

# Lon Nol Brings Opponents Into Cambodian Council

**President Sharing Power in Response to U.S. Pressure—Brother Expected to Go Soon on Mission to America**

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By MALCOLM W. BROWNE APR 25 1973

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PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, April 24—The executive leadership of Cambodia became a four-man council today under an agreement by which President Lon Nol will share power equally with three leading political opponents.

Marshal Lon Nol had been under strong American pressure for months to unite the various anti-Communist political factions in the face of a growing Communist military threat.

The new executive, the High Political Council, the plan for which was announced a week ago in a speech by the President, will consist of Gen. Sisowath Sirik Matak, In Tam and Cheng Heng, in addition to Marshal Lon Nol.

All four were major collaborators in the ouster of Prince Norodom Sihanouk as Chief of State in 1970.

One obstacle to proposals that political opponents join the Government has been their objection to the great power exercised by the President's young brother, Brig. Gen. Lon

Non, a Cabinet minister as well as a division commander. Last week the Phnom Penh radio announced that he would be leaving on a mission to the United States; today Mr. In Tam said he was convinced that the general would be leaving soon, although he asserted that the departure was not a condition for his collaborating with the President.

"I believe he will go soon," said Mr. In Tam, himself a retired brigadier general. "He has already really given up his Government posts, and if he goes on a mission he will have to be replaced as commander of the Third Army Division.

The two most important members of what will amount to a ruling junta are Mr. Sirik Matak and Mr. In Tam, both former political advisers to Marshal Lon Nol.

General Sirik Matak, who heads the opposition Republican party, is a distant relative of Prince Norodom Sihanouk. He is regarded by United States of-

Continued on Page 12, Column 2

Continued From Page 1, Col. 3

officials as the most effective administrator in Cambodia.

Mr. In Tam, who led the opposition Democratic party until incurring its displeasure earlier this year, was the chief adversary of Marshal Lon Nol in the Presidential election last June. After that he and Mr. Sirik Matak both collaborated with the President for a time but then left the Government because they had not been accorded any real authority.

After the removal of Norodom Sihanouk, Mr. Cheng Heng became Chief of State by virtue of being President of the National Assembly. He resigned in March, 1972, at which time Marshal Lon Nol became Chief of State. Mr. Cheng Heng, who represents a "neutral" faction, lacks a political base.

Marshal Lon Nol met twice today with his new partners, first to confirm their mutual agreement and second to obtain the blessings of leaders of the Buddhist faith, formalizing the arrangement.

Yesterday the moribund National Assembly voted approval of the new council and responding to conditions demanded by the opposition leaders, recessed for six months, ceding full legislative power to the council.

Yesterday Mr. In Tam said that nothing was settled but today he told reporters that he

was fully satisfied with the arrangement and was confident President Lon Nol would genuinely share power this time. He said he did not know when the council would meet since it will be convened by the President.

Among its first tasks, Mr. In Tam said, will be the formation of a new cabinet. The Cabinet headed by Premier Hang Thun Hak resigned Wednesday to allow the President a free hand in reorganizing the Government.

In fact the cabinet has little significance and there is no urgent need to form a new one. Mr. In Tam said his colleagues

had not talked about such details as the possible sharing of ministries among the parties.

Asked what he considered the most pressing problem facing the council, he reflected a moment and replied: "The army."

While the military situation is reasonably stable, powerful hostile forces are operating just a few miles from downtown Phnom Penh and refugees continue to flow into the capital from suburban Takhmau, which is under sporadic mortar fire every night.

The continuing American support by high-flying B-52 bombers was particularly evident all of last night, rattling windows in the capital. Correspondents counted at least 20 missions of three bombers each; the bombers always drop their load separately, so the number can easily be discerned.

### Larger Size Ruled Out

When the two-chamber legislature, made up of members of the President's Social Republic party, met yesterday to

agree to the new arrangement, several members asked that the heads of the chambers be made members of the council, but the three opposition leaders insisted that the membership be restricted to four.

Marshal Lon Nol had originally proposed an 11-member council in which power would have been much more diffuse, but General Sirik Matak and Mr. In Tam refused to join a body with more than four members.

American officials privately expressed relief that the Cambodian political crisis, such as it was, had passed and hoped that the Government might now show more vigor in bringing the nation behind the war effort.

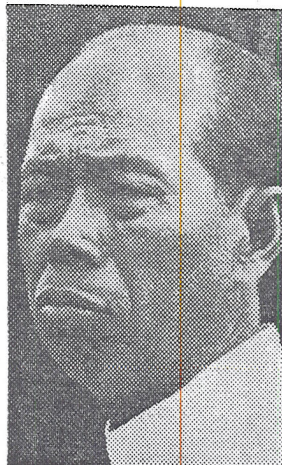
Political observers have expressed a wait-and-see attitude on the prospects of effective working cooperation between the four council members. All will depend, it was said, on willingness to make concessions and accommodations — something never seen in previous efforts.



The New York Times  
President Lon Nol



Denis Cameron  
Sisowath Sirik Matak



Inger McCabe  
In Tam



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