

U.S. BEGINS AIRLIFT TO PROVIDE FUEL FOR PHNOM PENH

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Gasoline on First Flights to
Besieged Cambodia Capital
Is Destined for Military

ROAD IS REPORTED OPEN

No Supply Vessels Are Said
to Have Gone Up Mekong
River Since Monday
NYTimes

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PHNOM PENH, Cambodia,
April 10—The United States
began airlifting fuel into this
besieged capital today.

The first planes were sched-
uled to bring in only military
fuel, American officials said,
but they suggested that later
flights might carry commercial
fuel if efforts to ease the criti-
cal shortage here failed.

Communist insurgents have
blockaded the highways leading
into Phnom Penh as well as the
Mekong River, virtually isolat-
ing the capital.

Road Reported Opened

This morning a military
spokesman reported that Gov-
ernment troops had opened
Route 4 from the capital to
the port at Kampong Saom on
the Gulf of Thailand. There
were no immediate reports that
any more convoy ships had
been able to reach Phnom
Penh. Sunday and yesterday
eight ships made their way
through a gantlet of gunfire
along the Mekong River to the
capital. But they were two
weeks overdue and carried only
a fraction of the fuel needed.

The Government has been
rationing fuel for cars and
motorcycles for several days
and the black market price for
a gallon of gasoline has jumped
from about 35 cents to \$2. Still,
there has been no noticeable
decrease in traffic, no stranded
cars are in evidence and the
city appears outwardly calm.

For the moment, one Ameri-
can official said of the airlift,
"It's not a major effort. You
won't see anything like a
Berlin-style airlift in the next
few days."

Decision Startles Some

Nevertheless, some Western
diplomats were startled by the
American decision to take an
even greater role in Cambodian
affairs.

"I'm amazed," said one diplo-
mat. "This is certainly going
to get the United States in-
volved deeper and deeper, and
it's up to its eyes now."

The first surprise for diplo-
mats and other observers here
came about a month ago when
the United States began a wide-
scale bombing campaign in
Cambodia in response to the
latest Communist offensive.

One diplomat said, "Having
read the Paris agreement, it
seemed to us that the United
States couldn't use airplanes
here and we were worried. The
situation looked bad."

Officials in the Nixon Ad-
ministration have argued that
the United States is justified
in using its air power in Cam-
bodia on the ground that North
Vietnam first violated the ac-
cords by mounting the offen-
sive.

Western diplomats and other

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nents and thus broaden what
has been a steadily narrowing
political base. But he has ap-
parently been unwilling to share
his power and some diplomats
say they expect him to be even
more intransigent now.

Next Stop Saigon

General Haig spent about
nine hours here, then flew on
to Saigon to end a five-day
tour of Indochina that has in-
cluded stops in Thailand and
Laos.

American officials believe
the situation in Cambodia is
critical. They feel that had
American air power not been
called in, Government forces
would have collapsed. Even so,
they say that the country is
balancing on a thin edge. Early
last fall the Communists be-
gan a siege of Phnom Penh.
Rice supplies ran short and

there were two days of rioting
and looting.

This time, there have been
few visible signs of stress in
Phnom Penh, but some West-
ern diplomats believe the situ-
ation is more serious now.

"It's psychologically worse
now," one diplomat said. "The
riots were spectacular, but
they were taken care of in a
couple of days. Now the Gov-
ernment is weaker, the army
is tired and everyone knows
it."

U.S. Raids Continue

HONOLULU, April 10 (UPI)

American B-52's and tactical
fighter-bombers flew air sup-
port for Cambodian troops to-
day in the drive to reopen
Route 4. It was the 34th con-
secutive day of intensified ac-
tivity over Cambodia by Ameri-
can planes.

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officials here said that most
of the troops opposing Govern-
ment forces are Cambodian and
estimate that they are accom-
panied by 4,000 to 5,000 North
Vietnamese who serve as ad-
visers and sometimes also han-
dle communications and heavy
weapons.

They say there are about
40,000 North-Vietnamese regu-
lars in base areas near the
South Vietnamese border, how-
ever, and they agree that no
offensive could have been con-
ducted without heavy support.

Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr.,
President Nixon's special envoy,
visited Phnom Penh today to
assess the situation. He flew
in from Nakhon Phanom, Thai-
land, where the United States
established a new headquarters
for military operations in In-
dochina after the last American
troops left South Vietnam.

He had spent the night with
Gen. John W. Vogt Jr., who
controls the more than 500
American warplanes in Thai-
land and is directing the bomb-
ing of Cambodia. Informed
Western officials here say that
American fighter-bomber pilots
are flying 120 to 150 strikes a
day in Cambodia and that every
night 12 to 15 B-52's drop more
than 30 tons of bombs each.

American officials here would
not discuss the details of Gen-
eral Haig's visit, but they said
that he spent most of his time
with the "country team" headed

by Ambassador Emory C.
Swank and including Brig. Gen.
John R. D. Cleland, the com-
mander of the 75-man team
that funnels military supplies to
Government forces and Col. Ray
L. Burnell, the senior defense
attaché.

Haig Sees Lon Nol

Administration officials in
Washington had said that Gen-
eral Haig was coming to South-
east Asia for "normal consulta-
tion" and added that the trip
had been planned for two
weeks. But they did nothing to
discourage reports that Presi-
dent Nixon was gravely con-
cerned about Cambodia.

Officials at the embassy here
said that General Haig con-
ferred with only one Cambodian
official, the chief of state, Mar-
shal Lon Nol.

There was no indication of
what was discussed, but it was
presumed that the talks cen-
tered on the military situation
and the question of the effec-
tiveness of American air power
and whether more should be
sent in.

Diplomats said that no matter
what message General Haig
carried to Marshal Lon Nol, the
mere fact of the visit was likely
to reinforce the impression in
Cambodia that the United States
stood totally behind the present
regime. There has been a con-
siderable effort on the part of
American officials here to get
Marshal Lon Nol to take into his
Government some of his oppo-