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# Reds Blow Key Bridge In Cambodia

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## Phnom Penh

Communist terrorists blew a 50-foot hole in the only bridge across the Tonle Sap river in Phnom Penh yesterday, leaving at least two persons dead and the strategically important bridge impassable to vehicular traffic.

Three Cambodians dressed in army uniforms were arrested as suspects as they fled across the 900-yard bridge after the explosion.

It was the third major attack on Phnom Penh this week. Enemy gunners fired 100 rockets into the capital Tuesday, killing more than 100 persons. Enemy frogmen blew up a cargo ship and two barges carrying fuel in the Bassic River on the south edge of the city Thursday.

### TRUCK

Cambodian military police said the device that exploded yesterday had weighed at least 200 pounds and had been concealed in the engine of an old French pickup truck which the terrorists parked near the center of

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the bridge, saying that it had stalled.

The blast, which shook windows throughout the city, blew the truck through the bottom of the bridge and twisted the steel girders of the central span. Four persons were known wounded and several others may have been blown off the bridge, known as the Japanese Friendship Bridge. It was completed five years ago.

No estimate was immediately available on how much time it would take to repair the damage to the 100-yard-long central span, but it appeared that it might be as much as several months.

The bridge leads to a Cambodian naval base and a large army garrison across the river. The bridge also leads to the ferry crossings on the Mekong river farther to the east. The whole area opposite the city now appears to be isolated and exposed to attack.

Despite the series of attacks on Phnom Penh's communications facilities, American officials here say they do not believe the incidents indicate an impending North Vietnamese offensive.

The four major North Vietnamese and Viet Cong divisions of roughly 12,000 men who have been engaged in fighting the Cambodians for the last two years have not launched any attacks since they battered a large Cambodian operation on Highway 6, near Kompong Thom, in December.

### LULL

The Cambodians have not begun any sizable operations against the Communists either since then, and the result has been a three-month lull.

American intelligence sources say the four main enemy divisions have remained in their base areas along the South Vietnamese border and around Takeo, 60 miles south of Phnom Penh. Moreover, these sources assert, only a relatively small amount of supplies has been sent down the Ho Chi Minh Trail this year to the Communist forces in Cambodia, the major portion having been diverted for use in South Vietnam.

Cambodian officials, whose security measures around Phnom Penh often seem rather casual, have also not appeared too concerned about the prospect of a Communist attack.

### SIEGE

In Eastern Cambodian, South Vietnamese rangers and armored vehicles began moving toward the beleaguered provincial capital of Prey Veng, 30 miles east of Phnom Penh. Prey Veng's Cambodian garrison has been under siege for the past five days.

The South Vietnamese force, moving north of the Saigon-to-Phnom Penh Highway 1, encountered North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops ten miles southeast of Prey Veng, setting off a brief clash.

The Saigon command said 15 enemy soldiers were killed, while the government troops suffered one killed and one wounded.

The Cambodian command reported 20 enemy rockets hit a position manned by South Vietnamese and Cambodian troops at Kompong Trach, 70 miles south of Phnom Penh and ten miles from the border of South Vietnam.

It was the second consecutive day of attacks on the allied positions in southern Cambodia. The Cambodian military spokesman, Major Chhang Song, said the enemy rocket and ground attack Thursday killed 31 South Vietnamese soldiers and wounded 20. He put enemy dead at 51.

In Laos, sources in Vientiane said Laotian regular army units were forced to abandon six positions ten and 25 miles north and east of Luang Prabang, the Royal capital, in the face of heavy mortar barrages and ground assaults by North Vietnamese troops.

Intelligence reports indicated the enemy troops included two battalions from the North Vietnamese 8th Regiment. It is unlikely the North Vietnamese will attack Luang Prabang, about 135 air miles north of Vientiane. Both sides have made it a neutral city.