

# Thai Border Town Awaits Evacuees

NY Times MAY 1 1975

By DAVID A. ANDELMAN  
Special to The New York Times

ARANYAPRATHET, Thailand, April 30—The first of over 600 foreigners that the Cambodian Communists are releasing from Phnom Penh could cross the Thai-Cambodian border as early as dawn tomorrow, officials here said today.

The officials, representing international relief agencies and eight countries, have gathered in this border village to meet the foreigners, but their exact arrival time was not known since all communications with Phnom Penh have ceased.

Amid repeated rumors of imminent arrival, the black-clad border guards on the other side twice approached the rusting barbed-wire coils strung across the center of the rickety wooden bridge that marks the frontier, and diplomats and border officials on this side pressed forward.

Each time the Communist guards bantered genially with diplomats and correspondents who spoke their language but said repeatedly of the evacuees: "We have no word. We believe they are coming, but we do not know."

## Boy With a Rifle

A box of cigarettes was tossed over the barbed wire, and a border guard picked it up and smiled.

Next to him a small boy in the black pajama-like garments and red plaid scarf that are the Cambodian Communist trademark fingered a Soviet-made automatic rifle. He said he was 10 years old and certainly looked no older than 14.

In Bangkok French Embassy officials continued to maintain that they had no firm work on the number of refugees to be expected in the first wave or who might be among them.

Reports received by French officials here described repeated delays of the truck convoy and raised the possibility of a march to the border.

Meanwhile, three large air-conditioned tourist buses chartered in Bangkok by the French Embassy pulled up in front of the red-and-white crossing gate that marks the frontier zone. They are to wait for the evacuees.

## Red Cross Sends Team

Officials of the International Committee of the Red Cross sent a medical-surgical team to set up a special receiving station. French officials, who had been in contact with the embassy compound in Phnom Penh until Saturday, said conditions there were deteriorating and there were fears of dysentery.

With food apparently dwindling in the embassy, French military aircraft have been standing by in Vientiane, Laos, for nearly a week to carry supplies to the Cambodian capital. No permission was received.

There are reported to be 515 French citizens, many of them Cambodians holding French passports, and 95 others, in-

cluding five American journalists, who sought sanctuary in the embassy compound shortly after the Communists took over nearly three weeks ago. Some 600 Cambodians who had also entered the compound were ejected nearly a week ago on Communist orders, and their fate has not been determined.

Two days ago the Communists said they would allow those in the embassy to leave—the French Government maintains that the action is expulsion—and to cross the border in this village, which is nearly 200 miles east of Bangkok by road, after taking them by

truck 250 miles from Phnom Penh to the Cambodian town of Poipet, across from here.

The French Government had pleaded for evacuation by air on the basis that many at the embassy were too ill or weak to make the strenuous journey. The request was ignored.

The Communists said that the evacuees would be turned over only to duly accredited diplomatic representatives of their nationalities, so the United States, West Germany, India, Japan, France, Thailand, Belgium and the Soviet Union rushed diplomats to the Thai border.



Associated Press

**HIS GOVERNMENT FELL:** Tran Kim Phuong, who had been South Vietnamese Ambassador to the U.S., in Washington yesterday. He said he did not want to blame anyone for the loss of his country.