

Reds Said to Tell Civilians In Phnom Penh to Leave

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Thousands of Cambodian civilians were reported yesterday to be leaving Phnom Penh under orders from the victorious Communists.

In the last news dispatch filed from the Cambodian capital before communications were cut off yesterday, Agence France-Presse reported that Communist patrols with loudspeakers had rolled through the streets the night before telling all residents to go more than 12 miles into the countryside.

The reason for the order was unclear. The dispatch from Phnom Penh quoted the soldiers as having said that the city might come under shelling, but they did not say from whom.

In Bangkok, Thailand, French officials, who reportedly had been in radio contact with Phnom Penh, where France has a consul, said that the Communists expected shelling by the Americans.

One diplomatic source there suggested that part of the reason for the evacuation order was a desire to thin out the city's population, which had swelled to two million, more than three times its normal size. By reducing the population, the source suggested, the Communists would be better able to cope with any possible pockets of resistance and to search for officials of the surrendered Government who had gone into hiding.

The evacuation orders, boom-

ing over the loudspeakers after nightfall, had reportedly touched off panic in some neighborhoods. But by yesterday afternoon, according to French officials in Bangkok, the city seemed much calmer. Phnom Penh, they said, seemed almost deserted.

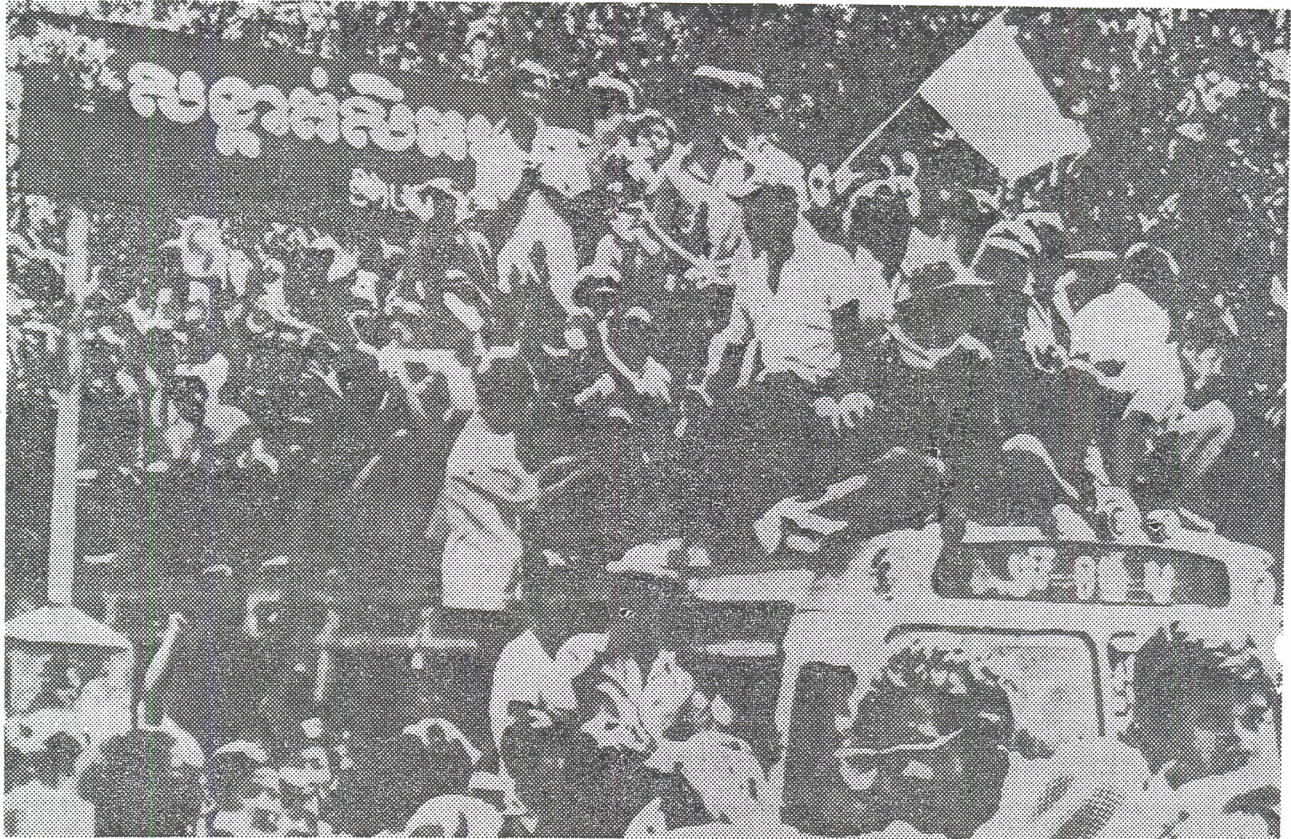
As the evacuation began, hundreds of Cambodians were said to have sought refuge in the French Embassy compound, which is surrounded by an iron fence. A number of foreign newsmen were also reported to be there.

Reports from Peking, where Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the nominal head of the victorious Cambodian forces, is still living, quoted Cambodian sources there as denying that there had been any evacuation or that one had been ordered. These reports were distributed by Tanyug, the Yugoslav press agency.

But Tass, the Soviet press agency, said that thousands of Cambodian peasants had left Phnom Penh after the former military Government had surrendered. It said they had gone back to the villages from which they had fled to the capital in the closing stages of the Cambodian war.

The evacuation was also reported in Paris by the French Foreign Minister, Jean Sauvagnargues, who told reporters

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Agence-France Presse/Pictorial Parade

People in Poipet, Cambodia, near the border with Thailand, meeting Communists while waving a white flag

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that his Government had been "informed that the residents are fleeing from Phnom Penh."

After the last Agence France-Press dispatch was transmitted from Phnom Penh, telecommunications with the city broke off.

The British Cable and Wireless Company, whose facilities in Hong Kong are the main relay station for such communications, said that it had been unable to restore Telex and telegraph service. Telephone service was also said to be out.

In the last several days there have been similar breakdowns in communications for extended periods.

In Geneva, the International Committee of the Red Cross, said it had been unable to make contact with its 16-member team in Phnom Penh since early Thursday. The team, headed by André Pasquier, had established a neutral zone at the Hotel Le Phom for treatment of the sick and the wounded.

First reports from the Cambodian capital after the Communist take-over said that Communist troops had not entered the hotel.

According to the last dispatch, however, the situation in the northern part of the city where the hotel is situated was confused. The French Embassy compound, the French Clamette Hospital and the French Des-

cartes Lycée are also in that area.

Agence France-Press reported that the Descartes school was said to have been occupied by the Communist soldiers after they expelled the caretakers.

At the hospital, where a team of seven French physicians and surgeons had remained on duty, the soldiers were said to have evacuated everyone, including the patients and several dozen foreigners who had taken refuge there.

There were reports also that the French Embassy was under heavy guard by Communist soldiers.

There were reports during the day that fighting continued in other areas of Cambodia in provincial capitals that had still not been taken by the Commu-

nists. But with communications cut, these reports could not be confirmed.

Nor was there any firm report on the whereabouts of Premier Long Boret, who was on the Communists' list of "traitors" who would be executed and who was last reported seen in Phnom Penh just before the formal surrender at 9 A.M. Thursday (10 P.M. Wednesday, New York time).

Many Cambodians, among them the acting chief of state in the ousted Government, Gen. Saksut Sahhan, managed to escape by air to neighboring Thailand. But in Bangkok officials denied reports that Mr. Long Boret had also arrived there. Other reports said the former Premier had been seized inside Cambodia by the Communists.