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Phnom Penh Surrender:
-Rebels Enter in
Triumph

White Flags

SFChronicle

Welcome

Insurgents

Phnom Penh

Phnom Penh surrendered to the Khmer Rouge insurgents today and welcomed the Communist-led rebels with white flags and banners on nearly every building in downtown Phnom Penh.

The surrender spelled the end to five years of fighting between the Communist-led Khmer Rouge forces and those of the government which had ousted Norodom Sihanouk in 1970.

Sad-faced Premier Long Boret was last seen being driven to the government palace. He refused to talk with newsmen.

Meanwhile, a Khmer Rouge speaker broke into what appeared to be a recorded address on the Cambodian government radio and said the insurgents had taken over the capital city at 7 a.m. local time (11 p.m. PDT).

"We did not come here to talk," the voice said just after the voice of Lieutenant General Sak Suthsakhon said:

"I myself and the committee of the armed forces will make a decision with the delegation from our brother side about a way to bring peace to our country."

Suthsakhon headed a committee that ruled Cambodia after President Lon Nol left April 1.

The Khmer Rouge speaker who interrupted the broadcast, which was monitored in Bangkok, Thailand, said, "The Lon Nol clique and

some of its officers should all be hanged."

He appealed to citizens and troops all over the country to lay down their arms and cooperate with the insurgents.

Earlier, Khmer Rouge leaders warned members of the government and other

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politicians in a broadcast to leave the country immediately for their own safety.

General Sirik Matak, one of the leaders of the coup that overthrew Sihanouk; Generals Hou Hang Sin and Kadul Kaden; and other leaders of the fallen government fled to the Hotel Le Phnom, which the International Red Cross declared a security zone for noncombatants yesterday.

Sporadic firing was heard

throughout the downtown area. It came from Khmer Rouge soldiers firing into the air in triumph as they walked in small groups, surrounded by cheering townspeople who stood on the sidewalks or followed them.

A jeepload of insurgent soldiers rode by waving a white flag.

Al Rockoff, an American freelance photographer, climbed on the hood of one jeep and rode about with the black-clad insurgents. Rockoff was one of five

American newsmen who remained behind when the U.S. Embassy staff and other Americans were evacuated Saturday.

People stood on the sidewalks waving to the incoming, black-clad insurgents.

On Mekong and Sap rivers along the east side of the city, government gunboats steamed up and down, hoisting white flags and banners at 8 a.m., according to newsmen.

Fourteen armored personnel carriers of the Second Infantry Division toured the streets with white flags. A jeep and a truck loaded with smiling soldiers followed one of the armored cars.

"The white flag means cease-fire," said an officer in the truck.

The officer told two Cambodian reporters for the Associated Press that the display of surrender flags had been ordered by the Cambodian military command.

The Cambodian military attache in Bangkok said army headquarters in Phnom Penh reported by radio that the government surrendered this morning. He said he was told Khieu Samphan, the deputy chief of Sihanouk's government in exile, had made a broadcast appealing for calm and advising all government leaders and politicians to leave the country immediately for their own safety.

Khmer Rouge soldiers entered the city in the north central sector and walked along the street leading from the Municipal stadium to the heart of the town.

The soldiers walked along in groups of three and four.

One group of unarmed insurgents in an armored personnel carrier shouted "bravo" as they drove along Monivong Boulevard. They stopped at the Le Phnom Hotel, embraced a group of Cambodian army soldiers there and took them aboard the armored car with them.

Yesterday, the Cambodian military government asked the insurgents for an immediate cease-fire and promised it would turn over power to the rebels.

However, Sihanouk, the nominal leader of the insurgents who is in exile in Peking, rejected the cease-fire proposal as unacceptable and the bloody fighting continued until the surrender today.

Sydney Schanberg of the

New York Times, the only American correspondent filing from Phnom Penh, had reported yesterday that this troubled city of two million had begun to show signs of collapse as the cease-fire bid failed.

Throughout the day, the communist-led insurgents pressed closer and closer on all sides, inflicting enormous casualties and sending scores of thousands of refugees pouring frightened into the city from the near outskirts. Exhausted soldiers who had had enough joined the refugees. Many of the refugees came into the very center of this cosmopolitan city with bullock carts and squealing pigs looking for a place to rest and a bit to eat.

In the hospitals there were wounded two and three to a bed, floors slippery with blood and children's shrieks of pain that tore any visitor's heart out, Schanberg reported.

Associated Press