

U.S. WILL CONTINUE RAIDS IN CAMBODIA TILL A CEASE-FIRE

MAR 28 1973

White House Links a Halt in
Bombing With the End of
Attacks by Communists

FULBRIGHT IS CRITICAL

He Questions the President's
Constitutional Authority

—May Call Hearings
NYTimes

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 27—

The White House said today that the United States would continue bombing in Cambodia until the Communist forces in that country stopped their military operations and agreed to a cease-fire.

The Nixon Administration's position was outlined by the White House press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, in response to questions as to how long the United States intended to continue air operations in Cambodia and what the President's constitutional authority for ordering such raids was.

In Cambodia, the consensus of Cambodian and foreign military experts is that without heavy daily bombing, rocketing and strafing of insurgent forces by United States aircraft, the Cambodian Army would collapse. [Page 7.]

Mr. Ziegler did not directly address the question of the Presidential authority. Rather, he emphasized that the operations were being conducted in response to a request from the Government of President Lon Nol.

Divisions Are Described

"The Cambodian Government has asked for our air support to assist Cambodian forces in resisting the Communists' offensive," Mr. Ziegler said at the daily White House briefing. "At such time as there is a cease-fire in Cambodia, the United States will adhere to that cease-fire agreement."

The White House appeared to face new conflict with some of its critics in Congress. Senator J. W. Fulbright, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, issued a statement demanding that the Administration provide a public explanation on the purpose and authority for continued military activities in Cambodia.

"Unless a full, forthcoming statement is made shortly," the Senator said, "I see no other course than a full public hearing with the Secretary of State to explore this subject in

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 1973

U.S. to Continue Raids in Cambodia Unti

Continued From Page 1, Col. 1
depth."

The Khmer insurgent groups, according to Defense and State Department officials, are divided into factions: for and against Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the deposed Cambodian head of state, and pro-Hanoi, pro-Moscow and pro-Peking.

This division of the insurgent groups, which are far outnumbered militarily by the Cambodian Government forces, according to these officials, has greatly complicated the problem of working out a cease-fire, since there is no dominant opposition group the Lon Nol Government can deal with.

"Lon Nol says he would like to talk, but who does he talk to?" observed one official with long experience in Cambodian affairs.

Meanwhile, according to the officials, the political impasse has been complicated by the inability of the Cambodian armed forces, equipped largely by the United States, to handle the insurgent forces without American air support.

The bombing has been carried out with a minimum of publicity, with Defense and State Department officials under strict orders, apparently from the White House, not to discuss details.

The only official statements have been terse communiqués issued daily by the Pacific command in Hawaii reporting that American planes have attacked Communist positions at the request of the Cambodian Government.

Defense officials insisted

that the Pacific command was chosen as the information point not to minimize the publicity but because it was "closer to the action."

Defense and State Department spokesmen have repeatedly refused to elaborate on the level, the targets and the purpose of the bombing, except to say that the operations are being carried out by B-52 bombers as well as tactical fighter-bombers based in Thailand.

After an appearance yesterday before a Senate Appropriations subcommittee, Secretary Defense Elliot L. Richardson said the bombing "is aimed at any sources of supply for those forces that are found in Cambodia." This was repeated in a slightly different form today by Maj. Gen. Daniel James, a Pentagon spokesman, who said the bombing was aimed at "sources of supply for those external forces in Cambodia."

The clear implication of the comments was that the United States was only bombing supplies intended for North Vietnamese forces in or near South Vietnam or for the Communist insurgent forces in Cambodia. But in Phnom Penh, Cambodian military officials were reporting that United States planes were providing close air support by attacking insurgent troops.

At the Pentagon press briefing today, General James also said that the level of bombing was "on the same order of previous operations in the area."

This comment, officials explained, was meant to indicate that individual raids have not been heavier than in the past. At the same time, the officials acknowledged that the bombing since Jan. 28 has been

more sustained than in earlier periods in Cambodia.

Another change has been that B-52 bombers, which previously were restricted to striking at an extension of the Ho Chi Minh supply trail in northern Cambodia, have now been shifted to hitting gat targets closer to Phnom Penh.

In recent weeks the Administration has been unresponsive to reporters' questions on the President's constitutional authority to conduct such bombing. The Defense Department referred such questions to the State Department. After promising an answer, the State Department spokesman, Charles W. Dray 3d, suggested that the question be addressed to "another house," meaning the White House. Again today Mr. Ziegler refused to address the question directly.

The question is now being raised in some Congressional circles. At an off-the-record State Department briefing yesterday for Senate aides, Winslow Wheeler, an aide to Senator Jacob K. Javits, asked William H. Sullivan, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, what the President's constitutional authority was for the bombing in Cambodia.

Mr. Sullivan reportedly answered laughingly: "It is interesting you should ask about that. I have got a couple of lawyers working on it."

Then Mr. Sullivan, more seriously, reportedly added: "I guess what I would say is the re-election of the President."

The most recent and definitive statement by Mr. Nixon on his constitutional authority came in a television interview in July, 1970, during which he

was asked, in view of the repeal of the Tonkin Gulf resolution, what legal justification he had for continuing an undeclared war in Vietnam.

Mr. Nixon replied that "the President of the United States has the constitutional right - not only the right, but the responsibility - to use his powers to protect American forces when they are engaged in military actions."

If the bombing in Cambodia continues after Thursday [29 Mar], when all United States troops are to have left Vietnam, there are indications there will be Congressional outcry centering on the question of the President's constitutional authority.

Continued on Page 10, Column 5