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Congressional Record S. 7682 - The Deteriorating Situation in Cambodia

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opinion, that the administration is endeavoring to find a way out of what is to them, and this country, a difficult, embarrassing, and dangerous situation. There is also talk that the President is considering sending Dr. Kissinger to Paris, again, to meet with the North Vietnamese to try and build a firmer base for a cease-fire in Vietnam and Laos and, hopefully, to lay the base for a Cambodian cease-fire. I hope this is true. In my judgment, the problem of Cambodia is not military but diplomatic and the important factor is to find someone who can pull the country together again. I hope the resignation of the Cambodian Cabinet, just announced, is a prelude to serious negotiations between all the participants in the civil war now raging in that unhappy nation. But a continuing concern over the direction of events leads me to return to the subject again today. By putting our bombers, an airlift and a river convoy all at the service of the Phnom Penh government, we are already on a course of deepening involvement in the internal affairs of Cambodia and what may well be a collapsing government. Moreover, we may well be also inviting the breakdown of the fragile cease-fire in Vietnam and Laos.

The fact is, Mr. President, that we had no business of the American people in Cambodia 3 years ago. We have no business there now and we are still paying the price in dollars and may, again, begin to pay in lives. Nor can I see the remotest valid business of the American people there tomorrow. But then, what was the business of the American people in the military involvement in Vietnam and Laos?

Yet, here we are at this late date digging ourselves deeper into another tragic military involvement, inflicting one more vast compass of devastation on one more hapless land, in support of one more irrelevant government, in one more obscure region of Indochina. In my judgment, to continue to pursue this vein is to cast into doubt all that has been achieved by way of negotiation in Vietnam.

Is it not time to ask ourselves: Why? What for? For whom? And to ask the questions again and again? On what constitutional grounds do we risk a single American life in or over Cambodia? On what authority do we spend \$150,000 or thereabouts of the people's money for each of the hundreds of sorties which are being flown around the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh? What far-out concept of national interest, obligation, or whatever compels us to wreak further devastation on that hapless land? Why are we pursuing this futile, tragic, last-gasp deadly military exercise? I know no valid reason associated with the interests of the people of the United States and I doubt very much that there is a Member of the Senate who can define one.

I greatly fear, Mr. President, that if land invasions from outside Cambodia do materialize, as has been hinted in the press, and they receive our aerial and other support, we will run the risk of a full recrudescence of the Indochina conflict which may well spread throughout Southeast Asia. Then what? More dead

and wounded? More POW's? More MIA's? More paraplegics? More drug addictions?

If ever there was a time for the President to call a halt, that time is now. If ever there was a time for this Nation to move out of Indochina militarily—land, sea, and air—that time is now. By so doing, we would contribute, in my judgment, to the well-being of the people of the Southeast Asian states and add, immeasurably, to the well-being of the people of this Nation.

On April 12, I suggested the possibility of a preliminary shift to a more reasonable government in Phnom Penh and then a diplomatic intercession on the part of both ourselves and other outside powers, an initiative which I am sure our Government is pursuing, to the end that a negotiated end of the civil war might take place among the Cambodians themselves. Perhaps the resignation of the Lon Nol Cabinet will make this possible. There is little, very little, to build on in Phnom Penh. It may well be, therefore, that peace will not return and that the war will intensify unless and until we discontinue completely our military involvement in that torn and battered land and unless and until Prince Norodom Sihanouk, who is the relevant symbol of Cambodian national unity returns to Phnom Penh.

THE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN CAMBODIA

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, on April 12, I addressed myself briefly to the deteriorating situation in Cambodia. While I do not approve of the 42d consecutive day bombing runs over Cambodia I recognize and accept the fact, in my