

SIHANOUK RENEWS DENIAL ON BOMBS

Insists He Did Not Approve
U.S. Raids in 1969-70

WASHINGTON, Aug. 27 — The dispute between Prince Norodom Sihanouk and the Nixon Administration continued today with a new denial by the exiled Cambodian leader that he had approved the American bombing of his country in 1969 and 1970.

In a cablegram to The New York Times, Prince Sihanouk, who nominally heads the Cambodian insurgents from his headquarters in Peking, noted that he had issued strong protests, including one in November, 1969, when American planes bombed Dak Dam, four miles from the South Vietnamese border, and killed 25 Cambodians.

The Nixon Administration has often asserted in recent weeks that American B-52 strategic bombers carried out raids against North Vietnamese and Vietcong sanctuaries in Cambodia in 1969-70 with the acquiescence of Prince Sihanouk, then Chief of State. The Administration maintained that Prince Sihanouk had said he would not complain when Vietnamese were hit, only when Cambodians were.

President Nixon, in a speech last Monday, said: "These strikes weren't directed at the Cambodian Army or the Cambodian people. They were directed at the North Vietnamese invaders who at that time had

occupied this area within Cambodia and were killing Americans from this area."

Mr. Noixon maintained that "the Cambodian Government did not object to the strikes."

"In fact," he added, "while they were in progress in the spring of that year, Prince Sihanouk, then the leader of the Cambodian Government, personally invited me very warmly to make a state visit to the Cambodian capital."

Accusation by Sihanouk

Prince Sihanouk, insisting in an interview in Peking the next day that he had never agreed to the bombing in his country, said that Mr. Nixon had lied.

Mr. Nixon at his news conference on Wednesday, said that no Cambodians were hit by bombs in the 10-mile wide sanctuary area, only Vietnamese or Vietcong.

On Thursday Secretary of State-designate Henry A. Kissinger explained Prince Sihanouk's denial by noting that he "has a rather difficult position right now" because of his alliance with Cambodian Communists he once sentenced to death.

"We have to understand the delicacy of his position," Mr. Kissinger said. "Prince Sihanouk always took the view that he would protest any air operations that involved Cambodians. He also took the position that the bombing of areas in which there were no Cambodians he would not protest."

"And I think if you look at the record of the year that we are talking about, that there was no Cambodian protest about the B-52 bombings. There were Cambodian protests when tactical air strayed across the border and got outside the zone in which the B-52 operations took place."

Distinction Not Rejected

In the message to The Times, Prince Sihanouk did not take

issue with the distinction made by Mr. Kissinger and other officials between the B-52 bombing, which was carried on in secret against the sanctuaries, and the other raids, many of which were made public at the time and in which Cambodian citizens and property were hit.

Prince Sihanouk said he had documents to show that "I did not approve the bombing and that I even stood up publicly against it" and instructed his delegate to the United Nations to protest. He cited in particular American raids on Dak Dam on Nov. 16, 17, 18 and 19, 1969.