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Phnom Penh Surrounded

--Rice Airlift Goes On

Phnom Penh

Communist led insurgents have attacked Cambodian government forces from south of Phnom Penh for the first time since their present offensive opened more than two month ago, the high command reported today.

The battle two miles south of the beleaguered city means the capital is now under attack from all four directions.

Previous insurgent attacks had been launched from across the Mekong river to the east, from the Pochentong airport area on the west, and from positions north of the capital.

The high command gave no figures of casualties in last night's battle, but observers said the operations in the new area would put an added strain on the already weakened government forces.

Yesterday, the insurgents fired more than 30 rockets into Phnom Penh's airport as American pilots continued to land cargo jets loaded with rice, fuel and ammunition for the isolated Cambodian capital.

Most of the Chinese-made 107mm rockets fell along the runway at the airfield but did not interrupt the U.S.-financed airlift. Initial reports indicated light casualties and no damage.

In Phnom Penh itself, the insurgents fired at least nine rockets into the downtown area, wounding seven persons.

Police said rebels also scattered leaflets into the city calling for an uprising against President Lon Nol and urging residents to flee

and join the Khmer Rouge. Otherwise, they said, people should move out of areas "into which we will fire hundreds of more rounds."

Travelers from northwest Cambodia said more than 1000 Cambodian students attacked Chinese-owned shops in Battambang with clubs for the second time in less than two weeks. No injuries were reported. Cambodians accuse the Chinese residents of hoarding rice.

The airfield has been Phnom Penh's only source of supply since ambushes and mines closed the Mekong River to convoys last January 30. American sources say the government has temporarily abandoned plans to reopen the river because of lack of available troops.

Diplomatic sources said the airlift moved in a record amount of supplies on Monday after a fourth DC-8 cargo jet joined in hauling rice. Yesterday the airlift was expanded to include fuel for

the civilian population — hauling 25 tons of rice. — about 120 tons a day — on two specially equipped U.S. Air Force C-130 cargo planes flown by civilian pilots.

The C-130 cargo planes, the sources said, flew in 31 loads of 25 tons each of ammunition and fuel Monday, while the DC-8s made 15 flights, with each aircraft

Western voluntary agency officials expressed satisfaction with a U.S. government decision announced earlier yesterday allocating 20,000 tons of rice for refugees and "other needy persons" in the coming weeks.

Associated Press