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**REPORTED BUILDUP OF SUPPLIES
AND SANCTUARY OF ENEMY
TROOPS IN CAMBODIA 8/24/67**

The SPEAKER. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. MARSH] is recognized for 30 minutes.

(Mr. MARSH asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks and to include extraneous material.)

Mr. MARSH. Mr. Speaker, I take this time to discuss the continued reports appearing in the press about the buildup of supplies and sanctuary of enemy troops in the country of Cambodia, whose border is adjacent to South Vietnam. I particularly raise a question as to the use of the Mekong River and what commerce destined for Cambodia or coming from Cambodia is moving along this waterway.

The Mekong River is one of the major waterways of that area of the world, and flows for countless miles across the Southeast Asian peninsula, emptying into the South China Sea. It runs across all of South Vietnam, after winding its way through Cambodia. It is sometimes overlooked and rarely mentioned that the Mekong River has the status of an international waterway with freedom of navigation for the benefit of the signatory parties, one being Cambodia. In 1955, there was signed a Mekong Convention which was a convention for the purpose of regulating maritime and inland navigation on the Mekong and inland navigation on the approach to the Port of Saigon. The State Department has furnished me a copy of this convention, as well as pointed out that the Government of the Republic of South Vietnam has sought to impose a number of regulations on the river traffic. The signatory nations were Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Article 2 of the protocol to the convention provides as follows:

Navigation throughout the course of the Mekong, its tributaries, effluents, and navigable mouths, must conform to the requirements prescribed by the riparian States, particularly in sanitary, police and customs matters and with respect to the maintenance of general security.

A reference to the book entitled "Cambodia's Foreign Policy" by Roger M. Smith, published by the Cornell University Press in 1965, touches on the circumstances leading to the agreement on the use of the Mekong River and also discusses certain differences involving the Port of Saigon. The author points out on pages 157 and 158 the construction of the port at Sihanoukville in 1959 has apparently diverted a substantial amount of traffic bound for Cambodia via the Mekong River.

Today serious questions are being raised by continued arms shipments into Cambodia. Although these apparently are coming in principally through the Port of Sihanoukville, nevertheless, I believe a question should be raised as to

what part, if any, the Mekong River might have, in the course of infiltration or distribution of these supplies.

In the August 28 edition of U.S. News & World Report, at page 25, there appears an article that discusses the entry of supplies for Vietcong and North Vietnamese through Cambodia. Set out below are the pertinent portions of this article:

Shipments are coming into Cambodia directly from Soviet Black Sea ports and Communist Chinese ports on ships of Russian, Soviet-bloc, Chinese and Hong Kong registry. Cargoes move by road and barges to the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops.

U.S. naval sources have become deeply concerned over the tremendous overall increase in international shipping into Cambodian ports, which has grown despite the fact that Cambodia's economy is nearly bankrupt after the breaking off of American aid three years ago and the expulsion of French and other traders when export-import firms and banks were nationalized.

One official American source reports that there is no question that Russian and Chinese shipping into Sihanoukville and elsewhere in Cambodia is bringing in ammunition.

Press accounts such as this raise a question to me as to the extent to which the Vietcong and North Vietnamese may be receiving substantial supplies via a Mekong River route ostensibly interdicted for peaceful commerce with Cambodia.

It has become necessary to look closer at the role of Cambodia in this war, and recent reports and news indicate Cambodia is playing a significant part in resupplying and providing a sanctuary for enemy troops.

I point out that I do not desire any information of a military nature which might jeopardize our forces or those of our South Vietnamese allies.

I might add that I am not familiar with the nature of cargo that moves on the Mekong River to or from Cambodia, nor do I have any idea as to what type of vessels carry these cargoes. However, I would be interested in knowing:

First. How much shipping travels up and down the Mekong River to or from Cambodia through Vietnam?

Second. Why, if this is regular commercial cargo, is it necessary to move these vessels in escorted convoys? I would point out that the State Department has furnished me information in reference to shipping on the Mekong River that "In November of 1966, shipping bound for Cambodia was being escorted in convoys up the Mekong River."

Third. Do we know just what is in each cargo moving up the Mekong to Cambodia?

Fourth. Are cargoes of obvious military use to our enemies turned back or confiscated?

The continued reports of Communist resupply operations in Cambodia may point to stricter measures for policing the use of the Mekong River.

It does not seem to be in the best interests of the American serviceman, nor our effort in South Vietnam, to permit travel through the heart of the battle ground over a main artery of trade items of war which will be used against our own troops.