

Editorials

Into Cambodia With Our Armies

WITH U.S. APPROVAL and some active U.S. support, the South Vietnamese Army has moved in force across the Cambodian border, thereby sending the stock market into a temporary spin and drawing cries of anguish and apprehension from Congressional leaders.

To Senator J. W. Fulbright, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, the action is "a great mistake" and "a great tragedy" and directly "contrary to what we have been led to believe." Senator Mike Mansfield, the Democratic leader, comments more specifically that it "lays the ground for escalation of the war and could be the first step in spreading the war."

THE VALIDITY OF these apprehensions can perhaps be judged this evening, when President Nixon goes on the air with a discussion of the situation as it relates both to Cambodia and to U.S. forces in Vietnam.

Meanwhile, the public may mull over a statement from Daniel S. Henkin, assistant Secretary of Defense, that U.S. involvement in the transborder operations will consist of advisers, tactical air, air co-ordinators, medical evacuation and some logistics assistance. It says further that the United States was "fully consulted" in advance of the foray and deemed it "a necessary and effective measure to save American and other free-world lives and to strengthen the Vietnamization program."

Any attempt to appraise the situation in advance of the President's clarifying discussion is likely to become confused by reference to two passages in his address of April 20, in which he disclosed plans for an indefinite withdrawal of 150,000 troops from Vietnam. He said, if North Vietnamese leaders "use the situation to jeopardize remaining U.S. forces in Vietnam, the President will take strong and effective measures." He also said: "We have in sight the just peace we are seeking."

AS OF NOW, that sight seems to have been obscured somewhat by a Cambodian adventure which Senator Mansfield appraises as "a new ball game" and one which he says could be turned into "a general Indochina war" by any U.S. involvement, direct or indirect. What the Nation ardently hopes to hear from the President is assurance that the advisers and medical and logistic units already committed to Cambodia are no such foot in the door as carried a half million American troops into Vietnam.