

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 12, 1975

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Identical copy to President of Senate)

As you and other members of Congress were advised, in view of circumstances in Cambodia, the United States had certain contingency plans to utilize United States Armed Forces to assure the safe evacuation of U. S. Nationals from that country. On Friday, 11 April 1975, the Khmer Communist forces had ruptured Government of the Khmer Republic (GKR) defensive lines to the north, north-west and east of Phnom Penh and were within mortar range of Pochentong Airfield and the outskirts of Phnom Penh. In view of this deteriorating military situation, and on the recommendations of the American Ambassador there, I ordered U. S. military forces to proceed with the planned evacuation out of consideration for the safety of U. S. citizens.

In accordance with my desire that the Congress be fully informed on this matter, and taking note of Section 4 of the War Powers Resolution (P.L. 93-148), I wish to report to you that the first elements of the U. S. forces entered Cambodian airspace at 8:34 P.M. EDT on 11 April. Military forces included 350 ground combat troops of the U. S. Marines, 36 helicopters, and supporting tactical air and command and control elements. The Marines were deployed from helicopters to assure the security of helicopter landing zone within the city of Phnom Penh. The first helicopter landed at approximately 10:00 P.M. EDT 11 April 1975, and the last evacuees and ground security force Marines departed the Cambodian landing zone at approximately 12:20 A.M. on 12 April 1975. The last elements of the force to leave received hostile recoilless rifle fire. There was no firing by U. S. forces at any time during the operation. No U. S. Armed Forces personnel were killed, wounded or missing, and there were no casualties among the American evacuees.

Although these forces were equipped for combat within the meaning of Section 4(a)(2) of Public Law 93-148, their mission was to effect the evacuation of U. S. Nationals. Present information indicates that a total of 82 U. S. citizens were evacuated and that the task force was also able to accommodate 35 third country nationals and 159 Cambodians including employees of the U. S. Government.

The operation was ordered and conducted pursuant to the President's Constitutional executive power and authority as Commander-in-Chief of U. S. Armed Forces.

I am sure you share with me my pride in the Armed Forces of the United States and my thankfulness that the operation was conducted without incident.

Sincerely,

(signed Gerald R. Ford)

The Honorable
The Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515