

# Lon Nol 'All Packed'

**Cambodia  
Situation  
Worsens**

## to Go

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New York Times

### Phnom Penh

President Lon Nol, whose removal has been urged both here and in Washington as a step toward ending the war, has packed his belongings and obtained passports for himself and his family, reliable sources at the presidential palace reported Saturday.

The sources said Marshal Lon Nol had told his aides that his departure "will depend on the situation."

Despite the deteriorating military situation and the possibility of an arms cutoff from the United States, he has apparently made no final decision, though he has evidently prepared for any eventuality.

The Americans have tried unsuccessfully in the past to ease Lon Nol aside, and it has been assumed that he will not leave voluntarily. The questions being asked now are who will give Lon Nol the necessary push and whether it will be too late to make any difference.

Most observers, including the Americans, regard the Phnom Penh government's position as virtually hopeless and believe that the best possible result that can be arranged is to negotiate an orderly and humane surrender to the Communist-led insurgents.

Lon Nol, who took power five years ago as a result of the overthrow of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, is regarded as an obstacle to contacts with the insurgents.

The insurgents, who are nominally led by Sihanouk from his exile headquarters in Peking, have branded the marshal and six other Phnom Penh leaders as traitors and marked them for execution.

The 61-year-old marshal has been partly paralyzed on his left side since suffering a stroke in 1971, a year after he took power.

It is virtually impossible to find anyone in Phnom Penh these days who supports the marshal personally, or his government.

The popular enthusiasm witnessed in the early months of his rule has turned into sour opposition after five years of corrup-

tion, soaring prices, a military draft that took only the poor, and a casualty toll that has killed or wounded perhaps one million of Cambodia's seven million people.

Since the start of the insurgents' offensive — which began New Year's Day and has eroded the government's fragile position — talk of getting rid of Lon Nol has increased in the capital. Some of it has been purely rumor, but there have also been serious discussions among high officials.

Diplomats, particularly from some of Cambodia's Southeast Asian neighbors, such as Thailand and Indonesia, have also met among themselves to discuss the question.

"Our idea is to get the marshal to step aside," a diplomat said Saturday, "but we cannot say this directly to the marshal. That must be up to the United States."

Virtually everyone is look-

ing to the American embassy either to do the job or at least to give the green light. The Americans, with a Congress threatening to end aid

to Cambodia, are trying to avoid playing any direct role.

Nevertheless, reliable diplomatic sources have indi-

cated that the embassy has passed the word that Washington would not be displeased at the marshal's departure.