

Administration Drops Claim Of Cambodia Negotiations

By Murrey Marder
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The Nixon administration has ceased all claims that it has any negotiations, under way on Cambodia, with the American cutoff on supporting bombing for that nation less than three weeks away.

Any negotiations that might influence the course of the war in Cambodia before the Aug. 15 deadline on U.S. bombing are up to the opposing sides in the warfare, U.S. officials said privately. But there is no serious expectation inside the Nixon administration that the pro-Communist insurgents will make any new negotiating move before Aug. 15. "Why should they?" one official bluntly asked.

What happens after Ameri-

can bombing halts on Aug. 15 "depends on the resiliency and strength of the Phnom Penh government," said an administration official.

Few U.S. officials — or Cambodians — are sanguine about the Cambodian army's prospects for surviving unaided.

Presidential national security adviser Henry A. Kissinger will not make a new visit

to China before Aug. 15, administration officials acknowledged yesterday. This represents "no postponement," they contended, because no time for a Kissinger trip to Peking this summer was ever announced.

It has been increasingly evident that a Kissinger trip to China would not come in time to produce a diplomatic settle-

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Court Stays Anti-Bombing Ruling

A federal appeals court in New York held up yesterday a lower court order that the United States immediately halt military operations in Cambodia. The three-judge panel then set a hearing Aug. 13—two days before U.S. bombing in Cambodia is to end.

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By Larry Morris—The Washington Post

Secretary of State William P. Rogers, right, and Curtis Tarr, under secretary for security assistance, before the Senate Subcommittee on Foreign Operations.

Cambodia Talks Claim

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ment of the Cambodian war before the legislated Aug. 15 cutoff on U.S. bombing there. The real question was whether any attempt would be made to have a diplomatic bargaining process under way at least to soften the damaging psychological and physical impact of the bombing cutoff on the American-supported Cambodian regime of President Lon Nol.

Kissinger has told associates that the primary purpose of his planned trip to Peking was not Cambodia, in any event, and that the trip was scheduled prior to the bombing cutoff. The Nixon administration, however, reportedly hoped that Kissinger's talks in China, which is the patron of deposed Cambodian Prince Norodom Sihanouk, would help pave the way for a Cambodian cease-fire.

Prince Sihanouk, on July 5 in Peking, said he will not talk with Kissinger because, he said, Kissinger four times refused offers to meet with him.

Sihanouk on July 12 added, however, that if the Americans wanted to bargain with "the Red Khmers—the future masters of Cambodia," that was up to those two parties to decide, even though Sihanouk claims to be the recognized leader of all insurgent forces in Cambodia.

On July 17, Sihanouk reasserted what he called his own "final proposal" to President Nixon, which he said was transmitted from Mauritania at the end of May: a halt to all U.S. bombing in Cambodia, an end to all "acts of aggression," and a cutoff of "all forms of military aid to the authorities in Phnom Penh."

White House deputy press

secretary Gerald L. Warren was asked yesterday if it is still the Nixon administration's position that sensitive negotiations on Cambodia are continuing. Warren said he was "not in a position to speak to that subject today," nor to discuss when Kissinger might go to China.

Secretary of State William P. Rogers declined yesterday to discuss the Cambodian negotiating outlook, current or future, when questioned by newsmen following testimony before a Senate Appropriations subcommittee.

The administration's silence on the consequences of the approaching Aug. 15 deadline stands in sharp contrast to President Nixon's public statement on the dire repercussions of a unilateral halt to U.S. combat support for Cambodia.

While the Nixon administration was fighting congressional attempts to impose a ban on bombing in Cambodia, spokesmen repeatedly said there were delicate secret negotiations under way to resolve the Cambodian war. Nothing ever has been disclosed about the substance of such negotiations.

President Nixon, on June 27, in vetoing the original, immediate legislative cutoff of bombing, said "a total halt would virtually remove Communist incentive to negotiate and would thus seriously undercut ongoing diplomatic efforts to achieve a cease-fire in Cambodia."

The "conquest of Cambodia by Communist forces," the President said then, would be "a serious blow to America's international credibility . . . that would be felt far beyond Indochina."

No such cataclysmic language is being employed now

by any administration official.

Rogers, testifying on foreign aid yesterday, said: "I am satisfied that the North Vietnamese have decided that they will not continue the war in Indochina on a large scale . . . What they will do [short of that], we are not certain."

Under questioning by Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii), who asked what would happen to U.S. aid if a new regime gains control in Cambodia, Rogers replied that "we are not committed to any particular government" in Cambodia, South Vietnam or Laos. "If the North Vietnamese took over Cambodia by force," he said, "we obviously would have no commitment to that government."

Inouye said it is the Khmer Rouge, rather than the North Vietnamese, who are raising the major challenge to the Lon Nol government. Inouye noted that reports show that out of 30,000 to 40,000 North Vietnamese in Cambodia, "less than 5,000 are involved" in military activity against the Phnom Penh regime. Rogers said that was "generally accurate," but he added that "if it were not for the presence of the North Vietnamese, I doubt very much that the Khmer Rouge would continue to fight."

Rogers said the United States repeatedly has told North Vietnam, in their joint talks on postwar reconstruction aid which are now in suspension, that no program can be considered "until the Paris agreements [on halting the Vietnam war] are carried out. So far they have not been carried out satisfactorily." These talks, recessed July 32, will not resume until after the Aug. 15 bombing cutoff, U.S. officials said, when North Vietnamese intentions in Indochina can be reassessed.