

U.S. Data on Cambodia Raids Show Shift to a Support Role

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WASHINGTON, April 27—A Senate subcommittee today made public previously secret Defense Department information officially confirming that the preponderance of American bombing in Cambodia shifted since last month from striking at North Vietnamese lines of communication to supporting Cambodian Government forces.

The information showed that there had been a steady increase of American bombing in Cambodia after the Vietnam cease-fire of Jan. 28. By the first two weeks in April, it showed, the United States was sending a daily average of 58 B-52's, and about 180 fighter-bombers and gunships on bombing and strafing missions. These missions, a staff report by the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee said, were coordinated from the American Embassy in Phnom Penh.

The report, containing the first detailed official information about the extent and rate of American bombing in Cambodia, was submitted by James G. Lowenstein and Richard M. Moose, members of the subcommittee's staff who recently made an inspection trip to Southeast Asia.

Civil War, Symington Says

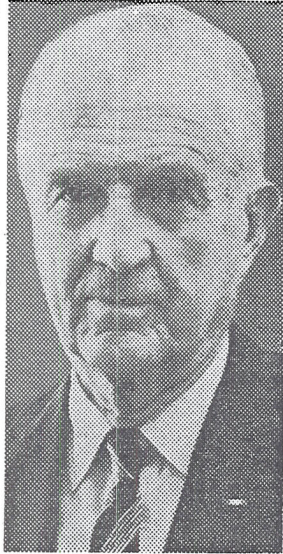
In an accompanying statement, Senator Stuart Symington of Missouri, the subcommittee chairman, said that the staff report should correct "the erroneous impression" that "the fighting in Cambodia was between Cambodians and North Vietnamese."

He said that it "confirms the fact that the struggle going on in Cambodia is essentially a civil war between opposing Cambodian groups and that our bombing is devoted primarily to the support of Marshall Lon Nol, the president of Cambodia.

The Senator said that the staff report made it apparent that American air power was being employed against more densely populated areas with "the safeguards employed to avoid civilian casualties far less stringent than those recently in effect in Laos."

The report disclosed that the United States Embassy in Phnom Penh was using maps "several years old" in approving B-52 strikes and "did not have current photography on proposed target areas which would permit the identification of new or relocated villages."

Senator Symington said that the "deep involvement" of the embassy violated the "clear intent" of Congressional amendments to limit the involvement of American personnel in Cambodia.



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Senator Stuart Symington, chairman of the subcommittee that made public information on U.S. bombing in Cambodia.

gave this picture of the steadily increasing bombing operations from mid-February, when the United States resumed bombing in Cambodia, through mid-April:

From Feb. 15 to Feb. 28 an average of 23 tactical sorties and 5 B-52 sorties were flown. In the ensuing two-week period, March 1 through March 15, about 58 tactical and gunship sorties and sorties by 5-52's were flown daily.

From March 16 through March 31, there were some 183 tactical and gunship sorties and 58 for the B-52. The average daily sortie rate for B-52's remained about the same between April 1 and April 18, while tactical air sorties decreased slightly, the report said.

Concern for Regime

According to the subcommittee report, "stepped-up U.S. air activity followed a meeting of U.S. officials with the Cambodian general staff at which the enemy effort was described as a serious attempt to knock out the Lon Nol Government and the Cambodians had appealed for more U.S. air support."

In the past, the defense department said repeatedly that all air operations in Cambodia were conducted "at the request of and with the approval of the Cambodian Government." The committee report, however, said that the American embassy was directly involved in planning and approving bombing strikes and that in eastern Cambodia strikes are actually initiated by the United States Seventh Air Force, now based in Thailand.

The report said that except for the eastern third of Cambodia, where there are no Government troops, the embassy validates all strikes by B-52 and F-111 bombers.

The Cambodian general staff submits a bombing request along with a certification that villages, houses, monuments or venerated places are not within a certain distance of the target. The embassy air attache then plots the targets on a detailed map on a 1-to-50,000 scale supposed to show the exact location of all permanent houses and buildings. The committee report said that the air attache had acknowledged that the maps were "several years old."

The Cambodian request, the report said, is then cleared by an embassy bombing panel headed by Thomas O. Enders, the 42-year-old deputy chief of mission. According to the report, Mr. Enders had said that about 40 per cent of the Cambodian requests are rejected.

A Change by April

The subcommittee report showed that during the last two weeks of March 80 per cent of the American bombing strikes were directed at interdiction of North Vietnamese supply routes in eastern Cambodia leading into South Vietnam, and that 20 per cent were flown in support of Cambodian Government forces.

By the first part of April, the "vast preponderance" of the B-52 and fighter-bomber strikes were aimed against Cambodian insurgent forces, the report said.

Previously, the Defense and State Department had refused to discuss rates of sorties — single missions by single planes — although, in an apparently inadvertent breach, the Pentagon made statistics available this week showing that nearly 39,000 tons of bombs were dropped on Cambodia in March.

The subcommittee report