



U.S. Boosting Embassy Strength In Cambodia

WASHINGTON — A few key Americans will remain in Cambodia, keeping as inconspicuous as possible, after

President Nixon's July 1 deadline for a U.S. pullout. Here's what is happening behind the scenes:

1. The U.S. embassy in Phnom Penh, the Cambodian capital, is expanding into more spacious quarters on Mao Tse-tung Boulevard. Since the embassy was reopened last August, the staff slowly has built up from three to 25 people. A secret radio-teletype system has been installed, and three teletype operators are kept busy beeping coded messages into Manila for transmittal to Washington.

2. My assistant Les Whitten writes from Phnom Penh that the Central Intelligence Agency has now established "a shadowy presence" in Cambodia. President Nixon has assured skeptical congressional leaders at secret briefings that the CIA had absolutely nothing to do with the overthrow of Prince Sihanouk and that no CIA agents were operating inside Cambodia at that time. But now the CIA has pushed its nose under the tent.

3. An officer high in the U.S. chain of command acknowledged to Whitten that American advisers will move "in and out" of the South Vietnamese divisions that stay in Cambodia—"unless we're specifically countermanded." The officer felt, clearly, that none of the existing orders would prohibit American advisers from slipping back into Cambodia any time they might be needed by the South Vietnamese.

The need for better communications between Phnom Penh and Washington had become critical before the war spread into Cambodia. Lloyd Rives, the American Charge d'Affaires, had been sending his messages over a makeshift Cambodian land line and radio circuit.

Communications Breakdown

Storms broke it down twice, once for six hours and again for 18 hours, and the bony Rives was out in the winds trying to jiggle the wires into working with a stick. During the crucial period of Sihanouk's ouster, the communication broke down again.

Rives asked British Ambassador Harold A. N. Brown, a stuffy, silver-haired diplomat of the old school, to transmit a message to London for forwarding to Washington. The American wanted to let the State Department know at least that he was on the job.

The distinguished Britisher, who had courted Sihanouk and was grumpy over his fall, rewrote the American message and incorporated it into the British report. The breach of grace was more serious than the diplomatic damage. The sense of the U.S. message was preserved, but the style was highly "Englishized."

The exasperated Rives appealed for his own communications equipment, and shortly, a gigantic American C-130 hunkered

down at Phnom Penh's airport and disgorged two heavy-duty generators.

Intelligence Hodgepodge

The intelligence that goes out over the new radio-teletype system is a mixed bag of miscellany: political interpretations from Rives and his advisers, military information from the Air Force colonel attached to the delegation, the latest rumors circulating in diplomatic circles, and reports from correspondents who stop off in Phnom Penh and spill their stories over whisky provided by the U.S. press officer, James Carrigan.

All reports, secret intelligence and barroom gossip alike, are sent out in code.

The available intelligence is somewhat limited, since the Cambodian Foreign Ministry has restricted all diplomatic personnel to Phnom Penh. The Ministry sent a confidential memo around to the heads of all missions, barring diplomats from leaving the capital, after two young embassy aides from Burma and the Philippines went to the battle zones near Takeo. Their car stalled, and they got it started barely in time to escape a brisk firefight.

U.S. Army and Navy attaches are expected momentarily in Phnom Penh to assist in collecting military information. What they pick up around town, however, isn't likely to be too reliable.

The Cambodians have demonstrated a whimsical tendency to romanticize the achievements of their willing but unready Army and to exaggerate the Communist menace. One Viet Cong, who might be spotted in an area, is likely to be multiplied by 100 or even 1,000 by the time the report reaches Phnom Penh.

Demonstration Control

The White House is quietly studying ways to keep future demonstrations under control. Aides are investigating how countries that have had more experience with violent demonstrations, such as France and Japan, handle riot control.

The French, for example, use water hoses which have been remarkably effective in dampening down the demonstrators without causing serious injury.

Another proposal is to send mobile violence control units to demonstrations to calm the demonstrators and prevent violence. The units would be manned by psychologists trained in crowd control. Presidential aides also are discussing a move taken by Communist China whose Red Guards set the style for youthful rampages. Mao Tse-tung has ruled that the Red Guards must now pay the government for all the damage they cause during the cultural revolution.

In some cases, they are being pressed into work battalions which are cleaning up the mess. In other cases, they simply have been presented with bills for the damage and threatened with imprisonment if they don't pay up. Some White House aides think this might be a good method to adopt in the United States.