

## U.S. Planes in Cambodian War Said to Use Capital for Refueling

NYTimes

FEB 28 1973

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, Feb. 27 (Agence France-Presse)—For the first time since the war began, United States Air Force planes carrying out missions over Cambodia have started using the Phnom Penh airport for refueling, it was reported today.

The aircraft, mainly observation and "forward air control" planes, are reportedly based in Thailand and have insufficient range to return without a refueling stop. The United States Embassy refused to make any comment.

Up to now, American planes landing at Phnom Penh's Pochentong Airport, five miles from the capital, have simply brought in military equipment for the Cambodian armed forces.

### Planes Carry Rockets

It was not known whether the Air Force planes were taking on fresh supplies of bombs and ammunition as well as fuel. This afternoon an OV-10 Bronco was seen taking off, with rockets under its wings and carrying a container of napalm.

The use of the airport by the American planes coincided with the recent resumption of strategic bombing by B-52's, which had stopped with the signing of the Paris agreement.

Today, the Cambodian military command announced that

Government forces went on the offensive, reopening Route 3, which links Phnom Penh and Tram Khnar, 25 miles southwest of the capital.

### Town Reported Retaken

On the east bank of the Mekong River, 32 miles southeast of Phnom Penh, the Government said its troops had recaptured the town of Phoumi Banam, which had been under enemy control for nearly a month. However, along Route 2, which runs south from the capital, the Cambodian forces were compelled to abandon two positions. Eight Government soldiers were killed and three wounded, according to a military spokesman. Route 2 remains cut some 12 miles south of Phnom Penh.

The Government said that opposition forces continued attacks on positions around Phnom Penh. Fighting was also reported in the Kompong Cham and Svay Rieng regions, in the east, and at Phumi Siem Reab, near the Angkor temples.

### U.S. Planes Attack

HONOLULU, Feb. 27 (AP)—United States aircraft conducted operations over Cambodia today at the request of the Cambodian Government, the United States Pacific command said. No details were given.