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AIDE SAYS LON NOL MUST BE PREMIER

Asserts Cambodian Crisis
Requires Him to Serve

By HENRY KAMM

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PNOMPENH, Cambodia, April 26—Lon Nol was described by one of his official counselors today as a man too ill either to make important decisions or to be informed of bad news. Nonetheless, the counselor said, the situation in Cambodia is such that the general must again head the Government.

The counselor, Son Ngoc Thanh, who was Premier in 1945, said in an interview at the Palais du Gouvernement, the residence of the former French rulers, that the general had agreed Saturday to become Premier once more but had not yet officially communicated his decision.

When he does, perhaps tomorrow, according to Mr. Thanh, a government will be formed in which three or four Vice Premiers will each be in charge of several ministries and make for these ministries the decisions that a Premier would make.

Mr. Thanh said that Brig Gen. Kang Keng, Health Minister and General Lon Nol's physician and confidant, had reported to him on the findings of a group of Cambodian and American physicians on the Premier's health.

Role for Vice Premiers

The physician said that the general, in his present condition, must not be asked to make decisions. Rather, he said, the vice premiers must make the decisions for him and inform only afterward.

The Premier's physician said, according to Mr. Thanh, that the general could work no more than one hour a day. Bad news, he said, might provoke another crisis in the general's health.

Mr. Thanh said that the general's doctor also foresaw the possibility that he might have to return to Hawaii for further treatment. General Lon Nol was taken there last February after suffering a stroke that has left his left side largely paralyzed. He suffers also from diabetes and chronic high blood pressure. He returned from Hawaii this month and resigned last Tuesday.

Mr. Thanh said that since his arrival last Thursday from Saigon, where he resides, he had not been allowed to see General Lon Nol. The general's doctors said that they feared their patient might use the courtesy visit to raise political questions and that might be too much of a strain for him. Mr. Thanh said he believed that General Lon Nol would prefer to turn over his tasks to another but that in Cambodia's critical situation he had been persuaded that at least his physical participation in the Government was a necessity.

A Possible Successor

The general's most likely successor would be Lieut. Gen. Sisowath Sirik Matak, the Deputy Premier. But General Sirik Matak, on whom Premier Lon Nol has relied since the overthrow of Prince Norodom Sihanouk as Head of State last year to manage everything but the conduct of the war, is a controversial figure in political circles.

For that reason, many Cambodians as well as American officials, feel that the most practical solution would be a Cabinet in which General Sirik Matak would serve as chief executive while General Lon Nol continued to lend to it his name and prestige.

An important group strongly interested in the continuation of Premier Lon Nol in office is a circle of colonels, lieutenant colonels and majors around Lieut. Col. Lon Nol, the Premier's younger brother. Their positions could be expected to diminish if their leader were no longer the Premier's brother.

In an interview tonight, Colonel Lon Nol expressed dismay over reports circulating that he opposed General Sirik Matak for an important position in the next government. He declared that he not only favored such a role but also deemed it necessary.