Accuses

Critics of 'Cop Out'

By Lou Cannon Washington Post Staff Writer

NEW ORLEANS, La. Aug. 20—President Nixor. acknowledged for the first time publicly today that he approved secret bombing raids in Cambodia and he vigorously justified them as being necessary to protect American lives.

Mr. Nixon also used a speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars here as an occasion to accuse critics in Congress and the press of seeking to "cop out" on U.S. global responsibilities.

Mr. Nixon spoke to a VFW convention after cancelling his motorcade route in downtown New Orleans because the Secret Service said it had uncovered a "possible conspiracy" to assassinate him.

He had been scheduled to motor down four blocks of Canal Street before arriving at

the convention center. He drove along an alternate route.

According to White House officials, Mr. Nixon was informed of the possible danger in New Orleans on Strategies. in New Orleans on Sunday night by the Secret Service, after consultation with the FBI and New Orleans police. This morning, he received the recommendation that he change the route and he agreed. There were no incidents during his stopover in New Orleans.

Mr. Nixon referred to the alleged conspiracy as he arrived at the Western White House heliport in San Clemente. He was met there by his confidensecretary, Rose Mary Woods.

"We were worried," Miss Woods said.

"About the assassination?" Nixon asked. "Yes," she said.

They conversed briefly and then, as Nixon left for the short car ride to his home, he called to her: "They'll never cancel another one" — apparently referring to a motorcade.

Miss Woods was not evail

Miss Woods was not available for comment, and other White House officials declined to say whether or not the President's remarks concerned the New Orleans motorcade. However, one aide who asked not to be identified said that the diversion of the motorcade had blemished the Presi-

dent's attempt to show that he intends to carry on "business as usual" despite Watergate.

Mr. Nixon, in his speech, gave the following explanation of why the U.S. bombings in Cambodia were kent secret. Cambodia were kept secret:

"Had we announced the air strikes, the Cambodian government would have been compelled to protest; the bombing would have had to stop; and American soldiers would have paid for the disclosure with their lives." closure with their lives."

He said, however, that the bombing was disclosed to unspecified government and congressional leaders.

See PRESIDENT, A4, Col. 6





