

NYTimes
Cambodian Holdouts Reported Besieged

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BANGKOK, Thailand, May 22 (UPI)—A Thai police official said today that Communist forces had opened an assault to dislodge a handful of holdout soldiers of the former Cambodian Army from an ancient Buddhist shrine on a cliff near the Thai-Cambodian border.

Maj. Gen. Suraphol Chullabrahm, commander of the Thai border patrol police, said that heavy fighting was under way at Preah Vihear temple, 300 miles northeast of Bangkok.

More than 100 Communist soldiers, he said, were attempting to drive out some 30 Cambodian loyalist troops holed up in the sandstone shrine atop the nearly impassable 1,000-foot cliffs.

General Suraphol said reports indicated that the situation was critical for the holdouts, who have beaten back a number of smaller assaults since the fall of Phnom Penh on April 17.

Ownership Contested

The temple is nearly impossible to reach from the Cambodian side and the soldiers have supported themselves and their families by collecting fees from

pilgrims and tourists visiting the shrine from the more accessible Thai side.

Thailand and Cambodia long contested ownership of the shrine, which is about 1,000 years old, roughly the same age as Cambodia's famed Angkor Wat.

The World Court ruled in 1963 that Preah Vihear belonged to Cambodia, a ruling that was a major reason for the break in diplomatic relations between the two countries at the time.

Meanwhile, Anant Panyarachun, Thailand's recalled Ambassador to the United States, said at a news conference today that he believed the Ford Administration and Congress disagreed on whether all American military forces should be withdrawn from Thailand.

Subject of Debate

"The congress and the Administration have been debating on this matter," Mr. Anant said.

He said Congress felt the end of the Indochina war removed the need for United States troops in Thailand, but the Administration disagreed. Anger over United States use

of bases in Thailand to rescue the crew of the American freighter Mayaguez led to the recall of Mr. Anant.

Thailand has ordered the withdrawal of the remaining 25,000 American troops by next March, but there have been indications Washington wants to keep about 10,000 troops in Thailand to insure that some of the five major air bases in the country will be ready for use if needed.

Cambodians Taken From Isle

BANGKOK, May 22 (Agence France-Presse) — Communist troops are still emptying Cambodian towns by force, refugees who arrived here yesterday reported.

They said the 1,000 inhabitants of Koh Kong island at the Thai border were taken away after being surprised at dawn by Communists last Friday.

A few fishermen who escaped said the villagers were routed from their homes and herded into boats. They were not allowed to take any belongings.

The Communist troops said the islanders were being taken to grow rice.