

# Saigon Rejects Lon Nol's Appeal

## Saigon

Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam said yesterday Cambodian President Lon Nol had appealed to South Vietnam to provide air support for his forces in case U.S. bombing raids were suspended but that Saigon refused.

Lam said that Lon Nol's request was rejected for fear it would upset the peace negotiations with the Viet Cong in South Vietnam.

"We have refused because we want to maintain the climate of peace with the other side while we are working together to solve the problems of Vietnam," Lam said at a news conference.

Military sources had indicated that American commanders at air bases in Thailand were reluctant to continue their air support to Cambodian troops due to the danger to civilians in the populous area of south central Cambodia, where most recent fighting has been centered.

There were no American air raids Saturday against Cambodian rebels on the heavily populated east bank of the Mekong river across from Phnom Penh, but the raids were resumed yesterday after the one-day suspension.

Fighting in South Vietnam continued at about the same level it has been in recent weeks. A Saigon military spokesman said the Communists violated the ceasefire 82 times in the 24 hours between noon Saturday and noon yesterday, raising total alleged violations in the three months since the truce began to 12,405. No figures are given for South Vietnamese operations.

In another development yesterday, a South Vietnamese command spokesman announced plans for the exchange of 722 civilian prisoners — 400 held by the Saigon government and 322 held by the Viet Cong — today. The two sides agreed to exchange 1387 civilian prisoners altogether, although both sides claim the other holds thousands more. There was no exchange yesterday by mutual consent, a Saigon spokesman said.

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