

Biggest Cambodia Air Raids

By Larry Green

PHNOM PENH—(CDN)—The American bombing campaign in Cambodia is the biggest U.S. air campaign of the three-year-old war here and shows that U.S. military intervention in Indochina is far from ended despite the Vietnam cease-fire.

In some instances the bombing exceeds the scope of the worst U.S. air raids in Vietnam.

The bombing is designed to save the tottering Phnom Penh government from collapsing while trying to force the Communists to agree to a truce.

Despite Pentagon and White House efforts to con-

ceal virtually every aspect of the bombing, particularly in the wake of growing congressional opposition and questions over its constitutionality, it was learned that:

- Attacks by U.S. jet fighter bombers based in Thailand average at least 120 strikes a day, more than during an extended period in the far bigger war in South Vietnam.

- Attacks by B-52s, the biggest U.S. bomber, with a capacity of up to 60,000 pounds of bombs, are running about 50 a day.

- One day this week about 120 B-52s hit Communist troop concentrations throughout Cambodia — one

of the largest single air raids by B-52s in Indochina's history.

The massive air attack began slightly more than a month ago but aside from daily announcements by the U.S. Pacific Command in Hawaii that they are continuing, virtually every arm of the government has refused to discuss the raids.

As in the past, the secrecy apparently was ordered by the White House, sources said.

Until the time of the Vietnam cease-fire, President Nixon and former Defense Secretary Melvin A. Laird defended U.S. bombing in Cambodia as necessary to protect U.S. troops in South

Vietnam.

With American forces gone from the war zone, congressional leaders have begun questioning the legal authority for the continued bombing while attempting to gather information about the raids.

Administration officials have refused to provide any details about the raids and when questioned about the constitutional authority for ordering them, Undersecretary of State William Sullivan told some congressmen, "Our lawyers are working on it."

Reliable sources said B-52 bombings are producing refugees by the thousands.