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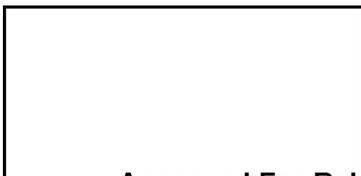


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State Department review completed

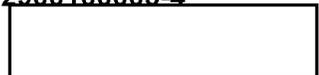
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CAMBODIA: Lon Nol ready to appoint new government.



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CAMBODIA: PRESIDENT LON NOL NOW APPEARS READY TO GO AHEAD WITH THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW GOVERNMENT.

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THE INCOMING FIRST MINISTER OF THE PROPOSED GOVERNMENT, HANG THUN HAK, HAS INFORMED THE US CHARGE THAT THE ANNOUNCEMENT WILL COME IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. WHAT IS PLANNED IS ESSENTIALLY A TEMPORARY RESHUFFLING OF OLD FACES IN THE EXISTING CABINET, A CHANGE THAT HOLDS LITTLE PROSPECT FOR IMPROVEMENT OF GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE.

HAK IS THE SECRETARY OF LON NOL'S SOCIO-REPUBLICAN PARTY AND IS GENERALLY REGARDED AS A MORE SKILLFUL BUT LESS COURAGEOUS POLITICIAN THAN THE OUTGOING INCUMBENT, SON NGOC THAN, WHOSE POLITICAL FUTURE APPARENTLY IS UNDECIDED.

THE PLAN ALSO FAILS TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THE KEY QUESTION OF THE VACANT VICE-PRESIDENCY. ON 8 OCTOBER LON NOL TOLD THE US CHARGE THAT HE WOULD HOLD THE POST OPEN FOR SIRIK MATAK PENDING A "MORE PROPITIOUS TIME," INDICATING THAT LON NOL IS STILL UNWILLING TO MEET MATAK'S DEMANDS THAT HE BE GIVEN THE NECESSARY AUTHORITY TO CARRY OUT MEANINGFUL GOVERNMENT REFORMS.

THE PROPOSED GOVERNMENT DOES REFLECT AT LEAST MARGINAL PROGRESS TOWARD THE MUTING OF PARTY HOSTILITIES AND THE CREATION OF A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY. LON NOL'S FORMULA DOES INCLUDE THE APPOINTMENT OF A MATAK MAN AS MINISTER OF JUSTICE, THUS GIVING THE REPUBLICAN PARTY AT LEAST SYMBOLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT. IT ALSO CREATES A BIPARTISAN "POLITICAL COMMITTEE" THAT IS TO REACH CONSENSUS ON POLICIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED BY THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

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