

LAST WEEK'S SCENARIO
COULD BE PLAYED OUT AMONG
FAR LARGER NUMBERS OF
CIVILIANS
April 11

There have been some press stories about the recent fighting along the Thai-Cambodian border, but the articles are ~~mostly~~ not receiving prominent play nor do they convey the casualties and suffering ~~in~~ the conflict is bringing to ~~about~~ the civilians along the border.

While journalistic and governmental interest focuses on the political-military implications of the fighting- for the Cambodian resistance elements, for Thailand and for Vietnam- the trauma to civilians is all but ignored. Already some 40,000 have been driven from the border and there are reports of a massacre of Cambodians at the hands of Vietnamese troops. Heavy artillery has been used in civilian areas by the Vietnamese and responded to in kind by the Thai.

More important is the potential threat. The largest concentrations of civilians are ^{ALSO} under threat of Vietnamese attack. ~~More~~ One hundred thousand or more ^{CAMBODIANS} ~~civilians~~ could be caught in a meat-grinder between Vietnamese and Thai ~~forces~~ with relatively weak forces. Ironically this is in an area ~~where~~ the non-communist resistance forces who pose no substantial threat to the Vietnamese. (The major Khmer Rouge areas are well to the south.)

We need to ~~more~~ recognize this threat to the Cambodians along the border and take steps to address the problem; Some possible approaches are:

- Raise the matter in the United Nations where Vietnamese actions in disregard of safety to civilians should be aired.
- Ask all sides to refrain from use of artillery and other indiscriminate weapons in areas of civilian concentrations.
- Insure that the UN and Thai authorities work out a detailed evacuation plan for civilians permitting a temporary retreat into Thailand before the fighting in a particular location becomes heavy.
- Form a U.S. government working group focussed on the needs of the Cambodians along the border; this would permit a sharper focus on the problem and a liaison

Such a group might develop longer-term approaches for the Cambodians along the border.

-- One such long term measure might be the formation of border safehaven zone(s) for civilians only under UN protection. Presently Cambodians along the border are fed, but not protected, by the UN.

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For the moment, more important than any long-term action will be for all of us to focus on the ~~problem~~ threat to the border Cambodians. The press has ~~xx~~ a vital role, as well, in bringing us clearer information on the situation of the civilians and the dangers they face.

~~The days of the Srokianka holocaust are over for Cambodia.~~

~~It would be ironic~~

In the wake of the Cambodian ~~holocaust~~ holocaust ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ the suffering continues for those along the border, but everybody appears to have more important concerns.