

Saigon and Pnompenh Set De Facto Military Alliance

By HENRY KAMM

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PNOMPENH, Cambodia, May 14 — Responsible Cambodian and South Vietnamese sources say privately here that South Vietnamese troops will fight in Cambodia until the defeat of their common enemy — the Vietcong and North Vietnamese.

A de facto alliance has quietly taken shape in which the South Vietnamese forces, with solid American air and logistical support, have extended their operations into Cambodia with the consent of the Government in Pnompenh but with only minimal coordination.

The lack of coordination, in the light of available evidence, does not result from highhandedness on the part of South Vietnam but from an apparent unwillingness on the part of Cambodia to share in the direction of military operations to which, because of her drastically limited forces, she cannot significantly contribute.

To observers familiar with the armed forces of South Vietnam, frequently criticized as unwilling and inefficient in action compared with the American troops fighting at their side, Saigon's army looks like a crack combat force compared with the Cambodian Army. The South Vietnamese are equipped beyond the present hopes of the Cambodians and seem to them a model of military organization.

Acting With 'Full Consent'

South Vietnamese sources say they have not in any way imposed their military presence on this country and are acting with the full consent of the Cambodian Government. There are no indications to the contrary.

The sources say that the South Vietnamese are obliged to take many independent decisions and to act on their own.

They found, for instance, in their combined military naval operation up the Mekong River to clear the banks of Vietcong forces and evacuate members of the menaced Vietnamese minority to South Vietnam, that Cambodian intelligence had misled them with exaggerated estimates of enemy strength. As a result, highly placed sources said, they employed far more troops than were needed.

Meanwhile, South Vietnam is contributing to raise the military efficiency of Cambodia. Planes from Saigon continue to arrive at night at Pnomphenh

Airport, carrying military materiel and more former mercenaries of the Americans. The mercenaries belong to the Cambodian ethnic minority in South Vietnam.

Thousands of Mercenaries

Cambodian sources say the mercenaries number "several thousand," and refuse to put their number more precisely, but they are clearly a strong force in this country. Although they have been nominally incorporated into the Cambodian Army, they are organized into their own units and have a separate general staff. Its chief is Maj. Lon Non, brother of Premier Lon Nol.

Although President Nixon has indicated that he will withdraw American advisers and air cover from the South Vietnamese forces in Cambodia when American troops are pulled out by June 30, this does not appear to deter Saigon from staying on.

A Town Is Occupied

By TAKASHI OKA

Special to The New York Times

BANAM, Cambodia, May 14 — South Vietnamese marines peacefully occupied this prosperous market town on the Mekong River yesterday afternoon in an operation mainly designed to restore the Cambodian Government's presence here.

The occupation illustrated the changing nature of the war in Cambodia. The search for enemy sanctuaries and caches of food and arms along the Vietnamese border continues. But the Saigon Government and its troops have taken on the additional task of helping the Cambodian Premier, Lon Nol, to re-establish government authority in a key region east of the Mekong River.

Banam is three and a half miles up the Mekong north of Neak Luong, which was the farthest north that South Vietnamese troops on the Mekong had penetrated before the advance to Banam.

The South Vietnamese now control all of Route 1, the Saigon-Pnompenh road, from the Parrot's Beak border with South Vietnam to the Neak Luong ferry. Banam is north of Route 1.

The South Vietnamese say that by tomorrow or the day after they will have repaired or replaced the bridges blown up by the Vietcong.