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FEBRUARY 25, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSELETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT TO  
THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES

February 25, 1975

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I wish to convey to the House of Representatives my deep concern over the present critical situation in Cambodia. An independent Cambodia cannot survive unless the Congress acts very soon to provide supplemental military and economic assistance.

Unless such assistance is provided, the Cambodian army will run out of ammunition in less than a month.

The Cambodian people are totally dependent on us for their only means of resistance to aggression. The Communist forces now attacking have a constant, massive outside source of supply from the North as has been demonstrated by their ability to sustain the current heavy offensive.

If additional military assistance is withheld or delayed, the Government forces will be forced, within weeks, to surrender to the insurgents.

The economic situation is almost as difficult. Refugees forced to flee their homes by the Communists' repressive measures and scorched-earth policies have poured into Phnom Penh and other cities. Severe food shortages are already beginning. If the Congress does not provide for continued deliveries of rice and other essential supplies, millions of innocent people will suffer -- people who depend on us for their bare survival.

The Government of the Khmer Republic has demonstrated on countless occasions its willingness to negotiate a compromise political settlement to bring peace to its tormented land. It has been proven over the past two years that the progressive outbacks of American support have only undercut the possibilities of negotiation by encouraging a ruthless enemy in the hope of obtaining a total victory.

These are the harsh realities which the Congress must bear in mind as it considers the Administration's request for supplemental assistance to Cambodia.

It has been a basic policy of this Government to give material support to friends and allies who are willing and able to carry the burden of their own self-defense. Cambodia is such an ally.

This is a moral question that must be faced squarely. Are we to deliberately abandon a small country in the midst of its life and death struggle? Is the United States, which so far has consistently stood by its friends through the most difficult of times, now to condemn, in effect a small Asian nation totally dependent upon us? We cannot escape this responsibility. Our national security and the integrity of our alliances depend upon our reputation as a reliable partner. Countries around the world who depend on us for support -- as well as their foes. will judge our performance. It is in this spirit and with this sense of responsibility, Mr. Speaker, that I urge rapid and favorable action on my request for additional assistance to Cambodia.

Sincerely,

/s/ Gerald R. Ford

Honorable Carl Albert  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C.

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