

*U.S. Invasion of Cambodia*

tion in Viet Nam deteriorated, incidents in the border area between Cambodia and South Vietnam became more and more frequent. For their part, the South Vietnamese and the Americans maintained that any incidents in which they were involved resulted from clashes with Vietnamese Communist forces who were making use of Cambodian territory as a sanctuary to which they retreated or as a base from which they operated against South Vietnam. The charge was also increasingly made that the Vietnamese Communists were making use of Cambodia as a supply route both in the northeastern province along what was called the Sihanouk trail and through the ports along the Gulf of Siam.

Since early 1968 the Cambodian government itself has complained publicly of the activities of Vietnamese Communist armed forces on Cambodian territory. Evidence substantiating these complaints were contained in an official Cambodian government report made public in October 1968 in which the Cambodian Secretary of State for National Security reported that armed Vietnamese continuously installed themselves in certain frontier districts of Svay Rieng province. In another report published in October 1968, the estimated strength of these Vietnamese Communist troops was given as 4,000.

By early 1969 public statements by Prince Sihanouk more and more frequently contained charges of extensive Vietnamese Communist infiltration in the border area. In his March 6, 1969 press conference, Prince Sihanouk declared that Viet Cong and Viet Minh units had infiltrated into Cambodia near Mimot and other areas in an apparent attempt to establish a Vietnamese frontier along the Mekong River. In his press conference of March 28, 1969 Prince Sihanouk declared that Viet Cong and Viet Minh units, in some cases in battalion and regimental strength, had infiltrated into Cambodia along Cambodia's eastern frontier and that they had actually engaged in armed conflict with Cambodian military forces in the Parrot's Beak.

In the Canadian government's opinion, these indications constituted prima facie evidence of a violation of the 1954 cease fire agreement on Cambodia by one of the parties and the ICC had a clear obligation to initiate an investigation to verify the facts. The Canadian delegation proposed such investigations but this was not taken up by our colleagues before the Cambodian government on October 7, 1969 indicated its intention to have the commission "terminate its mission by the

[Mr. Sharp.]

end of the year". Earlier, two Canadian proposals were put forward in the commission in response to a general request by the Cambodian government in August 1968 to investigate the alleged presence of Vietnamese Communists in the Parrot's Beak area. These, however, were rejected by the majority in the commission.

Thus, prior to 1969, the Cambodian government appeared to us to be genuinely interested in the International Commission. It gave the commission virtually carte blanche to fulfil its responsibilities and provided the permissive framework within which the commission could act if it so decided. We were unable to convince our colleagues on the commission to do so and by early 1969 the Cambodian government ceased asking the commission to undertake any kind of investigation—even of border incidents allegedly involved U.S.A.-South Vietnamese forces which the commission had been carrying out. On October 7, 1969, as I mentioned in the House this morning, the Cambodian government indicated the desire to have the commission terminate its mission, and on December 4, 1969 it asked the commission to adjourn sine die by December 31, 1969.

It is against this background that we must weigh the present situation in which the United States and South Vietnamese forces have entered Cambodia. The President has declared that this is not an invasion of Cambodia. I express no view on that; that is the statement that he has made. He went on to say that the areas in which these attacks will be launched are completely occupied and controlled by North Vietnamese forces.

He has also made clear that it is not the purpose of the United States to occupy these areas. He said, as I mentioned this morning, that "once enemy forces are driven out of these sanctuaries and their military supplies destroyed, we will withdraw".

I should make it clear here that Canada was not informed about the United States decisions ahead of time. We had no previous knowledge whatever, and there was, of course, no reason why we should. As I said in the House this morning, there is no doubt that these decisions were hard ones and certainly very momentous. It remains to be seen whether they will accomplish what the President has in mind.

I have no doubt whatever that the President is very conscious of the risks of uncontrolled escalation in this situation, and that