

Cambodia Says Vietcong Double Area They Control

PNOMPENH, Cambodia, April 17 (Reuters) — A military spokesman said today that the Vietcong had more than doubled their area of control in Cambodia in the last two weeks.

The spokesman said that three of the country's 17 provinces were virtually in Vietcong control and that five more were more than half occupied.

If the guerrillas from South Vietnam complete the occupation of the province of Preyveng, the spokesman said, Pnompenh will be cut off from all provinces to the east and northeast.

Those provinces under almost 100 per cent Vietcong control, he said, are Rattanakiri and Mondulkirin in the north and the parrot's-beak province of Svayrieng in the south. He said those under partial control other than Preyveng were the border provinces of Takeo, Kampot, Kendal and Kompong Cham.

Tonight, unconfirmed reports said heavy fighting had broken out in Takeo Province and that several hundred persons had been killed.

Fighting had leveled off in recent days, but observers regarded the slow downs only temporary. They pointed out that in South Vietnam the guerrillas had always needed at least two months to coordinate a major operation, and they said they believed the Vietcong were coordinating an operation for Cambodia now.

The observers expect a major Vietcong push in about three weeks.

The lull, the observers believe, has come for two reasons.

First, the Cambodians are having trouble finding men and equipment to fight the guerrillas.

Secondly, the guerrillas see that they can get what they wish by slow infiltration and the minimum expenditure of men and arms, and are thus taking up strategic positions quietly.

The Cambodian Government, meanwhile, has continued to make requests for aid. Australian sources said today that the Government was studying such a request for arms and equipment.

The State Department in Washington said yesterday that such a request had been received and was being studied.

The specific requests followed a general appeal by Premier Lon Nol Tuesday for assistance.

South Vietnamese Stream In

SAIGON, South Vietnam, April 17 (AP) — More South Vietnamese troops streamed into Cambodia today ready to battle the Vietcong and North Vietnamese. United States forces took up blocking positions on South Vietnam's side of the border.

Correspondents reported from the Highway 1 border crossing 45 miles northwest of Saigon that scores of South Vietnamese trucks and jeeps were moving into Cambodia

and helicopters were landing across the border.

At a news briefing, however, a South Vietnamese military spokesman said it was possible that some units of squad or platoon size had gone 500 to 700 yards into Cambodia by mistake but insisted no large units had crossed the border.

Three battalions of the United States 25th Infantry Division have moved up to the border

area. One battalion has taken over an outpost, relieving the South Vietnamese entering Cambodia.

The two other battalions have taken up blocking positions.

American advisers are assigned to the South Vietnamese units, but a United States military spokesman said: "No U.S. advisers have gone into Cambodia."



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VIETCONG AREAS IN CAMBODIA: Communists control the three provinces shown in black. The five others that are shown diagonally shaded are said to be more than half occupied. Reprisal killings of Vietnamese civilians were reported in Takeo (cross) after a raid by Vietcong troops.