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Foe's Aim Is Puzzle in Cambodia

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PNOMPENH, Cambodia, Sept. 10—The United States Embassy here began moving into larger quarters today in anticipation of the arrival Saturday of the new American Ambassador Emory C. Swank, and a few more hands to help administer the increased American aid program.

Mr. Swank, the first United States Ambassador to Cambodia since 1965, will grapple quickly with the question uppermost in the minds of Cambodian officials, diplomats and just about everybody else here: What do the Communists really intend to do about Cambodia?

The daily briefings here, attended by the Soviet, Polish and East German military attaches along with the press, generate occasional excitement with the ups and downs of battles but provide no real clues to the true intentions of Hanoi.

There are some who say that Hanoi has not made up its mind whether to commit to battle the bulk of the 40,000 Communist troops said to be in this country or merely to harass the Government of Premier Lon Nol while keeping its principal pressure on South Vietnam. They say some clear indications may come with the dry season within two months.

Vietnam Termed Target

According to some estimates, only about 7,000 Communist troops have taken part in the fighting against the growing Cambodian Army, with the others remaining in reserve, providing logistical support and trying to drum up Cambodian recruits and to build sanctuaries in the countryside. Most of

the enemy moves so far seem to be designed to create a sense of insecurity in Cambodia.)

"It looks at this point as if their main interest is still Vietnam," said one official here. "They could throw more into this one even now and cause a bit more havoc. But to bring real disaster here, to bring down the Lon Nol Government, they would have to make a basic decision on manpower and resources. And that would dilute their energies for Vietnam."

There are those who will argue that come the dry season the Communists will put new and forceful efforts into Cambodia, where the going undoubtedly would be much easier than in South Vietnam. In this view, Hanoi would turn again to Vietnam once the number of American combat troops dwindle there.

Cambodians Disagree

Though optimistic in their assessments, Cambodian leaders take the view that Cambodia is already the top priority for Hanoi.

"Cambodia is the key to the war," said one high ranking Cambodian. "Before we ousted Sihanouk in March the Communists had all their supplies directed towards fighting in South Vietnam. That is why you have a war there that never ends."

"After the battles, they would come back into Cambodia. They would rest, recuperate, spend their vacations and even take promenades. Then they'd go back to fight. All thanks to Sihanouk.

"Certainly Cambodia was not the main objective before when we left them alone at the border areas. But now it is. If they

can't take Cambodia, the war will be over for them."

The more general view among diplomats and others here is that the Communists will do little to divert their energies from the effort in South Vietnam. They believe Hanoi will continue with its present protracted war strategy of small-scale operations involving pressure that stops short of jeopardizing the pace of the American withdrawal.)

Enemy Problems Seen

Those who argue against the chances of any all-out Communist effort in Cambodia in coming months cite several reasons. They say the arms and men could move into the country en masse but only at a high price.)

Supply and communications problems for the North Vietnamese and Vietcong troops would multiply and United States and South Vietnamese air strikes would take their toll, they say.

Moreover, they argue, there is considerable doubt in Hanoi, as elsewhere, about what the United States would do if it appeared that Cambodia was about to go under.

The Nixon Administration has made it clear that United States troops would not be used in Cambodia to save the regime of Premier Lon Nol.

But Washington has left the door open for the use of American troops there if United States forces in Vietnam were put in jeopardy by Communist actions in Cambodia.