

Peking Greets Cambodians; Talks On

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HONG KONG, Aug. 15—A delegation of senior Cambodian Communist leaders arrived in Peking today to a warm welcome and immediately began talks with top Chinese officials, the official Chinese press agency, Hsinhua, reported.

The Cambodian delegation was led by Khieu Samphan and Ieng Sary, both Deputy Premiers and reportedly two of the three most powerful leaders of the new Communist regime in Phnom Penh. It was the first trip outside Cambodia by any of the country's leaders since the Communist victory last April.

Indicating the importance China evidently attaches to the visit, the delegation was met at the airport this morning by Teng Hsiao-Ping, China's first ranking Deputy Premier, and a cluster of other top officials.

Mr. Teng, who now administers China's day-to-day affairs and appears to rank only behind Chairman Mao Tse-tung and the ailing Premier Chou En-lai, also led the Chinese side in talks with the Cambodian delegation this afternoon.

No details of the talks were disclosed, but it is widely expected that they will focus on the fate of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Cambodia's nominal head of state who has not returned to Phnom Penh since April. For the last three months he has been living in North Korea.

Speculation on Prince's Role

The Prince's predicament is believed to have embarrassed the Chinese, who have served as his hosts and chief supporters since he was overthrown by Marshal Lon Nol in 1970. Chinese Communist sources in Hong Kong have indicated that they thought Prince Sihanouk would now probably return briefly to Cambodia and then proceed to New York to represent Cambodia at next month's session of the United Nations General Assembly.

One possible clue that today's talks did not center on economic aid and might instead have covered Cambodian

internal affairs was that the second ranking member of the Chinese side was Hua Kuo-Feng, a Deputy Premier and Minister of Public Security. His presence was considered unusual in meetings with foreign delegations.

Although Prince Sihanouk himself apparently remained in North Korea today, the nominal Cambodian Premier, Penn Nouth, did join in the welcome at the airport. But Mr. Penn Nouth, who like the Prince has been living in exile, did not take part in the talks.

The warmth of the official Chinese reception for the visiting Cambodians was indicated by a front-page editorial this morning in Jenmin Jih Pao, the party daily. It said the Chinese people were "filled with tremendous joy and exceedingly affectionate feelings" toward the new Cambodian leaders and extended "a warmest welcome."

Although there have been reports of malnutrition and harsh repression in Cambodia following the Communists' systematic depopulation of the cities, the editorial said the Cambodians "have already made marked achievements in a matter of a few months" in rebuilding their country.

The reception accorded the Cambodian delegation today contrasted strongly with the correct but cool treatment accorded a visiting top-level North Vietnamese economic delegation. The Vietnamese, led by Le Thanh Nghi, a Politburo member and Deputy Premier in charge of economic development, have held three days

of talks with Chinese officials.

The Chinese press has downplayed the visit and has released no information on what the talks were about. But the North Vietnamese press agency today quoted Mr. Nghi as saying at a banquet Wednesday night that they covered "China's aid to Vietnam for 1976 and the development of long-term economic cooperation between our two countries from 1976 to 1980."