and their families, and as many other Cambodians who have been associated with us as circumstances permit.

"Because of the effective interdiction of Phnom Penh airport by Khmer Communists' rockets, artillery and mortars, this evacuation is being carried out by U.S. military helicopters from landing zones near the American mission in Phnom Penh. The evacuation operation is being protected as necessary a security force of U.S. Marines. Tactical air-

craft are in the vicinity in the event they are needed. There is no intention to use force but if necessary it will be applied only to protect the lives of evacuees.

"The evacuees will be taken temporarily to Thailand before being moved onward to their destination of choice.

"Because of the U.S. ambassador's efforts in the past few weeks to reduce the number of potential evacuees to the barest minimum, we are not certain that we have up-to-date figures on the numbers likely to be involved. However, we anticipate there will be several hundred people involved."

United Press