

CAMB  
FILE SUBI.  
DATE SUB-CAT.  
3/18/70

# Viet Reds Deaf to Cambodian Plea During Talks on Withdrawing Troops

From News Dispatches

Vietcong and North Vietnamese delegates have turned a deaf ear to requests for the departure of their troops from Cambodia according to Cambodian officials in Phnom Penh.

They reported no progress in negotiations that started yesterday.

However, military sources in Saigon said that increasing numbers of Communist troops have been crossing from Cambodia into the Mekong Delta, and the Associated Press reported an unprecedented incident of Cambodian-South Vietnamese military cooperation.

South Vietnamese artillery fired in support of Cambodian soldiers trying to drive a Vietcong unit out of Cambodia, Peter Arnett of the AP reported.

The action took place Sunday and Monday 103 miles southwest of Saigon in Chau-doc Province, which abuts Cambodia. During the military operation, a Cambodian officer was in radio contact with the chief of South Vietnam's Anphu District and asked for artillery support.

Several 105-mm. howitzers were fired at targets on both sides of the border after Cambodians radioed in the targets' coordinates.

"I guess the Cambodian officer over there figured he needed a little extra help," one American adviser said.

While the use of South Vietnamese artillery called in by a Cambodian officer is believed to be unprecedented, in the past there have been infrequent reports of Cambodian and South Vietnamese ground troops working together in border regions.

There also have been occasional reports of Cambodian troops supporting Vietcong units and firing across the border at South Vietnamese and Americans.

The action near Anphu was the second reported instance over the weekend of Cambodian troops tangling with Communist forces near the Mekong Delta border with South Vietnam.

Following large demonstrations against the Vietcong and North Vietnamese in Phnom Penh last Wednesday, the Cambodian government had given the Vietnamese until dawn Sunday to get their troops out of Cambodia.

At the Phnom Penh talks called to discuss such a withdrawal, the Communists only have expressed interest in discussing compensation for damage caused to their embassies during the Wednesday demonstrations, reliable sources said.

There was no official government statement on the progress of the talks, but officials in Phnom Penh were pessimistic.

The Cambodian news agency published a telegram from chief of state, Prince Sihanouk, to his mother, the queen.

The prince deplored the "intrusions in the affairs of our sovereign country" by the Vietnamese Communists, who use Cambodia for sanctuary and for resting and resupplying. But he also warned that activities of what he called extreme rightists threatened the political structure of Cambodia more than the acts of the Vietnamese.

Sihanouk has kept Cambodia neutral and has long sought to keep the United States, the Soviet Union and China at arms length without antagonizing them.

Sihanouk, who is now in Moscow, blamed rightists for the Phnom Penh demonstrations when he first heard of them. He charged the protests were part of a plot to push Cambodia into the American orbit.