

Sihanouk Is Said to Be Worried About Returning to Cambodia

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PEKING, Aug. 12 — Prince Norodom Sihanouk, nominally head of state of Cambodia, is seriously worried about the prospect of returning to his country on the terms specified by the Communist rulers, according to a thoroughly knowledgeable source in Peking.

The Prince, who has spent the last three months in North Korea, is reliably reported to fear for his safety and for that of his wife, Princess Monique, if they go almost unaccompanied to Cambodia this month, as suggested by the Government there.

There is a strong feeling among Prince Sihanouk's large retinue of exiled supporters that they are being denied access to their country after more than five years during which they fought Cambodia's political and diplomatic battles from Peking, while the Communist forces fought on the battlefield.

As reported recently by Agence France-Presse — the Prince's usual channel of publicity—an envoy from Cambodia visited him in Pyongyang last month and asked him to return.

The terms of the invitation, it is learned, were that Prince Sihanouk should be accompanied only by Princess Monique and by Penn Nouth, the nominal Premier, and his wife. The

Prince is reported to have been upset that more members of his entourage could not go with him, and suspicious of the motives of the Khmer Rouge leader, Khieu Samphan.

It is pointed out that, by his own admission, Prince Sihanouk's forces actively suppressed left-wing insurgents in Cambodia before the final escalation of the American military presence in Vietnam and the coup mounted by Lon Nol.

After he took up residence in Peking, Prince Sihanouk espoused the Khmer Rouge cause and made vigorous propaganda for it. His garrulous and popular with foreign diplomats and politicians and, after the Khmer Rouge victory, he said that he would soon return to Cambodia.

However, Prince Sihanouk's mother died in Peking, and this caused him to remain here before going on a prolonged visit to North Korea, where his normal flow of public statements and protests has abated.

An acknowledged bon viveur and dilettante, the Prince has admitted the contradiction between his own style of life and that of the Khmer Rouge. However, as an ardent patriot he had hoped to return to Cambodia and act as titular head of state with particular responsibility for foreign affairs.