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WXPost Symington Sees Cambodia Fall

Sen. Stuart Symington (D-Mo.) yesterday predicted an early collapse of the Cambodian government and the return to power of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, who was deposed in 1970.

Symington, acting chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said in a television interview on "Issues and Answers" (ABC, WMAL) that he had been assured by the Defense and State departments that under no circumstances would the United States resume bombing Cambodia after the Wednesday deadline.

"When the government falls," he said, "in my opinion, in a relatively short time, Prince Sihanouk will be in charge of the government in Cambodia."

Asked whether this was "good or bad," the senator replied: "I don't think anything could be much worse than what has been going on."

"We justify 14 months of secret bombing without anybody knowing about it on the grounds that he had acquiesced to it, approved it, and yet at the same time, when he left the country, his military leader took the country over, took it away from him, and we promptly supported the military leader."

"There's a dichotomy in that that is very difficult to understand."

He said that after a visit to Cambodia last year, the fact that impressed him most about the present head of state, Lon Nol, "was that the man is ill . . . My impression

is that Sihanouk has a great deal more strength in the country than any other single person or group."

Symington said the United States should see a viable government formed in Cambodia and then get out.

"It is not in our interest to be involved in this situation in the Far East," he said. "Whatever comes out of it, so long as we get out of it, is entirely satisfactory to me."

The senator, whose committee is investigating secret U.S. ground and air operations during the Indochina war, said it still is not known who ordered the falsification of bombing reports during sorties against Laos and Cambodia early in the Nixon administration and before that when the last

President Lyndon Johnson was in the White House.

The Pentagon has admitted, following testimony by former Air Force officers before the committee, that bombing operations officially listed as being in South Vietnam were in fact carried out in Cambodia—while the United States was professing support for its neutrality—and northern Laos.

"I think that we know that the orders came from the White House . . ." Symington said. "We know that the orders to bomb came from the President and that the orders for secrecy came from the President."

"What we have not yet found out and are still trying to find out is who arranged for the falsification of the records."