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**U.S. Counsel Defends Cambodia Drive**

By ISRAEL SHENKER

The State Department's legal adviser yesterday defended the American invasion of Cambodia as legitimate self-defense, legal under international law.

The official, John R. Stevenson, said that the United States had chosen to invade without Cambodian consent to preserve the neutrality of that country, from whose territory North Vietnamese and Vietcong soldiers had posed an imminent threat.

He was promptly rebutted, in a forum at the Bar Association here, by Professor Abram J. Chayes of Harvard, former legal adviser to the State Department.

Mr. Chayes insisted that if there had been any increased threat of attack it had been within the enemy sanctuaries in Cambodia or westward into Cambodia, but not toward South Vietnam. The United States violated the territory of a neutral country, he said, and thus violated its own international undertakings and its obligations under the United Nations Charter.

The United States had earlier made soundings in the United Nations Security Council and found "very little interest" in the Cambodian question, Mr. Stevenson said. He added that

the United States had also secretly favored a French proposal for an international conference on Indochina, but that the Russians had opposed it.

#### Protest Discounted

William Rehnquist, Assistant Attorney General and legal counsel of the Department of Justice, said that the opposition first expressed by the Cambodian Government to the invasion had been "perfunctory and per forma." After the forum, Mr. Rehnquist explained that this information had come from newspapers.

Mr. Chayes had seized on Mr. Rehnquist's phrase—"perfunctory and per forma"—to assert that this was the first time the Administration had said that the Cambodians had given their tacit consent. His own view was that the Cambodian Government was so weak and "beset by three invasions at once" that it had eventually been forced to choose among the invaders.

Mr. Rehnquist insisted that the President had full Constitutional authority—as Commander in Chief of the armed forces—to undertake the Cambodian invasion. "A tactical decision," he called it, about how an armed conflict should be pursued.

Dean Robert B. McKay of the New York University Law School, insisted that Congress had the right to disapprove the President's action, and to require withdrawal.

When these four scheduled speakers had concluded their remarks, three Columbia Law School professors made brief statements from the floor.

Prof. Wolfgang G. Friedman ridiculed the idea that America was replying to an armed attack, saying that "indeed American troops had great trouble in finding the Vietnamese troops." He added that it was evident that the United States was "less and less respecting the integrity of small nations" and acting "as an imperial power."

Prof. Richard N. Gardner insisted that parties to a dispute were obligated to go to the Security Council.

"I think the way is not to take away the President's powers," said Prof. Louis Henkin. "I think the way is to get better Presidents exercising the powers."

He insisted that the international law complications of Cambodia added very little to what he termed the grave violations already committed by the United States in Vietnam.