

Government of Lon Nol Denies Any Intent to Rule

By HENRY KAMM

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PNOMPENH, Cambodia, Oct. 21 — The Government of Premier Lon Nol, in an exceptional formal statement, denied tonight that it intended to rule by dictatorship and was abandoning democracy.

"The measures recently decided upon by the Government of Khmer Republic cannot in any circumstance be taken to mean that our democratic ideal will be forgotten nor that a new dictatorship could ever be installed in our country," the Government declared in a statement issued by Information Minister Long Boret.

Diplomatic observers said that the measures announced yesterday did provide for executive rule without parliamentary checks, but a number of observers felt that Marshal Lon Nol had shown no tendency to do so. Also yesterday, Marshal Lon Nol in a nationwide broadcast declared a state of emergency, announced he would rule by decree and declared he would no longer "play the game of democracy and freedom" in wartime.

He appealed for unity but also cautioned against dissent.

"Recently certain groups have launched acts aimed at creating confusion," he said. "There is a fifth column at work."

He continued: "Should we vainly play the game of democracy and freedom that will lead us to complete defeat or should we curtail anarchic freedom in order to achieve victory? The Government has made its decision. We have selected the way that will bring us to victory."

ward dictatorial ambitions. To underline the formal nature of its statement today, the copies distributed in French to foreign correspondents described Mr. Long Boret as "Spokesman for the Government."

Powers Given to Cabinet

The statement was provoked by the interpretation in the foreign press of the Government's action in designating the Cambodian Parliament, whose term expired Saturday, as a Constituent Assembly. The Government announced yesterday that Cheng Sheng, the chief of state, had conferred the functions exercised by Parliament on Marshal Lon Nol's Government.

The difficulty for Marshal

Lon Nol and his principal associate, Premier Delegate Sisowath Sirik Matak, was described as follows by a well-informed diplomat of a non-involved country:

The National Assembly, which played the principal role in the overthrow on March 18, 1970, of Prince Norodom Sihanouk as Chief of State has not been allowed to play a significant role since then. This is believed to be due at least as much to the strains imposed upon Cambodia by the war as to any other reason.

Lon Nol Believed Sincere

Cambodia has not passed through a Democratic stage in her progress from absolute monarchy to foreign colony followed by Prince Sihanouk's one-man rule. Thus, while proclaiming with apparent sincerity a will to install democracy, Marshal Lon Nol's Government has not found the way, while under heavy Vietnamese military pressure, to bring this about.

The dissatisfaction of leading figures in the assembly at their inability to participate significantly in the Government has led a number of members to be bitterly critical of the mili-

tary and express their views openly, which angered the military.

Marshal Lon Nol, in this analysis, was forced to choose between the two sides when faced with a situation not covered by the Constitution: to decree the continuation of Parliament or to dissolve it when its mandate ran out.

By turning it into the body that is to draft a new constitution, it is thought, he hoped to have found a happy way out.

Mr. Long Boset's statement today said:

"There has never been any question for Marshal Lon Nol and his Government to abandon the great principles of democracy in order to establish in their place a dictatorship under any form whatever."

Cautious observers said that whether Cambodia had been turned into a dictatorship

Cambodia by a Dictatorship

would have to be judged by the uses to which the Premier put his new powers.

U. S. to Continue Support

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 21—The State Department said today that Premier Lon Nol's decision to dissolve the Cambodian National Assembly and rule by decree would have no effect on United States support for Cambodia.

The spokesman, Charles W. Bray 3d, also took issue with press reports from Phnompenh yesterday characterizing the new Government as a "military dictatorship."

Mr. Bray also said the emergency powers invoked by the Government were originally authorized by the National Assembly in the spring of 1970, after the overthrow of Prince Norodom Sihanouk.

He said the United States would continue to support the Cambodian people "in their effort to defend themselves."

Cambodia Floats Currency

PNOM PENH, Oct. 21 (UPI)—Premier Lon Nol's Government announced today it would allow the Cambodian riel float and find its own value. Diplomats said this amounted to devaluation of the currency.

The action came in a series of decrees for economic stabilization that included new credit restrictions and import taxes designed to curb inflation.

The riel was officially 55.4 to the dollar and the black market rate is about 165 to the dollar. Diplomatic sources said they expected the riel to level off at about 140 to 150, giving the country a more realistic currency attractive to exporters and buyers.