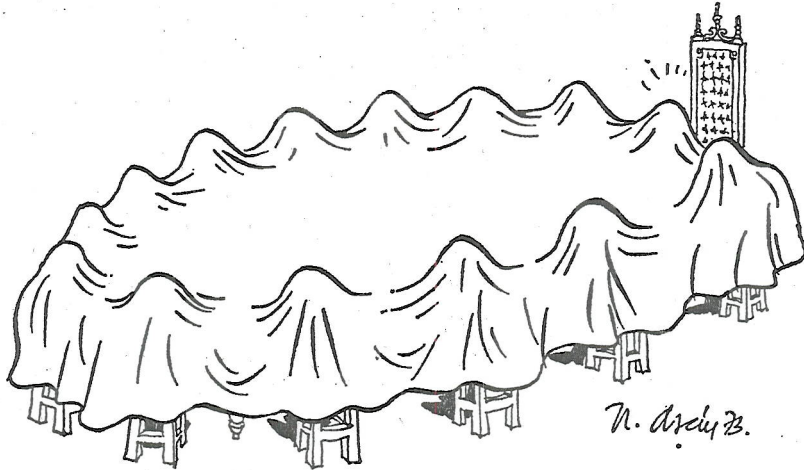


# Letters to the Editor

NYTimes  
Cambodia and Our 'Need to Know'

AUG 8 1973



To the Editor:

The question of President Nixon's involvement in the Watergate affair is serious enough, but is overshadowed by the questions raised by Gen. Earle G. Wheeler's revelation that President Nixon ordered the Cambodia bombing to be kept secret. Since the enemy certainly knew what was happening, the only purpose was to keep the information from the American people. [Editorial Aug. 5.]

In a democracy, the military is supposedly a necessary evil carrying out the will of the nation when it feels it must go to war. The President was so afraid of the reaction of this nation that he used the military, paid for and staffed by the people, for a purpose he knew they would not support.

General Wheeler said that only those with a "need to know" were privy to the fact that we were bombing a neutral country. In this country there is no greater "need to know" than that of the press. At least as frightening is the apparently deliberate deception of a Congressional committee in secret session. Here Congress was deemed to have insufficient "need to know" or the information was kept

even from the Secretary of State.

Political security is not national security. This abuse of Presidential authority must quickly be brought to account if our institutions are to remain democratic. Whatever the legal technicalities of the President's action, his secret use of the military strikes at the heart of this country's ideals.

CHARLES M. KOLINER  
Captain, Medical Corps, U.S.A.F.  
Westover A.F.B., Mass., Aug. 1, 1973

To the Editor:

The President would do well to heed these words:

"The President has a duty to decide, but the people have a right to know why. The President has a responsibility to tell them—to lay out all the facts, and to explain not only why he chose as he did but also what it means for the future. Only through an open, candid dialogue with the people can a President maintain his trust and his leadership."

They were spoken by him during a nationwide radio address on Sept. 10, 1968.

WILLIAM P. HANSEN  
New York, July 25, 1973