

# AGNEW SEES GAIN IN CAMBODIA WAR

Ending Asian Trip, He Says  
Over Half of Foe's Forces  
'Have Been Eliminated'

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HONOLULU, Aug. 30—Vice President Agnew, heading home today from a tour of five Asian nations, said that more than half the Communist combat forces in Cambodia "have been eliminated."

"By the South Vietnamese estimates and our estimates and also by Cambodian estimates—and they should certainly be in a position to know—somewhere in excess of 50 per cent of all the Vietcong and North Vietnamese forces in Cambodia have been eliminated," the Vice President said aboard Air Force 2 as it flew here this morning from Thailand. "There has been some resupply, but the numbers are down."

Mr. Agnew's report of the number of enemy casualties in Cambodia since Premier Lon Nol ousted Prince Norodom Sihanouk as chief of state in mid-March surpassed the official figures issued yesterday in Phnompenh and Saigon. Military spokesmen in the two capitals said that 26,800 of the estimated 70,000 enemy troops in Cambodia had been killed.

The Vice President's plane landed at Hickam Air Force Base here at daybreak. He was

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to spend two days in Hawaii before leaving for San Clemente Calif., where he is to report to President Nixon.

Two days after meeting with leaders of the Cambodian Government, the Vice President appeared optimistic about its prospects for survival and prepared to give President Nixon a hopeful assessment of the situation in Southeast Asia generally.

Mr. Agnew said that there was "no need at the present time" to consider using United States troops in combat operations across the Cambodian border from South Vietnam.

From his analysis of consultations in Cambodia, Thailand, South Vietnam, Nationalist China and South Korea, it was apparent that the vice president would tell Mr. Nixon that his Asian doctrine was a success and that he would carry that theme into the Congressional campaign this fall.

The Vice President, when he began his journey on Aug. 22 expressed grave doubts about the ability of the United States to withdraw its troops from Vietnam if Cambodia fell to the Communists, continued today to temper his concern.

He said he had meant that future withdrawal timetables "might not be as ambitious" as the Nixon Administration would like if the South Vietnamese were to face a consolidated enemy force along the 600-mile Cambodian border.

### More Stabilized

Mr. Agnew said that the over-all situation "is quite a bit more stabilized" than it was when he first visited Asia last January.

In South Vietnam, the enemy does not have the ability to mount a major offensive, he said he had learned from briefings by Gen. Creighton W. Abrams, Commander of United States Forces there.

The Vice President said he had found the Asian allies prepared to embrace the Nixon doctrine's philosophy of replacing direct American combat assistance with military and economic support so that they can defend themselves.

In Thailand, he said, he did not discuss with the Government of Premier Thanom Kittikachorn whether Thai troops would be sent to Cambodia's aid because the United States had no desire to become "grand master of the war design in Cambodia."

Even in South Korea, where President Chung Hee Park objected strenuously to the proposed 20,000 man reduction in the authorized strength of 64,000 United States troops there, the Vice President contended, misgivings about the Administration's intentions will fade. He said that the South Koreans had not had sufficient opportunity yet to adjust to the proposal, and he noted that "we also have to remember that President Park is facing an election" next spring.

### Expresses a Campaign Theme

Mr. Agnew is preparing to carry the White House colors in the campaign to elect a Republican Senate majority in November. Although he denied last week that there was any connection between his Asian journey and his role as campaign spokesman, the Vice President appeared today to be willing to use his diplomatic credentials in the campaign.

"One of the basic issues of the campaign," he said, "will be who is to make the foreign policy of the U. S. and whether the Congress has made unrealistic limitations—attempted to make unrealistic limitations—on the President's ability to conduct foreign policy."

Yesterday, in Bangkok, Thailand's Foreign Minister, Thanat Khoman, said the Thais believed there were "certain elements" in the United States "that would like nothing better than to push Southeast Asia into Communist hands." He left no doubt that he referred to critics of the Nixon Administration in the Senate.

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