

Cabinet Receives Cambodia Briefing At 'Frank' Session

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WASHINGTON, May 19— President Nixon held his first Cabinet meeting today after a month of crisis. But there was no official evidence that he had resolved his differences with Cabinet members who have criticized the substance and style of his Presidency.

Ronald L. Ziegler, the Presidential press secretary, said that the session, which lasted three hours, was "very frank" and covered "the significant things before the country," including a briefing on Cambodia.

Informed sources reported that as of yesterday afternoon the agenda for the meeting included the subject of youth and dissent on the nation's campuses. It was removed from the agenda this morning.

The official explanation was that two key Cabinet members were missing. The subject—one of those which

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has most sorely troubled the President's critics — was discussed informally and briefly.

Among those at the meeting were Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel, who in a letter on May 6 criticized the President for displaying what Mr. Hickel thought was insensitivity to the nation's youth, and for isolating himself from the views of his official family; Secretary of Housing and Urban Development George Romney, who publicly agreed with the letter, and Secretary of State William P. Rogers, who is said to have endorsed it privately.

Two members of the Cabinet, who have split often in the past on major issues, were absent. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Robert H. Finch was in the hospital with numbness of the left arm; Attorney General John N. Mitchell was in the south.

Last Meeting April 13

The last formal Cabinet meeting was on April 13. Since then the Administration has been publicly assailed and privately torn by the President's decision to send American troops into Cambodia, the shooting of four students at Kent State University, the

stock market decline, new incidents of racial violence and charges from Mr. Hickel and others that regular access to the President had become increasingly difficult.

Mr. Hickel refused to give any details on the meeting but was reported to be in excellent spirits when he returned to his office at the Interior Department. In the period since his controversial letter, he has conferred only with John D. Ehrlichman, Mr. Nixon's assistant for domestic affairs, and Mr. Ehrlichman's deputies.

The Interior Secretary also issued a formal statement indicating that the Cabinet had discussed youth problems in addition to other concerns.

"It was an effective and productive work session," Mr. Hickel said. "We examined the full spectrum of the nation's possessive concerns, including our interests in the problems of youth. We agreed it is vital to explore these concerns."

Mr. Nixon is expected to devote more time tomorrow to the subject of campus problems when he confers with the heads of 15 predominantly black colleges and universities. Dr. James E. Cheek, president of Howard University, asked for the appointment after an outburst of racial violence in Augusta, Ga., which left six Negroes dead and several wounded.