

U.S. Invasion of Cambodia

can action is a straight invasion of Cambodian territory without any information having been given to the government or people of that country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Lewis: Of course it is true that the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong had been in some parts of Cambodia for five years, as the President said last night.

An hon. Member: Even longer.

Mr. Lewis: And perhaps even longer. But this, I suggest to you, cannot excuse the United States action. It is no consolation to the world that President Nixon has decided to meet North Vietnamese duplicity by similar action on the part of United States. This is not the way in which peace can be sought in that area or anywhere else. I believe that Canada must speak out in this kind of situation. I hope that when the minister enters this debate he will say, not only as he said this morning that he regrets that the United States found it necessary to do what it did but, that on behalf of Canada he deplors the action, that he considers the action dangerous and that it is not helpful to the search for peace in our troubled and anxious world. Nothing less from this government in my view can satisfy the present situation.

I simply cannot accept the explanation of the President of the United States. He talked about the need for his country to show itself strong, about his fear of humiliation and about the need for the United States not to be a helpless giant. Indeed, in his foreign policy report to Congress of February 18 last, the President stated this significant sentence: "When it comes to maintaining peace, prestige is not an empty word."

What are we dealing with, Mr. Speaker? Are we dealing with national prestige, or with the fate of the world? Is it important for the world that President Nixon maintain his own prestige, or is it important for the world that the war in Viet Nam come to an end?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Lewis: All these statements underline the role which the United States has been trying to play in the world, wrongly, for some time. No one nominated the United States of America as the policeman of the world, and in an international community no one should try to act in that capacity.

It seems to me that the action of the United States and the explanation President Nixon

[Mr. Lewis.]

tried to give last night indicate a complete reversal of the alleged search by the United States for peace and the intention to withdraw American troops. I suggest that it is difficult for anyone who looks at the situation objectively to believe in the good faith of some of the words expressed. It is difficult to accept good faith when the President promises peace while escalating the war. Sure, there is not good faith with the Communists, either at the present Paris negotiating table or anywhere else; but, I repeat, our answer cannot be to try to match Communist hypocrisy.

In our view, and in my view, the action of the United States yesterday and today has spread the war in Southeast Asia in a way which makes it impossible to see the end of the war. I suggest to you that some of the words that the President used indicate that it is the intention of the United States to retain a sizeable army in Southeast Asia, no matter what may come. The President said, you will recall, that he was taking this action in order to assure the lives of those who will remain in Viet Nam after the withdrawal of the 250,000 troops that he has so far promised to withdraw. I read into that a definite warning to the world, and it is with great sadness that I read the warning, that United States does not have any intention of withdrawing all its troops from Southeast Asia. I believe that to be a pre-condition for any kind of development in that part of the world.

• (3:20 p.m.)

I want to say to this House that there are some steps Canada might try to take. I do not know whether they would be entirely successful. We have suggested on a number of occasions that Canada should try to bring the matter of the new developments in Southeast Asia to the security council of the United Nations. I appreciate that we are not a member of the Security Council now, but we are a member of the United Nations and have every right to seek to have this subject put on the agenda of the Security Council.

I also appreciate that some of the major nations involved, such as China, North Viet Nam, and for that matter, South Viet Nam, are not members of the United Nations and therefore there are limits on what the United Nations might be able to do. In my submission this ought not stop us from trying to put it on the agenda of the only international organization available to mankind to save itself from complete destruction. At least it