

12:41Z
13.4
9:44 E
From JCS

EO 11850
RCA

TALKING POINTS FOR CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION

I am calling to inform you, on a classified basis, of certain developments with regard to the seizure of an American merchant vessel by Cambodian naval vessels off the coast of Cambodia yesterday. The United States has demanded the immediate release of the ship and its crew. There has been no Cambodian response to this demand.

As a precautionary measure, the President has ordered the U. S. military forces to take certain actions:

-- to prevent the American seamen from being transferred from the vessel or the nearby island to the Cambodian mainland, placing their lives in jeopardy and restricting our ability to rescue them.

-- to prevent reinforcement from the Mainland of the Cambodian forces detaining the American vessel and crew.

With these objectives in mind, the President has directed that U. S. aircraft should attempt to stop the movement of Cambodian boats ^{-- to prevent movement} between the island ^{ship or the} and the ship and between the ship or the island and the Cambodian mainland. ^{and to prevent movement of the ship itself,} Our military commanders have been directed to use the minimum force required to achieve these objectives.

FYI. You may draw on, but not go beyond, the attached fact sheet in answering questions on this subject.

May 13, 1975

Status of the U. S. Merchant Ship Seized by Cambodians

The S. S. Mayaguez, seized by Cambodian Communist forces, May 12, is now about 20 miles outside the port of Kompong Som, just north of Koh Tang Island. The ship is dead in the water, and there is reason to believe that most or all of its crew has been transferred to the island. The ship is being kept under surveillance by U.S. reconnaissance aircraft.

As a precautionary measure, several U.S. Navy combat vessels have been ordered to proceed to the general area of Koh Tang Island.

The U.S. has requested that Phnom Penh authorities have the ship released immediately. We have, so far, received no reply.

An NSC meeting was convened this morning.