

Sihanouk Says Ouster Is Illegal and Asks Vote

By Agence France-Presse

PEKING, March 20 (Agence France-Presse) — Prince Norodom Sihanouk said here today that his overthrow as Chief of State of Cambodia was "absolutely illegal." He called for a referendum in Cambodia under the auspices of the International Control Commission — composed of Canada, India and Poland set up in 1954 to supervise the Geneva cease-fire agreements that ended the French Indochina war.

In a statement issued here, he said the "turbulence" in Cambodia had been created by the group that staged the coup and the United States Central Intelligence Agency.

"I cannot be dismissed from the office of Supreme Magistrate except by the nation as a whole," he said. "That is to say, by a national referendum whose validity cannot be contested.

However, at the present time and until the return to a state of constitutional regularity, any referendum organized by a traitorous and perjurious government would have no value.

Talks With Chinese Continue

"I solemnly declare that I am ready to hear the verdict of the nation as a whole, provided that confrontation with my enemies of the extreme right and referendum following this confrontation are guaranteed as regards security of persons, and as regards validity of votes.

Meanwhile, talks between Chinese leaders and Prince Sihanouk, which began shortly after his arrival here yesterday, went into their second day, apparently at a lower level.

Prince Sihanouk met Premier Chou En-Lai, immediately after flying in from Moscow.

On the basis of a dispatch by

Hsinhud, the Chinese press agency, it appeared that a deputy Premier Li Hsien-nien, and Wu Fa-hsien, the Deputy Chief of staff, represented China and Pen Nouth, Prince Sihanouk's personal adviser, and Gen. Ngo Hou, his technical adviser, were the Cambodian officials at the talks today.

The talks have been surrounded by tight secrecy and nothing is likely to be disclosed until they have been completed.

Prince Sihanouk was initially scheduled to leave China for home by way of Shanghai next Tuesday. Bookings for the Prince and his party were made with Air France, before the coup in Pnompenh. This morning, Prince Sihanouk's plans still seemed to be unclear.

Plans Speculated On

But it was thought here that he might return to France if it proved impossible for him to enter Cambodia. He might go there directly or via Moscow, for a new round of talks with Soviet leaders, whom he saw last week before the Cambodian coup. He was about to leave Moscow for Peking when he received news of the coup.

There are indications that he was not met with as much understanding on the part of the Soviet side as he had expected. Some analysts, in socialist countries and elsewhere, considered it possible that Prince Sihanouk might have been involved in some way in the demonstration in Pnompenh against North Vietnam and the Vietcong's provisional revolutionary government that preceded the coup.

Prince Sihanouk's statement said:

"My deposition pronounced by the National Assembly and

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Sinhua via Associated Press

CAMBODIAN IN PEKING: Prince Norodom Sihanouk, right, being welcomed Thursday by Communist Chinese Premier, Chou En-lai. Deposed Cambodian leader had been in Moscow.

the Council of the Kingdom of Cambodia is absolutely illegal, for the following reasons.

"I was appointed Head of State in 1960 by Parliament (unanimously) in conformity with the kingdom's Constitution, it is therefore absolutely false to pretend, as have certain members of the National Assembly, that I was granted the Supreme Magistrature of the state by simple popular acclaim.

"On the other hand, there is in our Constitution—even in the latest amendments prior to the anticonstitutional coup d'état of this month, March, 1970, perpetrated at Pnom Penh by the extreme right wing—no provision allowing Parliament and the Government to depose the Head of State, who is implicitly appointed for life."

Prince Sihanouk said that the referendum "should be guaranteed by the presence—accepted by both opposing parties—of an armed contingent sent to Cambodia for this sole purpose by India, Canada and Poland in the framework of the International Control Commission.

On Oct. 9, 1969, Prince Sihanouk told Britain and the Soviet Union, chairmen of the Geneva conference of 1954, that Cambodia wanted the International Control Commission to leave Cambodia by Dec. 31. He said later that Cambodia was unable any longer to pay her share of the commission's expenses.