

Lon Nol Shuffles Cabinet And Ousts Chief of Forces

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He Asks Premier to Form a New Government— Little Change Seen

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PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, March 11—President Lon Nol removed the commander of Cambodia's armed forces today and asked the Premier to form a new Cabinet.

The changes were announced by the President in a radio broadcast tonight after days of Cabinet-level meetings and political maneuvering. Cabinet changes were not immediately disclosed by Premier Long Boret, but no major surprises were expected.

Today's moves seem unlikely to have any major impact on either the Cambodian insurgents or the United States Congress, where opposition to further military aid for Cambodia requested by the Ford Administration has been increasing.

Sihanouk in Peking

The insurgents have named seven "criminals" who they say must be "hung" before any settlement talks can begin. While General Sosthene Fernandez, the ousted military commander, is one of the seven, the list also includes Marshal Lon Nol and Premier Long Boret, who remain in power.

It was Marshal Lon Nol who joined with two confederates to overthrow Prince Norodom Sihanouk, as Chief of State on March 18, 1970. Prince Sihanouk has been living in Peking where he is the titular head of the Cambodian insurgent movement.



Associated Press

Premier Long Boret



The New York Times

Gen. Sosthene Fernandez

Lieut. Gen. Saksut Sakhan, the new Defense Minister, held that post during the final days of the Sihanouk regime and the early days of the Lon Nol Government, but he is not known to have a close relationship with Prince Sihanouk. And it is doubtful that Prince Sihanouk holds any real power over the insurgent leaders in charge of the war within Cambodia.

The exact role of the Ameri-

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can Embassy here in shaping the new Cabinet was not known although the United States Ambassador, John Gunther Dean, is known to have met with Marshal Lon Nol only two days ago.

The United States Embassy is known to be gravely concerned over the image of the Cambodian Government and military forces with the approach of the crucial vote in Congress on additional aid for Cambodia.

Early today, news reached here that Mike Mansfield and Hugh Scott, the Democratic and Republican leaders in the Senate, had called for the ouster of Marshal Lon Nol and his entire Cabinet as a prelude to possible talks with the rebels and perhaps as a condition for further aid grants.

In his speech tonight, President Lon Nol expressed confidence in ultimate victory, making no mention of any negotiation or compromise in terms of his own resignation or that of any other senior members of the Government.

Governmental shake-ups such as this have become a regular feature of Cambodian political life, particularly since the overthrow of Prince Sihanouk, but they have never meant a major change in the direction of Cambodian policy.

At one point little more than a year ago, for instance, the

Cabinet was shuffled twice in two and a half months, Marshal Lon Nol remaining as chief of state.

In his speech, the President asked Parliament, which is virtually a rubber-stamp body, for a series of new laws that would, among other things, "severely punish economic saboteurs and subversive elements." This was not seen as going much beyond the Government's present emergency powers.

A British military transport plane evacuated 30 foreigners from Phnom Penh today, transporting them and some British Embassy documents and equipment to Singapore shortly after 2 P.M.

No British Embassy personnel left since the embassy had already been reduced to a staff of six. Three 107-mm. rockets struck Pochentong Airport shortly before the passengers arrived there from the British Embassy to board the plane. The aircraft escaped damage.

More rockets continued to fall on the airport, which is the last supply line for the isolated capital, and on Phnom Penh itself. Three struck near the National Assembly, two blocks from the British Embassy. Another landed in the grounds of a school for Buddhist monks, but there were no injuries.

U. S. Airlift Interrupted

PHNOM PENH, March 11 (Reuters) — Cambodian insurgents today carried out the most intensive shelling attack of their 10-week offensive here, interrupting the United States airlift to Phnom Penh.

Military sources said the insurgents had fired 61 rockets into Pochentong Airport in a nine-hour period.

American sources said that the intensity of the fire had forced cancellation of eight flights by DC-8 aircraft bringing rice to the besieged capital.