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[REDACTED]

CAMBODIA: There are signs of increasing political ferment in Phnom Penh.

25X1 [REDACTED] some students and Buddhist monks in the capital are planning anti-corruption demonstrations, including one aimed specifically at Acting Prime Minister Sirik Matak, whose alleged venality has been sharply criticized in civilian circles. [REDACTED] student agitators are also considering circulating petitions calling for the withdrawal of all foreign troops, including the South Vietnamese. The regime is aware of these developments, and several as yet unidentified persons apparently have been arrested.

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The possibility of demonstrations is also being used by some supporters of Prime Minister Lon Nol to discredit Matak. One junior officer, for example, is spreading the story that the impending demonstrations are part of a Matak-inspired plot to dump Lon Nol. Although this kind of talk is not likely to get out of hand, it is symptomatic of the fear for the future among those most closely associated with Lon Nol.

Concern that a threat to the government's stability may be developing apparently prompted a meeting of the government's extralegal "special coordinating committee." The committee, which is headed by the prime minister's brother Lon Non, has obtained Matak's approval in principle to establish a new ad hoc committee, ostensibly to facilitate action against government corruption and incompetence. The committee's recommendations may also be designed to increase its own power, which appears to have been in eclipse since Lon Nol's illness.

A more fundamental issue, namely the question of Lon Nol's ultimate successor, may also be involved. Cheng Heng and National Assembly President In Tam have recently stated that they are convinced that Lon Nol will have to step down soon. Some top military officers, who have been given an uncommon degree of freedom by Matak, have also expressed the view that even if Lon Nol returns he will not be

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able to exercise as much authority as before his illness. Under these circumstances, political rumor-mongering and maneuvering for power have increased and are likely to continue as long as Lon Nol is out of the country and his physical well-being is in doubt.



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FRANCE: Defense Minister Debre will soon introduce legislation to reorganize the armed forces into functional commands [redacted]

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Under the legislation, the three armed services--while maintaining their identities and individual roles for training and career purposes--would be realigned into five functional commands and four supporting services. The most important command would be the strategic nuclear force which would include Mirage IV bombers, land-based strategic missiles, and nuclear-powered ballistic-missile submarines.

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[redacted] the other functional commands would govern forces for combat maneuver, security for border defense, foreign intervention, and general purpose. The commands would be supported by common administration, logistics, personnel, and research and development services.

Under the reorganization, the present chief of staff and service heads would be relegated to less important roles. The new chief of staff would be General Roger Guernon, now the director of France's nuclear testing program.

In December 1969, Debre ordered a high-ranking commission to study the Ministry of Defense and make recommendations on the reorganization of the armed forces in an attempt to reduce duplication and waste in manpower and resources. Although the proposed reorganization might eliminate certain wasteful practices, it might also create significant problems in coordination and control by raising the number of command channels. The proposals could generate ill feelings among the present chiefs of staff and other senior military officials and probably would not significantly improve the posture of French combat forces.

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FRANCE-USSR:

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Moscow has agreed to enrich French uranium to be used in the nuclear power plant being built at Fessenheim, near Strasbourg. Although the Russians in the past few months reportedly have talked with both the Swedes and the West Germans about supplying enrichment services, this contract is the first actually signed between a West European country and the USSR. The US has been the sole supplier of such services to France in the past and might normally have expected to supply the service for Fessenheim. Signature of the contract is another step in France's continuing effort to strengthen bilateral ties with Moscow.

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