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PRINCE SIHANOUK SEES VIETNAM CEASE-FIRE IMMINENT

Paris AFP in English 1352 GMT 21 Jan 73 C--FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

[Text] Peking, Jan 21--by Pierre Comparet--Prince Norodom Sihanouk, head of the Peking-based Royal Cambodian Government of National Union, today told a group of foreign journalists that he believed a Vietnam cease-fire agreement was near to being signed.

President Nixon is bad, but he cannot avoid signing it, Prince Sihanouk told (?six) journalists during a five-hour meeting at his home.

HISTORY OF THE VIETNAM WAR ON MICROFILM

Prince Sihanouk said that international and American opinion would force President Nixon to sign the cease-fire and that the signing may be imminent.

Prince Sihanouk said there was no question of a cease-fire between North Vietnam and Americans being applied to Cambodia.

If the Vietnamese want a cease-fire, that's their business. But as for us, we don't want one, he said.

He said he would go to Hanoi for a week's visit at the end of this month for the signing of a joint declaration.

After his return here he will make an official visit to Canton. In May and June he will make an official visit to Senegal, Guinea, Mali and Congo (Brazzaville). During this trip he will also make nonofficial stop-offs in the five countries he visited last summer: Romania, Albania, Yugoslavia, Mauritania and Algeria.

Prince Sihanouk said that France and the Soviet Union will lose a great deal when Cambodia is liberated, without expanding.

Prince Sihanouk invited the foreign press to his home and gave a dinner not only to honor visiting Australian journalist Wilfred Burchett (the new Australian Government has just restored Mr Burchett's passport to him) but also to celebrate the publication of a book, My War with the CIA, which he wrote in collaboration with Mr Burchett. The book is to be published tomorrow in London.

Prince Sihanouk appeared much more optimistic today over the Vietnam cease-fire than a month ago when I talked to him at Tien-Tsin. At that time he said he didn't believe in the conclusion of an agreement.

Today he said that the signing of the agreements seemed close but that it was necessary to remain suspicious of American intentions.

When Nixon speaks of a just peace, that means an American peace, he said.

But we can only accept a peace under total independence without American neocolonialism and without the Lon Nol clique, he said

Prince Sihanouk said the principal U.S. aim was to maintain a solidly implanted neocolonialism in Indochina.

With the signing of a cease-fire agreement, he said, there will then be three Vietnams. We do not want there to be two Cambodias.

The war will continue in Cambodia following the signing of a cease-fire in Vietnam. If Lon Nol thinks a Vietnam cease-fire will bring him peace, he is dreaming. Prince Sihanouk described as a positive element the fact that Gen Lon Nol, although a traitor, also rejected the partition of Cambodia.

That means that he must disappear, he said.

Prince Sihanouk expressed satisfaction at what he termed [word indistinct] testimony that the Cambodian resistance existed independently.

Even the Pentagon's experts agree to that, he said.

Prince Sihanouk continued: Our liberation forces now number 72,000 men with solid ideological training and enjoying popular support. The figure of 72,000 only includes our regular troops and to that should be added numerous guerrillas.

Against us there is theoretically an army of 150,000 men, but in fact 100,000 of them are phantom, only existing on paper and who enable recruiting officers to pocket the corresponding wage.

Lon Nol has in fact at his disposal only 30,000 soldiers, who are disliked because they loot, and more and more it is the South Vietnamese whom our forces find facing them.

Against us, Lon Nol is nothing. We have enough reserves of weapons to last us two years. We have just concluded a new military aid agreement with China and shipments are already en route.

Prince Sihanouk said that losses en route were heavy because of bombing of the Ho Chi Minh trail. The losses often reached 40 percent, sometimes 50 or 60 percent, he said.

However, the demoralization of the Lon Nol forces and the corruption rampant in the Phnom Penh administration compensated for that handicap, he added.

We have more American weapons than Chinese, he said. We are attacking the Lon Nol garrisons with commandoes in American uniforms; that is to say, the uniforms of the Lon Nolites themselves.

Were it not for the American bombing, the Lon Nol administration could be swiftly wiped out, he said.

He said he did not think the Americans would continue bombing after the signing of a cease-fire with North Vietnam, for that would amount to starting the Indochina war all over again in a different form.

But to prepare for such an eventuality, the Cambodian liberation forces were operating a four-year plan--that is to say, right to the end of President Nixon's second term, Prince Sihanouk said.

[Words indistinct] The American Government had not made any more offers to him since he rejected its offer for the (? establishment) of a government of reconciliation in Phnom Penh, of which he himself would have been head.

The U.S. had suggested this solution to him last year through the Chinese Government. He had rejected the offer, because for one thing it prescribed the winding up of the Cambodian Royal Government of National Union and the Phnom Penh government in favor of a government of national reconciliation that would have existed until general elections were held in Cambodia.

Prince Sihanouk said that solution was supported not only by the U.S., but also by the Soviet Union and France. Since then, the Americans had made no more offers to him, or tried to contact him.