

WXPost  
*Listen, You Dominoes, We Never*

COMMENT

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By Art Buchwald

Tung Dat, who lives in the village of Bomb A Gen outside of Phnom Penh in Cambodia, came running out of his hut the other morning and shouted, "Good news! Good news!"

The villagers gathered around. "What is your good news?" asked Nu Dong.

"I just heard on the radio that President Nixon and Congress have reached a compromise and we can only be legally bombed by United States planes until Aug. 15."

"That's good news?" Nu Dong said.

"Well, it could have been worse. You see, Congress didn't want to let the President bomb at all. At the same time the President insisted he needed the bombing to implement the Indochina ceasefire. It reached a point where there was going to be a constitutional crisis.

"Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed and everyone agreed it was all right for the President to bomb us for another month and a half—and that was it."

"What happens if the B52s bomb our village in

the next month and a half?" the school teacher Won Low asked.

"I guess that's just tough luck," Tung Dat said. "Look, I would just as soon the President stop the bombing tomorrow, but he had to save face with Congress. If he agreed to cease the raids because of pressure from the Hill, it would have made him look very weak. The question that we all have to answer in this village is do we want our homes intact or do we want a weak President of the United States?"

"You make the choice very difficult for us, Tung Dat," an old man said.

"I would rather have my home," grandmother Ling Lang said.

"Hush, old woman," Tung Dat said. "Do you realize that this extension of the bombing for another month and a half could affect the entire peace of the world? If Cambodia falls to the Communists, then they will

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be encouraged to forment other civil wars in other countries. The security of the free world could depend on what American airpower does with its bombs in the next month and a half. Be proud that Nixon has chosen us to defend his doctrine in Southeast Asia. If he can go through what he's been going through for the last few weeks in the Watergate hearings, we can put up with a few hundred thousand bombs."

"Tung Dat," Sing Fom the priest said, "We have been bombed for a year and it hasn't seemed to do any good. How can we believe that another month and a half of bombing our village is going to change the course of the war?"

"Because," said Tung Dat, "if Nixon and Kissinger know they have only a month and a half to bomb, they're going to bomb like they've never bombed before. You give them a deadline like that and they'll

blanket the skies with B52s. I wouldn't be surprised if by August you are not able to recognize Cambodia."

"And we're supposed to be happy with that?" Nu Dong asked.

"Why can't you people understand? If the President had been prohibited from bombing us as of this week, he intended to veto all the money bills sent to him by Congress. Nobody would have been paid in the United States. The entire government machinery in America would have ground to a halt. Would any of you have wanted that on your conscience?"

"I'd rather have that on my conscience than those bombs," grandmother Ling Lang said.

"You can say that, old woman," Tung Dat retorted, "but you're not an American and you wouldn't have to suffer."

Grandmother Ling Lang was about to reply, when the villagers heard the roar of the airplanes.

"Here they come again," Nu Dong cried. Everyone ran to his bomb shelter. Phase one of the Nixon-congressional compromise had begun.