

055445

C 206
FILE SUBJ.
DATE SUB-CAT.
10-71

IV. 22 Oct 71

C A M B O D I A

H 1

SPOKESMAN SAYS CRITICS MISUNDERSTOOD LON NOL'S MESSAGE

Phnom Penh Domestic Service in Cambodian 1410 GMT 21 Oct 71 D

[Statement of information minister, spokesman of the government]

[Text] The Government of the Khmer Republic has noted that certain media abroad misunderstood or misinterpreted certain parts of Marshal Lon Nol's message to the nation of 20 October 1971. Certain papers commented that the prime minister had said that our government had given up playing the game of fruitless democracy. Some other commentaries have falsely speculated that a military dictatorship has been established in the Khmer Republic. These interpretations perhaps result from a too rapid or superficial analysis of the events in Cambodia and the Marshal's message.

The minister of information would like to restate that the marshal and his government have never intended to give up the great principles of democracy in order to set up a dictatorship. On the contrary, the Government of the Khmer Republic has chosen a means for the sake of the success of the struggle of the Cambodian people against the Viet Cong-North Vietnamese aggressors. According to this view, the government has adopted another means in order to increase its capability in the war against the alien aggression until victory. This aim is considered primordial for us (? as for any other country) fighting a war for survival.

Further, we believe that these interpretations do not conform to the will of the marshal, since the marshal ever since the beginning has been one of the masterminds of the establishment of the republican regime in the country, especially after he stood against the dictatorship of the former regime. Thanks to the leadership of Marshal Lon Nol our Cambodian people were able to attain freedom after living for centuries under the feudal regime of the royal throne and under Sihanouk's dictatorship for the last 15 years. Hence, the Khmer Republic cannot intend to reject this precious freedom; but in the present situation, which has resulted from the barbarous aggression of the North Vietnamese troops, it is necessary for us to fully mobilize our forces throughout the country. This does not allow us to use our institutions as we would in a time of peace. However, the measures taken by the government of the Khmer Republic do not mean that we have forgotten our democratic ideals or that we intend to set up a new dictatorial regime. The various comments on some parts of Marshal Lon Nol's message of 20 October are mere misinterpretation or misunderstanding of the Cambodian problem.