

Nixon Orders Troops To Enter Cambodia

WASHINGTON (UPI) — President Nixon announced last night that several thousand American ground combat troops have entered Cambodia to wipe out Communist headquarters for all military operations against South Vietnam.

The President also announced he would provide "small arms and other equipment" to enable the Cambodian government "to defend its neutrality."

"This is not an invasion," the President told the nation and the world in a broadcast from his White House office. "The areas in which these attacks will be launched are completely occupied and controlled by North Vietnamese forces..."

Administration officials, amplifying the President's remarks, said several thousand Americans along with some South Vietnamese troops struck at 7 p.m. EDT into a long-held Communist sanctuary 20 miles inside Cambodia and about 55 miles northwest of Saigon. The President expects the operation to last between six weeks and two months.

Mr. Nixon said the actions were "in no way directed at the security interests of any nation." He warned: "Any government that chooses to use these actions as a pretext for harming relations with the United States will be doing so on its own responsibility and at its own initiative, and we will draw the appropriate conclusions."

Mr. Nixon's speech was broadcast live nationwide and by satellite to at least a half-dozen Far Eastern and Southeast Asian countries. The Voice of America carried the address worldwide, including the Soviet Union and Communist China.

The President said his decisions were "indispensable" in assuring the success of his program to withdraw U.S. troops from Vietnam and to end the war rather than having it drag on endlessly.

The President noted that 10 days earlier, in his report to the nation on Vietnam, that he

had warned he would take strong and effective measures to deal with any increased enemy activity in Laos, Cambodia or South Vietnam which endangered American troops.

"Despite that warning, North Vietnam has increased its military aggression in all three areas — particularly in Cambodia," he said.

"I have concluded that the actions of the enemy in the last 10 days clearly endanger the lives of Americans who are in Vietnam now and would constitute an unacceptable risk to those who will be there after our withdrawal of 150,000 men over the next year.

As if answering an outpouring of criticism from Capitol Hill over his decisions to further involve the United States in Southeast Asia, Nixon said, "I have rejected all political considerations in making this decision."

He said he would rather be limited to one term in the White House "than to be a two-term President at the cost of seeing America become a second-rate power" and suffer its first defeat.

Mr. Nixon's statement that the U.S. involvement was on a far, far larger scale, triggered renewed opposition.