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## 'Saving' Cambodia

Brushing aside strong public opposition to any widening of the war in Southeast Asia, the Administration now appears determined to pursue the Cambodian intervention by proxy, sustaining South Vietnamese troops in operations that go far beyond the announced objective of cleaning out border sanctuaries.

Statements by Secretary of State Rogers and other American and South Vietnamese officials make it clear that South Vietnamese forces are planning to remain in Cambodia after the June 30 deadline set for American troops, contrary to President Nixon's May 8 prediction. Furthermore, they will probably receive American air and logistical support, in direct contradiction of the President's promise of that date.

The scope of South Vietnamese operations, which now cover wide areas of eastern and southern Cambodia well beyond the 21-mile limit imposed on American units, suggests that the purpose is not merely to eliminate the border sanctuaries but to maintain a new anti-Communist front in Cambodia by bolstering the Lon Nol regime in Phnompenh.

Nothing could be more shortsighted. Sustained South Vietnamese presence on Cambodian soil can only serve to undermine any government in Phnompenh which condones it. Traditional hostility between the Cambodians and Vietnamese, plus widespread reports of Vietnamese mistreatment of Cambodian civilians—and vice versa—already have produced serious strains between the Cambodians and their new-found "allies."

A Cambodian military spokesman said last week that his countrymen would rather die than live under Vietnamese domination, and he made clear he was referring to Vietnamese from the South as well as those from the North. Phnompenh's chief information officer said: "We now have two invasions being conducted in Cambodia, the North Vietnamese and the South Vietnamese." Saigon's Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky meanwhile has announced that South Vietnamese forces would remain in Cambodia "not only to destroy the Communists but also to provide protection for the lives and property of 600,000 resident Vietnamese."

In this context, the announcement of Cambodia's foreign minister that he will appeal for American troops to remain in his country sounds like a plea to Washington to save Cambodia from Saigon.

It is certainly not in this country's interests to become further embroiled in Southeast Asia, whether support Cambodian resistance to Vietnam. It certainly does not serve this country's interests, in short, to widen a conflict that its President is pledged to end.