

## Return 'If'

# Lon Nol Sorry To See U.S. Go

### Phnom Penh

Premier Lon Nol expressed hope yesterday that United States troops would return to Cambodia "if the situation deteriorates."

He said he already had indications Cambodia could count on U.S. air support in the fight against the Communist invaders.

Lon Nol met with correspondents in his first news conference since taking office three months ago as the last of the 31,000 American troops withdrew across the border to South Vietnam. The withdrawal was completed one day before the June 30 deadline set by President Nixon.

### HOPED

The Cambodian premier estimated there are between 60,000 to 65,000 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops in Cambodia and added he had hoped the American forces would remain.

He said Cambodia now has 70 battalions trained and ready to fight but lacks weapons. He said 30 battalions are in the field but they are not what he would call "fully armed."

Informed military sources reported the arrival at Phnom Penh during the day of eight U.S. C-130 and three South Vietnamese C-119 cargo planes loaded with arms and ammunition for the Cambodian forces.

### JOBS

Lol Nol said Cambodia is "not yet" offering jobs to white mercenaries, reported to have been seen about Phnom Penh, but he thanked "our friends for their offerings."

"We do not need their services at the present time," he said.

Lon Nol said he has received several personal letters from President Nixon but said none explained the political reasons for the withdrawal of the U.S. forces.

Later, he said he had received indications from Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird that Cambodia could rely on continued U.S. air support.

### SUPPORT

Asked if he expected close air support for ground troops or interdiction raids by B-52 bombers, he smiled and said, "Both, I'd hope."

Meanwhile, Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops renewed their assault on the Cambodian munitions depot at Long Vek, 23 miles north of Phnom Penh and shelled Cambodian troop positions in the Siem Reap-Angkor area in the northwest.

The fighting at Long Vek was a continuation of an attack launched five days ago. Cambodian officials say the North Vietnamese hope to capture the weapons in the munitions depot and use them in an assault on Phnom Penh. Informants reported, however, that many of the depot's supplies were removed before the fighting began.

More than 1000 South Vietnamese marines and infantrymen were reported to have moved to within ten miles east and north of the Cambodian capital, but there were no reports on whether they had been committed to the battle at Long Vek.

Cambodian officials said the enemy bombarded troop positions around Siem Reap and Angkor with mortars and called it only a harassing action.