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SIHANOUK: MORE U.S. AID WILL NOT SAVE PHNOM PENH CLIQUE

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[By Rene Flipo]

[Text] Peking, 26 Feb (AFP)--Prince Norodom Sihanouk said here today that nothing would prevent the Red Khmers from winning a "final and total" victory in Cambodia even if the American Congress granted additional credits to the regime of Marshal Lon Nol.

Approval of these credits could in no way alter the "irreversible" position of the NUFC (United National Front of Cambodia), the RGNUC (Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia), the CPNLAF (Cambodian National People's Armed Forces of Liberation) and himself to "never negotiate with the Phnom Penh traitors," the prince said.

Prince Sihanouk, president of the NUFC, was commenting in a statement distributed to the foreign press here on remarks made Monday in Washington by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Philip Habib that the military situation in Cambodia was now more serious than it had ever been since the start of the fighting in 1970.

"Since 1970, the U.S. already spent more than 3 billion dollars to buy and enrich the Phnom Penh quislings and over 7 billion dollars to destroy Cambodia and enslave its people", Prince Sihanouk further said.

"Therefore, 220 million dollars (eds: The sum represented by the additional credits requested from Congress by President Ford) cannot turn back the irresistible drive which is pushing the Cambodian people, the NUFC, the RGNUC and the CPNLAF towards final and total victory", Prince Sihanouk stated.

He also rejected the U.S. argument that Marshal Lon Nol's setbacks and the "economic and financial collapse" of the Phnom Penh regime were due to "the lack of sufficient credits granted by the U.S. Congress".

Prince Sihanouk blamed the "incompetence and the corruption" of the Lon Nol regime as the "sole reason for its having exhausted U.S. credits too rapidly".

The real reason behind the United States' obstinacy in backing the "dying" regime of Phnom Penh was that "willy nilly, it will have to leave South Vietnam and Laos after its forthcoming and ineluctable defeat in Cambodia", the prince said.

"Then, it will no doubt lose Thailand, Taiwan, South Korea and the Philippines", he added before concluding that the "domino theory" would also prove true "in other areas: the Middle East, Latin America etc..."