

# ARMS TO CAMBODIA AND LAOS DEBATED

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Pentagon Said to Feel Pact

Bar Help With the State

Department Differing

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 2—A disagreement has reportedly broken out within the Nixon Administration over whether the recently concluded agreement for a cease-fire in Vietnam allows the United States to continue military aid to Laos and Cambodia.

Senate Democratic sources report that they have been informed by State Department officials that the Defense Department is being urged by the State Department, and apparently by the White House office of Henry A. Kissinger, to continue military aid to Laos and Cambodia and not to withdraw any of the military aid personnel assigned to the two countries. The aid amounts to some \$500-million a year.

Directors of the military aid program in the Pentagon have reportedly questioned whether such continuation of military aid was permissible under the Vietnam peace agreement and are said to be demanding that any orders to continue the aid programs be put in writing by either the State Department or

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the White House.

The agreement is specific in restricting the military aid provided to the contending sides in South Vietnam. It provides that from the start of the cease-fire last Sunday, all military aid must be limited to replacing, on a one-for-one basis, equipment and armaments that have become worn out or destroyed. But when it comes to military aid to Laos and Cambodia, the agreement is less specific and subject to varying interpretations within the Administration.

Article 20 of the agreement, dealing with Cambodia and Laos, provides in Section A that all parties "shall strictly respect" the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Cambodia and the 1962 Geneva Agreements on Laos—agreements that basically established the independence and neutrality of the two nations.

Section B of Article 20 goes on to provide: "Foreign countries shall put an end to all military activities in Cambodia and Laos, totally withdraw from and refrain from reintroducing into these two countries troops, military advisers and military personnel, armaments, munitions and war material."

### Pentagon Cites on Section

It is Section B that Defense Department officials cite in questioning whether a continuation of the military aid programs is permissible under the agreement.

To Defense Department officials, the clear intent of this section is to cut off military aid to the two nations, although no precise deadline is set for the termination.

However, State Department officials, in arguing that continued military aid is permissible, cite Section A of the article, which calls on all parties to respect the 1954 and 1962 Geneva accords. They note that both the 1954 Agreements on Cambodia and the 1962 Agreements on Laos permit each country to request and receive military aid needed for self-defense.

Therefore, State Department officials contend, the Vietnam cease-fire agreement permits military aid to be continued if requested by the governments in Laos and Cambodia. Describing Section B as redundant, they said they were governed by Section A.

The present intention, State Department officials said, is to

continue military aid to Laos and Cambodia unless such aid is specifically prohibited in any truce agreements worked out by the contending factions in the two countries.

The Senate majority leader, Mike Mansfield of Montana, said in an interview that he would advocate "a cut-off of military aid to Laos and Cambodia as soon as a cease-fire is reached and a truce is arranged."

In the defense budget submitted to Congress earlier this week, the Administration asked for \$2.1-billion in military aid for South Vietnam and Laos in the fiscal year beginning July 1, with about a sixth of the total for Laos. Military aid for Cambodia is handled in separate legislation that has not yet been submitted to Congress.

### Mansfield Favors Cut-Off

For the current fiscal year, which ends June 30, the Defense Department has scheduled \$49-million in military aid for Laos plus \$50-million in "supporting assistance," an indirect form of military aid used to help a nation carry a heavy defense budget.

For Cambodia, the Defense Department has proposed \$209.5-million in military aid in the current fiscal year, plus \$75-million in supporting assistance.

Because of a stalemate that developed in the last congress on foreign aid legislation, however, foreign aid for Cambodia and other countries is being provided under a continuing resolution, with spending at basically last year's rates. That continuing resolution expires at the end of this month.

The United States maintains a military mission of more than 500 in Laos.

In Cambodia, where the United States resumed military aid in 1970 after the ouster of Prince Norodom Sihanouk as chief of state, there is a 50-man "military equipment delivery team," that is not supposed to give military advice to the Cambodians.

### U.S. Air Strikes in Laos

HONOLULU, Feb. 2 (UPI)—The Office of the Commander of United States forces in the Pacific said today that American aircraft continued bombing missions in Laos for the fifth straight day.

A three-line announcement said only that United States aircraft, including B-52's, continued operations over Laos at the request of the Laotian Government.