

U.S. to Halt Briefing on Cambodia

PHNOM PENH—(UPI) — The U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh discontinued its daily briefing for Western newsmen today and said it was doing so at the request of Cambodian authorities.

"It is the consensus of this Embassy we will not have (further) briefings," an Embassy spokesman said. He said they were being scrapped "at the request of the Khmer (Cambodian) government."

He told reporters the Cambodian government based its cancellation request on complaints about recent "facts" on the military situation issued to reporters by the Americans.

Overrun by Reds

One such disclosure by the Embassy was a report Thursday that two battalions of government troops were overrun by Communist soldiers near Neak Luong, 32 miles southeast of Phnom Penh on the Mekong River. The attack killed 20 soldiers and 580 others were "led away" by the Communists.

Asked if any recent briefings contained factual mistakes, the Embassy spokesman replied: "There were no errors."

He said the Embassy had "second thoughts" about the advisability of briefing American and other newsmen on the military and political situation in Cambodia.

The spokesman said the Embassy felt that briefings should be given "by the Khmer government."

Brief Reports

The twice daily military "briefings" by Cambodian officers consist of the posting of a brief French language report on a bulletin board in a courtyard outside the offices of Command spokesman Col. Am Rong.

The release rarely sup-

Cambodia Retakes 3 Villages

PHNOM PENH — (AP) — The Cambodian government claimed yesterday it has retaken three southern villages near Takeo, a key provincial capital besieged for months by antigovernment forces.

These small victories followed a drive last week by Takeo's defenders to expand their area of control. The developments indicated government soldiers were strengthening their position at Takeo, target of months of ground attacks and mortar and artillery barrages by anti-government forces encircling it.

American aircraft, including B-52s, continued operations over Cambodia yesterday at the request of the Cambodian government, the U.S. Pacific Military Command reported in Honolulu.

An official spokesman declined to provide any details on yesterday's operations.

Government soldiers retrieved four more bodies from under the wreckage of a U.S. Air Force A7 bomber yesterday. The confirmed casualty count reached 11 killed, including two families and 20 wounded.

plies vital information on military activity except to report overnight shelling attacks and relatively minor fights. Casualties seldom are reported.

Diplomatic and military sources say the Communist forces are mostly Cambodian rebels operating with strong logistical and leadership backing from the North Vietnamese. The Phnom Penh government maintains Vietnamese Communists are waging the war and censors will not allow correspondents to refer to the antigovernment soldiers as Cambodian rebels.