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Letter to the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate Reporting on the Evacuation of the United States Mission in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. *April 14, 1975*

[Dated April 12, 1975. Released April 14, 1975]

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 Communists forces had ruptured Government of the Khmer Republic (GKR) defensive lines to the north, northwest 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

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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,

GERALD R. FORD

NOTE: This is the text of identical letters addressed to the Honorable Carl Albert, Speaker of the House

of Representatives, and the Honorable Nelson A. Rockefeller, President of the Senate.

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Remarks at the Swearing In of the Membership of the Federal Election Commission. April 14, 1975

Members of the Congress, the designated members of the Commission, and guests:

It is a great privilege for me to participate in the actual swearing in of these six very distinguished individuals who will be undertaking a very serious responsibility.

The campaign reform legislation, which was enacted by the Congress in 1974, which I had the privilege of signing, is landmark legislation, and the responsibilities that these five men and this one most attractive lady have is a responsibility that I know they will take seriously.

It is a combination of individuals selected—two by myself and four by the Congress—who can really, in the months and years ahead, set a path for the kind of elections that we want.

We want clean elections. We want fair elections. We want the best people campaigning and the best results as the American people decide.

I have great faith in all of them. I know some better than others, but as I have looked over their records, I think the House and the Senate and the White House have selected fine people for a great, great responsibility.