

# Cambodia Bids U.S. Abide By a 'Moral' Duty to Help

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 21—The Cambodian Government appealed to Congress and the American people today to abide by "the moral obligation" of the United States to help

it remain alive in the face of growing insurgent pressure.

In a news conference in the wake of the cessation of American bombing in Cambodia, last week Ambassador Um Sim read an "open letter" that his Government had sent to all members of Congress, then made his own emotional plea for the United States not to let down "a small country which has cast its fate with you."

Asked if he believed that the United States had "sold out" Cambodia by halting the bombing, the ambassador said, "To a certain extent, yes."

"Though we feel not betrayed, we feel abandoned," Mr. Um Sim said.

[In Peking, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, terming President Nixon a liar, denied that while Cambodian Chief of State he had acquiesced in secret bombing, as the President had contended in his New Orleans speech. Page 10.]

## 'Lessened the Burden'

The Cambodian Ambassador's letter, dated Aug. 15, the day the bombing halted, said that by joining forces with the United States and South Vietnam in 1970 after ousting Prince Norodom Sihanouk from power, the Government of President Lon Nol had "enormously lessened the burden on American and South Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam and contributed to saving the lives of many American soldiers."

"We believed that the United States would recognize its moral obligation toward us for having cast our lot with you, even though there does not ex-

Continued on Page 9, Column 1

Continued From Page 1, Col. 2

ist any formal treaty commitment between our two countries," it said.

"We believed that, as President Kennedy said in his inaugural address of 1961, the United States would 'bear any burden' to help us in the defense of our liberties. We believed we could count upon the United States."

Taking note of the cessation of bombing, the letter said:

"Now the United States has taken its most direct and effective support from us. We are confident that our people will continue to fight for the independence of our nation. The American Congress and people should remember that it took many years to properly train and equip the South Vietnamese to fight for their independence."

"The people of Cambodia, now struggling for their sur-



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Ambassador Um Sim at news session yesterday.

vival, ask only for more time so that they too can one day stand on their own. We do, indeed, appreciate very much the help already given and the assistance promised to us."

In its only specific request, the letter said: "We need continued military, economic, political and humanitarian assistance from the United States."

"If the Khmer Republic is conquered," it said, "its fall will have far-ranging repercussions for Southeast Asia, America and the entire world."

"We ask, then, for ongoing assistance from you, the Congress and people of the United States. For if the United States grows weary of aiding its friends and abandons them, even though they are willing to fight and to continue fighting as long as humanly possible in the defense of their freedom and the freedom of the world, your great country will someday find itself alone," the letter said.

In answer to questions, Mr. Um Sim said that his Government wanted the current aid level of about \$200-million yearly continued, and might ask for more if the fighting intensified. He refused to put a time limit on the aid.

## Ability to Survive

Asked if his Government could last long without the air support, he said that "we believe and are confident our Government will be able to survive." He added, "It is not as desperate as you may think."

Much of what Mr. Um Sim said seemed to echo the comments of the Nixon Administration, which has assailed Congress for forcing the halt in the bombing through a rider to an appropriations bill. Asked if the Administration had encouraged the news conference, he said it had not.

He added, however, that the embassy had received help from "friends" such as the American Security Council, a Washington-based nonprofit organization dealing with national security affairs, which rented the room at the National Aviation Club for the news conference.

A spokesman for the council said that the embassy was inexperienced in arranging such conferences and "we helped it out."

Mr. Um Sim, who was educated at the University of Illinois and speaks excellent English, said that his Government had no indication that American aid would not continue. But he said that in light of the bombing halt the letter was "a precaution."

Later, Charles W. Bray 3d, the State Department spokesman, said that "this Government has made it clear it intends to continue providing military, economic and political assistance and do whatever it can within our laws to support" the Lon Nol Government.

Mr. Um Sim, asked at his news conference whether there were plans for the United States to evacuate President Lon Nol or other top officials, said, "The answer is absolutely no."

"We have no intention of evacuating anyone," he said. "We are determined to fight on to restore peace in Cambodia or at least a negotiated settlement." But he added that so far negotiations had gotten nowhere.

He said that Cambodia had no plan to ask for the bombing to resume but that if North Vietnam committed its forces to the battle she might make such a request.

Mr. Um Sim was also asked about the controversy in the United States over the secret bombing in Cambodia in 1969 and 1970. President Nixon strongly defended the raids yesterday in a speech in New Orleans, and Mr. Um Sim said that he completely supported what Mr. Nixon had said.