

Thais to block Cambodia airlift

Examiner News Services

PHNOM PENH.— Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj of Thailand said yesterday in Bangkok that the United States will be asked to end its airlift of arms, which has been averaging more than 600 tons a day, from Thailand to Cambodia.

He said the airlift of food and fuel would be allowed to continue.

"We agreed in the national security council meeting Friday that the airlift from Utapao to Cambodia will carry only food and other humanitarian supplies," Kukrit said.

"We agreed that the foreign ministry will do whatever is required to reach this goal because our policy is not to interfere with any other country's internal affairs."

The airlift to Phnom Penh was suspended again yesterday after insurgent rockets

damaged two American cargo planes. Northeast of the airfield Communist-led rebels overran a government position and field reports said 20 Cambodian soldiers were dead or missing.

U.S. sources said more than a half dozen rebel rock-

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ets slammed into the Pochentong Airport unloading area within five minutes in the early morning, damaging two planes.

No Americans were injured, but at least 17 Cambodians were wounded, airport sources said.

On Friday, five Cambodian rice handlers were reported killed and 18 wounded in the same area.

An American source said the damaged cargo planes could not be repaired until insurgents were pushed out of rocket range.

American officials said it was not yet known whether the airlift could be resumed today.

U.S. officials had tried to reopen the airlift about three hours after the planes were hit, but another rocket

landed in the unloading area.

The U.S. embassy in Bangkok refused to comment on Kukrit's remarks on the airlift. The sources said that the Thai government has not yet approached the Embassy on the subject.

In ground fighting in the northwest sector of Cambodia, 155 miles from Phnom Penh, the military situation around the rice-growing center of Battambang deteriorated further. Three positions within 10 miles of the town were reported lost to Communist-led insurgents yesterday.

At the Mekong River enclave of Neak Luong, 30 miles southeast of Phnom Penh, insurgents continued shelling attacks and ground probes although pressure lessened somewhat during the day.