

August 15, 1973

Office of the White House Press Secretary

NOTICE TO THE PRESS

Statement by Jerry Warren, August 15 Bombing Halt.

As you know, combat air operations by United States aircraft have ceased in Cambodia. In order clearly to explain our position concerning this action and to avoid any misunderstanding by others, I would like to make the following points:

-- As the President indicated in his letter to Congressional leaders on August 3, this Administration is terminating combat activity in Cambodia in compliance with a specific, direct and binding instruction from the Congress. The President continues to hold grave reservations about the wisdom of this legislative action. He is concerned that by its action the Congress has eliminated an important incentive for a negotiated settlement in Cambodia, has weakened the security of Cambodia's neighbors in Southeast Asia and has eroded the structure of peace in Indochina laid down in the agreements of January 27. Most importantly, this Congressional act undermines the prospects of world peace by raising doubts in the minds of both friends and adversaries concerning the resolve and capacity of the United States to stand by international agreements when they are violated by other parties.

-- While noting the dangers of this legislative action, the President most reluctantly accepted the August 15 cut-off date as a necessary compromise to avoid a major disruption in United States Government operations and to allow the Khmer Republic more time to adjust to the new situation. You will recall that at the time this law was enacted, the President faced the alternative of accepting a June 30 cut-off date or halting all governmental operations through a veto of the Appropriations Bill to which this legislation was attached. To have terminated immediately all combat support for the Khmer Republic in the face of a massive enemy attack would have been an irresponsible act depriving the Cambodian Government of the essential time to prepare for the future. In light of these extreme alternatives, the only viable course