

Post 9/21/70

Cambodia Gain Seen By Agnew

Says the Enemy Has Lost Half Of Forces There

HONOLULU, Aug. 30 (AP)—Vice President Agnew said today "somewhere in excess of 50 per cent of all the Vietcong and North Vietnamese forces in Cambodia have been eliminated" and he said there is no need at the present time for the return there of U.S. troops.

Talking with reporters aboard Air Force Two on his way home from Asia, Agnew praised Cambodian Premier Lon Nol, said Thai, Cambodian and South Vietnamese forces are working well together and pictured the Communist failure to take the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh as a sign of weakness.

"I think that the Communists would take Phnom Penh in a minute if they thought they could," he said, adding that he expects the major Communist effort in the next few months to be in Cambodia rather than South Vietnam.

Agnew said his conclusions on the extent of Communist losses in Cambodia, where he spent five hours in conference last Friday, were based on "South Vietnamese estimates and our estimates and also by Cambodian estimate—and they should certainly be in a position to know."

Asked about the circumstances under which Thai forces would be sent to help Cambodia, Agnew said that is up to the Thais and the Cambodians. "The United States does not want to become the grand master of the war design in Cambodia," he said.

Asked to compare what he

found on his five-nation trip with his longer visit to Asia in January, Agnew said, "The situation is quite a bit more stabilized and I think that our allies have accepted the idea that the U.S. military presence is being withdrawn as their capabilities to undertake their own defense increase. They accept this."

See AGNEW, A4, Col. 6

Vice President Says Foe Has Lost Half of His Forces in Cambodia

AGNEW, From A1

He visited South Korea, Taiwan, South Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand before leaving Bangkok early today. After a refueling stop in Guam, his plane crossed the international date line en route to Hawaii and a scheduled two-day rest stop before Agnew reports back to President Nixon at the Western White House in San Clemente, Calif.

After a few days of rest, Agnew will be off to the political wars as the Nixon administration's chief campaigner in the fall elections.

The Vice President told Thai leaders he would use the campaign to hit Senate moves aimed at restricting U.S. actions in Southeast Asia, and he reaffirmed that in today's talk with reporters.

"One of the basic issues in the campaign will be who is to make the foreign policy of the U.S. and whether the Congress has attempted to make unrealistic limitations on the President's ability to conduct the foreign policy," Agnew said.

Asked about any possible U.S. role in Cambodia, Agnew

said "American forces will not be involved in the Cambodian fighting unless in the judgment of the U.S. commander, Gen. Creighton Abrams, and of course the people who have to make decisions, that the security of American troops is threatened."

He reiterated that "if Cambodia fell to the North Vietnamese and they were able to consolidate their positions there and resupply those sanctuaries from Sihanoukville and have unlimited access along that 600-mile border, that future timetables for withdrawals beyond 150,000 presently announced might not be as ambitious as those that are contemplated under present conditions."

But he declined to speculate on the rate of U.S. withdrawals if Cambodia does not fall, saying "that will have to be decided when we get somewhere closer to the spring of next year."

In discussing Asian acceptance of U.S. military withdrawals, Agnew said President Park Chung Hee of South Korea "is extremely concerned" and that "the Korean people are unused to the idea yet."

"I think that as time goes on

and as we work out the details of our modernization program for Korea, that President Park's misgivings will disappear," he went on, adding the fact Park is facing an election "is not an inconsiderable factor in the impressions he has."

The Vice President said that in their marathon talks "President Park kept saying that he would fear we would withdraw troops before they were able to undertake their defense capabilities and I kept saying that absolutely we will not do it."

In discussing the eventual complete withdrawal of the American force from Korea, Agnew said "I was careful to say I didn't know whether this would be five years, or eight years, or whatever it might be that American troops would be withdrawn."

He repeated that the phone check he made with officials in San Clemente during the Korean talks—his only such conversation during the trip—"was a careful effort on my part to make certain that we didn't get involved in semantics that might give the South Korean government a signal that was inconsistent with our policy."

Shaggier Agnew Gets No Notice

GUAM, (AP)—Vice President Spiro T. Agnew said today that he has let his sideburns grow longer, but denied that it is an effort to increase the Nixon administration's appeal to youth.

"It's just an effort on my part to make my photographs look like I'm not bald from half-way up," he told reporters on Air Force Two. "The gray hair doesn't show in the pictures."

Asked if his teen-age daughter Kim approves of the longer sideburns, Agnew replied with a laugh. "She hasn't even noticed it."



United Press International

Vice President Agnew is draped with the traditional leis of welcome as he arrives at Hickam AFB, Hawaii.