

Raids in Cambodia ***By U.S. Unprotested***

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WASHINGTON, May 8— American B-52 bombers in recent weeks have raided several Vietcong and North Vietnamese supply dumps and base camps in Cambodia for the first time, according to Nixon Administration sources, but Cambodia has not made any protest.

In fact, Cambodian authorities have increasingly been cooperating with American and South Vietnamese military men at the border, often giving them information on Vietcong and North Vietnamese movements into South Vietnam.

Information from knowledgeable sources indicates that three principal factors underlie the air strikes just inside the Cambodian border, west and northwest of Saigon:

¶ **Rising concern by military**

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CAMBODIA RAIDS GO UNPROTESTED

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men that most of the rockets and other heavy weapons and ammunition being used by North Vietnamese and Vietcong forces in the southern half of South Vietnam now come by sea to Cambodia and never have to run any sort of bombing gantlet before they enter South Vietnam.

¶A desire by high Washington officials to signal Hanoi that the Nixon Administration, while pressing for peace in Paris, is willing to take some military risks avoided by the previous Administration.

¶Apparent increasing worry on the part of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Cambodia's Chief of State, that the North Vietnamese and Vietcong now effectively control several of Cambodia's northern provinces and that he lacks sufficient power to disrupt or dislodge them.

No Desire to Extend War

Officials say that there is no Administration interest at this time in extending the ground war into Cambodia, or Laos either.

Discussing the on-again, off-again statements of Prince Sihanouk on the re-establishment of relations with the United States, one official said: "Although the Prince has made various statements in recent speeches questioning the sincerity of our recognition of his frontiers, he has made none of these protestations to us. It may be that he's simply demonstrating to his people that any new deal he makes will be on his own terms."

The Prince has made United States recognition of Cambodia's "present frontiers" a condition for the re-establishment of relations.

Some American ground commanders have long urged that battalion-size forces occasionally be allowed to sweep into sanctuaries in Laos and Cambodia to follow up air strikes. This plea has been rejected by President Nixon as it was by President Johnson.

But sources here say that to assure that accurate information can be obtained to provide "lucrative" targets for the bombers, small teams of men are permitted to slip across both the Cambodian and Laotian borders to locate enemy concentrations of men and matériel.

Coincided With Other Raids

The sources report, for instance, that to try to reduce losses in B-52 raids the enemy has dug in and dispersed supply caches in such a way that it is unlikely that all supplies in any one area would be hit by the linear pattern of bombs dropped by a B-52. Each plane, which normally carries about 30 tons of bombs, lays out a pattern that is 1,000 feet wide and 4 miles long.

The raids into Cambodia, the sources say, coincided with heavy B-52 raids on the Vietnamese side of the border 50 to 75 miles northwest of Saigon.

Over the last two weeks more than 5,000 tons of bombs have been dropped by B-52's in this area, according to one estimate.

There are reported to be three enemy divisions operating back and forth across the border in this area: the First and Seventh North Vietnamese Divisions and the Ninth Vietcong Division. Another division, the Fifth Vietcong, is now operating south and southeast of Saigon.

The decision to demonstrate to Hanoi that the Nixon Administration is different and "tougher" than the previous Administration was reached in January, well-placed sources say, as part of a strategy for ending the war.

Hints by Siranouk Noted

Limited, selective bombing strikes into Cambodia, the sources say, were considered feasible because Prince Sihanouk had dropped hints that he would not oppose such actions and because they seemed to offer relatively little risk of either expanding the war or disrupting the Paris peace talks.

In the past, American and South Vietnamese forces had occasionally fired across the border and even called in fighters or helicopter gunships to counter fire they received from enemy units there. But there had been no bombing of supply stockpiles or base camps in Cambodia, military men say.

Over the last several weeks the military sources say, Cambodian Army officers in border posts have held secret meetings with Americans and South Vietnamese to "coordinate" some actions against enemy forces.

The South Vietnamese have provided them with radios and in some instances the Cambodians have radioed information on enemy units moving into South Vietnam. At other times, the Cambodians have fired colored flares—for example, red to mark an enemy unit and blue to mark their own—so that allied forces would not fire at the wrong unit.

"This cooperation is only starting to get off the ground," said one officer. "It's too early to tell how important this will turn out to be."