

*Editor*  
NYTimes

MAY 1 1973

## The Victims

To the Editor:

The bombing of Cambodia by our B-52's is about to enter its third month. As many as 120 B-52's per day have been devastating one of the most beautiful and most inherently peaceful nations in the world. In addition to the B-52's, American fighter-bombers based in Thailand have reportedly flown an average of 250 missions a day over Cambodia. Civilian casualties are said to be appalling, and the reports call the plight of the refugees worse than it was in Vietnam.

The rest of the world is struck, quite naturally, by our indifference toward these people we are bombing. They are neither our enemies nor our friends—only victims. Probably not one American in 100,000 could utter the name of a single hero or heroine of the Cambodian people in the long and glorious history of Khmer culture.

The bombing is self-defeating in its coldness and casually racist character. If the small nation being pounded day after day by our B-52's were Ireland, let us say, there would be rebellion in Congress and in the Pentagon. If the small nation being pounded day after day by our B-52's were Italy, the streets of our Eastern cities would be aflame with rioting Italian-Americans, and the millions of Americans who love Italy would send up a howl of anguish that no politician in Washington could ignore. If the small nation being pounded day after day by our B-52's were Israel, there would be unending protest and fury across the land.

But there is no Cambodian voting bloc in the United States. Cambodia is obscurely Asian and militarily weak. It is incapable of threatening our well-being, our homes or our schools. No statesman would ever court its friendship out of respect for its power. Cambodia has only had the bad luck to be caught up in a clash of wills between Washington and Hanoi. And so, the little children in the villages and towns of Cambodia must be killed and maimed from a remote height.

Whatever political settlement is worked out in Cambodia, our responsibility is to end B-52 raids there.

ERIK AMFITHEATROF  
Palisades, N. Y., April 24, 1973