

# Americans Flee Cambodia

## As Reds Close in on Capital

### U.S. Pilot Killed In Crash

#### Phnom Penh

Rebel forces advanced over closer to this besieged capital yesterday in a series of assaults that claimed an American victim.

Most reports indicated that defeat for government forces is not far away; some said hours, others said it would be only days.

The American was a civilian pilot killed when his plane crashed during shelling at the airport, which the insurgents have been hitting at will for days. He was the first American killed in Cambodia in four days.

The pilot died after his DC-3 was hit by rocket fragment as he was taking off. The plane crashed and exploded on impact. The Taiwanese copilot and a Cambodian crew member were also killed in the crash. The names were withheld pending notification of next of kin.

(In Saigon, the Associated Press reported that the United States has suspended the



UPI Telephoto

A wounded civilian was moved by attendants after being hit during a shelling of Pochentong airport.

airlifting of rice and ammunition into the encircled capital.

(The AP quoted sources as saying the suspension occurred with the closing of the American embassy early today.)

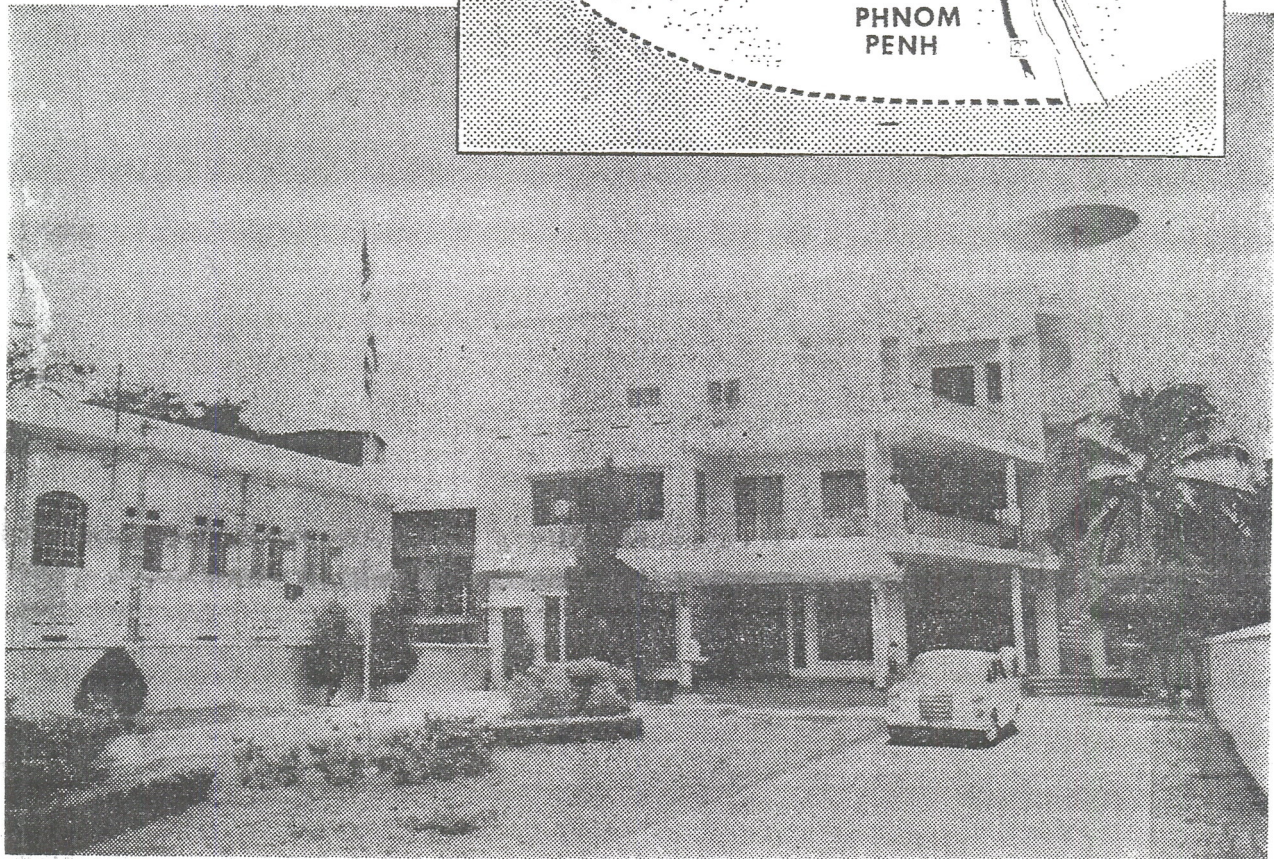
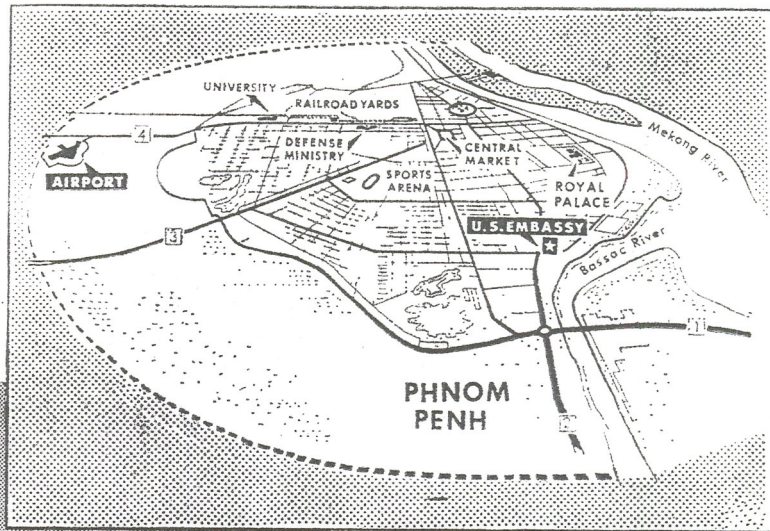
The American pilot, who was not part of the U.S. airlift, was flying for a private Cambodian company, which ferries supplies within the country.

In the ground war, the insurgents were reported within one, two and four miles of Pochentong airport and the downtown area. They were also firmly entrenched in the village of Khmoung, 1.8 miles north of Phnom Penh's outskirts.

Before American news correspondents left the capital this morning, they reported that the city was

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*AP Wirephoto*

**The U.S. Embassy (inset) in Phnom Penh was closed down and, because Pochentong airport was under rebel fire, the embassy staff and other Americans in Cambodia were lifted out by helicopters**

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# PILOT

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calm but that government artillery could be heard firing on the outer edges of Phnom Penh.

Meanwhile, more than 1500 government reinforcements were taking up counterattack positions on the capital's northwestern front, field reports said.

On Thursday, government forces were caught in a U-shaped ambush six miles northeast of Phnom Penh but freed themselves and called in government planes, that pounded more than 2000 rebels in the area, a U.S. military officer said.

In the bombardment, on a tight perimeter, an estimated 500 insurgents were killed, military sources said.

*A.P. & U.P.*