

Lon Nol's

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Farewell

To Generals

Phnom Penh

President Lon Nol met with his top generals yesterday and told them "I am leaving . . . to pave the way for a peace settlement," palace sources said.

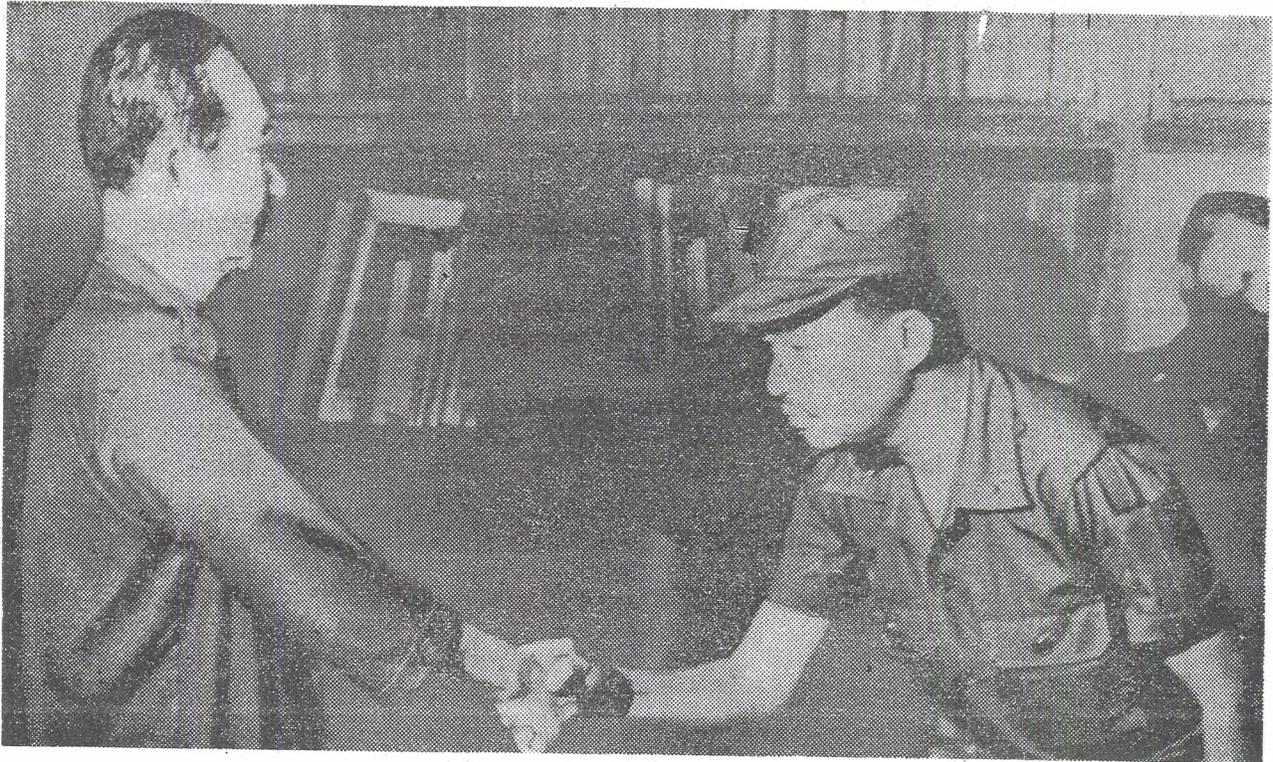
"The country now needs your leadership. I ask for your unity in solving the problems to the best of your abilities," he added.

Political sources predicted that Lon Nol's departure today would be followed by a sweeping government change, with the removal of most of the men associated with him and the inclusion of new men more acceptable to the Communist-led Khmer Rouge.

Meanwhile, insurgent forces unleashed a 40-rocket barrage at the airport and one of them touched off a small pile of napalm bombs, which sent thick black smoke into the air for 20 minutes. No injuries were reported and the U.S. airlift continued, field reports said.

Rebel forces also penetrated Phnom Penh's defense perimeter across the Sap River just 1½ miles from the city, and shelled the airport at the second largest city of Battambang, 180 miles northwest of Phnom Penh, for the first time in more than a year, the reports said.

The insurgents were reported on the move a mile from the Battambang airport and two miles from the heart of the city. Analysts said they do not think Battambang could hold out against an insurgent attack. Government strength is estimated at 1500 men while the



AP Wirephoto

Lon Nol shook hands with one of his generals yesterday as high-ranking officers and civilians said farewell

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insurgents have more than 5000 men in the region.

Lon Nol, partially paralyzed from a stroke in 1971, will fly to Indonesia today and then go on to Hawaii to seek medical treatment, reliable sources said. They said his departure is also aimed at getting the U.S. Congress to provide more military aid for Cambodia.

In addition to his

generals, Lon Nol met with U.S. Ambassador John Gunther Dean and the Cambodian cabinet yesterday and paid a short visit to his home in the southern part of Phnom Penh to say goodby to relatives, soldiers and servants.

Lon Nol is leaving after a month-long campaign to get him to step aside so a new government could be formed that would be more acceptable to the insurgents in the

event of negotiations. He has come under severe criticism for poor leadership and for failing to stamp out corruption.

More than 20 close officials, including Premier Long Boret, and Lon Nol's family will accompany the president. Lon Nol is the No. 1 man on the insurgents' death list.

Some of the men flying with him have also been marked for death, and if

both Lon Nol and Long Boret stay out of the country, only two of the insurgents' original list of "seven traitors" will be left — Republican party leader and former deputy premier Sirik Matak and former Premier In Tam.

The others have already fled and other rich people were flocking to the passport office to get exit visas to go abroad, reports said.

Associated Press