

Key Opposition Men Seen Joining Lon Nol Cabinet

By MALCOLM W. BROWNE
Special to The New York Times

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, April 18 — President Lon Nol, who announced last night that he had obtained the resignation of his cabinet, appeared today to have persuaded a number of key opposition figures to join him in collective leadership of the country.

American officials have frequently asserted that the only way the President's Government could consolidate its shaky political base would be by incorporating the leading opposition parties, thus presenting a united front toward the communists.

Among the key opposition figures reportedly willing to serve on a new "High Political Council of the President of the Republic" was In Tam, a former Interior Minister who was president Lon Nol's main opponent in a presidential election last June.

But a spokesman for the Cambodian Democratic party headed by Mr. In Tam said today that it had expelled him as a result of his decision to work with the Government. The spokesman, Kim Sin, said the party had also expelled a close associate of Mr. In Tam, Douc Rasy, who reportedly accepted appointment today as Cambodia's Ambassador to Britain.

New Party Leader

"Our party leader now is Dr. Cha Su," the spokesman said in an interview. He said that Dr. Cha Su, who is an economist, had been offered the post of Minister of Finance in the new Government but "he rejected any form of participation."

"Our party holds that until Long Nol is willing to return the nation to a Democratic Government, to hold really free elections and free Democratic principles generally, we cannot cooperate," the spokesman said.

Nevertheless, the President's apparent success in persuading Mr. In Tam to join the Government appeared to be a significant development.

Among the opponents of the Government that some American officials particularly wanted included in a collective leadership was Sisowath Sirik Matak, one-time special counselor to the President, who left the Government after a falling out. It was believed that Mr. Sirik Matak was prepared to rejoin the Government.

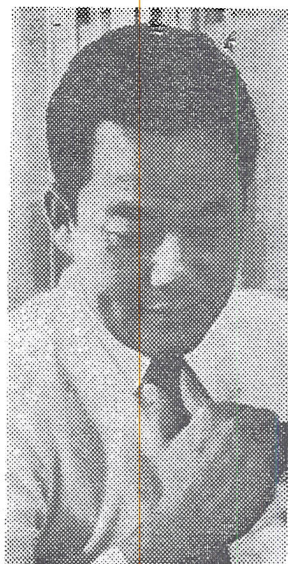
Diplomats Hopeful

Both Mr. In Tam and Mr. Sirik Matak previously severed connections with the President on the ground that their positions lacked sufficient real authority to carry out urgent reforms and to reorganize the administration. But Western diplomats



Inger McCabe

In Tam, former Interior Minister and opponent of the President in election, is reported ready to serve in new Government.



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Hang Thun Hak, whose six-month term as Premier ended with Government's resignation at President Lon Nol's request.

say they feel that power may really be shared this time.

The President's brother, Gen. Lon Non, resigned his Government posts two weeks ago, saying he would return to regular army service. But since then the Cambodian Information Minister, Kearn Reth, has said that the resignation has not yet been accepted.

President Lon Nol's brief broadcast last night opened with a denunciation of "Vietnamese Communist" invaders who, he said, were intent on exterminating our race." He charged that the current difficult situation in Cambodia was partly the fault of "a certain segment of the national and foreign press."

He Attacks Press

He said, he Vietnamese Communists had been able to "buy" this segment of the press and that it and "subversive agents" had "caused the masses to believe they would come to the end of our resistance on the occasion of Chaul" the Cambodian New Year festival that ended Monday.

"Now roads have been reopened," he said, "traffic is moving on the Mekong and the enemy's dry-season offensive has been stopped," the marshal asserted.

"After the victory of the first phase of our struggle," he said, "I feel it is time for us to create a political base capable of reinforcing national solidarity."

He said he was appointing an 11-member High Political Council consisting of "high personalities and representatives of different political parties."

The council is to meet every week and will "make decisions together" regarding "the defense of the republic, national concord, the quest for peace, foreign policy and political, economic and financial policy."

Premier's Term Ends

The resignation of the Government at President Lon Nol's request marked the end of Premier Hang Thun Hak's six-month term. The Premier and the other ministers will continue as a caretaker Government until the new government is formed.

Politicians here indicated some doubt today as to whether the new collective leadership council would really function as such, but some seemed to feel that the idea of the council should not be prejudged.

There is general agreement that the recasting of the Government will have little or no effect on the poor prospects for a quick end to the war in Cambodia.

"If the Cambodian Government is able to make a plausible show of unity opposing the other side," a Western diplomat said, "the other side may be discouraged from its expectations of achieving military victory and therefore more willing to talk peace."

But there does not now appear to be the slightest chance of a new initiative toward Cambodian peace talks in the foreseeable future.

Hanoi Sees Deterioration

SAIGON, South Vietnam, April 18 (AP)—The Hanoi radio said today that changes plan-

ned in the Cambodian Government were "aimed at settling internal conflicts of the Lon Nol puppet government which is deteriorating while confronted with greater and greater military and political defeats."

"Unde American pressure," the Hanoi continued, "Lon Nol has been forced to introduce a number of so-called opposition elements into his Cabinet so that it may have a 'broader political base'."

"However reformed it may be, the Lon Nol puppet government still remains an instrument of the U. S. imperialists," it said. "With such a nature, the Lon Nol Government will be more and more isolated and disrupted every day."

The Hanoi broadcast indicated that Cambodian insurgents would continue their military drive in hopes of forcing Marshal Lon Nol out.

U.S. Pleased by Step

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WASHINGTON, April 18—State Department officials expressed satisfaction today with reports from Phnom Penh that President Lon Nol was reorganizing his Government to include some important opposition political figures.

The officials said that if the Government was widened—as recommended to Marshal Lon Nol by Washington for some time—the political situation in Phnom Penh and the morale of the population and the army would be improved.

There is hope, one official said, that a stronger Lon Nol Government might persuade the Hanoi-backed Cambodian insurgents to seek a negotiated settlement.

One frustration in Washington has been the inability of the Lon Nol Government to begin a dialogue with either the ousted chief of state, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, or any other insurgent leader. Mr. Sihanouk has vowed not to compromise with Marshal Lon Nol, but some officials believe he could change his mind.

It was understood that Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., President Nixon's special envoy, stressed the advisability of widening his Government when he met with President Lon Nol last week in Phnom Penh.

Postcard Registration

WASHINGTON, April 17 (AP)—Opponents of a bill providing for registration of voters in Federal elections by postcard filed a petition today to cut off Senate debate. Senator James B. Allen, Democrat of Alabama, said he and 20 other Senators who signed the closure petition hoped the vote on it would convince the bill's supporters to give up.