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Cambodia - Communist China: Sihanouk hits Chinese for interfering in Cambodian affairs. (Page 2)

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Cambodia - Communist China: Prince Sihanouk has made his first explicit attack on Chinese Communist activities in Cambodia.

In a long, emotional press conference on 11 September, Sihanouk condemned China for "interfering" in Cambodia's internal affairs. His tirade was precipitated by a message sent by Peking to the Cambodian-Chinese Friendship Association after Sihanouk had dissolved it on 1 September for "subversive activities."

Sihanouk took strong exception to the fact that the message, in addition to standard attacks on the US and the USSR, contained a reference to "reactionaries." He interpreted this as Peking's first "official attack" on his regime.

Although Phnom Penh's relations with Peking have been cooling for almost a year, Sihanouk has tried to avoid an open rift. His position on relations with China, however, has been undermined by the evidence that Peking has given at least some encouragement to the increasingly assertive Cambodian left as well as by the course of China's internal and foreign affairs over the past year.

Sihanouk gave no indication, however, that he plans to follow up his anti-Chinese blast with concrete steps affecting formal relations between the two countries. In addition, he made it clear that a rapprochement with the West is not in the offing. His dismissal of the two remaining leftist cabinet members and the ban on all nongovernment newspapers in the country indicate that at least for the present he intends to concentrate on domestic problems.

Peking has avoided open attacks on the Cambodian Government, but Sihanouk's latest action may prompt the Chinese to change tactics. There have been a number of indications in recent months that Peking was

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becoming increasingly annoyed with Sihanouk. As
early as last July, a news bulletin [redacted]
[redacted] implicitly
criticized Sihanouk for anti-Chinese policies and
statements. The Chinese gave the Cambodian foreign
minister a cool reception when he visited Peking last
month. [redacted]

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