

the 23d Brigade and 1st M-113 Squadron conducted a forceful attack against enemy positions astride Route 61 and, aided by effective air and artillery support, broke through the enemy's main defenses and linked up with the besieged garrison at Muk Kampul on 3 August. Government losses in actions along Route 61 during the period 26 July to 3 August were 15 killed and 106 wounded, while enemy losses were 212 killed and 45 weapons captured. As FANK forces were mopping up along Route 61 on 4 August, an enemy force struck four outposts on the east bank of the Mekong River, manned by unprepared and poorly trained troops from Vihear Suor Military Subdivision. These attacks were supported by attacks against Prek Tamerk (WT0198) and Khnar Kar (WT0783). The four outposts fell apparently without much resistance, as a result of poor leadership and curtailed basic training of unit personnel. A counterattack on 5 August by reinforcements from the Parachute Brigade, 23rd and 84th Brigades retook the positions on 5 August with little or no enemy resistance. Friendly losses were: 39 killed, nine wounded, 105 missing and 175 weapons lost. Additionally, four heavy pieces of engineer equipment were damaged. No enemy casualties were reported. On 8 August, the enemy again attacked Muk Kampul and interdicted Route 61 south of this position. Quick reaction by elements of the 23rd Brigade, supported by M-113s, opened Route 61 that same day, leaving 121 enemy dead on the battlefield and capturing 16 weapons; friendly losses were only one killed and three wounded. Further enemy attacks against Route 61 and around Muk Kampul during the period 10 - 20 August were ineffective. After 20 August the enemy apparently gave up or postponed further offensive action against Muk Kampul and instead decided to attack Prek Tamerk on the east bank of the Mekong River northeast of Muk Kampul. FANK forces were well prepared and heavy enemy attacks against Prek Tamerk on the nights of 21 - 22, 26 - 27, and 30 - 31 August resulted in over 80 enemy killed and 71 weapons captured. Friendly losses were 11 killed and 29 wounded. Reportedly, the enemy penetrated the outer defensive perimeter around Prek Tamerk on the night of 21 - 22 August by claiming to be refugees who desired

sanctuary. As August ended, government forces in the northeast sector returned Route 61 to government control and successfully countered determined enemy efforts to extend KC control in that area.

August was also a very active month in the southeast sector, as both government and enemy forces launched offensives to secure control of key positions along the Bassac River and in the Bassac corridor. FANK objectives were to deny the enemy areas from which rocket attacks could be launched against the capital. On 7 August a joint 1st Division/2d Division operation was launched in the Bassac corridor. On 8 August, 1st Division units succeeded in moving south from Route 1 to Prek Thmei (WT0067), a key enemy position on the Bassac River. During the night of 8 - 9 August, enemy gunners fired 10 107-mm rockets from the Bassac corridor, but all landed far south of Phnom Penh. On 9 August the 1st Division units linked up with 2d Division units advancing along the east bank of the Bassac, but enemy harassing attacks against the rear and flank of 1st Division units caused nine killed and five wounded. On 12 August an enemy attack forced the 2d Division elements out of Prek Thmei, and on 15 August forced 2d Division units back as far as two kms. However, the 2d Division was able to reconstitute a defense line and keep 107-mm rockets from reaching Phnom Penh and disrupting armed forces day celebrations. Another enemy attack on the west bank of the Bassac on the night of 20 - 21 August forced a 2d Division unit back about one km.

FANK reinforcements moved into the area on 21 August for a major offensive along the Bassac River and stabilized the situation. This operation involved 17 infantry battalions and four M-113 squadrons from four divisions and was the first major FANK offensive action of the rainy season. The objective of the operation was to extend government control in the Bassac region and establish a new defensive line between Route 1 and the Bassac River further away from the capital. On 23 August, a brigade from the 1st Division established a beachhead on Anlong Chen Island in the Bassac River, against heavy enemy resistance. FANK forces on the island then made slow progress

against stiff enemy resistance, as did the government units along both banks of the Bassac River. Meanwhile, elements of the 3rd Division, attacking south from Route 1, advanced toward the Bassac River and reported reaching the east bank on 29 August. Although enemy resistance was determined, the greatest obstacle to movement was the difficult terrain and flooding that inundated many areas and severely restricted the use of vehicles and M-113s. As August came to a close, units attacking along the Bassac River were still over five kms from the elements that had reached the river from Route 1, and progress was disappointingly slow. Moreover, enemy counterattacks and harassing fire against advancing government units were beginning to produce significant government casualties, including one M-113 destroyed. However, the main objectives of the operation had been realized by the end of the month.

In the northwest sector, the Route 5 operation was effectively terminated and the Lovek commander assumed command of forces in the Lovek/Oudong/Kompong Luong area; the 5th Brigade commander assumed responsibility for Route 5/Tonle Sap from Kruos (VT8293) north to Prek Kdam and the 7th Division commander assumed responsibility for the area west of Route 5 and northwest of Phnom Penh. In the latter part of August, activities in the northwest sector were centered west of Tuol Leap (VT3779). On 22 August, KC gunners fired four 107-mm rockets at the Kantuok ammunition depot (VT7873), west of Phnom Penh. The rockets failed to hit the depot and caused no damage but triggered a government operation to the west and south of Tuol Leap in order to expand the outer defensive perimeter and prevent the enemy from firing more rockets at this vital installation. On 30 August the enemy fired one 122-mm rocket from southeast of Tuol Leap at Kantuok. Again, the rocket missed the depot and caused no damage, but the fact that enemy rockets could reach Kantuok increased the pressure on the 23d Brigade and 7th Division to further expand FANK control to the west. Thus, as August drew to a close, government forces were attempting to push west of Tuol Leap.

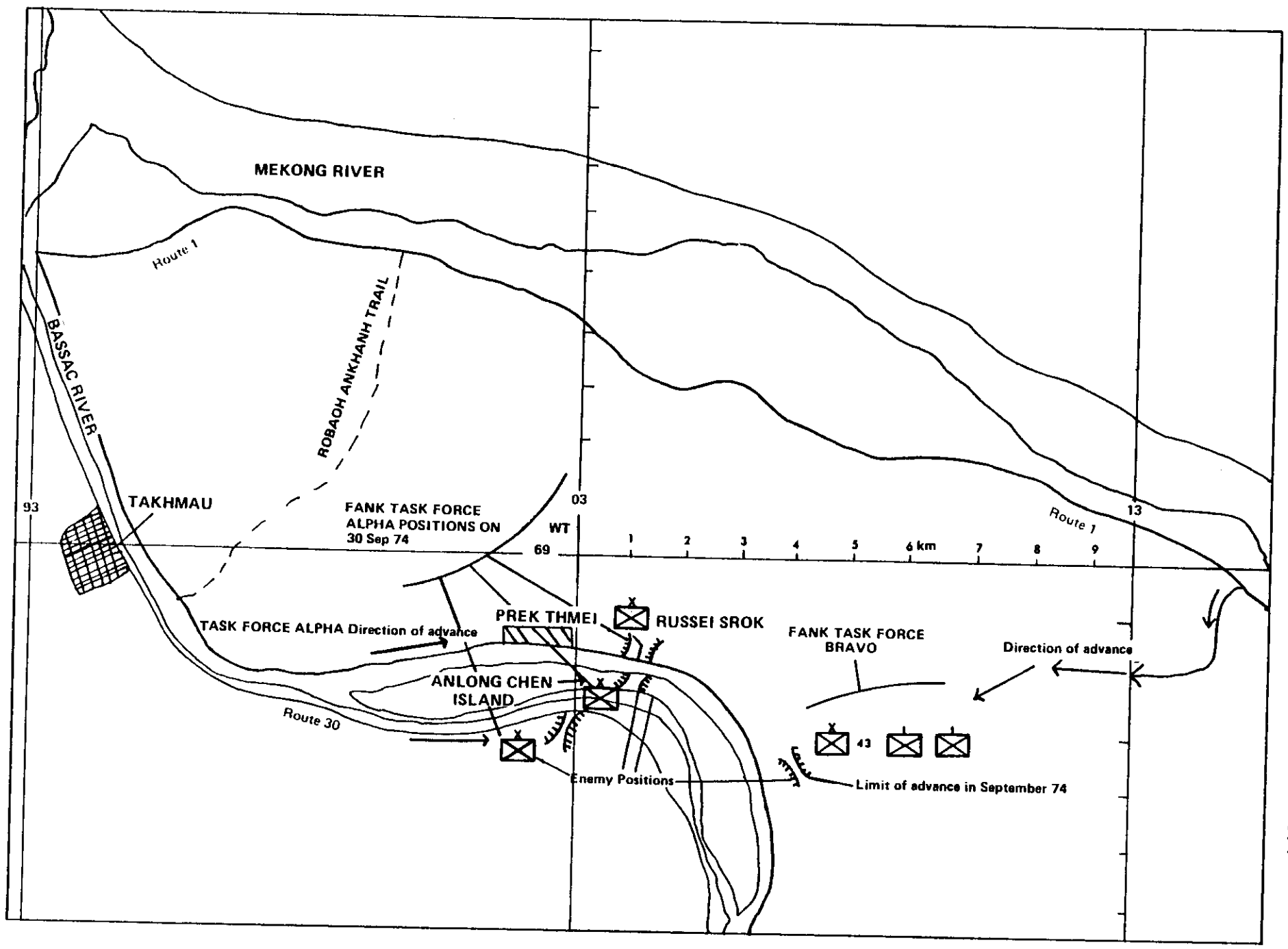
Enemy attacks against Mekong River convoys continued during August, but their intensity, by comparison with previous months, was lessened due to more frequent clearing operations. The majority of the attacks came from the west bank in the vicinity of Phu My, and consisted of: 75-mm RR; B-40/B-41 rocket; 12.8-mm machine gun fire. The cargo ship *HAY AN* was sunk.

In September, the Bassac operation in the southeast sector continued to grind out slow progress -- progress often measured in meters per week. (Map 26) Severe flooding continued to hamper maneuver and resupply. The enemy was well entrenched in ideal defensive positions along most avenues of approach and had heavy automatic weapons, rocket and other fire support. By the end of the month Task Force Alpha, consisting of three brigades of the 1st and 2d Divisions, a battalion of the 7th Division, two Kandal provincial battalions, and one M-113 squadron had reached Russei Srok (WT040673) on the north bank, WT042667 on the island, and WT025660 on the south bank. Task Force Bravo, consisting of the 43rd Brigade of the 2d Division, two battalions and one M-113 squadron were moving west across the corridor. They were stopped just short of the east bank at WT067653. This gap on the east bank between Russei Srok and Task Force Bravo provided the enemy a corridor through which he resupplied his units and infiltrated behind attacking forces. On 23 September, a reserve battalion of the 78th Brigade was driven from Prek Thmei (WT014625) by an enemy force in sampans, but the position was reoccupied the same day.

Attacks against Mekong River convoys were at a lower level in September than August; four convoys reached Phnom Penh during the month.

In October, the Bassac operation continued, making slow progress. On 2 October, an enemy counterattack in the Task Force Bravo area caused FANK to withdraw 1 km to the east, and continued enemy pressure prohibited friendly progress on either axis. On 19 October, heavy enemy attacks were directed toward Task Force Bravo, in an apparent attempt to cut the friendly locations at the Sophi bridge site. Repeated enemy ground attacks failed to dislodge the FANK defenders, as Khmer air support was of high order. On 24 and 25 October, elements of the

Map 26 - Operations in the Bassac - Mekong Corridor, September - December 1974



43rd Brigade conducted a sweep operation near the Sophi bridge site and killed 81 enemy during the two-day operation. The enemy continued its ground attacks and shellings against Task Force Bravo's area, failing however to take any friendly positions and paying a heavy price for their efforts.

The use of the Mekong was again unrestricted in October. Four convoys made the round trip from Vietnam to Phnom Penh, sustaining nine attacks by fire, light cargo damage, and no personnel losses.

During November, the northeast sector was the scene of a heroic defense by FANK of a position which blocked that area to the enemy for rocket positions. The FANK garrison at Barrong Khnar Kar, 14 kms northeast of the capital (WT070835) defeated an estimated 2-3 enemy regiments. The enemy, from Regiments 152, 153 and 182, (over 2,000 men as verified by prisoners and captured documents) hurled themselves against the small garrison on the morning of 10 November. The FANK defenders repulsed the first attack, suffering 4 killed and 28 wounded. However, on the following day, the determined enemy succeeded in overrunning two company-sized positions on the northern portion of the perimeter. Thirty-nine FANK soldiers were reported missing, including an unknown number killed in action. FANK reinforced the garrison with elements of the 128th Battalion and the complete 2d and 4th airborne battalions. Enemy attacks were launched almost daily against friendly positions for the next 13 days; however, government defenders successfully defeated each one. Friendly artillery and air support largely were responsible for over 400 attackers killed during this period. On 25 November, the garrison undertook to retake those positions lost on the 11th. In two days of heavy fighting, another 160 enemy were killed in action and the lost positions were retaken. November ended with FANK forces mopping up small pockets of resistance and with the enemy quitting the field. Final results of the 20-day battle were 558 enemy killed, 9 captured, 16 FANK soldiers killed and 185 FANK wounded. The defenders of Barrong Khnar Kar did themselves proud, and the KC incurred an expensive defeat.

In the southeast sector, the FANK operations in the Bassac area continued to "slug it out." On 5 November heavy enemy attacks against 72nd Brigade elements in Task Force Bravo of the operation resulted in 3 battalions retreating 1 km to the north. Friendly casualties were not high; however, the loss of terrain was significant. The enemy shifted his attention to Task Force Alpha on the east bank of the Bassac, which had taken 600 meters from the enemy during mid-month assaults. On the night of 24 November heavy enemy attacks into the rear of the 78th Brigade of Task Force Alpha resulted in a retreat of 700 meters to the west of three of its battalions. FANK defensive positions were quickly consolidated but on the early morning of 27 November, enemy attacks against the 78th Brigade again forced it to retreat to the west. FANK reinforced the area with 2 battalions of the 28th Brigade, and by the end of the month the situation appeared to be under control. Total casualties for the Bassac Operation during the month of November were 94 FANK killed, 499 wounded, while only 34 enemy were killed. The enemy probably lost more; however, FANK inability to sweep the battlefield precluded an accurate body count. The enemy launched several 107-mm rocket attacks from the southeast sector towards the capital city; however, none impacted within the city limits during the month.

Although there was some increase in harassment of Mekong convoys during November, the combined efforts of the Navy, Air Force, and Naval Infantry made possible four round-trip operations from RVN. On a resupply mission by river to Kompong Cham there were unfortunate losses, however. On 21 November, the enemy carried out a violent attack north of Phnom Penh. Of 316 tons of ammunition, 1,000 tons of rice, 50 tons of salt and 100 tons of POL shipped, only 25 tons of ammunition, 100 tons of POL and 25 tons of salt arrived. Enemy forces sank 2 ammunition junks, 1 USAID tug, 2 rice barges and 1 Navy monitor. Eight navy personnel were lost.

The Bassac Operation in the southeast sector was again the scene of heavy fighting in December. Early in the month, the enemy attacked the 78th Brigade and succeeded in completely decimating it. FANK

declared the unit ineffective and retired its colors, transferring remaining personnel to other units. The 24th Brigade, an independent brigade, was selected to replace the 78th Brigade in the 2d Division. A few days later the enemy attacked the 24th Brigade, defending in the Task Force Bravo area between Route 1 and the Bassac, forcing that unit to retreat in disorder with heavy casualties. By the 20th of the month FANK had reinforced the Task Force Alpha units with elements of the Airborne Brigade, who moved aggressively and enjoyed great success against the enemy. By 24 December, a defensive line was consolidated between Route 1 and the east bank of the Bassac River. The main FANK effort was then directed along the west bank of the Bassac. In order to clear the region and finally end the operation, four division commanders (1, 2, 3 and 7) cooperated in an operation which had their M-113 squadrons attacking abreast to sweep the last remainder of the enemy from the horseshoe portion west of the Bassac River, killing 63 enemy, and by 31 December terminating the Bassac Operation.

There were five Mekong convoys to Phnom Penh during December, four of which were subjected to some enemy attack. Two ships sustained significant damage.

## CHAPTER VII

### Closing Months, January - April 1975

The year of 1975 opened on the most somber of notes for the young Khmer Republic. The war had gone on for five years, during which Cambodia the Monarchy and "oasis of peace" had become Cambodia the Republic and "oasis of war." It was a period when all of the unhappy things of the world had been poured out on Cambodia: a war of aggression carried out by foreign forces, the VC/NVA, and a civil war, pitting Khmer against Khmer. While we had gained some allies on the international scene, these could not compensate for our losses on the battlefield. The morale of the FANK sank lower and lower, as the great sacrifices of yesterday's battle brought no relief, but, rather, presaged even greater hardship. Each year had seen the circle tighten around the population centers and particularly around the capital. Each year had seen the military capabilities of the enemy more than keep pace with those of the FANK, notwithstanding heroic efforts and generous military assistance.

By 1975 it was also clear to the various elements of the republican side that our internal political divisions could no longer be ignored if we were to have any hope of salvaging the situation for the Khmer Republic. The divisions between the political party in power, the Socio-Republican Party of Marshal Lon Nol, and the other parties were becoming deeper and deeper. No reconciliation was found. In his leadership Marshal Lon Nol was completely isolated from his companions of the early hours: General Sirik Matak, Mr. Cheng Heng, Mr. In Tam. The Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, with their Presidents, expressed their disagreement over the way in which Marshal Lon Nol carried out his responsibilities as chief executive of the country. Throughout 1974 and into the beginning of 1975 this discontent on the

part of the legislative branch manifested itself by several investigations into the conduct of certain cabinet members. The criticism of military and administrative matters became more and more violent, followed by social crises manifested particularly by dishonesty in the supply of food and in the almost vertical rise in prices. But the greatest damage from this internal crisis was complete division or non-cooperation between civil and military authorities. These two groups accused each other, on the slightest pretext, of the ills of the century and placed all blame on each other. The principle of all for one and one for all, advocated by Marshal Lon Nol, produced no result and this great wound became more and more open.

In this situation of political and military asphyxiation, the storm-tossed Khmer ship of state passed the helm to a new team and redoubled its efforts to find a negotiated settlement of the war.

#### *Peace Initiatives*

The Paris cease fire agreement for South Vietnam was signed on the 27th of January 1973 and the Joint Communique of Paris of 13 June specified the obligation of all parties concerned in the South Vietnam cease-fire to apply strictly Article 20 of those accords, an article which pertained specifically to Cambodia.

On the 29th of January 1973 Marshal Lon Nol seized the occasion to offer to the Khmer enemy a unilateral cease fire in place, as a means to finding a negotiated peace. In his radio message of 29 January he asked that the VC/NVA lay down their arms and that the Khmer communist forces rejoin their national community with a guarantee of general amnesty. The FANK for their part, suspended offensive operations against the enemy and limited themselves to defensive actions. The reactions to this peace offer varied. In certain national and foreign circles, the offer was seen as a "trial balloon", launched toward the Vietnamese Communists and the Khmer with a view to measuring the level of their goodwill and sincerity to observe the cease-fire agreement; it was also a gesture on the part of the Khmer Republic to demonstrate to international opinion its own desire to find national

reconciliation. For others this gesture toward peace was interpreted as a sign of weakness and was a factor which demoralized the FANK and caused them to lose their combat initiative. There was a feeling that it was useless to try to negotiate with the other side unless the FANK were in a strong position and this seemed all the more useless as 1973 was also the time when the fundamental policy of the United States had already shown an intention to carry out progressive disengagement from the Indochinese Peninsula.

As a result, this first peace initiative achieved no favorable response from the enemy who, rather, redoubled his political and military efforts at the expense of the Khmer Republic. If the FANK could congratulate themselves on the number of Khmer who rallied to the republican side during the years 1973 and 1974, giving thereby a favorable psychological lift to its cause, the same was not true in the practical world. The question of rallying created enormous social, economic, and political difficulty. The flood of refugees who fled the combat zones along with the ralliers drained the fragile economy of the Khmer Republic. Their feeding alone posed for the government an almost insoluble problem. This says nothing of the problem of security in the friendly camp, which was certainly endangered by the enemy practice of introducing its own agents among the groups of refugees. In a sense people viewed these massive rallyings to the Khmer Republic cause as a sort of bad joke, played on us by the Communists for the purpose of giving us more mouths than we could feed. At the same time the enemy could be freed from these groups who would be unable to play the role or make the contribution to the enemy effort which the enemy sought.

For our part we accepted the refugees with open arms. Whether traitor or not, these refugees were first of all human beings and it was up to the authorities to judge whether they properly belonged to the friendly or enemy group. Nevertheless, what did seem to lend support to this off-hand judgment was the fact that the vast majority of these refugees and ralliers were almost entirely made up of old people, wounded people, women and young children.

Thus we have the results of our first peace initiative. If the effect of the Paris Accords was to bring a certain calm to South Vietnam, permitting the antagonists to begin the processes of the cease-fire, it was altogether different on the battlefield of Cambodia. Months went by and the level of combat mounted, while Marshal Lon Nol persisted in his efforts to achieve peace as shown by the following chronology:

1. On 6 July 1973, he called for strict application of Article 20 of the Paris Accords, cease-fire between the forces of all parties, a withdrawal of all foreign troops from Cambodian territory, as well as their weapons and ammunition, a reactivation of the International Control Commission (ICC) for Cambodia, and discussions between the Khmer parties with a view to finding national reconciliation.

2. On the 9th of July 1974, the Khmer Government addressed once more an appeal to the Khmer Communist forces to commence peace talks without prior conditions. No favorable response came from the appeal of 9 July 1974, nor from appeals made at three additional times during 1974. Lon Nol reiterated his call for peace talks on 15 August during the course of Armed Forces Day celebrations, again on 9 October, on the occasion of the 4th anniversary of the Khmer Republic and finally on the 30th of November, after the victorious vote in the United Nations which maintained the seat of the Khmer Republic in the General Assembly and marked the adoption by that organization of a resolution asking the various parties to the Cambodia conflict to enter into negotiations.

In the absence of any positive response to these peace offers, the Khmer Republic began during 1974 and into 1975 to enlarge its foreign contacts, in order to gain additional sympathizers for its cause. Previously, the Khmer Republic had neglected this aspect of its diplomacy and there were many countries who simply did not understand the principle causes for the fighting in Cambodia. In line with this we made particular representations to the Arab nations and to the countries of Southeast Asia, and Latin America. We were, of course, greatly helped by the very effective work of the United States and its allies on our behalf.

## *Enemy Strategy*

The reactions of the enemy to our peace initiatives were in keeping with his overall strategy. The GRUNK of Prince Sihanouk became more intransigent as it found its international position reinforced among non-aligned countries, in Africa, and among the European communist countries. It drew strength as well from those Khmer within Cambodia who by now had come to be known as opportunists, those who would await and see what sort of deal might be made with the GRUNK in the event of the latter's victory.

In Chapter VI, I discussed the campaigns carried out by the enemy during the period 1972 to 1974. The objective of the Khmer Communists, an objective supported by the VC/NVA even though these latter had signed the cease-fire agreement for South Vietnam, remained always to isolate Phnom Penh from the other zones held by the FANK. With this being accomplished the capital and the other provincial centers survived only with the resources at their own disposition; communications with the capital and resupply from outside were possible only by air-drop. The zones of insecurity grew to the point that it prevented almost all normal activity by the population and by FANK forces who continued to hold certain important positions. After isolating the capital, the enemy massed the majority of his forces around the capital and began to carry out a campaign of harassment by rocket and mortar, both day and night. Beginning in January, the enemy carried out heavy attacks on Route 1, along the Mekong. During this same month the enemy was able to mine the Mekong, thereby blocking the passage of our resupply convoys and all Naval operations. At the same time, the air base at Pochentong was not spared; there, harassment of the airfield continued on a daily basis at the rate of some 30 to 40 rounds per day. In spite of this pounding this remarkable air base remained in service to both civil and military aircraft until the 15th of April, two days before the fall of Phnom Penh. It should be noted that the shipments of U.S. aid in rice, gasoline and military equipment, were carried out by cargo aircraft beginning on

16 February 1975, and these continued until the end of the first week of April.

*FANK Change of Command*

I returned to Phnom Penh on 20 February 1975 from New York after my assignment as a member of the Delegation of Khmer Republic to the 29th Session of the United Nations of 1974. I should note here that since the summer of 1972 I had spent all of my time attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the capacity of roving ambassador, and much of my time traveling abroad. During these two or more years I had not had the opportunity to follow the military situation closely, nor had I had a great deal of contact with the senior members of FANK.

Thus, it was a great surprise to me that starting only days after my return a good number of FANK general officers, including division and military region commanders and directors of logistic services came to see me. They wanted to make me aware of the political situation within the country and more particularly the military problems at that time. The one theme in the conversations of these officers, who, I might add, came to see me at my house time after time, was the request that I accept the idea of returning to military command and taking the posts of Chief of the General Staff and Commander-in-Chief of FANK. They confessed to me that they could no longer carry out their responsibilities in such an atmosphere of internal division and disagreement between the civil and military authorities of the same regime; and, in the circumstances they dared not try to exercise their responsibility of command any longer. At the same time, I was contacted as well by civil authorities, such as Mr. Long Boret, Prime Minister, and certain members of his cabinet who held responsible positions in the Socio-Republican Party. These latter contacts had the same objective, that is, that I consent to assume the functions of Chief of the General Staff and Commander-in-Chief of FANK.

These visits and entreaties went on for a month and I found myself in a real dilemma. Finally, with a clear conscience I agreed. Thus,

it was in a troubled atmosphere, charged with military and political tensions, that I relieved my friend, Lieutenant General Sosthene Fernandez, on 12 March 1975 at a ceremony presided over by Marshal Lon Nol and carried out with complete simplicity. As an interested party to this change of command I abstain here from all comment and confine myself to the facts of the matter. Marshal Lon Nol was not a stranger to this question either, because on two occasions during the month of February 1975 he had sounded me out, and asked me to take on this new mission. I accepted this post with complete understanding of what lay before me but again in good conscience because I had told my military and civilian friends quite frankly that it was my conviction that I would not be able to redress the military situation which then existed. The picture of the Khmer Republic which came to mind at that time was one of a sick man who survived only by outside means and that, in its condition, the administration of medication, however efficient it might be, was probably of no further value.

Thus, it was no great shock when I had my first briefing on the situation only hours following the change-of-command ceremony to see that the general military situation throughout Cambodia consisted of little more than defeats everywhere, due to various reasons: the lack of resupply; inefficiency; misunderstandings; and discontent, provoked by the conduct of certain senior officers.

#### *Military Operations*

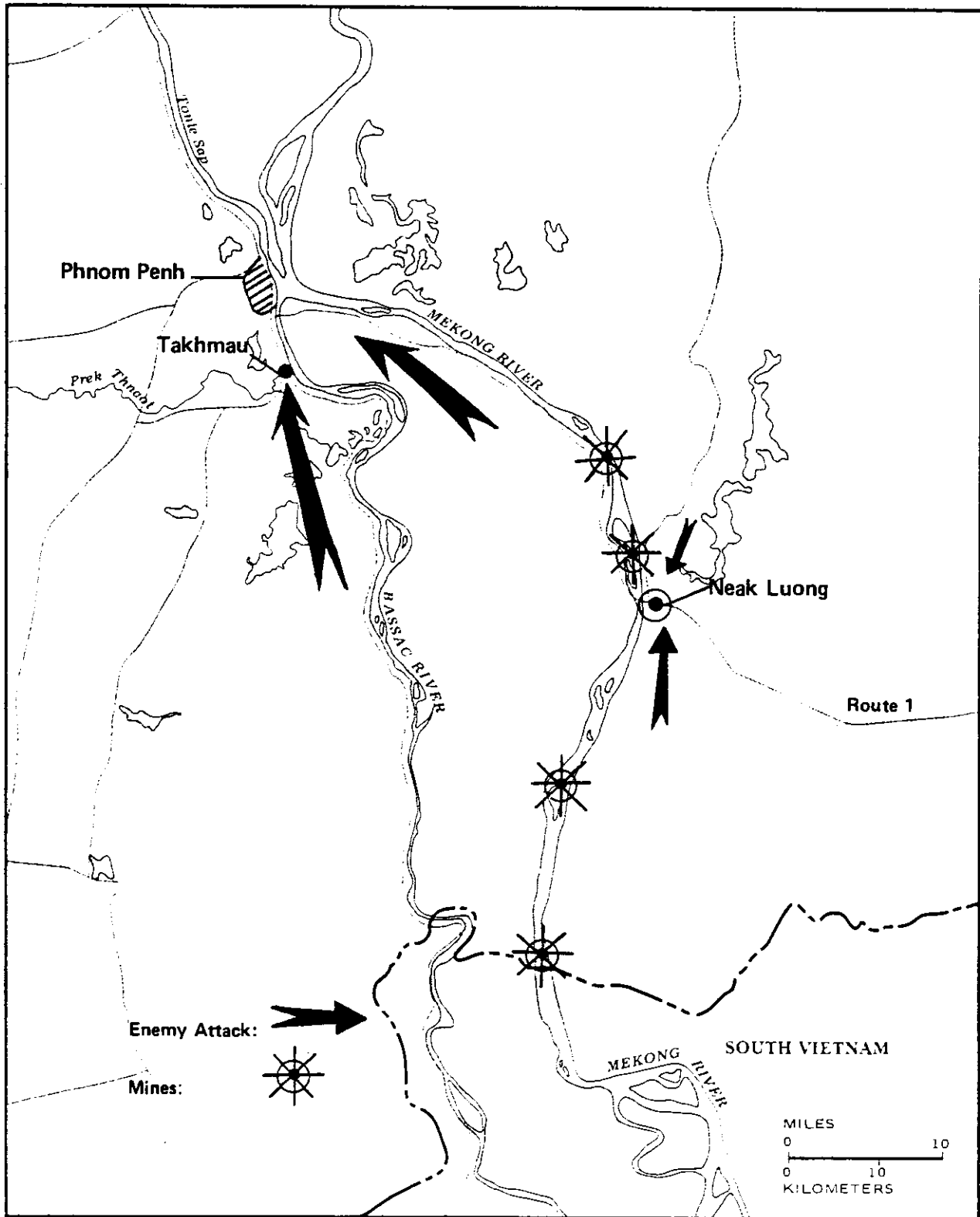
The fighting for Phnom Penh was by this time concentrated within a radius of some 15 kilometers of the capital. In the northwest, the 7th Division, whose units were primarily Khmer Krom, was in an increasingly difficult position. Its front had been cut in several places, particularly in the region of Toul Leap where the situation had changed hands several times. The 3rd Infantry Division, located on Route 4 in the vicinity of Bek Chan, some 10 kilometers west of Pochentong was cut off from its own command post at Kompong Speu.

In the south, the 1st Division handled the defense, along with the 15th Brigade of Brigadier General Lon Non; it was the calmest part of the front at that time. In the region of Takhmau, Route 1, and the Bassac, the 1st Division was subject to continued enemy pressure. East of the capital were the parachute brigade and the troops of the Phnom Penh Military Region. The Naval base and the Air Force base were defended by their own forces. The key position of Neak Luong on the east bank of the Mekong was completely isolated following many attacks. As for the state of the Air Force and the Navy, these two services were on their last gasp. Their best efforts simply could not satisfy the requirements stated by the ground forces. The general logistic situation for FANK was increasingly critical and the resupply of ammunition for the infantry could not be carried out except in a sporadic way.

The rapidly worsening situation of March was capped on the night of 1 April by the fall of Neak Luong, despite ferocious resistance and following many days of siege. (*Map 27*) This development opened the gates of the capital to the south and two days later all friendly positions on Route 1 above Neak Luong and held by the mostly Khmer Krom 1st Division, fell one after the other, in the course of heavy combat. All intervention, whether by road or by the Mekong, was impossible. The Mekong itself was mined in several places, and the capture of six 105-mm howitzers at Neak Luong was a further menace to Phnom Penh.

North of the capital, in the 7th Division area, enemy attacks came every day, and despite air support carried out day and night, there was no improvement in the situation there. Several counter-attacks by FANK, carried out to retake certain lost positions, met with no success. The losses suffered by this division grew and grew every day and the evacuation of its sick and wounded by helicopter was no longer possible. The last reserves of the high command, reconstituted hastily by taking the battalions of the former Provincial Guard, were rushed to the north, only to be completely dispersed by the enemy after several hours of combat. Finally, a great breach was

Map 27 -- Final Assault on Neak Luong and Closing of the Mekong, March 1975



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opened in the north defenses without hope of closing it. To the west, the troops of Brigadier General Chantaraingsei's 3rd Division, despite reinforcements, were unable to make junction with their own elements at Kompong Speu and to retake the position at Toul Leap. An error of computation which caused FANK artillery fire to land on 3rd Division elements during this operation had a very bad effect on the morale of that unit.

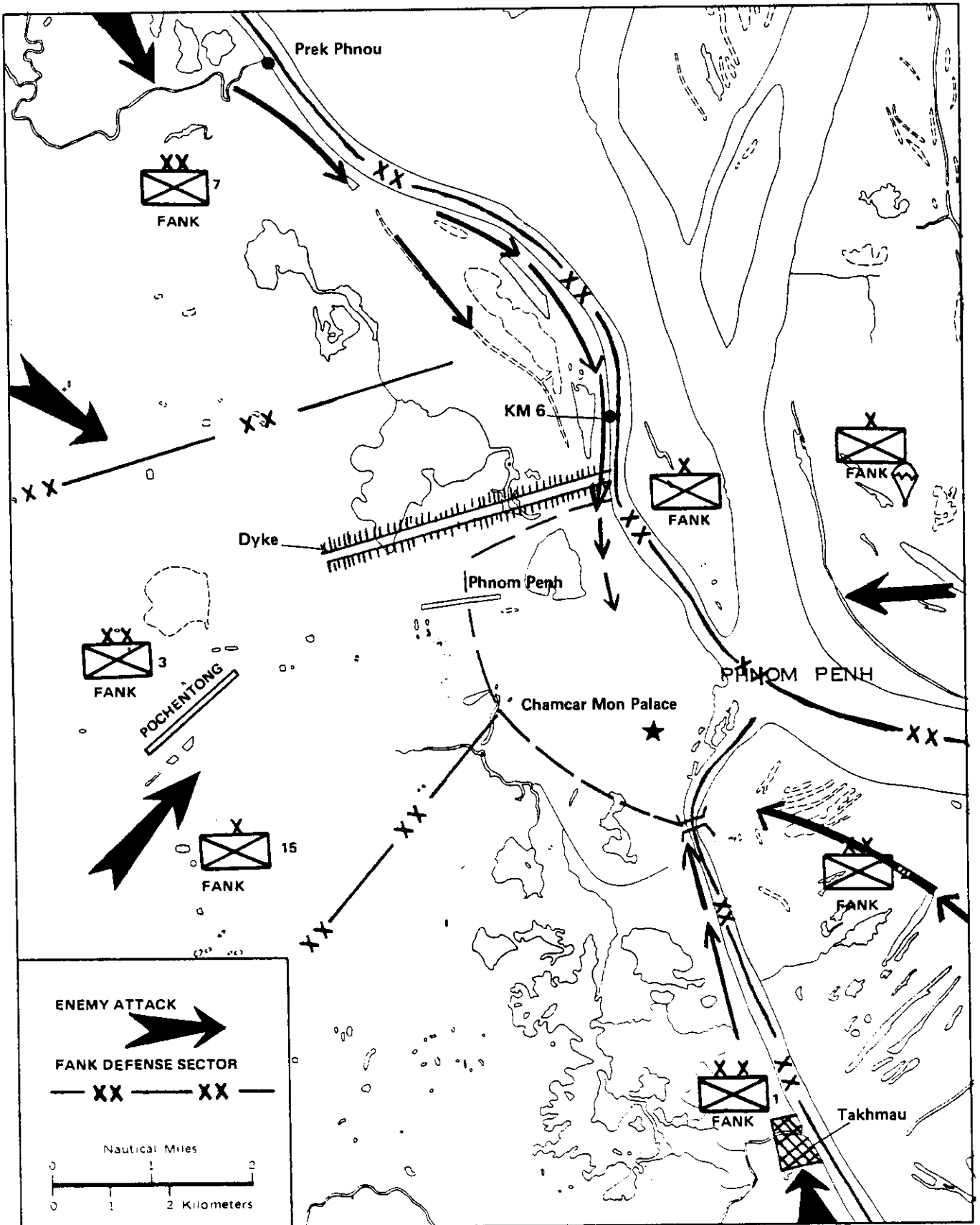
The situation I have described above developed during the period from 3 to 12 April 1975, a period during which civilian refugees never ceased to flow toward the capital, coming from all directions. The authorities, civil and military as well, were submerged and no one knew where to lodge them. Schools, pagodas, public gardens were completely occupied by these refugees and there was no way for the authorities to determine who was friend and who was enemy.

The unravelling of the five-year war of the Khmer Republic came, for all practical purposes, to its end on the day of 15 April when the town of Takhmau, the air base at Pochentong, and the dike running east/west to the north of Phnom Penh, all of which formed the last ring of defense around the capital, were overrun by enemy assault. (Map 28) The last units of the FANK, whose resupply of ammunition was no longer possible, the aerial resupply of U.S. assistance having been completely halted on 14 April, continued to fight to their last bullet. The intervention of the parachute brigade, brought back from the east of the Mekong, had no effect on the situation to the west of the capital. The brigade tried to move west but was able to get no further than 6 kilometers down Route 4.

#### *The Departure of Lon Nol*

The departure of Marshal Lon Nol from Phnom Penh on 1 April 1975 was, in effect, a final gesture on the part of all concerned in our efforts to move Cambodia toward peace. The various responsible elements in Cambodia, the National Assembly, the FANK, the leaders of Lon Nol's own Socio-Republican Party, had begun to wonder in 1974 whether or not

Map 28 — The Battle for Phnom Penh, April 1975



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Lon Nol's continued presence in Phnom Penh was perhaps an obstacle to peace. The peace initiatives which he had made in 1973 and 1974 produced no positive results. The military situation was becoming desperate, and the country was torn with internal political strife, as I have already noted. All of this was insufficient, however, to move Lon Nol himself to suggest that he go.

Finally, in January and February 1975, international opinion began to make itself felt. The countries of Southeast Asia, particularly those of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Japan, all began to make representations to our officials that they too considered that the absence of Lon Nol might help matters. The United States was interested as well, but appeared to prefer that the ASEAN countries take the lead in this. U.S. Ambassador Dean never discussed this question in any way with me, and I do not know whether Dean discussed it with anyone else in our government.

In these circumstances, the question came to be discussed more and more explicitly by the above-mentioned groups, leading in March to the adoption of formal resolutions that Lon Nol leave the country on a temporary basis, while the terms of a cease-fire were worked out. In late March, following my assumption of command, a delegation called on Lon Nol to present the resolution; he was shocked that the country would thus turn its back on him, and asked for a few days to consider the proposal. During this time, Lon Nol met separately with each member of the delegation in an effort to test the degree of unity among his detractors. Finding them both collectively and individually of one mind in support of the resolution as submitted, Lon Nol agreed to leave, asking that those remaining work for an honorable peace -- not simply capitulate -- and, failing that, continue the struggle.

The departure ceremony at the Chamcar Mon Palace was devoid of all fanfare and attended by Khmer only, the diplomatic corps having not been invited. From the grounds of Chamcar Mon, helicopters took Lon Nol, his family and party to Pochentong, where they boarded an Air Cambodia craft. Ambassador Dean was at Pochentong when

the group arrived. From Phnom Penh, Lon Nol traveled to the U.S. base at Utapao, Thailand, where a plane sent by the Government of Indonesia waited to take him to Bali. After several days in Bali, during which Lon Nol had an interview with President Suharto, the President of the Khmer Republic traveled to Hawaii to continue medical treatment for the effects of his 1971 stroke.

## CHAPTER VIII

### The Final Days of the Khmer Republic

My taking office, after the departure of Marshal Lon Nol, a departure desired by both the Khmer and the United States Embassy, gave evidence of a real effort on the part of both the Khmer Government and the United States to reach a peaceful and honorable solution to the struggle. The government called for a purge of certain key people. Although it was a little late in the game, this was carried out but not without difficulty. Everyone rejoiced, especially the civilian population from the highest placed to the most humble. It was thought, not unreasonably, that real negotiations would take place and that peace was at hand. The troops were tired of fighting, the ammunition supply was running low, supplies were increasingly difficult to deliver to the troops at the front as the battle raged around the besieged capital. People waited for a miracle which only the United States Congress could provide -- a favorable vote to continue military air support. Everyone hung on the radio listening for news from the United States. Alas, the decision -- a negative one -- was announced soon and caused an immediate and general panic. Nevertheless, President Ford did say that supplies would continue to be provided in accordance with the remaining credits of the original FY75 U.S. MAP.

#### *Departure of the U.S. Embassy*

On April 12, 1975, the American Embassy evacuated its staff, its Cambodian personnel, including their families, and Acting President Saukham Khoy (with whom Washington had some further plans) by helicopter in plain daylight. This spectacular evacuation, considered by many to

be a flight, as neither the Government nor the National Assembly knew about the mission of General Saukham Khoy, marked the beginning of the end for the Khmer Government. Not only was this a surprise, but it was also a moral shock of vital importance, as subsequent events proved. The U.S. plan was to evacuate certain other Khmer officials as well whose lives, according to U.S. Ambassador John Gunther Dean, were in danger. General Sisowath Sirik Matak was invited to join the exodus, as were General Lon Non, Mr. Long Boret, Pan Sothi, Long Botta, and General Saukham Khoy. General Sirik Matak courteously declined the invitation, as well as General Lon Non and Mr. Long Boret. All of these personalities were contacted separately by the U.S. Embassy. Mr. Long Boret, for example, did not know that General Saukham Khoy had been contacted or, if he had been, he thought that the latter had refused.

To the great surprise of the Americans, the entire Cabinet and all other military and civilian leaders decided to stay with their people (only one lower echelon member of the government, Undersecretary of Sports Mr. Long Botta, joined the fleeing party). The declaration of Prime Minister Long Boret, announcing the continuation of the fight, gave the keynote to the days to come. Even those who saw no more hope rejected the offer. Former Premier Sisowath Sirik Matak's widely circulated and moving letter explained eloquently why he chose to remain.

And, indeed, all was not yet lost. Not only Phnom Penh but almost all provincial capitals (except those in the east occupied by the North Vietnamese) were in the hands of the government, packed with millions of refugees who voted against Communism with their feet. Some reliable estimates put the number of the population under government control at six million and under Khmer Rouge control at one million. The Phnom Penh airfield was still in friendly hands (there was also a smaller one used by military planes), and an aerial bridge, much smaller than that of Berlin, could still have had the necessary effect. In fact, considerable quantities of food, ammunition, and medical supplies were parachuted every day by American planes, even after the evacuation.

### *The Last Government*

Events accelerated rapidly following the U.S. departure. On 12 April at 8:30 a.m., the Council of Ministers met in the office of Prime Minister Long Beret. It was decided that a sort of general assembly should be convoked, consisting of the highest functionaries and military leaders, members of the Cabinet, the President of the Senate par interim (Mr. Tep Hun), the President of the National Assembly (Mr. Ung Bun Hor), the representative of the Republican Party (Mr. Op Kim Ang). The President of the Democratic Party (Mr. Chau Sau), although invited, decided not to participate. From 2:00 p.m. the general assembly sat during the greater part of the day in the Chamcar Mon Palace. It finally adopted a unanimous resolution asking the transfer of power to the military and condemning Mr. Saukham Khoy for not handing over his office in a legitimate way. At 10:00 p.m. the Presidents of both Houses convoked all members to ask them to confirm the resolution, which they did unanimously.

At 11:00 p.m. the general assembly continued its session, accepted the decision of the two Houses, and elected the members of the Supreme Committee:

- Lt. General Sak Sutsakhan
- Maj. General Thong Van Fanmuong
- Rear Admiral Vong Sarendy
- Brig. General Ea Chhong
- Mr. Long Boret, Prime Minister
- Mr. Hang Thun Hak, Vice Prime Minister
- Mr. Op Kim Ang, Representative of the Republican Party

At 12 midnight I went to the General Staff to check the new developments at the front. The military situation had deteriorated sharply during the day. The Khmer Rouge threatened the capital from all sides. The fall of Neak Luong on the Mekong, an important communication center, was particularly disturbing. In the north our front was cut at several points by the massive attacks of the Communists, in spite of the fierce resistance of certain of our units. The airport, Pochentong, was in

immediate danger of being taken; therefore, the small military airport of Stung Mean Chey had to be designated as an emergency landing place for the planes and helicopters bringing ammunition and supplies.

April 13th, the Cambodian New Year, would have been celebrated with public festivities, sermons in the pagodas, family outings; this time, however, no official celebration took place. The Khmer Rouge continued to bombard Phnom Penh. At 9:00 a.m. the Supreme Committee of seven had its first session and elected me as its President. The vote was unanimous. The General Assembly sat from noon until late that night. It approved the election unanimously, and thus I had to assume power, being in a way both the head of the government and an interim Chief of State. I was fully conscious of the heavy responsibility laid upon me. I was faced with a desperate situation, one which in all sincerity exceeded my imagination. The progressive decline in morale among our soldiers during the previous weeks, as contrasted with the enthusiasm they showed during the five years of fighting, was frightening.

But I was equally conscious that during these five cruel years too much blood had been shed on Khmer soil, too many human lives had been sacrificed. So in the first hours of my assumption of power I arrived at the conviction that at any price I must find a way to an honorable peace immediately. It was in this spirit, completely devoid of illusions, bitterness or pride, that I decided to make our last peace offer to Prince Sihanouk. Late that night I called my first meeting of the Council of Ministers. The Council of Ministers—this time consisting of both the Supreme Committee and the Cabinet—composed a message to the nation to be read by me on Radio Phnom Penh. Other decisions included certain political and military measures, channeling the ever increasing stream of refugees into schools, pagodas, their feeding, the reshuffling of the cabinet, reinforcing the troops in Phnom Penh by flying in (through the smaller military airport) a few battalions from different provinces, etc. But one of the most important resolutions was the formation of an Ad Hoc Committee to prepare peace overtures with either Prince Sihanouk or the Khmer Rouge. Its chairman was Long Boret.

On April 14th the military situation was becoming increasingly precarious. That morning the Cabinet met at my office at the General Staff. It was important that I remain with my command post without interruption and equally important that the Cabinet follow the events closely, having contact with all fronts there. At 10:25 a.m., a tragic thing happened: a young Khmer pilot, won over by Communist propaganda, dropped four 250-pound bombs from his T-28 fighter bomber. Two of the bombs exploded about 20 yards from the office where we were meeting, but none of us were hurt. However, the bombs killed seven officers and N.C.O.s and wounded twenty others. The session continued. Our main task was to direct the refugees, now pouring in from all points of the compass, into hospitals, pagodas, schools, the university, etc. The atrocities committed against them in the neighboring villages left them no alternative other than to escape into the city.

That afternoon another one of our bastions fell, Takhmau, the capital of Kandal Province, which was only 11 km from Phnom Penh. The loss of this key town, a key point in our defense perimeter, had a demoralizing effect. Several counterattacks were initiated but to no avail. Soon a fierce battle was in progress in the southern suburbs. The Cabinet met again that evening, as it had every night. The mood was gloomy.

On 15 April almost everyone in Phnom Penh knew that President Ford had dropped his request for the \$333 million additional aid for Cambodia, in anticipation of Phnom Penh's imminent fall. Even the front-line soldiers were able to hear Khmer-language broadcasts of the Voice of America. It is true that, seeing the determination of the people to continue the fight, he reversed his stand, but the damage could not be repaired by then. Even in this last moment the morale could have been boosted by active American help. Numerical strength was on the government's side. The air bridge was functioning (although faltering), and aid even as low as \$50 million could have provided the army with ammunition, with about 20 surplus planes and a few dozen old tanks—all waiting to be delivered in Thailand. These could possibly have turned the tide of the battle.

The 15th began with the enemy pressing in from north and west. The number of the refugees quadrupled, quintupled, multiplied tenfold! Our police force was no longer sufficient to direct the refugees, despite the many students who offered their assistance. In fact, the Khmer Rouge used the terrorized people, peasants with their families, as a shield as they advanced. Rockets and shells rained on the city. In the north and west, fires started to flare up; depots of food, fuel and arms were on fire; and the population found itself in ever-increasing disarray. The fighting went on. The climax of the day's battle—so catastrophic for us!—was the fall of the Pochentong airport. Of course, at that time it could no longer be used by planes, but ammunition and food could still be dropped on it. Even greater were the consequences for the troops' morale. A few relief operations were undertaken but in vain. Our reinforcements did not arrive in time, and the enemy succeeded in cutting off the main arteries, preventing their use for relief operations.

I could not maintain contact with my family during those days. Leaving at 7:00 a.m. and returning around 2:00 or 3:00 a.m. the following day, I saw practically nobody. Anyway, I was too tired to discuss anything with anybody in the family. Besides, starting at 6:00 a.m., visitors were announced regularly, visitors I could not refuse to see. I ate on the run at impossible hours and hardly slept. I did not even visit my poor sick father, confined to his room. Always rushing, pressed and pushed from all sides, I just had time to tell my wife to be ready with the children for a forced departure. I did not think I would be able to join them for a long time. However, destiny decided differently.

### *One More Effort to Negotiate*

On 16 April, our early morning Cabinet meeting was devoted entirely to the mechanics of sending the peace offer to Peking as quickly as possible. Prime Minister Boret drafted it, asking for peace from Prince Sihanouk, so that every problem could be discussed in an atmosphere of serenity. But above all, the Khmer people needed peace. To this end we were ready for an immediate ceasefire and transfer of power to GRUNK and

to FUNK. We had two channels to forward the offer. We used the good offices of the representative of the UN and the International Red Cross, Mr. Scheller; he promised to forward it personally to Peking via Geneva. The second channel was the representative of the France Press who had rapid access to Peking and who also promised to pass on the offer.

In the meantime, the military situation was becoming worse. The morale of the population, of our functionaries, and of the military cadres was disastrously low. On the other hand, the leadership, aware of the peace offer they made, still nurtured some hope.

All afternoon we waited for the answer from Peking. By 11:00 p.m. an answer still had not arrived. We realized then that the Khmer Rouge did not want to accept our offer. We decided to have another meeting of the Ministers at my command post.

*The 17th of April 1975*

It was already 2:00 a.m. on the 17th of April when we agreed that, as our appeal had not been accepted and we did not want to succumb to the Communists, we would establish a government in exile (i.e., outside of Phnom Penh but still in Cambodia). We would transfer the Cabinet, the Supreme Committee, and even members of the Assembly to the north to the capital of Oddar Mean Chey Province. We planned to continue resisting there. The only way to leave the capital was by helicopter. We agreed to rendezvous the members of the Government at 4:00 a.m. in the garden in front of the Pagoda Botum Vaddey. We waited there for over an hour, but the helicopters we ordered to report there did not show up. The dawn was breaking over the eastern horizon. We said to ourselves that our plan was ruined and were ready to leave when our liaison officer appeared and announced that there were no more helicopters. All of them had left the city on operational missions and were prevented from returning. Even the few still in Phnom Penh the day before had left during the night.

Due to this shocking turn of events, we returned to Premier Long Boret's house. It was about 5:30 in the morning, and we decided to

resist to the death in Phnom Penh itself. After 6:00 a.m., while we held our meeting, the Minister of Information, Thong Lim Huong, brought the cable just arrived from Peking; our peace appeal had been rejected by Sihanouk. At the same time they branded the seven members of the Supreme Committee as chief traitors, in addition to the seven who had taken power in 1970. There was no longer any hope for peace for the Khmer people.

A little before 8:00 a.m. a strange calmness descended on the house of Long Boret. The rest of the Cabinet, the Deputies and Senators all left the session without saying a word, leaving us alone, Long Boret and me. This was the moment when General Thach Reng arrived to plead with us to yield to reason, to face the facts and leave with him, as he still had his men of the Special Forces and a few helicopters at his disposal. It was exactly 8:00 a.m. when I sent my aide-de-camp to tell my wife to join me with the children and Mrs. Sisowath Sirik Matak at the Olympic Stadium on the Boulevard ex-Moniret, renamed Boulevard Samapheap after 1970. I left the house of the Prime Minister in my official car and Long Boret in his. I arrived at the stadium at 8:10. My family was already there, and we boarded the helicopter General Thach Reng kept ready. When Long Boret arrived, he boarded our helicopter too, accompanied by Mr. Thong Lim Huong, Minister of Information. Both joined us while the pilot (without a copilot and used to flying only transport planes) tried to start the motor -- without success. It was decided to exchange the battery with that of another of the helicopters standing nearby. At this moment, Mrs. Long Boret, their two children, his sister and the family of Mrs. Diep Dinar, General Secretary of the Senate, and a good friend of the couple, arrived in the center of the stadium, loaded with luggage. Mr. Long Boret, followed by his faithful companion, Thong Lim Huong, left us to join the newcomers in another helicopter. His decision was normal, and I did not try to detain him; there were still two more helicopters and two pilots ready to take charge. At 8:30 a.m. our machine took off, and while we gained altitude I saw Mr. Long Boret and his family wander from one helicopter to the other. This was my

last view of our Prime Minister. I never knew exactly what happened to him afterwards.

We should have landed at Kompong Chhnang to get fuel, but the base radioed us not to land. So we continued our flight. Later, a little after my arrival in Thailand, I understood that the base was in the hands of defeatist officers and N.C.O.s who arrested all personalities of the Republican regime. I escaped this way a fate which would have cost my life. At 9:30 a.m. we arrived in Kompong Thom for refueling and to change pilots. Through establishing contact by radio with Phnom Penh, we understood that the enemy penetrated into the Headquarters of the General Staff and was engaged in the act of ordering all the personnel present to undress. Afterwards I heard the voice of General Mey Sichan who addressed the nation and all the troops in my name asking them to hoist the white flag as the sign of peace. Mey Sichan was interrupted while delivering his short message by a Khmer Rouge who yelled that they came as victors, as masters, and not as negotiators.

The troops in Kompong Thom and Siemreap were still loyal to their commanders and decided to resist. But the Governnor, General Teap Ben, and his family had to leave the city with us. There were two helicopters leaving Kompong Thom. In Siemreap the Governor and Commanders of the Military Region promised to protect our trip towards the frontier. He planned to join us later, but we heard that he was killed the same night.

At 1:30 p.m. we arrived in Oddar Meanchey, the last stop before crossing the Thai border. After a gloomy lunch and a short meeting with all the officers present, General Teap Ben offered to make the necessary steps to obtain entry visas for all those who wanted to leave. He returned to the Headquarters of the region at about 5:30 p.m. It was almost dark. Departure was scheduled for next morning very early. There were other groups which came from Kompong Som, Kampot, Phnom Penh, and Kompong Thom. They were mostly members of families of Air Force officers.

However, the night brought another alarming surprise for us. The nightmare began at about 10:00 p.m. and lasted until the early hours of the next morning. No one closed his eyes; all were on the watch waiting

for the least noise. The population of the place, after getting wind of my presence, demanded that the governor hand me over into their custody. Finally, a compromise was reached, and Colonel King Saman came to see me to get my assurance that he might first accompany his own family to the frontier. His wife and his numerous children then left in the middle of the night by car. The Colonel returned afterwards to the gathering of the region's civilian authorities and calmed them down by some miracle I cannot even imagine. This made it possible for us to carry out our original plan.

On April 18 the expedition began at 5:00 a.m. sharp. The only incident occurred when the guards at the airport did not want the groups walking on foot to pass. But they became reasonable after they received a large sum of money. In total darkness, the C-123 took off with a cargo of people weary from grief, lack of sleep, and fear. The trip was sad and silent, all of us lost in our thoughts, barely aware of what we had just experienced. The arrival at Utapao marked the end of the nightmare, but only for us, a few individuals.

## CHAPTER IX

### Analysis and Conclusions

During the early hours of its war, the Khmer Republic entertained the hope of resolving this grave problem by peaceful means, especially those means that could be undertaken by that great international organization, the United Nations. As a full member of the United Nations, Cambodia had, in fact, hoped that this organization would do for Cambodia what it had done for South Korea and Israel by committing its own security troops for the maintenance of peace. Unfortunately, our hopes did not come true. Of the five years of agony, and the many relevant events, both internal and external to Cambodia, I believe it useful to comment here on two decisions taken by the United States for reasons which related as much to the situation in that country as to the situation in Cambodia. They are not the decisions of initiative, the decisions to send U.S. troops into the communist sanctuary areas of Cambodia in 1970, or to accord the FANK a very generous military assistance; rather they are decisions of termination, the decisions to terminate its cross-border operations on 30 June 1970 and to terminate its presence in Phnom Penh on 12 April 1975. In both cases, the significance to Cambodia far exceeded their importance to the United States.

When President Nixon announced his decision to commit U.S. forces in Cambodia, an intervention which was designed to destroy the war potential of NVA/VC forces installed in Cambodia there was reason for the Cambodian leadership to feel immediately relieved and content. Indeed we witnessed, in the wake of this intervention, a marked, though temporary, decrease in combat capabilities on the part of the enemy. Knowing, however, that this important intervention

by U.S. forces was both limited in time and scope, the enemy avoided confrontation and was thus able to conserve his main forces while waiting out the deadline for U.S. withdrawal, only 60 days later. If a careful analysis were made of this aspect of the problem and from an enemy viewpoint, one might say that the enemy made a well-calculated move when his forces took the areas east of the Mekong River (Stung Treng, Kratie, Kompong Cham, Prey Veng and Svay Rieng) and used them as sanctuaries, firmly established this time deep in Cambodian territory. For friendly troops no longer occupied this part of Cambodia and in a certain sense intervention operations by U.S. and RVN forces in Cambodia merely pushed these mobile and viable enemy sanctuaries deeper inside this abandoned part of Cambodia.

On the Cambodian side, we observed that these operations consisted of frontal, rather than enveloping maneuvers. This gave the enemy ample opportunity for seeking refuge deeper inside Cambodia. Therefore, this part of Cambodia was effectively cut off and isolated from the rest of the country. The local population who stayed behind were thus caught in the grip and remained under the total control and domination of the enemy. Although the U.S. Air Force continued to apply its efforts to this region, enemy forces were nevertheless able to bring in reinforcements, organize themselves and eventually change the outlook of this war of aggression against Cambodia into one of civil war between Communist and Republican Khmer. If, in fact this operation was conducted solely within the framework of Vietnamization as the U.S. command had intended it, then it might be considered a success, because it largely contributed to the achievement of Vietnamization within the time limits imposed by the U.S. Government. On the other hand, the withdrawal of U.S. troops would be possible only if the RVNAF were capable of taking over. It was difficult at the time to tell that the RVNAF had that capability. For one thing, the NVA/VC sanctuaries were solidly anchored along the entire western border of South Vietnam. For another, the armed forces of South Vietnam were compelled to extend themselves precariously in order to fill the voids created by the departure of U.S. combat units.

As far as the FANK Command was concerned, however, and within the framework of its war efforts against the NVA/VC forces, the destruction or even occupation of that part of Cambodia which was under enemy control, if done on a temporary basis only, did not end the problem for FANK. For, while these temporary effects were sought by the U.S. command, in view of their absolute necessity for Vietnamization to succeed, their repercussions fell with all their weight onto the FANK, who were from the beginning not sufficiently prepared to confront an enemy of this size. To avoid massive bombings by U.S. and RVN forces, the enemy fell back deeper and deeper inside the Cambodian territory. These bombings and attacks by friendly forces also caused the complete evacuation of these areas by the civilian population, whereupon the enemy immediately moved in. The result of all this was that a sizable part of the Cambodian territory was lost to the enemy.

But if the destruction of these enemy sanctuaries had been followed by the permanent U.S. occupation of the recovered territory, it would have been much more beneficial to Cambodia, as well as to South Vietnam because, as we can now see, the enemy was able to reconstitute his forces and renew his activities from the destroyed sanctuaries. In addition, we have also to consider the psychological impact created by this operation which marked the last episode of the presence of U.S. combat troops in South Vietnam. The publicity with which the U.S. disengagement was made largely benefited the enemy, who took advantage of it to sap the morale of the civilian population and troops alike in Cambodia, as well as in South Vietnam. As a result, there was a certain lowering in morale on our side; during the same period, the other side, encouraged by ever-increasing support and assistance, became more aggressive and began to prepare for its eventual and final victory. The departure of U.S. troops on 30 June 1970, in the midst of this critical period, and during which the last decisive card was to be played thus resulted in a void so great on the allied side that neither the FANK nor the RVNAF were ever able to fill it.

Turning now to 12 April 1975, the departure of the U.S. Embassy was based on a U.S. judgment that the fall of Phnom Penh was imminent.

Clearly, the defense of Phnom Penh was related both to the will of the FANK to resist and their means to do so. Up to that point, the U.S. had been supplying the means. But here the internal situation in the U.S. came into play. The needs of the FANK were jeopardized by the most unfortunate Watergate scandal, which considerably weakened the prestige of the U.S. Executive Branch of government vis-a-vis the U.S. Congress and the American public. In a certain sense, the departure of President Nixon sealed the fate of the non-communist side in Indochina. Note that the U.S. Congress would not grant credits for additional help to Cambodia or South Vietnam in April 1975, even though this was known to be vital.

While I had no illusions about the situation or my ability to influence events when I accepted military command in March, I came to have some hope a little later, after taking office. It seemed that if there had been a little time and had the U.S. Government supported me, there never would have been a 17th of April so bloody and barbaric; in fact, there would have been no 17th of April. I still had several loyal and patriotic commanders of battalions who wanted, like I did, to purge the country of its most unhealthy elements. The young people, idealistic as everywhere, also approached me. The population saw a new ray of sunshine rise on the horizon, - warm, promising, stable and comforting after all the devastating storms that had raged since the beginning of the war. Morale began to surface, slowly, still hesitant but confident and hopeful of a better future. And it is appropriate to remind the Western reader that a few days before the catastrophe, a far-away people, small, because epic struggles in the past had weakened it, and great by its works of art, was still resisting, almost in its entirety, a foreign ideology which brought destruction to its social and cultural fabric and death to millions of its citizens.

With the fall of Cambodia there died a millennial civilization and -- irony of fate -- there was reborn -- in this 20th century -- a cynical demagoguery. While our plane hovered over the western plains of my country, I realized that it was not a question only of a little

nation, submerged under a murderous rule, but world totalitarianism, engulfing new territories on its march for the domination of the world. Will humanity stand still and simply watch the genocide committed against one poor, defenseless nation after the other, without reacting at all?

APPENDIX A

The Delegations to the Summit Conference<sup>1</sup>  
of the Indochinese Peoples, April 25, 1970<sup>1</sup>  
(The Canton Summit)

*Joint Declaration of the Summit Conference of the  
Indochinese Peoples, April 25, 1970*

The summit conference of the Indochinese peoples was held on April 24 and 25, 1970, in a locality of the Lao-Vietnam-China border area, on initiative of Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, Head of State of Cambodia and President of the National United Front of Kampuchea (FUNK). The three peoples of Indochina were represented by four delegations:

The delegation of the Cambodian people comprised:

Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, Head of State of Cambodia, President of the National United Front of Kampuchea, head of delegation.  
Samdech Penn Nouth, private advisor to the Head of State, delegate of FUNK, deputy head.  
Mr. Huot Sambath, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, delegate of FUNK.  
Mr. Sarin Chhak, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, delegate of FUNK.  
Mr. Chau Seng, delegate of FUNK.  
Mr. Thiounn Mumm, delegate of FUNK  
Mr. Roearng Mach, delegate of FUNK

The delegation of the Lao people comprised:

His Highness Prince Souphanouvong, President of the Lao Patriotic Front, head of delegation.  
Mr. Khamsouk Keola, Chairman of the Committee of the Alliance of Lao Patriotic Neutralist Forces, deputy head.  
Mr. Phoumi Vonvichit, Secretary General of the Central Committee of the Lao Patriotic Front, deputy head.  
Mr. Khamphay Boupha, Member of the Central Committee of the Lao Lao Patriotic Front.  
Mr. Oun Heuan Phounsavath, Deputy Director of the Information Bureau of the Lao Patriotic Front in Hanoi.

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Caldwell, Malcolm and Lek Tan, Cambodia in the Southeast Asian War, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1973. (pgs. 363-365).

The delegation of the people of the Republic of South Vietnam comprised:

- Lawyer Nguyen Huu Tho, President of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation, President of the Advisory Council of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam, head of delegation.
- Lawyer Trinh Dinh Thao, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces, Vice-President of the Advisory Council of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam, deputy head.
- Mrs. Nguyen Dinh Chi, Vice Chairman of the Thau Thien-Hue Revolutionary People's Committee, Vice Chairman of the Committee of the Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces for Hue City, member of the Advisory Council of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam.
- Mr. Le Quang, member of the Central Committee of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam.
- Professor Nguyen Van Hieu, member of the Central Committee of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation, Ambassador of the Republic of South Vietnam to Cambodia.
- Mr. Vo Dong Giang, member of the Central Committee of South Vietnam National Front for Liberation.

The delegation of the people of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam comprised:

- Mr. Pham Van Dong, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, head of delegation.
- Mr. Hoang Quoc Viet, Member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Fatherland Front, deputy head.
- Mr. Hoang Minh Giam, Member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Fatherland Front, Minister of Culture of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.
- Mr. Nguyen Co Thach, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.
- Mr. Nguyen Thuong, Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to Cambodia.

APPENDIX B

The Members of FUNK and GRUNK<sup>1</sup>

Government of the National United Front of Cambodia (FUNK):

Head of State and President: Samdech Norodom Sihanouk

Political Bureau of the Central Committee:

President: Samdech Penn Nouth  
General Secretary: Thiounn Prasith  
Members: Chan Youran  
Chau Seng  
Chea San  
General Duong Sam Ol  
Hou Yuon  
Hu Nim  
Huot Sambath  
Khieu Samphan  
Sarin Chhak  
Thiounn Mumm

Central Committee:

Ang Kim Khoan	General Duong Sam Ol
Chan Youran	Hak Seang Layny
Chau Seng	Han Mat
Chea San	Hay Kim Seang
Chem Snguon	Hou Yuon
Chou Chet	Heng Pich
Hu Nim	Ong Meang
Huot Sambath	Samdech Penn Nouth
Mme Ieng Thirith	Poc Doeus Komar
In Sokan	Ros Thol
Kiet Chhon	Sarin Chhak
Keo Meas	Seng Chongkal
Khieu Samphan	Sien An
Kong Sodip	Sor Thouk
Koy Toum	Suong Sikoeun
Krin Lean	Thiounn Mumm
Ly On	Thiounn Prasith

<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Caldwell, op. cit. (pgs. 384-386).

Princess Monique Sihanouk	Tiv Ol
Ngo Hou	Toch Kham Doeun
Ngo Taing Tykea	Ung Panharith
Ok Sakun	Van Pinny

Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia (GRUNK)

Prime Minister: Samdech Penn Nouth  
Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of National Defense:  
Khieu Samphan  
Minister Delegate to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers:  
Kiet Chhon  
Minister of Foreign Affairs: Sarin Chhak  
Minister of Information and Propaganda: Hu Nim  
Minister of Interior, Communal Reforms, and Cooperatives:  
Hou Yuon  
Minister of Economy and Finance: Thiounn Mumm  
Minister in charge of Special Missions: Chau Seng  
Minister in charge of the Coordination of Struggle for the  
National Liberation: Thiounn Prasith  
Minister of Popular Education and Youth: Chan Youran  
Minister of Equipment and Military Armament: General Duong  
Sam Ol  
Minister of Justice and Judiciary Reforms: Chea San  
Minister of Public Works, Telecommunication, and Reconstruc-  
tion: Huot Sambath  
Minister of Public Health, Religious, and Social Affairs:  
Ngo Hou  
Minister without Portfolio: H.R.H. Norodom Phourissara  
Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs: Poc Doeus Komar  
Vice-Minister of National Defense: Kong Sodip  
Vice-Minister of Interior and National Security: Sor Thouk  
Vice-Minister of Information and Propaganda: Tiv Ol  
Vice-Minister of Economy and Finance: Koy Thuon  
Vice-Minister of Popular Education and Youth: Mme Ieng Thirith  
Vice-Minister of Public Health, Religious, and Social Affairs:  
Chou Chet

High Military Command of the People's National Liberation Armed  
Forces of Cambodia

President: Khieu Samphan, Commander-in-Chief  
Vice President: Salot Sar, Chief of the Military Conduct of  
the Army  
Vice President: Nuon Chea, Chief of the Political Conduct of  
the Army  
Vice President: So Vanna, Deputy Chief of the Military Conduct  
of the Army  
Members: Thieun Chhith, Chief of the Conduct of the Military  
Materiel  
Son Sen, Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Committee of FUNK of Phnom Penh, Capital of Cambodia

President: H.R.H. Norodom Phourissara

Vice-President: Thiounn Thieunn

Vice-President: Mme Khieu Ponnary, Women's Representative

Members: Toch Phoeun, Civil Servants' Representative

Phouk Chhay, Youth and Students' Representative

Nguon Eng, Workers' Representative

Ros Chet Thor, Writers and Journalists' Representative

APPENDIX C

Major Items of U.S.-Furnished Equipment in FANK  
(Total Inventory by Year)

<u>Army Item</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>
Rifle M-16	41,351	69,224	158,115
Carbine, Cal 30	52,616	83,515	83,515
Machine Gun M-60	18	18	859
Machine Gun Cal 30	2,278	4,531	6,220
Mortar 60-mm	815	1,170	2,223
Mortar 81-mm	97	196	503
Grenade Launcher M-79	6,971	7,735	20,481
Recoilless Rifle 106-mm	7	33	304
Howitzer 75-mm	20	47	57
Howitzer 105-mm	69	134	208
Howitzer 155-mm	0	0	24
Ambulance 1/4T & 3/4T	41	139	380
Truck Dump 2-1/2T & 5T	0	24	76
Truck 2-1/2T Cargo	496	982	1,838
Truck 3/4T Cargo	0	441	758
Truck 1/4T Utility	220	647	1,264
Personnel Carrier M113	21	46	185
Personnel Carrier M106	3	7	17
Telephone TA1 & TA312	1,037	4,298	9,629
Radio AN/PRC 10	2,206	4,750	4,843
Radio AN/PRC 25	1,975	3,207	5,023
Radio AN/URC 46, 47	85	152	320

<u>Navy Item</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>
Patrol Boat River (PBR)	39	43	64
Armored Troop Carrier (ATC)	2	14	14
ATC (Refueler)	0	2	3
ATC (Recharger)	0	1	1
Command & Communications Boat (CCB)	0	1	2
Monitor with Flamethrower (ZIPPO)	0	1	1
Assault Support Patrol Boat (ASPB)	0	4	4
Minesweeper River (MSR/MSM)	0	6	5
Monitor	0	5	6
Landing Craft Medium (LCM6)	19	22	30
Landing Craft Medium (LCM8)	0	5	5
Combat Salvage Boat (CSB)	0	1	1
Landing Craft Utility (LCU/YFU)	1	4	4
Patrol Craft Fast (PCF)	0	4	20
Floating Crane (YD)	0	1	1
Mobile Support Base (MSB)	1	2	2
Infantry Landing Ship (LSIL/LCI)	2	2	2
Patrol Craft (YTL)	2	2	2
Yard Tug Light (YTL)	2	2	3
Drydock	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Total Craft	69	123	171

<u>Air Force Item</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>
T-28B/D	16	48	64
O-1D/A	17	31	37
AU-24	0	14	14
AC-47	3	6	14
C-47	10	15	11
U-1A	16	7	1
C-123K	0	0	8
UH-1H	14	19	34
UH-1GS	0	0	10
T-41	<u>0</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>18</u>
Total	76	154	211

APPENDIX D

FANK Order of the Day, 5 October 1971

Officers,  
Noncommissioned Officers,  
Men,  
of CHENLA II

In order to liberate our compatriots from the yoke of the enemy, and to fall upon the communist VC/NVA aggressors, CHENLA II was launched the 20th of August last on my instructions.

In six weeks of violent combat, during which you confirmed once more your determination to defend Khmer soil, you have overcome the enemy and destroyed his finest regiments.

The enemy has been put to flight, leaving on the field irreparable losses: four VC/NVA regiments were practically put out of action, and the materiel captured is even more considerable.

The losses inflicted on the enemy bear witness to the importance of your victory:

- 3,634 VC/NVA put out of action, of which 952 bodies were left on the battlefield
- 287 weapons captured, including 18 crew-served, of which two were 75-mm
- A large quantity of ammunition
- An important stock of food and fuel
- A great number of vehicles
- An important stock of latex

The morale of the enemy is, therefore, surely very low, and from this moment more than 100,000 of our compatriots return to the peace of the Khmer family, and the quietude of republican law.

Officers,  
Noncommissioned Officers,  
Men,

Your exploits have exceeded our hopes, and you have held high the flag of the Republic. You have earned the praise of the Fatherland.

Humbly do I bow before your dead. Their sacrifices are not in vain.

I salute your colors, and I address to you my most affectionate congratulations.

Nevertheless, still further sacrifices will be asked of you that the Nation may survive.

Now, forward, to victory.

Done at Phnom Penh, 5 October 1971  
Marshal Lon Nol, Commander-in-Chief  
and Chief of the General Staff, FANK

/s/ Lon Nol

## Glossary

ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asia Nations
CINPAC	Commander-In-Chief, Pacific
COMUSMACV	Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
COSVN	Central Office (for) South Vietnam
DAO	Defense Attache Office
DATT	Defense Attache
DRV	Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam
FANK	Forces Armees Nationales Khmeres (Khmer Armed Forces after 18 March 1970)
FARK	Forces Armees Royales Khmeres (Khmer Armed Forces prior to 18 March 1970)
FAO	Foreign Assistance Office (FANK)
FNL	Front for National Liberation
GKR	Government of the Khmer Republic
GVN	Government of (South) Vietnam
ICC	International Control Commission (First Indochina War)
KAF	Khmer Air Force (after 18 March 1970)
KC	Khmer Communists
MAAG	Military Assistance Advisory Group
MACV	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
MAP	Military Assistance Program (U.S. grant military assistance)
MEDTC	Military Equipment Delivery Team, Cambodia
MILSTRIP	Military Standard Requisitioning Procedures (U.S.)
MNK	Marine Nationale Khmère (Khmer Navy after 18 March 1970)

MR	Military Region
MRK	Marine Royale Khmère (Khmer Navy prior to 18 March 1970)
NLF	National Liberation Front
NVA	North Vietnamese Army
POL/MIL	Politico/Military Counselor
PRC	People's Republic of China
PRG	Provisional Revolutionary Government (Viet Cong)
RVN	Republic of Vietnam
RVNAF	Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces
SEATO	South East Asia Treaty Organization
TCN	Third-Country National
UN	United Nations
USAF	United States Air Force
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USN	United States Navy
VC/NVA	Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army
VNAF	Vietnam Air Force
VNN	Vietnam Navy