

Cambodian Skies Fall Silent; U.S. Ends 8 Yrs. of Bombing

Compiled From AP and UPI

PHNOM PENH — Phnom Penh shook Wednesday morning in the last hours of American bombing, which ended at 11 a.m. by order of the U.S. Congress.

PACIFIC STARS AND STRIPES

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 Vietnamese military denied the report.
 United Press International quoted South Vietnamese military sources as saying more than 5,000 Cambodian nationals serving in the armed forces in South Vietnam have been placed on 100 per cent alert in case a decision is made to send military help to Cambodia.
 UPI quoted these sources as saying the troops, gathered near the Cambodian border, had not yet received orders to cross into the neighboring nation.
 The 7.4 million tons of bombs and other explosives rained by the United States on Indochina since 1965 was three times the amount the United States used in World War II and 10 times the amount in the Korean War.
 The bombing during recent months has been credited with a large role in keeping the Cambodian government of President Lon Nol in power.
 The daily bombing of Cambodia for 6½ months, since 10 days after the January Vietnam peace agreement, had slowed but not stopped advances on Phnom Penh by Communist-led insurgents. U.S. bombing errors in the final weeks of intensive attacks also killed scores of civilians and government troops.
 The last American raids included continual strikes around Phnom Penh's perimeter. An estimated 4,000 insurgents were massed for an attack west of the capital's international airport.
 The fate of the capital of 1½ million, including thousands of refugees, was open to speculation. The antigovernment forces loosely surround Phnom Penh and control an estimated 80 per cent of the country militarily.
 Premier In Tam of Cambodia vowed his government would "fight along with the people until the final victory, both militarily and politically."
 He said in an interview that despite the bombing cutoff, "Our American friends are still providing us with more material to modernize our army. The situation here is very much improved and there is nothing for us to be worried about. The other side has suffered heavy losses from bombing over the past few weeks."

Rumors circulated that In Tam would resign from the post he has held since mid-May. He denied having any such plans.
 On the eve of the bombing halt, life in Phnom Penh was undisturbed. Shoppers and commuters jammed the streets. The residents could hear the short thuds of bombs from U.S. fighter-bombers and the explosions of the B52 bombs that sounded like barrels rolling off a roof.
 American air strikes increased in the final weeks of the bombing. By the Pentagon's count, fighter-bombers and B52s were averaging about 220 missions daily toward the end of the bombing.
 Orders to halt the bombing of Cambodia went out Tuesday from a peaceful Marine Corps base overlooking Pearl Harbor in Hawaii.
 American pilots and crews were instructed that the last bombs were to be dropped before midnight EDT — ending more than a decade of U.S. com-

bat involvement in Southeast Asia.

The orders for all U.S. forces to comply with a law ending bombing and combat activity throughout Indochina as of Aug. 15 came from the office of Adm. Noel Gayler, commander of U.S. forces in the Pacific.

"We will continue to fly unarmed and unescorted reconnaissance missions over Cambodia," Gayler said. "This is legal under the federal law passed by Congress."

Gayler said that while the combat missions would be halted, most of the planes and their

crews would remain at their bases in Southeast Asia, at least for the time being.

"Certainly, we won't move them out instantly," Gayler said.

He said the decision on whether to pull the planes and crews out of Southeast Asia entirely

would "have to be made on the situation as it evolves."

"What we leave in Southeast Asia is largely dependent upon the actions of the North Vietnamese," he said, "and their posture and the degree to which they follow the Paris Agreements."

Added web note: The USAF would continue to operate EC-47s out of NKP and Ubon until May, 1974. ASA would fly a few ARDF missions out of Thailand until just before Saigon fell on 30 April 1975. Adm Gayler had previously been Director, NSA (DIRNSA), 1969-1972.

Tanker Task Force Patch



The capital was calm. Shops were open and streets were busy. High school pupils sat for their annual examinations. The population had food and fuel for at least three weeks, rice for up to three months.

Military police roved the city looking for infiltrators and sympathizers. They found a "big" arms cache near the central market and conducted a house-to-house search there for two hours.

Platoons of government troops were stationed at important street intersections, public buildings and foreign embassies.

Communist forces who advanced to within three miles of Phnom Penh 10 days ago had fallen back to an average of nine miles north, west and south of the capital.

The Communists were within a mile of Phnom Penh to the east, but there the city is protected by the mile-wide barrier of the Mekong River.

What were the Communists' intentions? One knowledgeable diplomat who has lived here for years said he did not think there would be an immediate attack on the city.

Instead, he said the insurgents, who are now regrouping, would slowly intensify pressure on the city and not attempt to take it until the dry season this fall.

Meanwhile, there were conflicting reports of Cambodians living in South Vietnam being prepared for action in Cambodia.

The Associated Press quoted informed sources in Saigon as saying that thousands of ethnic Cambodians living in South Vietnam, including some drawn from South Vietnamese Army units, have been flown to Phnom Penh to help the Lon Nol government survive after the U.S. bombing ends.

The U.S. Embassy in Saigon and a spokesman for the South

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