

# Evicted Cambodians Toll High—Kissinger

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Reuter

ATLANTA, June 24—Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger said today that a terrible toll has been inflicted on the population of Cambodia by the new Communist authorities who took power two months ago.

In a press conference here, Kissinger said the United States has received high estimates of the death toll among Cambodians, resulting when they were driven from the cities into the countryside, where no harvest is expected before November.

Kissinger said the United States has also received rather firm reports of clashes between South Vietnamese and Cambodians along the border and on some of the offshore islands near which the Mayaguez was captured."

U.S. officials have previously reported that South Vietnamese Communists overran the Wai Islands about 50 miles south of Cambodia.

South Vietnam and Cambodia had both claimed the islands, prospective sites of oil deposits, since before the two nations fell to the Communists.

Kissinger said U.S. information about the current situation in Cambodia was either second-hand or based on intelligence reports. But he added:

"We do know that there has been a rather terrible toll of civilians inflicted."

On other issues, Kissinger said:

- He has not yet made a precise decision on whether to return to the Middle East to seek an interim agreement between Israel and Egypt, or to seek a resumption of the Geneva conference;

- President Ford will undoubtedly run for election, but will not use foreign policy as a partisan political issue.

"I'm certain he considers the national security of the United States beyond partisan politics," Kissinger said.

"I know he will conduct his office for the best interests of the country and that in our relations (relations between Kissinger and President Ford) we will not discuss what helps him as a candidate but what helps the nation."

Kissinger was scheduled to return to Washington later today from his trip here, one of

a series he has been making to cities around the country in hopes of rebuilding a national consensus on foreign affairs.