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CAMBODIAN CRISIS GROWS AS TROOPS SEEM TO FALTER

With Reds Near, Pnompenh
Is Gloomy Over Limited
Response to Aid Pleas

CIVIL AVIATION CURBED

Aide Declines to State How
Long Army Can Hold Out
With the Arms It Has

By HENRY KAMM

Special to The New York Times

PNOMPENH, Cambodia, April 22—An atmosphere of heightening national emergency is overtaking Cambodia.

The emergency atmosphere is due to evidence that the Cambodian Army is unable to turn back the Vietnamese Communist forces, who at one point are within 15 miles of the capital, and to the lack of response from any nation except Indonesia to Premier Lon Nol's appeal to all nations for arms aid.

The military authorities closed the Pnompenh airport this evening to all civilian traffic. According to military sources, it is to remain closed until tomorrow in connection with an important military operation. The operation is presumably intended to dislodge the North Vietnamese and Vietcong forces from the district capital of Saang, about 15 miles south of here.

An Appeal to Newsmen

The discouragement over the failure of such countries as the United States and France, on which Cambodia had counted for important aid, reached a point this evening where the official military spokesman, Major Amrong, appealed to foreign newsmen at his briefing to awaken world public opinion to Cambodia's pressing need for arms, ammunition and other equipment. Major Amrong declined to say how long the army could hold out with the ammunition it had.

High officials have been mak-

ing the same appeal for days in private talks with journalists. Key Cambodian officials consider the United States their principal hope.

Highly placed sources reported that there had been no reply yet from President Nixon to an urgent appeal from General Lon Nol for aid. This was in addition to a specific request for American arms and military supplies, which reached Washington last Wednesday through the United States Consulate in Pnompenh. [In Washington, officials said that the Nixon Administration had agreed to supply several thousand automatic rifles to the Cambodian Government.]

The Cambodian letter to President Nixon was handed to the United States chargé d'affaires, Lloyd M. Rives, yesterday by Foreign Minister Yem Sambauer. It was written Monday by the Premier after a week's wait during which, officials said, only Indonesia responded to his public appeal

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on April 14 for help. The sources said that Indonesia could supply a wide range of military equipment and that shipments might begin soon.

In another effort to enlist United States assistance, the chiefs of both houses of Parliament addressed an appeal to the American political personage best known here as a friend of Cambodia. He is the senate majority leader, Mike Mansfield; Democrat of Montana.

Mr. Mansfield enjoyed a special relationship with Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the deposed Chief of State, that outlasted even periods when American-Cambodian relations were extremely cool.

In their joint letter, made public today, the heads of the two chambers expressed regret at a statement by Mr. Mansfield against any United States action that might lead to the extension "of the tragedy of Indochina to the territory of Cambodia."

The Senate President, Ong Sim, and the acting President of the National Assembly, Ek Yi Oun, said that arms aid to Cambodia was necessary to the survival of this country.

No Interference Seen

While expressing admiration

for the Senator's opposition to "United States military intervention in South Vietnam," the legislators declared that arms aid to Cambodia by the United States could not be considered interference in internal affairs but as "assistance due to a country in danger."

They continued: "We can assure you moreover, that Cambodia would have preferred that the great international organizations assure her the peace and the security to which she is entitled. But, attacked and invaded, we have no other choice but to defend ourselves, with the material help of countries that affirm their devotion to liberty and justice or alone with our poor means, in a world indifferent to the destruction of a nation."

The letter ended with an appeal for Senator Mansfield's "understanding of the tragedy that we are living out."

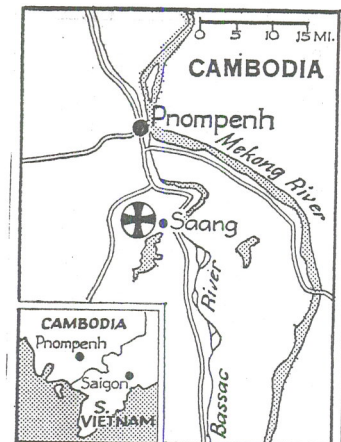
Meanwhile, military sources reported the fighting at Saang at a standstill, with no changes in position. Major Amrong reported that 50 Cambodian soldiers were killed at Saang yesterday, the highest loss since the Vietnamese invasion became generally known.

High military sources believe that the Vietnamese must be driven from this closest advance toward Pnompenh at all costs.

High diplomats consider Cambodia's position critical. They believe that the invaders are seeking to cut off Pnompenh without actually entering the capital to force the fall of the Government and the return of Prince Sihanouk.

Cambodian Commission Formed

PNOMPENH, April 22 (Agence France-Press)—The Cambodian



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Cambodians began military operation presumably aimed at retaking Saang (cross).

Government announced today the formation of a "commission responsible for the safety of all foreigners" following foreign press reports of massacres of

Vietnamese civilians in this country.

The announcement said that the commission had been established to counteract the "lying propaganda" of the foreign press, which has accused the Government of unjustified repression of the Vietnamese.

Military sources said, meanwhile, that the Government had been forced to "regroup" numerous Vietnamese in special centers because the Vietcong had armed the Vietnamese in some areas and had used them to fight Cambodian troops.

2 Americans Said to Arrive

SAIGON, South Vietnam, April 22 (AP) — Informed sources said today that two Americans believed to have been from the Central Intelligence Agency flew into the Cambodian provincial capital of Svay Rieng last week apparently to coordinate military operations against Communist forces.

The sources said that when

the helicopters landed, the two Americans were met by Cambodian officials carrying maps and that the Cambodians pointed out the North Vietnamese and Vietcong positions in Svay Rieng Province.

Shortly after the reported meeting, South Vietnamese fighter-bombers began attacking positions suspected to be North Vietnamese base camps and troop positions along a 30-mile stretch of both sides of the border.

Sihanouk Again Urges Revolt

PEKING, April 2 (Agence France-Presse)—Prince Sihanouk called on Cambodians again today to take up arms to overthrow the new regime in Phnompenh.