

UNDO
REBEL LEADERSHIP

PUZZLES CAMBODIA

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**U. S. Aides Cite Uncertainty
With Whom Phnom Penh
Regime Could Negotiate**

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 28 —

With a growing sense of futility, the United States continues to urge a negotiated end to the Cambodian war, but State Department officials said today that they were not even certain with whom the Phnom Penh Government of President Lon Nol could negotiate.

One experienced official said: "It is not clear to me that if Lon Nol decided to surrender, he would know where to send the surrender offer."

The problem, in fact, has changed little in the nearly five years of the civil war in Cambodia. Ever since Prince Norodom Sihanouk was deposed in a coup in March, 1970, while he was on a visit to Moscow.

Since then, Prince Sihanouk has maintained headquarters in Peking as the titular head of the insurgent movement, known as the royal Cambodian government of national unity.

From there he has sent regu-

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lar cablegrams to former President Nixon and President Ford and given interviews to newsmen. His theme has been consistent—as seen in his latest cablegrams to Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield and an open message to Mr. Ford sent to the Long Island Newspaper Newsday.

Prince Sihanouk has unswervingly refused to negotiate with the Phnom Penh Government and has offered "reconciliation" with the United States if it will drop all support for the Lon Nol regime. In his message to Mr. Ford, Prince Sihanouk said:

"We propose to the U.S.A. a rapid reconciliation to re-establish peace and friendship between us. To achieve this noble objective, we propose no condi-

tions. We demand of you only that you put an end to all your interference in the affairs of Cambodia and leave it to the Cambodians to conduct these affairs."

American officials say that the failure to achieve even the start of negotiations has been largely a result of a lack of a visible and clear-cut insurgent leadership. They say that Prince Sihanouk himself has acknowledged in Peking that he is not the actual leader of the insurgency, which he says is led by the "Khmer Rouge," or Cambodian Communists.

In an interview with Agence France-Presse yesterday Prince Sihanouk said that if Cambodia was liberated by the insurgents, he would accept only a post as a roving ambassador or representative outside the country.

"I don't want to be mixed up with internal questions ever again," he said. "They have already cost me much too dearly."

Recalling that the Lon Nol Government had sentenced him in absentia to death as a traitor, he said that he had ideological differences with the Cambodian Communists.

"To be sure, after the victory, I would become once again a patriot and a herot in the eyes of the Khmer Rouges," the Prince said. "Very well. I prefer to stop there and end my career rather than risk, one fine day, to have the Khmer Rouges put me on trial and make me a traitor once again."

The Cambodian insurgent government inside Cambodia is officially headed by Penn Nouth, the premier, but he too lives in Peking.