

CAMBODIAN CHIEF SUFFERS A STROKE

FEB 11 1971

Lon Nol Reported Paralyzed on Right Side— Debate on Successor Opens

NY TIMES

By United Press International

PNOMPENH, Cambodia, Feb. 10 — Premier Lon Nol suffered a stroke Monday that paralyzed half his body, reliable sources close to the Cambodian Government said today. An official statement said he had been ordered to stop all activities for medical reasons.

Premier Lon Nol, 58 years old, is a general in the army and also serves as Cambodia's Defense Minister in charge of operations against Communist invaders.

He came to power last March after the National Assembly ousted Prince Norodom Sihanouk as Chief of State, charging that he had allowed Communist forces to infiltrate Cambodia and set up bases along the South Vietnamese border.

Right Side Is Paralyzed

There was immediate speculation as to who would step into Premier Lon Nol's position should his condition not improve, but no official announcement was made. The Cabinet will presumably act on his behalf under Vice Premier Sirik Matak while the Premier is under treatment.

The official statement said that Premier Lon Nol was un-

Continued on Page 19, Column 3

Cambodian Premier Partly Paralyzed by Stroke

Continued From Page 1, Col. 2

dergoing medical treatment but gave no indication of what was wrong with him. Government sources said several physicians, including Dr. Thong Boyan, head of Pnompenh's military hospital, were treating Mr. Lon Nol at his home and that he would not be able to perform his official duties for at least a month.

Medical sources said the right side of his body was paralyzed. He has a medical history of diabetes and high blood pressure.

Since last March when the Indochina war spilled over into Cambodia, the Premier has been carrying an extremely heavy work load. The stroke was reported to have occurred Monday a short time after he had delivered a three-hour speech on the military situation to a committee of the National Assembly. The news was withheld until early this morning.

Premier Lon Nol has been a widower since 1969 when his wife died of cancer. His brother, Lon Nil, was murdered

by the Vietcong in the provincial capital of Kompong Cham last April.

The death or incapacitation of Premier Lon Nol, in the opinion of Cambodian affairs specialists outside of the Government, would rob the new regime of its strongest figure and diminish the support it now enjoys among the Cambodian Army and students.

"Lon Nol has traditionally been respected by those groups far more than Sirik Matak," Bernard K. Gordon, a Cambodian specialist with the Research Analysis Corporation, said. "He has been able to deal effectively with the South Vietnamese on that basis and to stand up to them. Sirik Matak would not have the same backing."

Despite such shortcomings, it is the consensus among analysts here that Mr. Sirik Matak would almost certainly succeed Premier Lon Nol if he were unable to resume his office. As Vice Premier he is next in line, and as one of the principals of the 1970 coup he has wielded considerable personal power.

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Special to The New York Times

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Associated Press

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