



# Nixon's Gamble 'Misrepresented'

— Joseph Alsop

**F**IRST, some facts:

- The South Vietnamese and U.S. troops in Cambodia have taken above 10,000 individual and crew-served weapons — or about two years of re-supply for all the 101 enemy battalions in the southern half of South Vietnam.

- They have also taken above 11.5 million rounds of rifle and machine-gun ammunition — or about a year and a half's supply for all these enemy battalions in III and IV Corps.

- Of rocket, mortar and recoilless rifle rounds, they have taken well above 50,000 — or enough for about 6000 of the little attacks by fire which are customarily reported as great enemy "offensives" when they are bunched together in a "high point."

- Some 7000 enemy troops have also been killed, and 1731 have been taken prisoner, against negligible U.S. losses and quite small South Vietnamese losses.

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**T**O THESE remarkable totals, far more could be added. But there is enough here to prove that President Nixon's courageous gamble in Cambodia is currently being as grossly misrepresented as the enemy's desperate offensive at Tet, in 1969. One case is in fact the reverse of the other.

Tet was initially portrayed as a gigantic disaster for the U.S. and its Allies. In the outcome, it proved to be a gigantic disaster for Hanoi. As to the Cambodian gamble, although the final outcome must be awaited, it is currently being portrayed

as a sad failure. Yet on the basis of the results to date, it promises to be the most brilliant feat of U.S. arms since the Inchon landing in Korea.

Almost better still, it promises to be a brilliant feat of South Vietnamese arms. Here there is another irony. The same disaster-mongers who misrepresented Tet and are now misrepresenting Cambodia, used to have an easy way of spending a dull day. On such days, they would describe the cowardice and incompetence of the South Vietnamese 25th Division.

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**I**T WILL NO DOUBT come as news to many senators, but the fact is that even the enemy's troops really cannot go on fighting without guns and ammunition. In Cambodia, we have now scooped up all the guns and ammunition and many other things that were destined to nourish the enemy's war in III and IV Corps for much more than a year.

Unless Hanoi can perform miracles of re-supply, therefore, the war in the lower half of South Vietnam should now begin to wither away by stages.

The President's gamble has decisively closed the Cambodian ports to the enemy, and it can be flatly predicted they will be kept closed, no matter what happens.

But the future of the Lon Nol government at Phnom Penh remains the uncertain factor. This is what makes it needful to wait and see whether the Cambodian gamble will finally fulfill all of its present promise.