

Lon Nol Yields on Coalition Regime

PHNOM PENH (Cambodia) — (AP)—President Lon Nol has bowed to U.S. pressure and agreed to bring some of his opponents into the Cambodian government in an attempt to get cease-fire negotiations started with the Communists.

"I will choose a new prime minister to lead the government with the participation of the opposition," the 59 year old chief of the embattled Phnom Penh regime said in a broadcast last night.

Lon Nol said he would also appoint a new 11-man council of political advisers to include opposition Republicans and Democrats as well as members of his own Social Republican Party.

Authoritative sources said Lon Nol agreed to broaden the government under pressure from President Nixon, who sent the vice chief of staff of the U.S. Army, Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., to Cambodia last week to assess the current Communist threat to Phnom Penh.

Sirik Matak

U.S. officials in Washington were hopeful that Lon Nol would turn the government over to his former associate, Sisowath Sirik Matak, who is a relative of the deposed chief of state, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, and that Sirik Matak could get Sihanouk's supporters in the Khmer Rouge guerrilla army to the conference table.

But political observers in Phnom Penh said no matter who Lon Nol brings in, the Khmer Rouge won't negotiate so long as Lon Nol and his younger brother and chief adviser, Brig. Gen. Lon Non, retain control of the government.

North Vietnam bore this out today, asserting that no matter how much Lon Nol

changes his government, it "still remains an instrument of the U.S. imperialists to Khmerize the war."

"With such a nature, the Lon Nol government will be more and more isolated and disrupted every day," Rado Hanoi said.

Although Lon Non quit the cabinet earlier this month, his influence on the partly paralyzed president is undiminished.

Cabinet

Premier Hang Thun Hak submitted his cabinet's resignation yesterday in accordance with a constitutional provision requiring reorganization of the government every six months.

There was speculation in Phnom Penh that the new cabinet would be headed by Hak, Minister of State Mau Say or Defense Minister Thapanna Ngin.

Cambodia is the only country in Indochina that still does not have a cease-fire agreement, and Lon Nol's forces are in a far more precarious position than the South Vietnamese and Laotian regimes supported by the United States.

The Khmer Rouge and their North Vietnamese allies control at least two-thirds of the country, and the government's army has been unable to make significant gains against them despite heavy bombing by U.S. air forces. Meanwhile, the Nixon Administration is under mounting pressure in the U.S. Congress to stop the bombing.