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The Communist Plans for Cambodia

**Jack Anderson**

AS THE DEADLINE approaches for the U.S. withdrawal from Cambodia, an ominous question mark hangs heavily over that unhappy land.

The American lunge across the border has driven the North Vietnamese inland where they now hold a dagger at Lon Nol's throat. If President Nixon considered it essential to destroy the Communist sanctuaries along the borders, the strategists ask, could he sit by while the communists took over all of Cambodia?

The strategists don't believe that the South Vietnamese, for all their new brava-do, could prevent a communist conquest of Cambodia. The inside reason the U.S. didn't let the South Vietnamese clean out the sanctuaries alone, in the first place, is that the South Vietnamese army couldn't spare enough battleworthy troops to do the job.

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THERE IS secret intelligence that the North Vietnamese had intended to install a communist regime in Phnom Penh before the American intervention. The deposed Prince Sihanouk had been reduced to puppet status, and his "liberation" movement was firmly in communist hands. He was merely being used as a front for the takeover. Even his statements were written for him by his communist backers.

Militiamen carrying Sihanouk's banner began to emerge from the rain forests. But they needed Cambodian interpreters to communicate with the curious Cambo-

dians who came to greet them. For the soldiers were Viet Cong in Sihanouk's uniforms.

The U.S. intervention, apparently, interrupted the timetable for the takeover. But the Americans also pushed the communists deeper into Cambodia, where they will be in a better position to resume their mischief after the U.S. departure. The destruction of their sanctuaries, of course, may deprive them temporarily of the weapons they need for a major offensive.

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MY ASSOCIATE Les Whitten, writing from Phnom Penh, reports that the delightful, quixotic Cambodian people are determined to defend their country, but they are pathetically unprepared for war.

"At the foot of the 15th-century shrine is a green wall with a pagoda-like soft drink stand and benches. There the mothers bring their babies. In hot weather the children play naked on the mall.

"On the other side of the shrine, men and girls, no more than a day in uniform, are learning to drill there. The girls laugh with shrill good humor when they make a mistake.

"Away from the mall, the graceful old trees planted by the French when they made Cambodia a protectorate 106 years ago bears posters in French and squiggly Cambodian. One says:

"Americans! drive the Viet Cong from our borders. Thank you!"

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