

[May 6, 1970]

Thursday, April 30...Nixon ordered U.S. and South Vietnamese troops to invade neutralist Cambodia. Nixon claims the move will protect American lives, speed the peace and show the world that the American will is strong.

Saturday, May 2...128 U.S. fighter-bombers struck the provinces of Quang Binh and Nghe An in North Vietnam. According to Spiro Agnew, this move will prevent increased infiltration from the north.

The invasion of Cambodia and resumption of the bombing in the north are dramatic escalations of the Indo-China conflict. Both decisions were made without the consultation of congress and both are contrary to repeated assurances from Sec. of State Rogers, Defense Sec. Laird, and Nixon that we would de-escalate the war.

WHY HAVE THESE EVENTS OCCURRED AND WHAT IS THEIR MEANING?

CAMBODIA

For 15 years, U.S. policy in Cambodia aimed to overthrow the neutralist head of state, Prince Sihanouk. On March 18th this aim was achieved.

Sihanouk represented a thorn in Washington's side because he refused to join SEATO or accept its protection. In addition, he resisted the strings attached to American and World Bank aid - namely the opening of Cambodia to foreign business speculation without Cambodian controls. Instead, Sihanouk insisted Washington guarantee its borders against long-standing territorial claims from South Vietnam and Thailand, which surround tiny Cambodia. While Washington would not provide such guarantees, the NLF did and agreed not to interfere in the internal affairs of Cambodia. In exchange, Sihanouk allowed certain NLF supply depots to be maintained within the Cambodian borders.

In May, 1965, following repeated warnings by Sihanouk that further U.S. attacks against Cambodian villages could not be tolerated, Cambodia broke off diplomatic relations with Washington. Cambodia presented a list of 7,000 U.S. violations in Cambodia to the 1969 U.N. General Assembly. Such attacks have increased greatly since the Nixon administration took office.

Nevertheless, in June of 1969, after Washington agreed to provide economic aid and protect Cambodia's territory, the U.S. embassy reopened. A few months later, U.S. subsidized newspapers began their virulent attacks in Cambodia against the Vietnamese population of Cambodia - numbered at around 600,000.

In February, attacks against the Vietnamese in Cambodia increased and, on March 11, complete with slogans in English, "spontaneous" demonstrations sacked the NLF embassy. A week later Lon Nol staged his military coup and instigated the genocidal attacks against the Cambodian Vietnamese. Peasants marching on the capital, Phnom Penh, and students demonstrating in support of Sihanouk were shot and jailed.

While the Thieu-Ky regime did not even protest the massacres of Vietnamese, the NLF could not accept the murders and retain their support among the people. In addition, the moves against their embassies and the obvious moves by General Nol to bring the U.S. military into Cambodia to prop up his regime left the NLF with no choice but to support the pro-Sihanouk forces.

One other fact bears mention. The Khmer Serei, the rightest force which provides the base for the present Cambodian dictatorship, is composed of Cambodians from Thailand and South Vietnam organized and trained with U.S. dollars to overthrow Sihanouk.

In no sense can the invasion of Cambodia mean anything but wider war in Indochina. It indicates Nixon's intention to accept nothing less than total military victory in Southeast Asia and it indicates the total futility of this intention. The invasion and the coup represent a clear violation of the Cambodians' right to self-determination.

The premise used publicly to justify the attack, that the Vietnamese resistance in the South is stimulated, supplied and carried out from the North, has been proved false so many times as to require no further refutation. It is clear that Washington's move is aimed simply at propping up in Cambodia, as in Saigon, a regime which represents nothing but a few corrupt and ambitious militarists. Clearly as well, Washington, continues to deny that the grievances of the Vietnamese are legitimate and need no stimulation from the outside.

Justification for the resumed bombing of the North is equally cynical and brutal. Virtually every sane Washington advisor, from former Sec. of Defense Macnamara to Nixon's favorite expert on guerilla war, sir Robert Thompson, concur that the bombing of the North has no military value whatsoever. It has no effect on "infiltration". What it does do is kill more American men, cost millions in planes lost, cause untold suffering to civilians in the North and raises the morale of the Saigon puppets. The North Vietnamese came to the negotiating table only after the bombing of the North had been reduced and then stopped. The resumption of the bombing means the end to negotiations and indicates Nixon's unwillingness to even pretend to seek a negotiated settlement.

Finally, Agnew justifies the new attacks by pointing out that the reduced level of enemy activity indicates their weakness. The fact is that the NLF reduced the level of fighting in response to Washington's promises that this would lead to similar reductions on our part and to serious negotiations in Paris. Now, when they do the very thing we demanded, we insult their spirit and strength. The result can only be an increased level of fighting, a dramatic increase in U.S. and Vietnamese casualties and an infinite extension of the war. This is totally unacceptable to the American people.

Nixon has drawn the line. Our choice is no longer between an "honorable" peace with negotiated agreements and gradual withdrawal. The choice before the American people is an expanded war with continued suffering on both sides or an immediate end to the conflict. It is not the American people who will have failed Washington if we pull out now but Washington and the Pentagon which failed the American people and the peoples of the world. If the war is allowed to escalate and continue now, not only the will, but also the sanity of the American people will be stained for all time to come.

This is why we must all meet Washington's challenge directly. This is why we have gone out on strike. There is only one honorable course now. AND THAT IS TO SAY NO....

Thursday, April 30, 1970, Nixon ordered the U.S. and South Vietnamese troops to invade neutralist Cambodia. Nixon says the move will protect American lives, speed the peace and show the world the American will is strong.

Saturday, May 2, 128 U.S. fighter bombers struck the provinces of Quang Binh and Nghe An in North Vietnam. According to Spiro Agnew, this move will prevent increased infiltration from the North.

The invasion of Cambodia and resumption of bombing in the North are dramatic escalations of the Indo-Chinese conflict. Both decisions were made without the consultation with Congress and both are contrary to repeated assurances from Secretary of State Rogers, Defense Secretary Laird, and Nixon that we would de-escalate the War.

WHY HAVE THESE EVENTS OCCURRED AND WHAT IS THEIR MEANING?

For 15 years, U.S. policy in Cambodia aimed to overthrow neutralist head of state, Prince Sihanouk. This aim was achieved on March 18.

Sihanouk represented a thorn in Washington's side because he refused to join SEATO or accept its protection. In addition, he resisted the strings attached to American and world bank aid, namely the opening of Cambodia to foreign business speculation without Cambodian controls. Instead, Sihanouk insisted that Washington guarantee its borders against long-standing territorial claims from South Vietnam and Thailand which surround tiny Cambodia. While Washington would not provide such guarantees, the NLF did and agreed not to interfere in the internal affairs of Cambodia. In exchange, Sihanouk allowed certain NLF supply depots to be maintained within the Cambodian borders.

In May, 1965, following repeated warnings by Sihanouk that further U.S. attacks against Cambodian villages could not be tolerated, Cambodia broke off diplomatic relations with Washington. Cambodia presented a list of 7,000 U.S. violations in Cambodia to the U.N. General Assembly. Such attacks have increased since Nixon took office.

Nevertheless, in June of 1969, after Washington agreed to provide economic aid to Cambodia and protect its territory, the U.S. Embassy re-opened. A few months later, U.S. subsidized newspapers in Cambodia began their virulent racist attacks against the Vietnamese population of Cambodia (app. 600,000).

In February, attacks against the Vietnamese in Cambodia increased and on March 11, complete with slogans in English, "spontaneous" demonstrations sacked the NLF embassy. A week later Lon No, staged his military coup and began the genocidal attacks against the Vietnamese in Cambodia. Peasants marching on the Capital and students demonstrating in support of Sihanouk were shot and jailed.

One other fact bears mention. The Khmer Serei, the rightest force which provides the base for the present Cambodian dictatorship, is composed of Cambodians from Thailand and South Vietnam organized and trained with U.S. dollars to overthrow Sihanouk.

In no sense can the invasion of Cambodia mean anything but wider war in Indochina. It indicates Nixon's intention to accept nothing less than total military victory in Southeast Asia and it indicates the total futility of this intention. The invasion and the coup represent a clear violation of the Cambodians' right to self-determination.

The premise used publicly to justify the attack, that the Vietnamese

assistance in the South is stimulated, supplied and carried out from the North, has been proved false so many times as to require no further refutation. It is clear that Washington's move is aimed simply at propping up in Cambodia, as in Indochina, a regime which represents nothing but a few corrupt and ambitious militarists. Clearly as well, Washington continues to deny that the grievances of the Vietnamese are legitimate and need no stimulation from the outside.

Justification for the resumed bombing of the North is equally cynical and brutal. Virtually every sane Washington advisor, from former Sec. of Defense McNamara to Nixon's favorite expert on guerilla war, sir Robert Thompson, concurs that the bombing of the North has no military value whatsoever. It has no effect on "infiltration". What it does do is kill more American men, cost millions in lives lost, cause untold suffering to civilians in the North and raises the morale of the Saigon puppets. The North Vietnamese came to the negotiating table only after the bombing of the North had been reduced and then stopped. The resumption of the bombing means the end to negotiations and indicates Nixon's willingness to even pretend to seek a negotiated settlement.

Finally, Agnew justifies the new attacks by pointing out that the reduced level of enemy activity indicates their weakness. The fact is that the L reduced the level of fighting in response to Washington's promises that this would lead to similar reductions on our part and to serious negotiations in Paris. The result can only be an increased level of fighting, a dramatic increase in U.S. and Vietnamese casualties and an infinite extension of the war. This is totally unacceptable to the American people.

Nixon has drawn the line. Our choice is no longer between an 'honorable' peace with negotiated agreements and gradual withdrawal. The choice before the American people is an expanded war with continued suffering on both sides or an immediate end to the conflict. It is not the American people who will have failed Washington if we pull out now but Washington and the Pentagon which misled the American people and the peoples of the world. If the war is allowed to escalate and continue now, not only the will, but also the sanity of the American people will be stained for all time to come.

This is why we must all meet Washington's challenge directly. This is why we have gone out on strike. There is only one honorable course now. AND THAT IS TO SAY NO....

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA STRIKE COMMITTEE