

Sihanouk Sheds Another Title

New York

Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia arrived here yesterday with the announcement that he is no longer a prince but only a president without power.

Although the United Nations listed him as Prince Sihanouk on the roster of speakers who will address the General Assembly Monday and referred to him as "his royal highness," he himself told newsmen at Kennedy Airport that he is now simply the president of Cambodia.

"When I was a king in 1955, I gave up my title voluntarily because I did not want to be an obstacle to the development of my country," he said. "The title of prince is less important than the title of king so it is not difficult for me to give it up also."

Sihanouk, 52, explained that his role as president is ceremonial, like that of the president of Italy or the queen of England, rather than that of a chief executive like President Ford. He said he came not only to address the General Assembly but also to "express our gratitude to the American personalities, students, journalists and other citizens who have supported us."

Despite the five-year war in which the United States aided the Lon Nol regime, he said, Cambodians retain no hostility toward the United States.

Sihanouk said Cambodia is devoting all its energies to the reconstruction of an economy destroyed by war and therefore could not yet receive foreign



AP Wirephoto

NORODOM SIHANOUK
He's just a president

diplomats or journalists. Food shortages required the complete evacuation of Phnom Penh immediately after the defeat of Lon Nol last April, Sihanouk said, but 100,000 former residents have now been allowed to return out of a wartime population of more than two million.

"We have nothing to hide but we have to be careful," he said of the exclusion of foreigners.

Even the former middle and upper classes are happy in the "new democracy," he said, and dissenters have fled to the United States, Thailand or Europe. There are no jails, only "rehabilitation centers" for adherents of the former regime, he said.

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