

299. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, May 19, 1970.

SUBJECT

Pressures on Hanoi

There are a number of indications that our Cambodian operations and the recent increase in tension throughout Indochina are generating pressures upon Hanoi and also between Hanoi and its allies. Some of these indications are the following:

—Hanoi's top party leader Le Duan spent three weeks in Moscow but left without any fanfare. This suggests that he and the Soviets did not reach a common understanding as to what to do at this point.

—The Soviet Union has still not recognized the Sihanouk government-in-exile.

—An "Izvestia" correspondent recently told a Japanese Foreign Office official that the situation in Indochina is "fluid," that Hanoi might be obliged to negotiate, and that the DRV is weakened by the long war and lacks "both the people and the material" to conduct "an expanded and protracted war." Soviet officials may have taken this line with Le Duan while he was in Moscow.

—On the other hand, the Chinese have almost overwhelmed Le Duan since he arrived in Peking on his way from Moscow. Mao Tse-tung, Lin Piao, Chou En-lai, and most other top Peking officials have seen him. China is apparently putting a lot of pressure on Hanoi to pursue the war.

—There have been no U.S. reconnaissance planes fired at over North Vietnam since the second of May.²

—Although Hanoi spoke very boldly of fighting "shoulder to shoulder" with the Cambodians before your April 30 speech, its rhetoric since that time has been more restrained. It speaks merely of increasing its "solidarity" with the Cambodians. Viet Cong organs and speakers, who are perhaps less concerned about the possible U.S. reaction to direct and overt involvement of their forces in Cambodia, still speak in very militant terms.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 146, Vietnam Country Files, Vietnam, May 1, 1970. Secret; Sensitive. Sent for information.

² The President wrote the following comment in the margin next to this sentence: "fly more flights."

—When Hanoi postponed last week's session in Paris, it did so in terms which clearly indicated that it did not want to disrupt the meetings completely. Moreover, the decision to postpone the session was not made until the very last moment although the President's speech and the bombing of North Vietnam took place five days before the meeting.

Hanoi Problems and Evaluation

These developments suggest that there are some real frictions between Hanoi and its allies and that the Hanoi leadership may have to review and evaluate recent developments before deciding what to do next.

Specifically, Cambodian developments have apparently created the following problems for the Hanoi leadership:

—They cannot now be certain what the U.S. will do under any given set of circumstances. They had not expected our move into Cambodia.

—They have lost a huge quantity of stores and valuable base areas. The loss will require considerable time to make up.

—If South Vietnamese and Cambodian forces can drive Communist forces out of the area south of the Mekong and the Parrot's Beak, Communist operations against South Vietnam will be much restricted.

—They are faced with an extension of the war at a time when they were already under pressure.

Hanoi Assets and Prospects

I do not believe we should exaggerate the problems which Hanoi faces all out of proportion. Obviously, the North Vietnamese still retain considerable assets:

—They have the best army and the best political organization in Southeast Asia.

—They probably also feel that recent demonstrations in the U.S. have placed some limits on our freedom of maneuver and that we may therefore not be able to react quite as firmly again.

—Despite conflicting pressures from Moscow and Peking, Hanoi may feel that ultimately both will have to fall into line with at least limited support for North Vietnamese efforts and policies.

—Last but not least, the Cambodian government is still very weak and the GVN is beset with severe political and economic difficulties.

Nonetheless, the developments of the last two weeks have probably complicated the options for Hanoi and compelled it to face some difficult decisions. It remains to be seen, perhaps in a month or two, what the leadership will decide to do.

300. Editorial Note

No minutes have been found for the Washington Special Actions Group meeting of May 20, 1970. The undated briefing memorandum for the meeting from Richard Kennedy and John Holdridge of the National Security Council Staff to Presidential Assistant Henry Kissinger provides a sense of the issues to be discussed. Kennedy and Holdridge noted that since the meeting of May 19 (see Document 297) one additional 1,000-man pack had been delivered to Phnom Penh. According to the briefing memorandum the issues to be discussed at the May 20 meeting were support for Khmer forces recruited in Thailand, and policy towards Cambodian combatants and refugees captured by U.S. and South Vietnamese forces. If time permitted, Kissinger was encouraged to raise the matter of maintenance for Cambodian T-28 aircraft.

According to the undated memorandum from Kennedy, the question of support for two Thai Khmer forces remained unresolved after the May 20 meeting with most issues still pending. The same lack of progress apparently occurred for the other two issues as well. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-074, WSAG Meeting, Cambodia, 5/20/70)

301. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Cambodia¹

Washington, May 21, 1970, 2051Z.

077899. Joint State Defense Message. REF: (a) State 70781;² (b) Phnom Penh 909 (Notal);³ (c) Saigon 7236 (Notal).⁴

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 27 CAMB/KHMER. Top Secret; Nodis; Khmer; Priority. Also sent to Saigon, CINCPAC, and MACV and repeated to Bangkok. Drafted by Johnson; cleared by Kissinger, Doolin (OSD/ISA), and Eliot; and approved by Rogers. An attached note from Kennedy to Johnson indicates that this telegram was approved by the President.

² Document 285.

³ See footnote 2, Document 293.

⁴ In telegram 7236 from Saigon, May 11, Berger reported on a conversation that Thieu and General Vien had in Tay Ninh that morning. Thieu feared that Lon Nol's government was in danger of falling. He promised to take no action without consulting the United States, but wanted to know what could be done. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 27 CAMB/KHMER)

1. This message provides supplementary guidance to that contained ref (a), with specific reference to actions in Cambodia of GVN forces.

2. Operations of ARVN forces must be consistent with the objectives of Vietnamization. In Cambodia, therefore, they should be limited to North Vietnamese occupied territory where enemy military activities threaten Vietnamization. ARVN forces must strengthen their capacity to fight the NVA/VC in South Vietnam. We should accordingly urge GVN to keep eyes on NVA/VC forces in South Vietnam and to focus effort on exploitation of opportunities to seriously damage those forces which destruction of supplies in sanctuaries now affords.

3. We want to encourage South Vietnamese to maintain a flexible posture concerning future operations in Cambodia, which would have principal objectives of (a) deterring enemy from reestablishing his previous posture in sanctuary areas threatening allied forces in South Vietnam and (b) deterring enemy from moving aggressively against Phnom Penh and the port areas of southern Cambodia by creating uncertainty about GVN reaction.

4. We want to make clear that restrictions which apply to U.S. forces after June 30 do not apply to SVN forces. We would favor short duration ARVN operations in sanctuary areas where required to protect ARVN/US forces and promote progress of Vietnamization. Fact that ARVN forces free to conduct such operations will serve as deterrent to enemy efforts to reoccupy and rebuild bases and sanctuaries and, should he attempt to do so, should permit their quick neutralization. We would be prepared to provide logistic and artillery support from the SVN side of the border and air support where necessary for such ARVN operations. We would prefer air support be provided by GVN but would not preclude U.S. air support if essential. We would not provide any other support or use U.S. advisors or other personnel within Cambodia.

5. On the other hand, we wish to discourage wide-ranging ARVN operations designed primarily to support Lon Nol government itself. We would not want to see ARVN forces involved in actions which would either (a) serve as pretext for an enemy attack on Phnom Penh to establish both military and political control over all Cambodia or (b) risk serious ARVN defeat. We want it made absolutely clear to GVN that we do not intend to fulfill ARVN's primary role of strengthening internal security in SVN.

6. At the same time, however, ARVN posture should be one which serves as deterrent to enemy assault on Phnom Penh or military effort designed to topple Lon Nol or to assert control over Cambodia. Accordingly, we prefer that no restrictions on ARVN operations be publicly stated. Actions should speak for themselves. Enemy should

perceive clear threat that, if he does move against Phnom Penh or increase level of his military pressure on Cambodia, ARVN forces will not be restricted in efforts to stop him.

7. We should encourage the GVN and ARVN to think in terms of assisting the Government of Cambodia in restoring its authority as far as possible in certain former sanctuary areas. Close liaison between GVN and GOC officials developed in the course of such efforts will improve Saigon–Phnom Penh relations and facilitate possible use of ARVN forces in these areas should that prove necessary.

8. Traditional Cambodian sensitivities regarding Vietnamese forces on Cambodian soil must be borne in mind. Although the South Vietnamese Government has exercised commendable restraint in its treatment of Cambodians in South Vietnam and in repatriating Vietnamese from Cambodia, there have been examples of excessively high South Vietnamese posture in Cambodia, which, if continued, could give rise to serious frictions. There is accordingly a need for South Vietnamese to maintain restraint and caution.

9. With foregoing guidelines in mind it is essential we be fully consulted by GVN concerning any future operations in Cambodia. GVN also should coordinate closely with GOC.

Rogers

302. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, undated.

SUBJECT

Special NSC Meeting on Cambodia, 3:00 p.m., Friday, May 22, 1970²

The restricted NSC meeting on Cambodia is scheduled for 3:00 p.m. on Friday, May 22. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss:

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-074, WSAG Meeting, Cambodia, 5/22/70. Top Secret. Sent for information. On the copy of this memorandum (ibid., NSC Files, Box 1324, Unfiled Material, 1 of 11) is a stamped note that reads: "The President has seen."

² The meeting was held in the Cabinet room, lasted from 3:02 to 4:53 p.m., and was attended by the President, Rogers, Mitchell, Laird, Helms, Wheeler, and Kissinger. (Ibid., White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) Apparently this meeting was so restricted that no one took notes; see Document 303.

(1) U.S. air operations in Cambodia, and (2) future South Vietnamese operations in Cambodia. I suggest you begin by calling on each of the following for about ten minutes each:

- General Wheeler for a rundown on sanctuary operations;³
- Director Helms for enemy reactions.

U.S. Tactical Air Operations in Cambodia

Issue: Should we conduct air operations against enemy tactical and logistical targets in Cambodia beyond the present 30 kilometer line?

Those who favor use of tactical air argue that there are profitable targets which can be identified. Attacks against enemy headquarters units, logistical facilities and infiltration routes in Cambodia would limit the enemy's ability to re-establish base areas or to threaten U.S. and Allied forces in South Vietnam. Such air attacks would keep the enemy off balance and by making clear that he cannot count on immunity from U.S. air, deter him from broadening his attacks in Cambodia.

Those who oppose tactical air attacks point out that accurate target identification will be difficult until ground reconnaissance and spotters can be introduced to supplement electronic and aerial surveillance. There is always the danger of some civilian casualties (but this can be controlled to a large extent). Unless present limits on MACV sortie rates are lifted, tactical air in Cambodia to some extent will be at the expense of effort elsewhere in the theater. There will be some adverse domestic public and Congressional reaction when such attacks become public knowledge—this reaction probably would be greater after June 30 than before.

Secretary Laird generally supports authorization for such attacks on selective basis. He doubts, however, the availability of many profitable targets. He also is concerned at the added costs which will further hurt his budgetary situation if sortie rates are increased to cover Cambodian operations. He believes that Congress has not been prepared to accept a wider use of U.S. tactical air, particularly after June 30.

Secretary Rogers probably will express reservations on the grounds of expected public and particularly Congressional reaction. He may also express concern over possible civilian casualties.⁴

³ Crossed out after this entry was: "Secretary Rogers for a résumé of diplomatic events." A new page reflecting the revision was inserted in the copy in the National Archives; see footnote 1 above.

⁴ Kissinger and the President discussed this issue and the restricted NSC meeting in a telephone conversation on May 22 at 6:20 p.m. Nixon told Kissinger, "I was heartened by the meeting today in terms of the Rogers thing. Schultz and others were saying there was a credibility gap. . . . But Rogers, who is the most sensitive, said it was not

General Wheeler and Mr. Helms support tactical air attacks now to take maximum advantage of the disruption of enemy units and supply facilities caused by the sanctuary attacks and to prevent the enemy from re-establishing supply routes in Cambodia.

*Your May 21 decision authorized:*⁵

—U.S. tactical air strikes to be conducted against enemy tactical and logistics targets in Cambodia to limit enemy capability to resupply forces which could threaten U.S. and allied units in South Vietnam;

—Waived the 30 kilometer limitation; and

—Specified that care should be taken to avoid strikes in heavily populated areas.

Your decision was based on the need to attack these targets to protect American forces in South Vietnam. (General Haig confirms that General Abrams can identify targets and wants authority to attack them.) You might wish to confirm your desire that these attacks go forward without delay. (You asked Secretary Laird to submit a plan by May 22.) There is no need to decide now on our policy after June 30—this can wait for an assessment of results of the strikes between now and then and a clearer picture of enemy actions and intentions at that time.

ARVN Operations in Cambodia

There are two issues:

(1) What limits should we try to impose on ARVN operations in Cambodia?

(2) What U.S. support should be given to such operations?

true." Kissinger noted that "Actually Bill [Rogers] agreed on bombing, which surprised me. It was Laird who disagreed." Nixon responded, "Yes. He also agreed with letting ARVN run loose. And that's exactly the right line. If they [the North Vietnamese] should take Sihanoukville, then we will let ARVN do the mining." Kissinger suggested that "someone will have to provide protection for them if the Russians decide to challenge them." The President felt "that was a long way down the road" and suggested that they concentrate on shaping up the White House staff and Cabinet and get them to realize that "we done something good." Kissinger agreed and noted that the debate was shifting to "what will happen to the ARVN after July 1." Nixon suggested that, "We can't object to Asians defending their own interests." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 363, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

⁵ On May 21 the President approved a plan he had requested from Laird to conduct tactical and B-52 air strikes in Cambodia beyond the 30 kilometer limit. The undated memorandum indicating Nixon's oral approval is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 335, Subject Files, Items to Discuss with the President, 1 May 1970–15 June 1970. Laird's plan is attached to a memorandum he sent to the President on May 22. Kissinger sent Laird a memorandum on May 23 that indicated Nixon's approval and asked that the plan be executed without delay. (Both *ibid.*, Box 103, Vietnam Subject Files, Freedom Deal)

Issue 1—Limits on ARVN Operations:

Those who favor continued ARVN operations point out that if we severely restrict those operations in the base areas, we could lose much of the longer term benefit to Vietnamization of the current successes against the sanctuary areas. If we foreclose ARVN operations elsewhere in Cambodia, we would be giving the enemy a free hand to secure the southern ports, to use military pressure to bring down the Cambodian Government, and to re-establish supply routes and bases for actions in South Vietnam.

Those who oppose point out that if the ARVN becomes obsessed with Cambodia, Vietnamization and pacification could suffer. There would be the risk that the ARVN could get in trouble and face a serious defeat unless we were willing to bail it out. Continued ARVN operations beyond the border sanctuary areas, unless specifically requested by Cambodia, also would risk serious damage to Cambodia-South Vietnam relations (there is an historical ethnic enmity).

Secretaries Rogers and Laird support a position of flexibility but would prefer that ARVN operations after June 30 be limited to short duration operations in the border sanctuary areas. Both may express concern over the effect on public and Congressional opinion of the appearance of U.S. acquiescence in wide-ranging ARVN operations, seen to be primarily aimed at supporting Lon Nol. Secretary Rogers may also emphasize the suspicion and possible growing estrangement between Cambodia and South Vietnam if the ARVN stays on.

General Wheeler and Mr. Helms support continued operations in the sanctuary areas to keep the enemy from threatening our forces in Vietnam and the flexibility for deeper operations as a deterrent.

Your Decision:

To protect U.S. forces in Vietnam and enhance Vietnamization, you decided to support continued ARVN operations:

- To continue clearing out the base areas;
- To prevent re-establishment of the base areas; and
- To deter broader enemy attacks against Phnom Penh or Cambodia's southern ports.

It would be preferable if all ARVN forces were withdrawn to South Vietnam and new operations after June 30 began from there.

You want the ARVN to concentrate on Vietnamization. You want to discourage wide-ranging ARVN operations which could be the pretext for enemy attacks. However, we would not publicly state a restriction in order to keep the enemy uncertain.⁶

⁶ This decision is reflected in Document 301.

Issue 2—U.S. Support for ARVN Cambodian Operations:

Those favoring U.S. support say that it will be important, though not necessarily crucial, to ARVN success. Operations in the base areas can be conducted without direct U.S. involvement in Cambodia—artillery and logistics support could be provided from the South Vietnamese side of the border. U.S. tactical air support in Cambodia, however, could make an important contribution to the ARVN's success in some circumstances.

Those who oppose argue that any U.S. support will generate domestic criticism and will not contribute significantly to our objectives.

Secretary Laird probably prefers that U.S. support be very limited and that air support be provided only in case of the most extreme need. Secretary Rogers probably prefers that no direct support be provided and that, in any event, no air support be provided to ARVN in Cambodia after June 30. Both positions rest on concern for domestic public reaction.

General Wheeler and Mr. Helms prefer air support if needed and artillery and logistics support from South Vietnam to keep the sanctuaries clear.

Your Decision: You approved U.S. artillery and logistic support from the South Vietnamese side of the border and, if needed, tactical air support (primary reliance to be on the Vietnamese Air Force). These actions support the objective of protecting U.S. forces in South Vietnam by assisting ARVN in keeping the sanctuaries clear.⁷

⁷ As reflected in Document 301.

303. Editorial Note

No minutes have been found for the Washington Special Actions Group meeting of May 22, 1970. The briefing memorandum for the meeting from John Holdridge of the National Security Council Staff to Presidential Assistant Henry Kissinger, May 22, provides a sense of the issues to be discussed. Holdridge noted that since the meeting of May 20 (see Document 300) the fourth 1,000-man pack had been delivered to Phnom Penh; a logistical survey of Cambodian ports had been undertaken that discovered that the port of Phnom Penh could handle 150–330 tons per day including stripped T-28's; and the United States agreed in principle to Thailand training two Khmer regiments for service in Cambodia. The issues still to be discussed at the May 22 meeting were the results of the restricted NSC meeting of May 22, the possibility of sending Cambodian speaking Thai regiments to Cambodia

until they could be replaced by the Thai Khmer regiments undergoing training, and other countries' aid to Cambodia. According to the briefing memorandum for the May 25 Washington Special Actions Group meeting from Holdridge to Kissinger, May 25, "At the May 22 meeting there was a consensus that Thai troops should not be sent, although there was the feeling that it might be advisable to collect these forces together in Thailand for possible use as a 'shock brigade' in Cambodia if the Communists launch a real push against Phnom Penh and the Lon Nol Government." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-074, WSAG Meeting, 5/22/70 and 5/25/70)

On the evening of May 22 at 6:05 p.m., Secretary of State Rogers discussed on the telephone with Kissinger the possibility of Thai Troops in Cambodia. Rogers stated: "On the Thai troop thing, I don't have any very strong views on it except that we ought to be thinking seriously about legal justifications for everything we do from now on. If, through carelessness or boldness, we do something contrary to law it will be a serious matter. There are lots of restrictions on uses of troops." Kissinger noted that "nothing should be shipped that hasn't been approved by the WSAG." Rogers countered that the WSAG wasn't necessarily concerned with legality. Both men agreed to highlight legal concerns at the next regular WSAG meeting. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 363, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

304. Memorandum for the Record¹

Washington, May 25, 1970.

SUBJECT

WSAG Meeting of 25 May 1970

PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Kissinger
Ambassador Johnson
Mr. Packard
Mr. Helms
Mr. Karamessines

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, DDO/ISG/IP/ARP Files, Job 74–251, Box 5 of 5, [file name not declassified] Memoranda, #1. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only.

1. Dr. Kissinger called a rump WSAG at the close of the 40 Committee meeting.² He first asked DOD to draw up a plan to move captured communist equipment to Phnom Penh. He said the President was anxious to go ahead with this but that the plan should be phased so that there was some assurance that arms could be used and would not be recaptured by the enemy.

2. On the Thai–Khmer regiments, Dr. Kissinger asked for confirmation that the field had been instructed to go ahead on forming these and training. He was told that recruitment of these regiments was proceeding but that no decisions had been made on money. Ambassador Johnson asked whether CIA expenditure of DOD money came under the same restrictions as if DOD spent the money. The Director answered yes. It was public money and if Congress placed restrictions on its expenditure that applied to CIA as much as to any other Agency or Department. Ambassador Johnson also asked for confirmation that the Cooper/Church Amendment would apply to Agency funds which were expended in Cambodia. Again the Director replied in the affirmative. There was considerable discussion on the legal aspects of all of this and Ambassador Johnson said his legal people would be getting together with Defense legal people tomorrow to try to plot contingency stage not only on the current Cooper/Church Amendment but on other amendments pending before the Congress which would be even more crippling. Ambassador Johnson wanted the Working Group to consider various actions proposed in the CIA paper of 22 May³ which would not immediately cost a lot of money. He also asked for consideration of arming and sending back into Cambodia the 3,000 FANK troops who had defected into Laos. There were some questions as to whether these FANKs would really be worth rearming.

3. On the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] request to introduce into Cambodia two regular Thai Army regiments, Dr. Kissinger clearly indicated that he was under pressure from above to agree to the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] proposal. After some discussion around the table the consensus was that it was better to hold these troops in reserve for an emergency. Dr. Kissinger said he would have difficulty getting clearance on the Johnson cable

² The account of the 40 Committee meeting, which only tangentially discussed Cambodia, is in a memorandum for the record by Jessup. (National Security Council, 303/40 Committee Files, Minutes, 1970)

³ This is the paper submitted by Nelson to Helms on May 20 and given to the WSAG on May 22; see footnote 4, Document 297.

of Friday⁴ which said this and in effect turned down the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] proposal. [*5½ lines of source text not declassified*]

4. [*1½ lines of source text not declassified*]

William E. Nelson
Chief, Far East Division

⁴ A draft cable of May 22. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-074, WSAG Meeting, 5/22/70)

305. National Security Study Memorandum 94¹

Washington, May 25, 1970.

TO

The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT

Diplomatic Initiatives on Indo-China

The President has directed that a study be prepared of diplomatic initiatives on Vietnam and Indo-China which might be taken following the June 30 completion of current military actions in Cambodia. The study should consider:

- U.S. strategy for convoking or participating in an international conference on Indo-China;
- Forums in which such a conference could be convoked;
- Proposals which the U.S. could put forward to bring about a settlement;
- U.S. strategy concerning regional conferences which might be called;
- Other initiatives which could be taken to move toward a settlement; and
- How proposals put forward or endorsed by the U.S. in an international conference should be related to on-going negotiations on Vietnam.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-028, NSC Meeting, Vietnam, Ceasefire, Diplomatic Initiatives, 7/21/70. Top Secret; Sensitive; Nodis. A copy was sent to Wheeler.

The study should present the advantages and disadvantages of alternative strategies concerning the U.S. approach to convoking or participating in a conference, of the various types of international forums for a conference, and of proposals which the U.S. might put forward or endorse.

The President has directed that this study be prepared by an ad hoc group chaired by a representative of the Secretary of State and including representatives of the addressees of the memorandum and of the NSC staff. It should be undertaken on a priority basis, and presented to the NSC Review Group not later than June 10, 1970.

Henry A. Kissinger

306. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, May 25, 1970.

SUBJECT

Situation in Cambodia

Attached are two cables² from General Haig describing the military and political situation in Cambodia, his conversations with Cambodian leaders and recommendations for actions which should be taken to shore-up the Cambodians.

Haig reports (Tab A)³ that the military situation is not bright and that:

—Most of the Northeast is under NVA/VC control and the enemy is infiltrating west across the Mekong. Only in the south has the situation stabilized as a result of ARVN cross-border operations.

—The Cambodian army is faced with conducting a war while at the same time developing a command and control structure, training existing forces, and equipping and training additional forces without a source for logistics.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 509, Country Files, Far East, Cambodia, Vol. VI, 23 May 1970–4 June 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Umbra. Initialed by Kissinger.

² The attached cables were undated and retyped.

³ Tab A was a summary of the military situation as of May 23.

—The inexperienced Cambodian army:

- consists of some 60 battalions of which about 2/3 are marginally effective.
- critically needs tactical communications equipment, small arms, and trucks.
- has an extremely weak intelligence capability, logistic system and training capacity.

Although political weaknesses exist the situation is not as immediately threatening as the military one. Haig reports (Tab B)⁴ that:

—There is no solid political opposition yet. The pro-Hanoi movement has not gotten off the ground. However, there is potential for conflict between younger reformers and the older political leadership, as well as the potential for factionalism within the army.

—Few individuals in the government realize that the war will be long and there is false optimism that massive American help and a few months training will allow the Cambodians to route the invaders.

—Cambodians at all levels distrust the Vietnamese.

—The basic political deficiencies stem from uncertainty of purpose and inexperience in governing.

As a result of his meetings with Lon Nol, General Pokse (Nol's Chief of Operations) and with General Matak and his assessment of the military and political situation (Tab E),⁵ Haig believes that:

—The situation is grave but not altogether hopeless.

—We must recognize the seriousness of the Cambodian plight with an even greater sense of urgency.

—We should take the following steps:

- Move Colonel Ladd to Phnom Penh as soon as possible to assist the government of Cambodia in establishing priorities for shipments of additional equipment, to coordinate with MACV and a representative of the GVN who should be sent to Phnom Penh, and to serve as our liaison with a combined coordinating staff from donor Asian states.

- Begin shipment of light weapons and individual equipment up to a total of 30,000 and ship all remaining 1,000 man packs immediately.

- Begin tactical and B-52 sorties in North East Cambodia (Lon Nol would warmly welcome this and the area for the most part is sparsely settled).

- Commence periodic GVN convoys and patrols along the Mekong River to Phnom Penh.

⁴ Tab B was the political assessment contained in the first telegram which also contained the military situation.

⁵ Tab C was an account of Haig's separate meetings with Lon Nol, Pakse Mon, and Sirik Matak on the morning, afternoon, and evening of May 23.

- Expedite the rehabilitation of Cambodian T-28s and urge Thailand to furnish up to 10 T-28s on a loan basis with a US replacement guarantee. The planes could initially be based in Thailand.
- Urge the South Vietnamese and Thais to send as many Khmer battalions as possible.
- Provide an observation aircraft for the US Defense Attaché in Phnom Penh.
- Send a high level US delegation to friendly Asian capitals to urge increased military and economic assistance.⁶

On the basis of his trip thus far, Haig concludes that:

—Without all or most of the above recommended steps the Lon Nol government's chances of surviving are dim at best.

—The Cambodian government can be expected to fight the NVA/VC to the best of its limited capability.

—The enemy appears to be taking a desperate gamble designed to offset blows to his sanctuaries by setting up a liberated area in the northeast or by liberating the entire country. The enemy is undertaking a campaign without prepositioning supplies or utilizing pre-established political cadres and political themes to motivate its forces.

—The enemy will remain inactive for an extended period in II, III and IV Corps. We should complicate his problems in Cambodia by helping the Cambodian government as much as possible while we press in South Vietnam to take advantage of the improved security situation.

—The conflict in Southeast Asia has changed fundamentally. Hanoi's deep involvement in Cambodia has seriously weakened its capacity to exert main force pressure on the South Vietnamese.

⁶ Nixon highlighted the lists of recommended steps and wrote the following notes: "K—go ahead" and "K, follow up on all these items."

307. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, May 26, 1970.

SUBJECT

Conversation with Lon Nol

Attached is a report from General Haig of his two-hour conversation with General Lon Nol.² During the discussion the Cambodian leader stressed that:

—The Cambodian people are behind him and ready to make sacrifices, but he must demonstrate an effective resistance to the enemy. It is imperative to expand the Cambodian government's presence throughout the countryside.

—Cambodia must have the wherewithal to resist, and it can't wait too long.

—Cambodia critically needs:

- light arms to equip 50,000 troops;
- additional air support;
- assistance in equipping and training Khmers in South Vietnam and Thailand (the Thais have promised to form one brigade and two regiments);
- help in keeping the Mekong River open.

—His government is definitely in the anti-communist struggle and will gladly enter the US bloc of nations if necessary.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 509, Country Files, Far East, Cambodia, Vol. VI, 23 May 1970–4 June 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. A stamped notation on the memorandum reads: "The President has seen." Nixon sent Haig to Cambodia and South Vietnam from May 19–26 to discuss with Lon Nol, Sirik Matak, Thieu, and other Cambodian and South Vietnamese officials the issue of U.S. and South Vietnamese military aid to Cambodia. (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 1010, Haig Special File, Vietnam/Cambodia, Haig's Trip, May 19–26, 1970) On May 19 Rogers telephoned Kissinger to ask about Haig's trip and whether "we are making representations to Lon Nol" and if the President was sending Lon Nol a letter. Kissinger replied that only one letter would be sent that introduced Haig, who was going to provide "some estimate of the situation, military effectiveness and what the problems are. A fact-finding mission." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 363, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File) For a critical account of the mission, see Shawcross, *Sideshow*, pp. 161–165.

² Attached was a "near verbatim text" of the conversation between Haig and Lon Nol which took place on May 23 at 10 a.m. in Lon Nol's office in Phnom Penh.

In his brief assessment of this conversation General Haig concludes that:

—The Cambodian leadership has burned its bridges completely and is resolved to hold firm.

—The leadership is badly shaken, if not desperate, and we must move promptly with more concrete manifestations of US support.

—Lon Nol is emotional and not very realistic (towards the end of the conversation he broke down). It would prove fatal to his government if he were to continue to expect a massive infusion of US assistance.

—Our most urgent task is to get the Cambodians to launch a realistic action program with essentially short-range goals designed to retain the support of the Cambodian people.

308. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, May 26, 1970.

SUBJECT

Report of Conversation with Sirik Matak

Attached is a report from General Haig of his conversation with First Deputy Prime Minister Sirik Matak.² During the course of their conversation Matak indicated that:

—there is an urgent need for an armed force sufficiently strong to oust the enemy from Cambodian territory;

—Sihanouk is finished in Cambodia and the people are just now realizing the role that Sihanouk played in collaborating with the enemy;

—Cambodia wishes to seek neutrality but would want to consult again with the United States on the question of neutrality if the situation reaches a state of emergency;

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 509, Country Files, Far East, Cambodia, Vol. VI, 23 May 1970–4 June 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. A stamped notation on the memorandum reads: "The President has seen."

² Attached was a "near verbatim text" of the conversation between Haig and Sirik Matak which took place on May 23 at 6 p.m. in Matak's residence in Phnom Penh.

—Cambodia has agreed to forget past difficulties with the South Vietnamese, but the potential for trouble exists. One aspect that complicates the problem is VC/NVA infiltration into groups of Vietnamese inhabitants;

—US air attacks in northeast Cambodia would be warmly welcomed;

—Sihanouk has managed to project a false image of Cambodia to Senators like Mansfield and Fulbright. Cambodia was not a peaceful oasis; its soldiers were being killed by the VC every day long ago, but it was not publicized. The leadership merely closed its eyes while the fabric of the country was being destroyed;

—According to captured documents, the North Vietnamese planned to keep Sihanouk as long as he was useful to them and then to liquidate him.

General Haig observes that Matak appears to be the moving force in the Cambodian government although willing to give full deference to Lon Nol for the present. Although Matak accepts the value of continuing with an ostensibly neutral stance for Cambodia, he feels (as does General Haig) that this posture may not survive and that flexibility should be retained on this issue in the longer term.

309. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, May 26, 1970.

SUBJECT

Conversation with President Thieu

Attached is a report from General Haig of his conversation with President Thieu on May 26.² In the course of the conversation, President Thieu:

—outlined his plans for future operations in Cambodia, which appear to be consistent with US guidelines;

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 509, Country Files, Far East, Cambodia, Vol. VI, 23 May 1970–4 June 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. A stamped notation on the memorandum reads: "The President has seen."

² Attached was an account of the conversation between Haig and Thieu and Bunker in the President's Palace in Saigon on May 26.

—discussed his broad strategy for the war after June 30, which is also entirely consistent with your desires. His plan includes maximum effort on pacification and concentration on destruction of enemy forces remaining in South Vietnam, new emphasis on control of the borders, and maximum effort against enemy infiltration of men and supplies;

—stated that the most important benefit of the Cambodian operation has been the fact that the enemy is now deprived of the security and freedom of movement he previously enjoyed in Cambodia;

—expressed complete understanding of Cambodian sensitivities and stated that he had already issued instructions to impose stronger control of GVN forces in Cambodia;

—suggested that we urgently consider improving Cambodian communications so that they can better control their forces and be aware of the battlefield situation;

—emphasized that a senior US military adviser is badly needed in Phnom Penh;

—said that he agrees with the assessment that Hanoi is hoping to topple Lon Nol quickly and cheaply, and that the answer rests with the will of the Cambodian people to resist until their forces can be rebuilt on a sounder footing.

In commenting on this meeting, Haig noted that:

—the issue of gravest consequence which should be receiving primary attention is what the GVN and US should do in the event NVA/VC forces make an all-out attack on Phnom Penh and the Cambodians urgently request help;

—it is essential that US spokesmen take an ambiguous and somewhat threatening position concerning future operations of the GVN.

310. Telegram From the Embassy in Vietnam to the Department of State¹

Saigon, May 27, 1970, 0937Z.

8218. Ref. A. State 070781; B. State 077899.²

Subject: Meeting With President Thieu, May 26, 1970.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 27 CAMB/KHMER. Top Secret; Nodis; Khmer.

² Documents 285 and 301.

1. General Abrams and I had detailed discussion with Thieu covering subject of reftels evening of May 26. Thieu found no problem with our presentation and agreed that guidance outlined should govern future actions.

2. As reported in my Saigon 7986,³ Thieu reiterated that it is not the GVN purpose to remain permanently in Cambodia. In GVN view, the main objective of the Cambodian operations is to assist and accelerate Vietnamization, to facilitate cleaning out remaining VC strongholds within Viet-Nam, and to destroy VC/NVA forces within country. It is not GVN purpose to take over either Cambodia's battle or its territory.

3. Thieu made the following additional comments:

—While he expects that all GVN forces will be out of Cambodia by 30 June, there may be some few caches which would need to be cleaned up.

—He hopes to work out arrangements with Cambodian Government which will permit limited cross-border operations to prevent enemy from rebuilding bases in Cambodia border area to preclude movement of forces across border from Cambodia into SVN and to prevent movement of enemy forces from SVN into Cambodia. Thieu believes that this latter move very likely to occur. He emphasized the fact that VC/NVA forces in III and IV Corps are now isolated and there is now opportunity to eliminate them.

—Since accelerated pacification program is to begin July 1, it is important that Vietnamese troops be in South Viet-Nam at that time.

—The GVN will study ways in which it can provide material support to the Lon Nol government to as great an extent as possible.

—It is important to keep the Mekong open to Phnom Penh but this does not appear to require strong military presence on the river.

—The GVN must do what it can to protect South Vietnamese residing in Cambodia. In this connection, access to Phnom Penh via Mekong important in case further evacuation necessary, but Thieu hopes it would be possible for Cambodian Government to maintain adequate security for ethnic Vietnamese.

—He feels that GVN must retain flexibility in regard to situation which could arise in case of a serious emergency such as an attack on Phnom Penh and a request for assistance from the Cambodian Government. He feels that we should try to arrive at a coordinated position on what action should be undertaken should such an emergency arise.

³ Dated May 23. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 27 CAMB/KHMER)

4. Thieu plans to review situation with his military commanders today to go over situation concerning operations in Cambodia and to alert them to requirements for accelerated pacification program to begin July 1. I shall try to secure read-out on this.

Bunker

311. Editorial Note

No minutes have been found for the Washington Special Actions Group meeting of May 27, 1970. The briefing memorandum for the meeting from John Holdridge of the National Security Council Staff to Presidential Assistant Henry Kissinger, May 26, provides a list of the items to be discussed. They were: "legal restrictions on our ability to supply U.S. arms and equipment to third countries; declassification of the Presidential Decision on aid to Cambodia; the possibility of sending Thai troops into Cambodia until they can be relieved by the two Khmer regiments; FARK request for assistance in Northeast Cambodia; CIA's proposals to augment irregular forces in South Laos; Indonesian military assistance to Cambodia; and legal restrictions related to the proposed Church-Cooper amendment under consideration in the Senate." The question of declassification of the Presidential aid determination was at Senator Fulbright's request and the Departments of State and Defense were prepared to declassify the actual determination. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-074, WSAG Meeting, 5/27/70) In the briefing memorandum for the June 2 Washington Special Actions Group Meeting, Holdridge reminded Kissinger that, "At the May 27 WSAG Meeting Ambassador Johnson pointed out that the only legal way he could see for the U.S. to support the introduction of the two Thai regiments into Cambodia was to identify them with the Black Panthers [Thai forces in Vietnam] as part of a program of 'fighting the Vietnam war in Cambodia.'" (Ibid., 6/2/70) According to Holdridge's May 26 briefing memorandum, the Cambodian request for reinforcement of northeast Cambodia by two Khmer Krom battalions raised a number of questions relating to feasibility, strategic advantage, and consultation. As for the CIA's alternatives for south Laos, the WSAG Working Group on Cambodia had been assigned the task of preparing a study. The issue did not need to be raised until it was complete. Indonesian military assistance had been promised, but had not been as yet delivered. (Ibid., 5/27/70)

312. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, undated.

SUBJECT

Issues for the May 31 Meeting

I have enclosed three papers addressing issues for discussion at the meeting on 31 May 1970.²

1. *Troop Withdrawals (Tab A)*

—The issue is whether we should speed up troop withdrawals.

—Secretary Laird's position is that there should be withdrawals in addition to the 50,000 presently scheduled by October 15.

—General Abrams prefers to limit withdrawals this year to 50,000 and has agreed to complete that withdrawal by October 15.

—My view is that the risks more than outweigh whatever small advantage could be gained by a speed-up of withdrawals. Since no timetable has been announced a speed-up would have little impact.³ We should withdraw enough forces to calm public opinion but we should do so slowly enough to give Hanoi an incentive to negotiate and to avoid risks to our forces.

—I recommend that you support General Abrams' recommendation that withdrawals this year be limited to 50,000 to be accomplished by October 15. I also recommend that you approve phased withdrawal of 100,000 after January 1 with the terminal date for the withdrawal to be determined at a later date based on your assessment of the situation and enemy reactions.

2. *ARVN Operations (Tab B)*

—The issues are what limits we should try to put on ARVN operations in Cambodia and what support we should give to such operations.

—This question you will recall has already been discussed in the NSC⁴ and the following four principles for continued support have been established:

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-074, WSAG Meeting, 5/22/70. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only.

² Attached but not printed.

³ Nixon underlined this sentence.

⁴ At the restricted meeting of May 22; see Document 302.

1. withdrawal of most ARVN forces by June 30 without precluding their reentry;
2. continued ARVN operations in the sanctuaries after June 30 to (a) remove supplies and (b) help prevent the re-establishment of caches;
3. a flexible ARVN posture which would deter but not serve as a pretext for wider enemy attacks in Cambodia; and
4. U.S. logistic and artillery from the South Vietnamese side of the border and tactical air support where necessary for ARVN operations in Cambodia.⁵

3. *Air Activity Rates in Southeast Asia (Tab C)*

—The issue is the level which should be established for air activity rates.

—Laird is pressing for the reduction of air operations on the basis of the following chart:

	<i>Current</i>	<i>JCS Proposal</i>		
	<i>Sorties</i>	<i>7/70–12/70</i>	<i>1/71–6/71</i>	<i>7/71–12/71</i>
B-52	1,400	1,000	1,000	900
7th AF	14,000	10,000	10,000	8,750
FWF	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
Navy	3,600	2,700	2,700	1,800
Marines	3,300	3,300	3,300	0

His major arguments are budgetary and cost-effectiveness.

—My view is that maintenance of the rate at least at present levels for the next few months will be important. We want to take advantage of the success of our Cambodian operations to keep the enemy's bases and logistic routes disrupted, and to attack his units in South Vietnam. We have authorized tactical air in Cambodia, are using it importantly in Laos and may provide some support to ARVN operations in Cambodia. Moreover, we should not decrease air activity in a way which could have the effect of lessening Hanoi's incentive to negotiate.

—We need to take a hard look, however, at where the money will come from to support the air activity rates and the effectiveness of our air activity.

—I recommend that air activity rates be maintained at present levels pending your review of a study to be done on an urgent basis of the financial aspects and effectiveness of air activity in Southeast Asia.

⁵ The President underlined "tactical air support where necessary" in this sentence and placed a question mark in the margin.

313. Memorandum of Conversation¹

San Clemente, California, May 31, 1970, 2:08 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

The President
Secretary of Defense
Deputy Secretary of Defense Packard
Chairman, JCS (General Earle Wheeler)
Chief of Naval Operations (Admiral Moorer)
CINCPAC (Admiral McCain)
MACV (General Abrams)
Mr. Henry Kissinger
Brigadier General Haig (notetaker)

The meeting commenced at 2:08 p.m. The first three minutes were utilized for press photography.

The President: I have asked you to come to San Clemente today so that we could take a close look at where we are in Southeast Asia, review the situation with emphasis on South Vietnam but include also discussion of Laos and Cambodia. We are now 30 days into our Cambodian operation and the public in general tends to believe that the military operation is all but over. For this reason, I would like to have the comments of the Secretary of Defense, the Chiefs as expressed by General Wheeler and Admiral Moorer, Admiral McCain and, of course, our Commander in the field. General Abrams, would you please present your appraisal of the situation.

General Abrams: I would like to begin by giving our appraisal from the enemy's perspective of what is happening in Cambodia and Laos:

—After sacking of the North Vietnamese Embassy in Phnom Penh by the Cambodians, the enemy commenced to develop a 360 degree improved defensive position around its base areas in Eastern Cambodia. This situation continued until about 26 March. At this point, pro-

¹Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 1024, Presidential/HAK memcons, Meeting at San Clemente with President, May 31, 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive. This memorandum was based on Haig's notes. A sanitized version of this meeting was typed on June 4 and given wider distribution. Haig's notes and the sanitized version are *ibid.* On June 2 at 9:12 a.m. Kissinger telephoned Rogers, who had been at the NATO ministers meeting, to tell him about this meeting: "You didn't miss anything. It would make you climb the wall. Abrams has been going around Cambodia but he gave no analysis—just where the units are—the tactical situation. Then we decided about the role of tactical at the NSC meeting. There was nothing." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 363, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

Sihanouk uprisings began to occur. These uprisings were centered around the rubber plantations and were instigated by VC/NVA cadres, with the intent of putting pressure on the Lon Nol Government. Concurrently, the Cambodians started to deploy FARK units towards the enemy sanctuary areas concentrating in the Snol and Mimot areas, as part of his overall strategy to push the enemy back into the sanctuaries.

—Then, on 1 April the enemy began to expand out of the sanctuary areas forming a 15 to 20 kilometer band from the tri-border area in the north to the sea in the south.

—By the 12th or 15th of April, the enemy had gotten specific guidance—we have documents to confirm this—setting up a new liberation movement and organizing cadres to support the movement. In effect, the enemy had established a head before they had developed a body and they were now trying to do this.

—On May 1, following our attacks, they reacted in a mixed fashion:

(a) In IV Corps, the enemy just tried to avoid Allied forces.

(b) In the Parrot's Beak, SR 2 and SR 3 tried to fight but took heavy losses.

(c) In the northern tier of III Corps, parts of the 7th NVA conducted a skillful delaying action, designed to protect COSVN headquarters.

(d) In Base Areas 350 and 351, opposite II Corps, the enemy moved out of the way.

(e) In Laos, the enemy moved to take Attoupeu on the Sekong River and Kratie and Sten Krang on the Mekong in Cambodia. In Laos, the enemy shifted his efforts from the north to the south, with the view toward developing a new logistics route over the Sekong and Mekong Rivers into III and IV Corps.

—In early May, the enemy suspended his infiltration groups in Laos destined for COSVN and held them up for about a week. We have intercepts to indicate that this caused some problems in that the groups started to consume rice stocks which had been prepositioned in the way stations for the rainy season.

—The 559th Transportation Group which runs all of the logistics system in Laos were told around May 11th to remain in Laos during the rainy season. This is abnormal since they usually return to North Vietnam during the rains.

—Between 10 and 22 May, 1,438 short tons of supplies were moved south from the Ashau area, suggesting a critical shortage in the III and IV Corps areas.

—On May 25, the enemy's pipeline around the western edge of the DMZ to Base Area 604 was reported operational.

On our side we have:

—Entered all the enemy's base areas in Cambodia, with the exception of Base Area 609.

—Gotten substantial amounts of supplies, hospitals, maintenance areas, small factory areas used to fabricate mines and munitions, and destroyed numerous logistical facilities.

—I believe we have disturbed COSVN, especially with our last three strikes which, with the second we forced them off the air for 30 hours and 20 minutes.

The President: How deep in were these strikes, General Abrams?

General Abrams: About 35 kilometers from the border.

The President: Then we have hit them in areas where they have not dug in.

General Abrams: I believe that is correct. Earlier, we captured a PW from the COSVN signal unit and he reported that they had received seven hours warning, that $\frac{2}{3}$ of COSVN had moved out while $\frac{1}{3}$ stayed and that many of those that remained were killed. He also described their tactic of placing their antenna approximately 2 kilometers from the staff section which the antenna supported. Consequently, we watched them day and night for a period of days, to get a pattern and then a firm fix on where the guts of the headquarters were located. Having gotten this fix, we think we significantly disturbed them, after instituting an entirely new system for delivering the strikes.

Dr. Kissinger: Didn't the prisoner state that they got their notice from Guam?

General Abrams: No, he was not specific. He merely stated that they had 7 hours' notice.

Mr. Laird: Of course, the Soviet trawler sitting off Guam reports to Peking when our B-52s take off and they, in turn, alert the enemy.

General Abrams: We had reviewed our whole B-52 targeting system on three separate occasions and removed many of the security holes but undoubtedly some still remained. The last three strikes we set up by establishing a compression calling for 35 sorties in 1 hour and 45 minutes. Only five officers besides myself in the headquarters knew the precise target. The B-52 pilots were briefed on primary and alternate targets and the whole system was fed information on an erroneous target. One hour and a half out, we gave new coordinates to the radar operator which he cranked into the system and guided the B-52s into the target. I am confident that this system has cut out the seven hour warning.

—In Vietnam, infiltration remains low, especially for the month of May, during which it rose to 13,900. The other months have been around 3,000 or 4,000. June will be at this level and perhaps July, although this could change.

General Wheeler: You are talking about arrivals, are you not?

General Abrams: Yes, we still have a good window on the infil-

tration business and the documents we captured in the Fish Hook corroborate the accuracy of our counting system.

—Terrorism has remained high with the most pressure in I Corps. There are 10 battalions just south of the DMZ which have been replenished through the DMZ. There are two regiments pointed towards Quan Tri City, four regiments pointed towards Hue and four regiments pointed towards the Da Nang area. During the week ending May 9, 100 U.S. KIA occurred in I Corps. This was 54% of the week's total. While this has dropped off since, it is still in I Corps where the pressure is highest. The enemy's pressure in the Highlands also continues. These are the only two bad areas where real main force pressure exists. These are the areas least affected by Cambodia.

The President: Do you think the stepup is the response to Cambodia?

General Abrams: Yes. In the future, we must:

(1) Have the South Vietnamese turn inward and clean out their problems in South Vietnam. Thieu agrees with this emphasis. Thieu has announced a renewed pacification effort, scheduled to commence on July 1 and running through October 31.

(2) Reinforce I Corps and II Corps with Vietnamese forces from III or IV Corps sometime in July.

The President: I know that your public appraisal of the ARVN has been high but what is your private assessment?

General Abrams: The ARVN has done better than I would ever have expected. Their combined operation up the Mekong River involving Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines was professionally done. All worked together. The Army were landed by helicopters and the Marines linked up over the water and relieved the Army in place. Throughout the operations, the Vietnamese Air Force provided close and continuous support.

The President: How do the Vietnamese people feel?

General Abrams: I cannot speak for the people but the Vietnamese military think the performance has been great. Up to now, they have been comparing themselves with U.S. forces. This time, they could compare themselves with the Cambodians and obtain an entirely different picture. Their pride is up.

The President: Then you could say that the operation has given us greater confidence in the Vietnamization program.

General Abrams: Yes.

The President: In terms of what is left, I recognize that from this point on it will level off although there still may be significant material. In your opinion is it worth digging any longer?

General Abrams: Yes, on a case-by-case basis. We are now using

Cambodians to help us locate caches and thus far, the reports have been about 50% accurate. We will not leave any U.S. forces one extra day longer in Cambodia if they are gainfully employed.

The President: How many U.S. troops have been engaged thus far?

Secretary Laird: There are 14,000 U.S. troops in there now. The highest figure was 19,000.

The President: But how many U.S. have been exposed in Cambodia all told? Also, how many GVN now and what was the highest total?

General Abrams: There are about 20,000 GVN in Cambodia now and at the high point it was 28,000. We will have to get other totals.

The President: This will be helpful to show the relative burdens.

General Abrams: They have also paid the highest price.

General Wheeler: That is correct. They have had 503 casualties as of today, while we have had 230.

The President: I would like to discuss some ideas for the future. I recognize that Laos is primarily CIA's responsibility but what can the Meos do offensively? To put it another way, is it not in our interest to keep three fronts active to the extent we are able? We should get the Meos to keep up the pressure and I would suspect the NVA may be somewhat weaker in Laos.

General Wheeler: Vang Pao started an offensive the other day which moved off easily the first day. Then they ran into very tough resistance. There were several NVA battalions in the area. I suspect the enemy does not wish to repeat last year's mistakes and also hopes to keep the pressure on themselves. It is obvious that the threat to Long Tieng is over. We may, however, be able to get some minor successes.

Admiral Moorer: Yesterday, Vang Pao reported he would keep pushing.

The President: Right. You should keep the heat on over the three fronts. This is vitally important to Vietnam. You must remember that all of the assistance we get there helps to bring Vietnam to a successful conclusion. Now is the time to keep the heat on so that the enemy doesn't assume that Cambodia was our last gasp. Before our operations started, I would have expected far more U.S. casualties. We have not seen the big stepup in casualties in Vietnam either, as so many predicted. Therefore:

(1) Clean out the sanctuaries as you have outlined and do not withdraw for domestic reasons but only for military reasons. We have taken all the heat on this one.

(2) On the South Vietnamese front, the primary objective must be the securing of Vietnam. For the ARVN, Cambodia is related to this objective and to that extent we want them to defend their interests in

Cambodia. Thus, we should urge them to take certain steps there. For our part, however, 30 June will mark the end of our ground operations. The enemy, however, must anticipate that the South Vietnamese will return if required. This involves the closest of judgments.

(3) Concerning U.S. support, we will not go back in with logistics or advisers. We will provide artillery support from the South Vietnamese side. Future air operations must be justified on the basis of U.S. security and goals. For example, striking COSVN in Cambodia. North-east Cambodia could be important for the security of our own forces if the enemy builds up there but our answer should be fuzzy on this issue. U.S. air power will be used for the purpose of defending U.S. forces in South Vietnam. That is what we say publicly. But now, let's talk about what we will actually do. Within the above guidelines, we may find that the South Vietnamese in Cambodia need our help and we can deal with that. In other words, publicly we say one thing. Actually, we do another. Mel, do you care to address this question?

Secretary Laird: This is a key point. We will not fly close air support for the South Vietnamese but only interdiction and only General Abrams should talk about that.

General Abrams: Whatever cross-border operations the South Vietnamese do after July 1, they probably won't need or ask for U.S. close air support.

Secretary Laird: Abe, tell the President of the VNAF's turn-about.

General Abrams: After Cambodia started, the South Vietnamese pilots were actually bribing their duty officers to get on the Sunday flying roster. In the past, we had been unable to get them to fly on Sunday.

The President: Then you think they won't need close air support?

General Abrams: We will get no pressure from them on this issue but problems may develop for them.

The President: Then you have authority, but publicly it is for defense of U.S. forces. Just do it. Don't come back and ask permission each time. We can deny publicly that we are providing close air support. Now I understand that the enemy may hit in I Corps. We have only had one good run at the choke points in North Vietnam so I want you to study these choke points.

Secretary Laird: Mr. President, there are seven highways and four choke points.

The President: Fine. Look at these carefully immediately and see if the enemy has restocked along these routes. Find out specifically what would be worth hitting if the enemy avoids my warnings and institutes another high point, especially in I Corps. We cannot sit here and let the enemy believe that Cambodia is our last gasp. We have taken all the heat and if we need to hit them again, let me know. In this instance, I want you to ask for this authority however.

Secretary Laird: General Abrams, give the President your views for the use of the ARVN airborne in I Corps.

General Abrams: I think we should now reenforce I Corps with South Vietnamese forces, using some combination of the strategic reserve such as their airborne and their marines and perhaps some cavalry squadrons from the IV Corps area. This, of course, will take some urging on our part.

The President: Does this mean that they will be in contact with the North Vietnamese in that area?

General Abrams: Yes, the airborne division has for the first time moved in Cambodia as a division. They are now perfectly competent to run their own show.

The President: In summary then, I would like you to prepare adequate plans which provide for:

- (1) Offensive operations in Laos.
- (2) Continuation of ARVN ground and U.S. air operations in Cambodia.
- (3) Provision for a summer offensive in South Vietnam (I am aware that you plan to initiate an offensive in III and IV Corps but I want to get the South Vietnamese to move offensively and at the same time keep our casualties low).

We have now arrived at a critical point. In July and August, the enemy cannot be led to believe that we have shot our wad. They must feel we are going ahead. Dr. Kissinger, would you care to comment on this?

Dr. Kissinger: I agree completely. The enemy will now have to reassess his priorities. We need especially strong air action during July and August.

The President: We also need a contingency plan in the event Lon Nol falls or in the event Matak takes over. In either event, the enemy might move on Phnom Penh, either through a coup or by direct military action. To preclude such an event, the South Vietnamese should constitute a deterrent. For this reason, we cannot leash the South Vietnamese but suppose the worst happens and Phnom Penh falls, then the port area becomes critical. In any event, it must stay closed. Therefore, we need a South Vietnamese plan to deny the ports to the enemy. We should think about this point especially. Another point is Cambodia itself. We have had quite a go-around on this one. Suharto told me he wants to help, even though he is for non-alignment. He made a strong pitch for modest U.S. replacements for Indonesian Soviet equipment which they, in turn, would provide to Cambodia. Indonesia wants to play a role in Southeast Asia. They want the South Vietnamese and Cambodians to hold. They are willing and actually wish to help with Russian equipment, if we can replace what they provide with U.S. equipment. We certainly need others to help Lon Nol even if only in a psychological sense. Indonesia should take the lead. Let's get a better effort from them.

Admiral McCain: Yes, Mr. President, we must encourage these people.

The President: Mr. Packard, cannot the Japanese be of more help?

Mr. Packard: Thus far, only with credits but they could certainly do more.

The President: We must not be out all alone on this one. We need the Asians to do more. We should not worry about amounts so much as the importance of getting something done quickly. President Suharto expressed great concern to me about the Soviet presence in the waters of the Pacific.

Admiral McCain: They are also beginning to worry about the resurgence of Japanese militarism.

Mr. Packard: Hopefully, we can get the Japanese to provide some open credit to the Cambodians.

The President: Mr. Kissinger, let's get moving on this. Sato certainly owes us one. Push Japanese action either with liberal credit or as an outright gift. On the military side, I want Mr. Ladd to go to Phnom Penh. He should do this not later than Thursday.² It is essential that the Cambodians know that we are behind them. How is our new military attaché performing?³

General Abrams: I am worried about this guy. He is too smooth. His discussions with me reflect supreme confidence. He seems dangerous. He brought in that Cambodian Brigadier General which we did not expect, who wanted all kinds of things to include dental work. Pietsch wanted me to see him but I refused to do so. Pietsch is making the U.S. profile too high.

Secretary Laird: We want to keep our assistance to Cambodia in South Vietnamese channels.

General Abrams: Yes, the Joint General Staff is sending representatives to Phnom Penh to assist with this.

The President: Where do we stand on Thai assistance?

General Abrams: I have grave doubts about their advice to the Cambodians and the provision of fighting troops. They have problems along their northern border which they themselves do not know how to solve. In my view, they need their people at home.

Secretary Laird: Exactly. Cambodia should work in their own north.

General Abrams: They should not send two regiments to Cambodia. The Thais just do not know how to do it. We must be realistic. The

² June 4. Retired Colonel Jonathan "Fred" Ladd, former Commander of U.S. Special Forces in Vietnam.

³ Colonel William Pietsch, U.S. Defense Attaché in Phnom Penh.

best people to train Cambodians are the South Vietnamese. They have the most experience.

Mr. Packard: What about the Indonesians?

Admiral McCain: I think the Indonesians are getting better.

General Abrams: This is a tough enemy and tough business and we must keep that in mind.

The President: Using the South Vietnamese as the channel to help the Cambodians is a good way, providing it does not prove to be counterproductive but we also want to get the other nations to help at least on the surface.

Secretary Laird: We can be tougher than we have been on the Thais. We should push them to face the northern Thailand problem.

Mr. Kissinger: It seems to me that the main problem is not what is best politically but how do we keep Cambodia from collapsing in the next 3 months. We must keep them propped up and time is the crucial problem. How do we do this? Anything we can do is certainly worth the risk.

Mr. Packard: But we can't pay for the Thais legally.

Mr. Kissinger: We have worked out a scheme in the WSAG but I am not pushing for this particular solution. What we must do is consider what we are going to do as we pull our forces out of Cambodia. It is essential that we keep a deterrent effect on the enemy.

Admiral Moorer: I agree entirely with Dr. Kissinger.

Admiral McCain: I also agree.

The President: The problem is the North Vietnamese also have a tough military problem but we must give them a political problem by getting Asian support for the Cambodians. The Thai problem might help. It is certainly important for the Indonesians to play a role. Let's look at some alternatives for what we do next. If the enemy takes Cambodia, we have got a rough problem. To prevent this, we must take some risks. The South Vietnamese, Thais, Indonesians should all help and the Japanese.

Now what about the Chieu Hoi problem?

General Abrams: The rates have dropped off somewhat this year but we are still in very good shape. We had some especially good results from our operations in the Parrot's Beak.

The President: I think we now need a major psychological offensive in South Vietnam to get the enemy to Chieu Hoi.

General Abrams: We are doing this Sir. The SR 2 Deputy Commander who defected has made some tapes which explain why he did it and encourages others to do likewise.

The President: Now, let's turn to the withdrawal program.

Secretary Laird: As you know, Mr. President, we have paused in our withdrawals over this period and we are paying for this holdup at the price of our U.S. forces in CONUS which are earmarked for NATO. I made the Army eat these costs. There is going to be some strong bitching about this but we are handling it. We plan to hold the pause on our withdrawals through July. Also, I have given guidance that there will be no withdrawals in excess of 60,000 troops for the balance of the year, but the Chiefs have problems with this and are preparing a paper with other options. Cambodia has been a success. Therefore, we should show some movement by withdrawing forces as soon as possible. The Chiefs' paper will be ready by the 10th of June. Money is the problem. Certainly, we cannot go to the Congress for a supplemental. I believe one of the options the Chiefs have presented calls for a 90,000 drawdown by the first of the year.

General Wheeler: Alternative A under our plan provides for a 60,000 drawdown by January 1 and another 90,000 by the end of May 1971 but the air sortie rates remain critical. We believe we have got to get higher sortie rates than the FY 1971 budget now provides and drawing down more ground forces is the only answer. Alternative B in our paper calls for up to 100,000 drawdown by the first of the year. Personally, I think this is too risky. In this plan, it still only provides for the FY 1971 approved sortie rate. No other tradeoffs were attractive to me because they involve a serious world-wide drawdown on our readiness. We are unable now to meet our NATO commitments. These commitments provide that we deploy 3 and $\frac{2}{3}$ divisions to NATO within 30 days. Right now, we can only provide 2 and $\frac{2}{3}$ divisions. This cannot be concealed from our Allies. On the other hand, even with 100,000 man drawdown by January 1, we still only keep the currently authorized FY 71 sortie rates. Therefore, this is a very high risk option.

The President: What is your view, General Abrams?

General Abrams: My judgment is to look in terms of South Vietnam—60,000 by December 31st—then 90,000 by May 1 can be done but it stretches the South Vietnamese capabilities. Anything beyond this would be nothing short of dangerous.

General Wheeler: I think we are now at the crossroads in this war. We have taken wrong turns in the past. The situation is favorable at this time because of Cambodia, especially in the III and IV Corps areas but in the north in the I and II Corps areas the enemy has the means to set us back.

Secretary Laird: I have asked for some more time to consider this problem.

Admiral Moorer: We are looking at our priority risks worldwide but we should not go too fast. We should not reduce our forces too fast. If the enemy is allowed to recover this time, we are through.

Secretary Laird: The South Vietnamese have shown they can do the job. We must keep the momentum going. I don't believe it is too easy to judge the relative merits of 60,000 or 100,000 and we must get Congressional support for our funding next year. Thus, we have got to win politically as well as militarily.

The President: Of course, that is why we must continue to draw down our forces.

Secretary Laird: The Hill is going to delay our appropriations process until next year. Mahon says our FY 1971 budget appropriations will probably be reduced by only \$1 billion. However, Ellender insists that it may go down as much as \$3 billion.

Admiral McCain: From my visits throughout Southeast Asia, I am convinced that Cambodia has made the difference. We must not lose it now.

The President: General Abrams, have you anything more to add?

General Abrams: I think we must get the ARVN to do most of the fighting in III Corps but the 5th Division and 18th Division are question marks. We have got to reinforce I Corps with ARVN. All this means that the Vietnamese will be pushed hard but they should be able to do the job.

The President: But what happens if Cambodia falls? I want you to put the air in there and not spare the horses.

Mr. Kissinger: We now have an advantage. Do we exploit this advantage or succumb to husbanding resources?

The President: To get the money we need, we must show results.

Secretary Laird: Yes, we must have the appropriations.

The President: That is a real problem. We will hang on. I will avoid any decision which throws away what we have accomplished. I will be judged on Vietnamization, U.S. casualties and the outcome of Cambodia. We cannot change this but decisions which are not realistic won't do. We have got to stretch the South Vietnamese. The effect of this worldwide will be whether or not we have succeeded. At the same time, we have a political problem involving the Congress and we must get the money.

Admiral Moorer: Why not just draw down an increment right away?

The President: I will not make a decision today. For now, we will hold to the 150,000 over the next year. I want no straight-jacket for the balance of the year.

Mr. Packard: Yes, but the drawdown should start soon. Maybe not until the end of June. If we go on a longer schedule and keep the sortie rates up, then NATO readiness must suffer.

Secretary Laird: This is true and we certainly cannot fool with Mediterranean area.

Mr. Packard: I can see no possibility of a supplemental and we will be lucky if we only have to take a \$1 billion reduction.

The President: When we talk about priority of risks worldwide, keep in mind that if we fail on this effort all the rest is insignificant. We must succeed here.

General Wheeler: On my trip, the Turks were vitally interested in Cambodia. They know that they also are out in front and have drawn their own conclusions from your actions in Cambodia. The Turkish opposition now tells the people that the U.S. will never come to their aid. Your actions in Cambodia and South Vietnam have strengthened NATO. Cambodia was a very sound decision.

The President: Exactly. We must also realize that if the allies believe this, then the enemy also must wonder. If we sit around and just dribble out our power, it is bound to have some effect on the enemy. We have got to make a decision best designed to disengage us but still succeed.

Admiral Moorer: We have intelligence suggesting there have been nine tankers in Haiphong this month alone, probably required to replace the POL hit during the air strikes in the north.

Mr. Packard: Can we do more in the DMZ area, perhaps mining the Ben Hai River?

General Abrams: He has got 22 battalions in this area. 10 are south of the DMZ and 12 are to the north. Replacements for these units and their supplies come directly through the DMZ.

The President: Could South Vietnamese hit North Vietnam through commando raids?

General Abrams: Probably not at this time but we should look at this.

The President: We need something to give the north some problems. Take a look at it.

We have all had a long day. I have decided at this point that the public assumes Cambodia is largely over and therefore I will give them a brief interim report this week, probably on Wednesday.⁴ It will touch upon what we have accomplished there, where we are. I hope it would have a salutary effect. During the balance of the operations, you will probably not get too much that is newsworthy and we have got to get the story out nationally. My report will be based on your report, General Abrams, and will be kept all within the framework of what we have said here today. We should continue to play a strong confident

⁴Reference is to the President's Address to the Nation on Cambodia, June 3; see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1970*, pp. 476–480.

game. I would like to say that our people in the field have done a superior job. What they have done is almost fantastic, especially the South Vietnamese.

Secretary Laird: My only problem is that they will get some setbacks. We must not be too optimistic here at home.

General Abrams: I had dinner with some press people the other night. They now want to know how we are going to stop the South Vietnamese. I told them that just last month they wanted to know how I was going to get them moving.

The President: The fact is they just don't want to win.

Mr. Packard then raised the Gleason gear sales to the USSR and the President instructed him to seek a 90-day extension rather than to move now commenting "by that time, we may be able to link something with it."

The meeting was adjourned.

314. Editorial Note

No minutes have been found for the Washington Special Actions Group meeting of June 2, 1970. Briefing memoranda for this meeting and the June 4 meeting from John Holdridge to Henry Kissinger, June 2 and 4, provide a sense of the issues to be discussed: the Thai plan to send two Thai regiments to Cambodia; the status of Thai/ Khmer regiments which would theoretically replace them; the U.S. public position on support for Thai military aid to Cambodia; proposed operations in south Laos and northeast Cambodia; costs to the U.S. of supporting Thai, Khmer, and Lao forces in Cambodia; and Indonesian military assistance to Cambodia. The Group agreed with Under Secretary of State Johnson's view that the only legal way to get Thai forces into Cambodia was to use the Thai Black Panther troops in Vietnam "as part of a program of fighting the Vietnam war in Cambodia." The Group then agreed that Johnson should send a cable to Bangkok to negotiate the pay and allowances for the Thai/Khmer regiments. Following the meeting of June 2, the Department of State agreed to COMUSMACV studying the issue of guerrilla operations in south Laos and northeast Cambodia and CIA preparing a study on potential Chinese reaction. At the June 2 meeting, the Group agreed with General Abrams' view opposing U.S. support of Cambodian operations in the so-called Green Triangle (encompassing Bung Lung–Ba Lev–Lomphat in northeast Cambodia) after June 30. The Group agreed to send

instructions to Rives to pass this decision on to Lon Nol in such a way as to emphasize the positive aspects—air support until June 30—of the U.S. decision and expressing sympathy and understanding for Lon Nol's position. The Group acknowledged that potential costs for support of Thai, Khmer, and Lao forces in connection with Cambodia were mounting and could create a "real budgetary problem." Kissinger directed the Group to prepare a study and get a handle on these costs. Finally, Kissinger stated that the President wanted a strong effort to encourage Indonesia to give arms to Cambodia and that the United States make up for depleted Indonesian stocks. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-074, WSAG Meeting, Cambodia, 6/2/70)

315. National Security Decision Memorandum 63¹

Washington, June 2, 1970.

TO

The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
The Director of Central Intelligence
The Director, U.S. Information Agency
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

SUBJECT

Psychological Warfare Operations Against the Vietnamese Communists

The President has directed that a committee be formed to provide direction for and coordination of psychological warfare against the Vietnamese Communists.

The committee is to be chaired by a senior representative of the U.S. Information Agency, to be appointed by the Director of USIA. It will bear the designation Ad Hoc PSYOP Committee and will report to the NSC Ad Hoc Group on Vietnam. Members of the committee will be representatives of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense,

¹Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 363, Subject Files, NSDM 51–96. Top Secret; Sensitive. On March 17 Sullivan, as chairman of the Ad Hoc Group on Vietnam, sent Kissinger a memorandum proposing an organization for more effective coordination of psychological operations against Vietnamese Communists. (Ibid., RG 59, S/S–Ex Files: Lot 83 D 305, NSDM 63)

the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency and the Assistant to the President for National Security. The recommendations of the Ad Hoc PSYOP Committee will be executed by the respective agencies represented on the committee in accordance with existing responsibilities, missions and procedures of the several agencies. This committee will perform the following functions:

—Develop a National Psychological Warfare strategy directed against the Vietnamese Communists, including psychological objectives to be accomplished.

—Coordinate the overall psychological warfare effort against the Vietnamese Communists.

—Provide thematic guidance.

—Prepare periodic reports to the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs on our psychological warfare operations against the Vietnamese Communists.

—Assess the anticipated psychological impact of Vietnam related policy options as appropriate.

Decisions relating to a psychological warfare strategy, as well as other decisions covering major issues in the conduct of our psychological warfare against the Vietnamese Communists, should be referred to the President for approval.²

The responsibility for coordination and policy guidance for all psychological and informational programs in South Vietnam remains with the Minister-Counselor for Public Affairs, Saigon, under the direction of the U.S. Ambassador and Mission Council.

Henry A. Kissinger

²On June 17 Sullivan sent Kissinger a memorandum with an attached paper that listed objectives and set out the themes and ground rules established by the Ad Hoc PSYOPs Committee created by NSDM 63. This paper was approved by the Ad Hoc Committee on Vietnam. In a July 6 memorandum to Kissinger analyzing the paper, Holdridge suggested that the objectives were “fairly traditional”: persuading the leadership to change its policies; increasing internal tensions, doubts, and policies; and motivating the Vietnamese people to question the wisdom of the North Vietnamese Government. Holdridge then listed the proposed targets: the top Party leadership, the Party apparatus, the North Vietnamese people, and Communist forces in the north and south. The themes developed for each target were designed to convince them that the war could not be won and policies must be changed, to increase war weariness and discouragement among troops and the population, and to cause resentment and tension between northerners and southerners. Kissinger approved the paper on July 14. (Memorandum from Holdridge to Kissinger, July 6, attaching a memorandum from Sullivan to Kissinger June 17 and a paper prepared by the Ad Hoc PSYOP Committee submitted to Sullivan on June 12; *ibid.*, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-216, NSDM 63)

316. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, June 4, 1970.

SUBJECT

Report of Hanoi Reaction to U.S. Moves in Cambodia

From a source who has been in touch with the North Vietnamese in Paris, our Defense Attaché in Paris has sent in a report on Hanoi's reaction to the U.S. operations in Cambodia. We consider that this report rings true, and may be a good indication of what Hanoi actually thinks about our Cambodian operation. It makes these points:

—The most upsetting factor to the North Vietnamese was that the U.S. behaved unpredictably in the Cambodian operation.

—The North Vietnamese estimate that to date they have lost about 30 percent of the supplies they had in Cambodia.²

—The North Vietnamese were also hurt by Cambodian actions against their agents. Many political cadres were lost. Others were ordered to fade into the environment and avoid capture. Hanoi will now attempt to work through the Khmer Buddhists who are presently unfavorable to the North Vietnamese.

—The North Vietnamese feel about 12 percent of the Cambodian population actively support them.

—Hanoi was disappointed by the lack of Soviet support and that Moscow had not broken with Phnom Penh. This has moved Hanoi closer to Peking.³

—Le Duan was dressed down by the Soviets who told him that they had invested large sums in his support but could not go beyond the present degree of commitment. They would make good the losses in the sanctuaries but it would take from four to six months (presumably to ship supplies from Moscow to Hanoi).

—There have been Chinese political cadres in Cambodia for some time, perhaps six months, mainly in the Northeast.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 147, Vietnam Country Files, Vietnam, 1 June 1970. Secret; Sensitive. Sent for information. Holdridge sent this memorandum to Kissinger on June 3, noting that he was responding to a request from Haig to prepare a memorandum of Walter's report. A stamped notation on the memorandum reads: "The President has seen, June 8, 1970."

² Nixon highlighted this paragraph.

³ Nixon highlighted this paragraph.

—The North Vietnamese contact maintained that they would continue to fight despite the factors listed above while awaiting the departure of U.S. forces from Cambodia. They would then try to gain a spectacular success over the ARVN.

Comment. The source for this information is a Frenchman who lives in Paris but who had previously lived for many years in Hanoi. He has good contacts among the North Vietnamese in Paris. Some of his reporting appears to have been of questionable accuracy, but much more of it has checked out. As I noted, we regard this piece as being probably true.

317. Editorial Note

No minutes have been found for the Washington Special Actions Group meeting of June 4, 1970. A June 4 briefing memorandum for this meeting from John Holdridge to Henry Kissinger indicates that the issues to be discussed were the same as for the meeting of June 2 (see Document 314). The briefing memorandum for the next meeting on June 8 indicates action had been taken as a result of the June 4 meeting. Johnson sent a backchannel message to Bangkok outlining levels of support for the two Thai regiments to be assigned to the Black Panthers in Vietnam thus freeing two regiments already in Vietnam for possible duty in Cambodia. Johnson also outlined the level of support for the two ethnic Thai–Khmer regiments that could be recruited and replace the regular Thais in Cambodia. Johnson sent cables to Bangkok endorsing Thai air support for forces operating in Cambodia and for the plan for Thailand to loan Cambodia five T–28 aircraft to replace similar planes of the Cambodian Air Force which were undergoing repairs. These cables are attached to the June 8 briefing memorandum. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H–074, WSAG Meetings, Cambodia, 6/4/70 and 6/8/70)

318. Memorandum From the Director of the Program Analysis Staff of the National Security Council (Lynn) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, June 5, 1970.

SUBJECT

Cambodia and South Vietnam

At Tab A is an update (as of June 2, 1970) of my earlier memorandum on the Cambodian operation.² As before it consists of:

- an analysis of the military impact of Cambodia operations (the latest numbers are used);
- a decision framework for thinking about U.S. options in Vietnam in the future.

However, this version of the paper discusses at some length the main criticism leveled against the earlier version, viz., that I was wrong in asserting that our cross-border operations have led the NVA/VC to be more aggressive and ambitious in Cambodia than they would have been otherwise.³

The contrary view is that we had solid evidence, both from the fact of increasing NVA/VC attacks in Cambodia's eastern provinces and south of Phnom Penh and from captured documents and COMINT, that Hanoi definitely planned, prior to our operations, to defeat the Lon Nol government militarily and establish a Communist regime in Cambodia. Our Cambodia operations, according to this view, can be credited with dealing a military setback to the Communists, relieving the pressure on Lon Nol, and perhaps buying enough time for the present Cambodia government to survive with Allied assistance.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-074, WSAG Meeting, Cambodia, 6/8/70. Top Secret; Sensitive. Sent for action. Drafted by Lynn.

² The updated memorandum was attached at Tab A but is not printed. The earlier memorandum from Lynn to Kissinger, May 28, was entitled, "Evaluation of Allied Operations in Cambodia." (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 585, Cambodian Operations, Cambodia/Vietnam, 31 May Meeting)

³ In a May 30 memorandum to Kissinger, Haig took strong exception to Lynn's May 28 memorandum claiming it "lacked the kind of objectivity" Haig had come to expect from Lynn. Haig continued, "he has in almost every instance gone to great pains to emphasize the negative aspects of our involvement in Cambodia. In some instances, he does this by mentioning negative statistics while avoiding counter balancing favorable statistics which a minimum of objectivity demands. In other instances, he cites unfavorable data which is tenuous at best and uses it to support the most pessimistic conclusions." Haig then proceeded to take issue with specific conclusions in the Lynn paper. (Ibid., Box 1009, Haig Special Files, Vietnam Files, Vol. V, [1 of 2])

I fully realize the uncertainties of estimating what would have happened had we not carried out the Cambodia operations. You probably have evidence that I do not. Based on the evidence available to me, however, I think the above line of argument is probably wrong, and important consequences flow from this conclusion. The conceptual framework and analysis are at pages 14 through 20.

This may seem like a moot argument, but I think it is of great relevance. It is in effect a plea that we undertake the most careful, objective and thorough analysis we possibly can in deciding future policy in Southeast Asia or, for that matter, anywhere else. Unless we are deliberately thorough, we can easily be misled or wrong.

We have improved the paper in other ways, and it is much more readable.

As a follow-up to our recent conversations, I would like to supplement the thoughts in the paper to (a) account more explicitly for Cambodia and (b) describe more concretely steps that have and can be taken to improve our position in Vietnam and thereby the prospects for Vietnamization and negotiations.

Concrete proposals are at the end of this memorandum.

Cambodia

I am convinced that:

—(a) the U.S. was compelled by political circumstances to act to assist the Lon Nol government, and

—(b) the U.S. had to act in Cambodia to the extent required to protect its strategic and military interests in South Vietnam.

I also believe that the U.S. must now act rationally in response to the new situation in Indo-China. In selecting its course of action the U.S. should:

—weigh carefully what U.S. interests in Cambodia imply about the extent to which we should support the Lon Nol government (there is a sharp difference between the necessity to assist a threatened government and the necessity to underwrite the continued existence of that Government no matter what the cost);

—analyze the relationship between our Vietnamization and negotiations objectives for South Vietnam and possible actions required to support our interests in Cambodia;

—consider possible NVA/VC and other enemy reactions to alternative moves we might make in Cambodia and the risks and opportunities they imply for us.

Cambodia may be on the verge of collapse, militarily and economically, if not politically.

Militarily, I have seen few, if any, reports of determined offensive or defensive ground force actions against enemy forces by Cambodian

army units. Only U.S., ARVN, and Khmer Krom forces can be so credited. As the enemy recovers from the shock of U.S./ARVN operations, the defense of Phnom Penh and its key LOC's to Kompong Som and Thailand will require a major boost in Cambodian force effectiveness.

Economically, the requirement to pay a force more than five times as large as the pre-March 18th army will almost certainly result in greater government expenditures concomitantly with a decline in government tax and customs revenues caused by the fall in shipping and business activity resulting from the war. Reports indicate foreign exchange reserves have dwindled, meaning imports will not be available to dampen inflation.

Additional military setbacks, coupled with economic difficulties will strain the political relationships within Lon Nol's government. On top of this, the onus of ARVN's continued and often harsh actions in Cambodia will probably become more difficult for Lon Nol to live with after U.S. units leave. Meanwhile, Thieu's, or more likely Ky's, stake in Cambodia, as well as that of General Tri and others, could make ARVN's continued presence an explosive political issue in South Vietnam, as well as between Cambodia and Vietnam.

I would not pretend to have sorted these issues out or be certain of their impact on our policies toward Cambodia. However, this government still has the opportunity to examine and make its decisions on the best evidence and judgment it can muster.

I do not know how current Cambodian decisions are being handled. I have tried to get information from the Joint Staff so I could do some analysis, but all attempts have met with failure. I cannot even obtain a copy of the daily NMCC Operational Summary so I can follow military developments in South Vietnam more closely.

If the WSAG is the decision-making forum, my observation of its earlier performance moves me to urge strongly that you consider chartering a special group to do the analytical thinking that must back up intelligent decisions on the new and complex issues raised by Cambodia.

Your earlier recourse to such a group resulted in an excellent paper on assistance options in less than a week.⁴ I believe that such a group could address the issues I raised above as well as analyze:

—the enemy threat to Cambodia: the enemy's main and insurgent force capabilities, enemy intentions, and the enemy's strategy;

⁴ Reference is to a study prepared by the WSAG Cambodia Working Group on options for U.S. assistance to Cambodia submitted to Kissinger on April 22. (Ibid., Box 506, Country Files, Far East, Cambodia, Vol. III, 10 April 1970–23 April 1970)

—the capability of Cambodian forces, with various levels of U.S. and U.S.-sponsored assistance to cope with the enemy threat and the outcomes that can be expected;

—the role that Thai and GVN forces can play in assisting the Lon Nol government;

—the economic situation in Cambodia, the requirement for external assistance, and possible sources of economic aid;

—the implications of possible Cambodian developments for the military situation in South Vietnam to include an assessment of:

—the effect of enemy and friendly unit diversions from South Vietnam to Cambodia on the situation in South Vietnam;

—the effect of Cambodian developments on the logistics capabilities of the enemy to support operations in III and IV Corps;

—the strategic significance of the new Cambodian situation for the GVN's Delta/III Corps strategy, e.g., does this make NVA units in the Delta more vulnerable than before? Will the enemy seek to open new supply corridors through the upper Delta from Northeast Cambodia? Should the U.S. re-consider its abstinence from operations in the Delta in order to achieve lasting gains by ousting NVA main force units? Should DMZ-like barriers or similar arrangements be made to secure South Vietnam's border with Cambodia?

Recommendation

I recommend you establish an interagency group similar to the one you convened earlier to analyze the major issues bearing on current Cambodian events and develop alternative U.S. courses of action for Cambodia.⁵

If you approve, I recommend you sign the memorandum at Tab B.⁶

Vietnam

I believe that as a result of a series of actions you have recently taken, there is a chance that the government is assembling the analytical elements that can provide the basis for decisions leading to a more coherent Vietnam strategy:

—On May 27, 1970, you sent Secretary Laird a memorandum asking him to forward proposals for future RVNAF force development

⁵ Kissinger initialed the approve option and wrote at the top of page 1: "Tab B is not a directive. It has no addressee." The memorandum from Kissinger reconvening the WSAG Cambodia Working Group was sent to Packard, Johnson, Helms, and Wheeler. (Ibid., NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-074, WSAG Meeting, Cambodia, 6/8/70)

⁶ The draft Tab B without the addresses was not attached.

and U.S. support along with an analysis (which you requested in an April 6th memorandum) of the principal alternatives;⁷

—On May 19, 1970, you sent CIA Director Helms a memorandum asking for his assessment of the VC/NVA proselyting and penetration activities, their implications for U.S. goals in Vietnam, and possible GVN/U.S. actions to counter them;⁸

—You recently approved the dispatch of a memorandum to Ambassador Bunker transmitting the Countryside Paper⁹ and asking for a Mission assessment of the status of the VCI and programs to counter it, the GVN leadership problem, and land reform;

—The VSSG is now preparing ceasefire and economic assistance papers, and I have dispatched a first-rate economic study team to Vietnam.¹⁰ These actions should provide options for possible decisions on these critical and long-pending policy issues;

—VSSG work is underway on a main force paper which should result in fundamental insights into the main force war and such issues as ARVN performance, enemy logistics vulnerabilities, the relationship between enemy infiltration and enemy main force options and the enemy's use of base areas.

In short, I believe the groundwork is being laid for a more sophisticated and possibly more successful Vietnam strategy than this government has ever had.

It would be a great loss if at critical junctures we ignored what we have learned and proceeded instead to decide each move piecemeal, in the relative absence of good analysis, hoping for the best, and without thinking through the consequences.

Very few knowledgeable people on this war accept the assumptions or share the pseudo-empirical assessments of either the war's leftist opponents or its patriotic-military advocates. Unfortunately, our Vietnam policy to date has vacillated between heeding the fears of the former and embracing the hopes of the latter.

⁷ Both are attached to a memorandum from Laird to the President, June 5, announcing to the Chairman of the JCS interim decisions on modernization and Vietnamization. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 146, Vietnam Country Files, Vietnam, May 1, 1970)

⁸ Not printed. (Ibid.)

⁹ Reference is to the Vietnam Special Studies Group paper of May 13, "The Situation in the Countryside." (Ibid., NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-2, VSSG Meeting, 5/20/70)

¹⁰ According to telegram 0883270 to Saigon, May 29, the team included Charles Cooper and Albert Williams of the Rand Corporation and Willard Sharp of AID. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 27 VIET S)

Recommendations

—(a) Your actions listed above have moved us in the right direction, and I believe the quest for good analysis is picking up some momentum. In a very real sense, however, I fear we have thus far failed in our analysis to bring this knowledge to bear in the proper forum at the proper time.

Earlier, you approved my recommendation that the NSC meet on the VSSG Countryside paper and other VSSG work. I still believe we should have such a meeting, perhaps after we have obtained Ambassador Bunker's comments and, as you indicated, after the ceasefire paper is done. We should begin surfacing the real issues.

Later meetings could be held on Secretary Laird's plans for RVNAF, ARVN performance, and the enemy's strategy.

Last week, you asked me to prepare a memorandum for the President on my "Vietnamization concerns." In the meantime, Secretary Laird has sent the President a memorandum that indicates he has become aware of the threats to Vietnamization described in our trip report in February¹¹ and in the VSSG Countryside paper. If you approve, I will combine these actions in a tour de force memorandum on the war for the President, which recommends that the NSC address the major issues raised above.¹²

—(b) It is important that we act now to follow up the Cambodian operation with decisive action in South Vietnam and along the Cambodian border. At Tab C is a memorandum¹³ that requests assessments from Secretary Laird and General Abrams on the following possible actions:

- large-scale attacks on base areas within South Vietnam;
- a blockade of Cambodia with Cambodia's cooperation to establish a precedent for control of international shipping into Cambodia in the event the enemy attempts to re-supply the areas in Cambodia he controls by sea or if Lon Nol falls;
- a new pacification offensive;
- expansion of ARVN or South Vietnamese territorial forces to cope with the threat in Cambodia and replace U.S. troops in South Vietnam;

¹¹ A summary of the report, March 11, is *ibid.*, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 144, Vietnam Country Files, Vietnam, March 1970.

¹² Kissinger initialed the approve option.

¹³ Tab C is attached but not printed.

—the use of U.S. troops in the Delta to help ARVN clean out still active VC base areas and destroy recently infiltrated and vulnerable NVA regiments;

—special border control measures on the South Vietnam–Cambodia border to include establishment of new RF–PF outposts, special river patrol measures, the establishment of natural or technological barriers.

The memorandum asks for views on other measures deemed feasible by Laird or Abrams and the response is due on June 15, 1970.

I recommend that you sign the memorandum at Tab C for Secretary Laird.

319. National Security Study Memorandum 95¹

Washington, June 6, 1970.

TO

The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy Objectives in Indo-China

The President has directed that a study be prepared on an urgent basis of U.S. interests and the short-term U.S. policy alternatives in Indo-China, with particular emphasis on the implications of the Cambodian situation.

This study should be done on the assumption that there is no progress toward a settlement in Indo-China through an international conference or other diplomatic initiatives. It should include discussion of, but not be limited to, the following subjects:

—Our interests and objectives in the current situation; e.g., the degree to which we consider important the maintenance of a non-Communist Cambodian Government.

—The steps which the U.S. might take directly or in support of other countries to further those interests and objectives.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 365, Subject Files, NSSM 43–103. Top Secret; Nodis; Sensitive. A copy was sent to Wheeler.

—The issues and options for U.S. policies if the Cambodian Government falls.

—The effect of various U.S. actions on efforts toward reaching a political settlement in Indo-China.

The President has directed that this study be prepared by an ad hoc group chaired by a representative of the Secretary of State and including representatives of the addressees of the memorandum and of the NSC staff. It should be undertaken on a priority basis to enable it to be considered concurrently with NSSM 94 and submitted by June 15, 1970.²

Henry A. Kissinger

² The response to NSSM 95 was prepared on June 24. (Ibid.) It was not considered concurrently with the response to NSSM 94; see Document 336.

320. Memorandum From Richard Smyser of the Operations Staff of the National Security Council to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, June 8, 1970.

SUBJECT

Message from General Walters regarding Meeting with Le Duc Tho

Hanoi has turned down our suggestion for another meeting with Le Duc Tho with language which clearly indicates that it wants to keep the channel open. Hanoi's reply was noteworthy for the following:

—It stated that there had to be a "temporary suspension" of the meetings (allowing for later resumption).

—After repeating the charge that we had caused the Cambodian coup, it blamed the suspension of the meetings on that rather than on any substantive breakdown. In fact, it stated that substantive discussions had "barely" started.

—Nor did it link our air attacks to the suspension of the meetings, though it did cite them as evidence of our desire for "military victory."

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 853, For the President's File—Vietnam Negotiations, Sensitive, Camp David, Vol. V. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only.

—It added further that the meetings would produce nothing useful “at this juncture” (again keeping the door open).

—The preconditions to another meeting are very vague and can be interpreted as forbidding or as virtually perfunctory. We can try to claim that we have met them after the Cambodian operations are finished, in order to test Hanoi’s intent.

—As for settlement conditions, this message failed to mention the NLF “ten points” or the usual Communist demands for U.S. withdrawal and for a “provisional coalition government.”

This statement represents the minimum that Hanoi could say under the present circumstances, particularly because Hanoi may well believe that we did cause the Cambodian coup and that, in any event, there can be no serious negotiations until the Cambodian outcome is a little clearer.

At the same time, Hanoi obviously wants to keep the door open. This may reflect its desire to negotiate seriously or its estimate that our continued contacts reduce the likelihood of further American escalation. In either case, it is an indication that North Vietnam’s situation at this point is not free of pressure either.

Attachment

Memorandum From the Senior Defense Attaché in Paris (Walters) to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)

Paris, undated.

Herewith text received evening five June from Tran Viet Dung. Titles omitted in text. “Recently Xuan Thuy and Le Duc Tho had meetings with Kissinger. In course of the meetings from side of DRVN we have always shown goodwill and a serious attitude in order to achieve peaceful and just solution for Vietnamese problem. Barely had these meetings started to discuss substantial questions when the United States fomented a coup d’état in Cambodia for purpose of preparing extension of the war to the whole of Indochina and to exercise pressure on negotiations. This led the meetings to a negative result and a temporary suspension. In fact the United States and the Saigon administration at their orders subsequently launched tens of thousands of their troops into an aggression against Cambodia. At the same time United States Air Force carried out several attacks against territory of DRVN thus infringing its sovereignty and security. All of these facts are sufficient to show clearly that the United States are still seeking a

military victory. This prolongs and spreads the war and shows that they are not animated by a sincere desire to solve peacefully the Vietnamese problem. The words of peace and goodwill uttered by the United States are more empty words without meaning. That is why at this juncture a meeting between Xuan Thuy and Le Duc Tho on one hand and Kissinger on the other as proposed by American Government at the beginning of month of May will bring nothing useful. However, as soon as United States have renounced the use of military pressure and show goodwill and a serious attitude for the purpose of seeking a peaceful and just solution to Vietnamese problems, Xuan Thuy and Le Duc Tho will be ready to meet again with Kissinger. But if the United States continues to prolong and extend their war of aggression, the Vietnamese people are determined to fight to recover at any cost their independence and freedom. The negotiations in Paris are presently at an impasse for which the United States must assume the entire responsibility."

321. Editorial Note

No minutes have been found for the Washington Special Actions Group meetings of June 8 and 9, 1970. Briefing memoranda for these meetings from John Holdridge to Henry Kissinger, June 8, indicate the issues to be discussed: provision of captured Communist arms to Cambodia, improvement of intelligence collection and analysis concerning Cambodia, the response to the North Vietnamese/Viet Cong attack on Seam Reap (including the psychological impact of the possible fall of Seam Reap and the nearby ruins of Angor Wat), the situation in the Green Triangle, the reconditioning of Cambodia T-28 aircraft, and the provision of communications equipment to Cambodia. The Lon Nol government urgently requested South Vietnamese air support and Thai troops to defend Seam Reap, and General Creighton Abrams advised that the South Vietnamese should set up a helicopter base at Seam Reap. The subsequent recapture of the air strip at Seam Reap eased the situation, but it remained precarious. There was also discussion of Cambodia making a formal appeal to the 1954 Geneva Co-Chairmen, the International Control Commission, the United Nations Secretary-General, and the Pope, but the feeling—at least as reflected in the briefing memoranda—was that these moves were premature. Kissinger charged the Department of Defense and Central Intelligence Agency with making recommendations to improve intelligence collection in Cambodia. Lon Nol asked that all North Vietnamese/Viet Cong arms caches cap-

tured in the sanctuaries be turned over to Cambodia. The issues of reconditioning Cambodian aircraft and providing communications equipment to Cambodia were not resolved at these meetings. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Boxes H-074 and H-075, WSAG Meetings, Cambodia, 6/8/70 and 6/9/70)

322. Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State¹

Phnom Penh, June 9, 1970, 0440Z.

1176. Joint State–Defense message.

1. As the deadline for the withdrawal of American troops from Cambodia approaches, it appears well to begin serious consideration of situation which we will be facing following that date and what should and can be done about it. This is, of course, based on the presumption that the situation in Cambodia and elsewhere in Indo-China will not see an early resolution.

2. The situation as we see it after June 30 will be as follows:

A) US troops pull out of Cambodia;

B) Partial ARVN pullout;

C) GOC will not control area east of Mekong or north of Prey Veng Province except for perhaps small area east of Kompong Cham town and near Mimot, but even these will depend on presence or assurance of SVN help. Exception may be small GOC forces in Rattanakiri which will survive only if continued help supplied by US/ARVN efforts.

D) Area west of Mekong north of line between Kompong Cham and Tonle Sap Lake may also be largely in NVNA/VC hands.

E) Prospect in southern border provinces can be tolerable if ARVN either leaves troops in area or is willing to provide assistance, if and as needed. However, NVNA/VC will probably continue harassment operations in area as they do presently.

F) Western and southwestern areas of Cambodia also run risk of increased disturbances in view of reported infiltration to west by NVNA/VC forces pushed from sanctuary areas near coast.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 27 CAMB/KHMER. Top Secret; Nodis; Khmer; Immediate. Repeated to Bangkok, Canberra, Saigon, COMUSMACV, COMUSMACTHAI, and CINCPAC.

G) The FANK will just have begun process of formation and training with limited arms and equipment and almost no organization.

H) The economy is already at an almost complete standstill. Not only are exports and imports down, but internal commerce and thereby the flow of money has come to an almost complete halt. This has been caused and will continue as a result of NVNA/VC occupation of territory and of the cutting of communications facilities, as well as such necessary measures as restrictions on movements, curfews, and the restriction of urban night life. All of the above result in such disruption that private business is almost non-existent and government revenues have virtually dried up. Taxes, for example, can no longer even be collected in large part of Cambodia. The result can only be the eventual disappearance of foreign reserves and a desperate situation internally as concerns the essential payment of troops, government employees and government services. For the Nonce, the GOC can continue thanks to a largely agricultural economy, larger foreign exchange holdings than many underdeveloped nations and the possibility, according to most local banks, of being able to issue some 2 billion riels without damaging the value of the local currency.

I) Although top level GOC leadership does not appear fully aware of the need to extend itself to rally the population, there is no reason to believe that it will not continue to enjoy the support of the population in areas it controls.

J) There are encouraging signs that local officials continue to make individual efforts to explain events to the population. This can be expected to continue, as well as better selected efforts against the NVNA/VC as contrasted with earlier broadsides which gave rise to serious, non-specific anti-Vietnamese feelings.

K) In areas reoccupied by Cambodia or freed by US/ARVN actions, the GOC has begun to reinstall administrative officials. This can be expected to continue as long as security can be guaranteed.

L) There are increasing reports of Cambodian peasant disillusionment with Sihanouk and that Communist efforts to establish FUNK is meeting with extremely limited success. However, after June 30 GOC efforts in this field must become more urgent, both from the point of view of propaganda and counter-insurgency.

M) Whether republic is proclaimed or not after June 30, it is virtually already in being. Evidence indicates that political groupings beginning to form within parliament and that Sangkum party no longer viewed as the ultimate political vehicle. Political developments outside of Phnom Penh difficult to assess for purposes gauging present political power centers. As noted in L above, Communists probably not succeeding in filling gap left by Sihanouk.

N) There is a good possibility that US, SVN, and Thai will have been able to contain the NVNA/VC advances in most areas, although the northeast and north will have been lost temporarily as enemy establishes redoubt extending into Laos and incorporating half the area alongside the SVN frontier.

3. Assuming that the GOC can hold on until June 30 thanks to the aid of its friends, we believe that situation will be beginning to be clarified to some extent. There may possibly be a delineation of “fronts” in specific regions. In any case, the United States’ effort to assist Cambodia will be well launched but the serious need will be to continue it along its present limited path with a few variations. Equally if not more vital will be the moves of the other nations in the political, economic and military fields. The Undersecretary’s statement to a recent visitor that the ultimate solution to the Cambodian crisis lies in the diplomatic field is quite correct. Nevertheless, if other immediate assistance in the military and economic/financial field is not forth-coming, there will remain nothing for diplomacy to deal with. Therefore, we would raise various suggestions, both precise and general, to be considered for the period after June 30, 1970. Some of these concern the USG, others concern other actual or potential aid donors. Some are specific, others are general in nature:

A) Continued diplomatic efforts by Djakarta group and others as well.

B) ARVN troops should either remain in some parts of Cambodia or should be stationed near enough to the border on an alert basis so as to be able to intervene when needed by Cambodians. Arrangements should also be made to base appropriate SVN aircraft at Phnom Penh airfield to provide emergency air support or troop lift for Cambodian forces since weather during monsoon season is usually better at Phnom Penh than at Saigon or other SVN airfields which may be used support operations in Cambodia.

C) Training of Cambodian forces either in SVN, Thailand or Indonesia, or in Cambodia itself by foreign advisors, should be urgently initiated if not already underway before end of June. Training might be effected in both camps or through use of mixed forces, as discussed already by Cambodians with Thais and South Vietnamese. Despite optimistic opinion of Cambodian troops in some quarters, most are presently a pretty miserable lot, perhaps with the necessary will but without training, organization or experience. Cambodians themselves prefer training in SVN training camps near SVN/Cambodian border where troops can be trained, armed, and equipped simultaneously.

D) Air support should be available at all times and urgent fulfilling of communications needs.

E) Some sort of transportation facility should be organized. Perhaps an ARVN helicopter group could be placed at the disposition of the FANK when needed.

F) Serious consideration should be given to the removal from Phnom Penh of A-1 aircraft which are out of commission but do not appear to require too much work to be put back into shape. These could either be repaired for Cambodian use or, if needed elsewhere, could be purchased from the GOC.

G) Meanwhile, T-28s should urgently be turned over to the GOC in place of inoperable ones presently in Phnom Penh. This should start before June 30 but should continue thereafter. Serious consideration should also be given to providing support (parts and maintenance assistance) for the 11 C-47 aircraft in the inventory. Numbers of cargo aircraft should also be increased, possibly by loan, to provide greater air resupply capability to counter further lack of ground security.

H) In the medical area, too, aid is needed. Probably sufficient help forthcoming from Japan, ROK and others with regard medical supplies but organization help required. Here, ICRS and others such as Austria, Sweden, etc., might provide medical teams, equipment (FANK possesses only 8 ambulances), etc.

I) As regards military equipment, re-supply will be major factor support of Khmer Krom and 65,000 Khmer troops set as limit FY 70 USG effort. We tend toward limiting equipment effort there and letting others do rest, perhaps with indirect USG assistance in some cases.

J) In naval field we support idea of modest program involving supply of spare parts, clothing, ammunitions and communications plus small number of PBRs and some vessels such as LCTs, LCMs and one or two LCUs which useful and necessary transport men and supplies year around and which can also supply modest fire support.

K) Economic factor alluded to above is that of future financial plight of GOC, whether or not war drags on. Here, we believe main burden should be that of others such as Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, either through cash grants or loans or through such programs as a commodity import one to generate funds for GOC use. Eventually, and perhaps sooner, USG should begin consideration of an aid program but one not requiring an AID mission.

4. In conclusion, we wish stress again our belief in support for Cambodia as nation desirous helping itself and whose policy of neutrality USG supports. Regretably, Cambodia completely unprepared defend self, having untrained and poorly-equipped military establishment. Nation has will but not ability to fight war and needs time for organization, training, etc. USG, SVN and Thailand currently buying time through their efforts. However, more is needed especially in economic/financial fields in order avoid future collapse on other front.

This is where others should be pushed assist. The USG should continue its proposed program, including the decision not to install MAAG or other missions in Cambodia. While this means more work for both Saigon and Bangkok, they are equipped handle it and thereby enable USG, for what is probably first time, to really implement what I have long felt was generally successful Communist method of assistance: that is, aid to a country through money and matériel in multi-national efforts but not troops or large missions which become too directly involved. In Cambodia I believe we have exceptionally good opportunity make this work in that issue not merely “communism” vs “democracy” (which always hard to explain and of little concern in new nations) but one of unified Khmer race against foreign enemy who trying impose communism.

Rives

323. Editorial Note

On the evening of June 10, 1970, Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger and Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin spent 4½ hours cruising the Potomac on the *Sequoia*, discussing Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Europe and Soviet-U.S. relations. On June 15 Kissinger prepared highlights of the discussions for the President. Attached to the summary was a full record of the discussion. According to the summary highlights, the discussion on Southeast Asia went as follows:

“—Dobrynin said that the Cambodian operation had a great impact on the Soviet leadership and made them doubt our motives for a possible summit. While we had made some military gains, Chinese influence in the region had been bolstered and prospects for a settlement set back.

“—The Soviets have no interest in a communist government in Phnom Penh since it would be dominated by Peking. Dobrynin considered our Cambodian operations past history and probed for what kind of government we could tolerate.

“—Dobrynin asked if we were prepared to partition Laos, a suggestion he had heard from the State Department. I said we were ready to discuss any reasonable plan that would assure the neutrality and security of Southeast Asia.

“—*The North Vietnamese care about a political settlement, not about the rate of our withdrawals.* Dobrynin said elections were unacceptable to Hanoi. When I pointed to your April 20 reference to determination of the popular will, he wondered whether our proposal was still open. I told him all proposals had been reiterated in the April 30 and June 3 speeches.

“—Dobrynin had the impression from Hanoi that we were being rigid in my Paris talks with the North Vietnamese. He saw little chance for negotiating movement now, but the situation might change after June 30.”

In the first paragraph above, Nixon underlined the phrase “Chinese influence in the region has been bolstered and prospects for a settlement set back,” and wrote in the margin: “interesting.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 489, President’s Trip File, Dobrynin–Kissinger, Vol. 1 [Part 2])

324. Memorandum From John Holdridge of the Operations Staff of the National Security Council to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, June 11, 1970.

SUBJECT

NSSM 94: Diplomatic Initiatives on Indo-China

At Tab A is a memorandum to you from Eliot of State transmitting the text of NSSM 94,² which deals with diplomatic initiatives on Indo-China we might take following the completion of current military operations in Cambodia in order to bring a settlement. The study

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 530, Country Files, Far East, Indochina, Vol. I, 1970–1971. Top Secret; Sensitive; Nodis. Sent for action.

² Dated June 9, attached but not printed. Smyser also looked at this draft of the response to NSSM at Kissinger’s request. In a June 12 memorandum to Kissinger, Smyser wrote that it was a “passable first cut” with some good ideas—collaboration with the Asian nations in the Djakarta group, international observers from Japan, Malaysia, and Indonesia, and cease-fire in place—but he thought it suffered from “a tendency to interpret its mandate very narrowly,” did not give options or preferences, had internal contradictions, never assessed the Chinese role, relied too heavily on Soviet help, made no detailed look at the composition of a conference, and did not consider possible cooperation with Sihanouk. (Ibid.)

was drafted by a working group of the Vietnam Ad Hoc Committee consisting of Ambassador Sullivan as Chairman and representatives from Defense, the JCS, CIA, State, and the NSC staff. It has been cleared by all the Principals except yourself.

The study begins by outlining the kind of a settlement *we would hope to achieve*: ideally, a realization of the 1954 and 1962 Geneva agreements, but more realistically a defensive interrelationship against a continued Communist threat on the part of South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand, with the first three perhaps being technically non-aligned and without the presence of U.S. combat forces, and with Thailand serving as a base from which U.S. military assistance could be provided. The importance of keeping the southern two-thirds of Cambodia out of Communist control is noted as a means of assuring territorial contiguity. It is assumed that the Communist threat would be subject to international supervisory constraints.

A *narrative discussion* then ensues which deals with the following subjects:

Section A: the various strategies which might be pursued to convoke an international conference on Indo-China, acting on the assumption that most nations would favor such a conference and that it could help to achieve our stated objectives:

- A *public call* by the President for an international conference;
- A *private approach* by the President to U Thant, the French, the Geneva Co-Chairmen, or all three;
- Secret discussions with the Soviets* as a channel to Hanoi;
- Direct discussions with the North Vietnamese* at Paris;

It is pointed out that in implementing these approaches the question of timing should be carefully considered.

Section B: the various international forums in which such a conference might get under way:

- A *renewed Geneva conference* on the 1954, 1962, or some expanded model, acting through the Geneva Co-Chairmen;
- The *conference of "interested parties"* suggested by the French;
- A *conference under the sponsorship of U Thant*, acting on the basis of his statement favoring a conference, and to be held in Geneva;
- A *conference using the nations attending the Djakarta Conference* on Cambodia as a nucleus;
- An *expansion of the current Paris talks on Vietnam* by the addition of Laotian and Cambodian representatives and maintenance of the "our side-your side" formula;
- "*Corridor conversations*" on Indo-China coming out of Article IV consultations among signatories of the 1962 Geneva Conference on Laos;

—A “*three-ring forum*” in which the *Paris talks would continue* and *negotiations would be opened between the opposing sides in Laos and Cambodia*, thus permitting a coordinated approach to the whole Indo-China problem.

Section C: the various proposals which the U.S. might make to induce an international conference and work toward a settlement ranging from acceptance of Communist demands at the one extreme and a virtual ultimatum on the other:

—*Accepting the NLF 10-point program as the basis for an agreement on Vietnam;*

—*Expressing a willingness at Paris to set a firm and early date for unconditionally withdrawing all U.S. troops from Vietnam;*

—*Softening our position on a political settlement in Vietnam and expanding this theme to cover Laos and Cambodia, but not setting a timetable for U.S. troops withdrawals so as to retain leverage;*

—*Proposing or initiating a cease-fire in Vietnam, which could include an agreed general cease-fire without conditions, an agreed local cease-fire, and a unilateral US/GVN cease-fire;*

—*Proposing a package deal consisting of a standstill cease-fire throughout Indo-China, immediate exchange of POW's, reactivation of the ICC in all three countries, establishment of observer groups from the Djakarta Conference countries, and agreement by both sides to participate in wider Indo-China negotiations;*

—*Appointing a prestigious figure to lead our Paris delegation who would negotiate on the basis of the package incorporated in the President's April 20 speech (a further reduction in U.S. troop strength by next Spring might also be offered);*

—*Doing the same as above, but setting a time limit on our willingness to follow this course (with the implication that we would thereafter be prepared to use greater force);*

—*Setting forth a carrot and stick proposal which would stiffen our military role in Indo-China and deny economic aid to Hanoi for reconstruction if it refused to negotiate, but would greatly reduce the U.S. military presence, accept neutralization of Indo-China, and repeat President Johnson's Johns Hopkins aid offer if Hanoi were to become responsive.³*

Section D: other initiatives which the U.S. might take to involve North Vietnam and other Communist nations if an international conference does not prove feasible (the study warns here that Hanoi probably still

³ At the top of the page Kissinger wrote: “This is just a laundry list. How do we clean it up?”

considers the odds in its favor and will resist attending a conference unless it believes that it can gain its goals in South Vietnam through one, and that while it might eventually reassess this position in the light of military and political developments, there is as yet no sign it is doing so):

—*Working out an arrangement for a cease-fire and immediate exchange of prisoners of war, along with the immediate reestablishment of the ICC in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia;*

—*Moving to establish a support base in Thailand to maintain the military viability of the three Indo-China states;*

—*Taking action in Washington to permit military and economic assistance to the three Indo-China states;*

—*Announcing an accelerated rate of troop withdrawals.*

Section E: the various strategies which might be pursued with respect to regional conferences and initiatives whether or not an international conference is convened:

—*Associating ourselves with the objectives and actions of the Djakarta Conference communiqué, possibly to include using Djakarta Conference nations to form Observer Groups;*

—*Working to keep Sihanouk and the PRG from representing Cambodia and South Vietnam in regional conferences or meetings, or from being accorded equal status;*

—*Encouraging realistic discussions of Indo-China at regional conferences and avoiding resolutions which would condemn our side;*

—*Working through Indonesia and Malaysia to keep Sihanouk and the PRG from being invited to the Non-Aligned Summit Meeting in New Delhi (this issue is already OBE'd—they were not invited).*

—*Not seeking any new regional conference on Indo-China but rather exploiting the Djakarta Conference;*

—*Taking advantage of the June 17 ASPAC Ministerial Conference in Wellington to obtain a fresh Asian endorsement of the Djakarta Conference conclusions;*

—*Seeking a fresh statement of intentions toward Cambodia and the Djakarta initiative from participants in the July SEATO and TCC ministerial meetings.*

Section F: relating the Paris negotiations on Vietnam to proposals in an international conference:

—*Accepting the concept that all interested parties in an Indo-China settlement should preferably be brought into a single forum to achieve a settlement (this might mean liquidating the Paris talks);*

—*Assuring that proposals which we support or sponsor in international forums are consistent with our position in Paris or in other Indo-China negotiations.*

Section G: the pros and cons of all the alternatives set forth in Sections A, B, and C (you will want to go over these in detail, and they are not repeated here).

Comment: One problem which I have with the study is its assumption, notably in Section D, that Hanoi will resist going into an international conference until it is convinced that it will get everything it wants by way of a settlement, and that we will either have to soften our negotiating position considerably to gain Hanoi's participation or accept the possibility that an international conference simply cannot be arranged at the present time. This assumption, which was strongly pressed by the CIA drafter,⁴ tends to downplay the constraints operating upon Hanoi (e.g. manpower shortages, the effects of Cambodia on Hanoi's strategy, and economic problems in North Vietnam), and thus infers that North Vietnam can go on as before for quite a while yet. In this respect, we have had more than a few remarks from various Soviets to the effect that Hanoi is "exhausted," which in turn follow in the wake of reports that the Soviets themselves are getting tired of underwriting Hanoi and would like to see Hanoi negotiate. It is therefore conceivable that over the next few months, if not now, Hanoi may become more receptive than the paper appears to think to the idea of an international conference. Whether or not it would be any more receptive to working out a compromise settlement remains hard to say, but there is some chance that once in a conference it would be as subject as ourselves to international pressures in favor of a settlement. (We may need to go through a period of heightened North Vietnamese military activity, for which the enemy now appears to be gearing up, before Hanoi shifts its stance.)

The foregoing observation aside, I believe that the study adequately outlines the various alternatives and the pros and cons connected with the key questions. If you should desire further drafting, however, it would be possible to accomplish this in conjunction with the work on NSSM 95, which is intended as a companion piece to NSSM 94 and which now has a completion date of June 19. With respect to interagency consideration, you may recall that you informed Ambassador Sullivan that the study would not be referred to the Review Group but to some higher-level body.

⁴ Kissinger wrote the following note in the margin at this point: "Why is CIA drafter?"

Recommendation:

That you approve NSSM 94 in its present form for high-level interagency consideration—approve.⁵

Disapprove, refer back to working group for further drafting.

⁵ Kissinger initialed this option and wrote: “I want a meeting of the VSSG to be followed by consideration of this paper. Laundry list must be reduced. I need small group to clean [?] out a scheme—Winston [Lord] talk to me about this.”

325. Minutes of Washington Special Actions Group Meeting¹

Washington, June 12, 1970, 2:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

Cambodia

PARTICIPATION

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

CIA

Thomas H. Karamessines

William Wells

Defense

Mr. Wade

JCS

Admiral Thomas Moorer

General Glick

NSC Staff

W.R. Smyser

State

U. Alexis Johnson

Tom Pickering

General Cushman said that estimates on the aid for Cambodia are being completed, and will be complete when Saigon comments. Mr.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, WSAG Minutes, Originals, 1970–1971, 6/12/70, Jordan and Cambodia. The meeting was held in the White House Situation Room. Kissinger initialed the memorandum from Holdridge, June 19, transmitting these minutes to him.

Karamessines said that the integrated Bunker–Abrams plan would be received that day and would be ready for the Tuesday meeting.²

Admiral Moorer, in response to Dr. Kissinger's question, said he has a report from Saigon on what they gave to Cambodia. More will come soon. Yesterday Cambodia got 600,000 rounds. Dr. Kissinger asked if this included material as well. He asked for a precise list of captured material shipped to Cambodia and what would be shipped next. The President wants this.

Dr. Kissinger said that we needed to increase our intelligence capacity in the Phnom Penh Embassy. We do not now have any information on what is happening in the Cambodian countryside or in the border areas, and we should get this information to be able to prepare for Communist military actions and to evaluate what we should do. He said the President did not worry about 6 more people, if they were needed. There was a discussion of the space shortage at the Embassy. Ambassador Johnson suggested that the increase be handled on an incremental basis. First a DOD complement of several people would be sent, as well as 5 Marines. State would send 2 (out of 3) administrative personnel. [*1½ lines of source text not declassified*] There was no objection to putting this proposal to Rives. Dr. Kissinger asked how soon we would have an increase in intelligence capacity; a week, perhaps? Mr. Karamessines said it would probably be longer.

Admiral Moorer said that the T-28's were on track. Five had been loaned from Thailand. We will send Thailand ten more of which five will go to Cambodia. He said that they wanted to give more authority for Salem House operations, and were testing for greater COMINT capacity. He said that General Abrams has uniforms for the Thai force of Khmers, but thought it would be best if Thailand made them—they would fit better. Dr. Kissinger asked if that would be soon enough.

Ambassador Johnson said that Lon Nol would like to see the results of the photo reconnaissance, and Admiral Moorer said he would be shown some.

The question was raised about money for the uniforms. Neither State nor CIA said they had the money, and the question was left open.

Admiral Moorer said that General Abrams would train two more battalions. The cost of the equipment would come from the MAP add-on funds for 1970–71. Ambassador Johnson asked why it could not be MASF-funded.

Dr. Kissinger asked why South Vietnam had stopped recruiting Khmers. Mr. Pickering said because it cut RF–PF recruitment.

² There was no WSAG meeting on Tuesday, June 16. Karamessines probably is referring to the June 15 meeting; see Document 326.

Admiral Moorer said that they were trying to see how to exploit the captured documents found in the operations for what they revealed about enemy plans. Dr. Kissinger asked Mr. Smyser to ask the Psyops Committee to look into this.

Mr. Karamessines said that Cambodia had been trying to get a 5 or 10 KW transmitter from Thailand. Bangkok suggested putting one on the border, but not in Cambodia. Cambodia wants it in Phnom Penh, of course.

Ambassador Johnson said he had asked the Australian Ambassador that day if his country could provide a transmitter. Admiral Moorer said that he could get a portable 10 KW transmitter to Phnom Penh soon, but a 50 KW would take longer. He said it cost \$380,000. Mr. Wells pointed out that Cambodia already had a large (50 KW) transmitter, and any additional would be to provide an alternative channel for listeners so they would not get tired of just one station. Ambassador Johnson said he had heard that there was none. Ambassador Moorer said that they could get a 10 KW transmitter from Okinawa to Phnom Penh on a loan basis soon. It was decided to have the working group look at this.

Ambassador Johnson raised the subject of the Black Panthers, indicating that the Thai were unhappy about the restrictions being placed on their operations.³ General Abrams was not happy either. They cost a lot. He does not want more.

Ambassador Johnson had drafted a cable with an alternative proposal, which he had tabled.⁴

A discussion ensued about how best to undertake the action proposed in the telegram and to justify it. There are no funds for use of Thai forces in Cambodia. There was some discussion about whether we should argue that the forces were committed for the defense of Thailand, but Dr. Kissinger argued that this would hurt us with the Thais in justifying their presence at Long Tieng. He asked why we just did not tell them that we have no legislative authority to pay them in Cambodia.

³ According to a June 12 memorandum from Holdridge, briefing Kissinger for this meeting, State sent Unger instructions indicating that the United States could not legally support Thai troops in Cambodia. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-075, WSAG Minutes, 6/12/70)

⁴ According to Holdridge's memorandum to Kissinger, June 12, the draft proposal envisioned supporting and upgrading two Thai regiments for the defense of Thailand that could be used in western Cambodia or southern Laos and given U.S. logistical support if an armed attack on Thailand developed. (Ibid.)

Ambassador Johnson said that, no matter what the reason, we want to train two regiments in Thailand rather than Black Panthers.

Dr. Kissinger reviewed the history of the issue and said that we were now back where we started—we have two Thai regiments as a strategic reserve, which is not what is needed.

Admiral Moorer said he would like to use forces across the border without U.S. support, but the Thais and the Koreans were not good for this.

Dr. Kissinger asked if the two regiments being developed would go into Cambodia. Ambassador Johnson said they would do so only if the threat to Thailand became clear and if the Thais themselves decided to move—with us paying. He said that his proposal would train regiments and let Thailand and Cambodia decide how to use them. But we would not give them special pay and allowances as for the Black Panthers.

Dr. Kissinger asked if this had not been agreed. Ambassador Johnson said only in the areas near South Vietnam; then payments could be made because the operations were Vietnam-connected. He said we would pay for the equipment and support, but not the special pay and allowances. [*1½ lines of source text not declassified*] We've said that it is up to them, but we cannot pay.

Dr. Kissinger asked what about the two Khmer regiments being trained by the Thais. Mr. Karamessines said this was in training. The packs will go in soon, and training will start July 1.

Dr. Kissinger then again reviewed the history of the discussions over the past three weeks, and said that we were back where we had been three weeks ago, without any forces to move into Cambodia when we moved out. Ambassador Johnson said this was correct, because of MACV's and Bangkok's attitude. He said that his proposal would get the process started, at least, at less cost than the Black Panthers. He said we could go ahead if DOD and the WSAG agree that we want to equip and train the Thai regiments in place. Mr. Ware said he would check, but thought DOD would agree, Dr. Kissinger said this seemed sensible, since the proposal would cost DOD less. Ambassador Johnson said that Thailand would get about \$7 million less under this proposal.

Dr. Kissinger asked if the forces would be used in Cambodia. Ambassador Johnson said this was not certain, but they could use them in Thailand. The ISA representative indicated that we do not want the Thai pulling forces out of Thailand which are used to defend our bases.

Dr. Kissinger again reiterated that nothing seemed to be happening by June 30. Ambassador Johnson said that there were the two Khmer regiments, whom we could not pay a bonus. There was a brief aside discussion about the 1971 MAP, in which DOD said that \$25 million had been reserved for Cambodia.

Mr. Karamessines asked if the Thai could not be asked to conduct a holding operation for three months. Ambassador Johnson pointed out that the Black Panthers, who are trained, cannot go into Cambodia without losing their allowances. [*1 line of source text not declassified*]

Dr. Kissinger again reviewed the history of the discussion, and again pointed out that there was nothing available to bridge the gap. He said that there have been many proposals and ideas and changes in proposals, and now we have a strategic reserve, but even that will not be ready in time. He said what was needed were units to bridge the gap. Hanoi will try to give us a serious blow in Cambodia after June 30, and what will we do?

Ambassador Johnson indicated the problem, [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Dr. Kissinger said that we have to get ready quickly.

Mr. Wells asked if offset payments could be used, [*1 line of source text not declassified*]

In response to Dr. Kissinger's urging for some push, Mr. Karamessines said that we should put a three-month proposal to the Thais. We would pay for the upgrading if they would send forces into Cambodia, even though we could not pay allowances. Dr. Kissinger said this sounded good. The ISA representative said it was not certain whether it could be done.

Ambassador Johnson said we would propose to pay for the upgrading, and that we would ask Thailand what units they could use until the Khmer were trained.

Discussion of the Green Triangle began, but was deferred since the proposal is still being studied.

326. Minutes of Washington Special Actions Group Meeting¹

Washington, June 15, 1970, 3:15 p.m.

SUBJECT

Cambodia

PARTICIPATION

The President
Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger
CIA
Richard Helms
Thomas H. Karamessines
William Wells
Defense
David Packard
JCS
Admiral Thomas Moorer
General Vogt
State
U. Alexis Johnson
Marshall Green
Tom Pickering
NSC Staff
John Holdridge
Col. Richard Kennedy

Dr. Kissinger said that the President had the feeling when told about the steps we were taking in getting military assistance to Cambodia that we were proceeding at too leisurely a pace. He, Dr. Kissinger, had therefore called today's meeting to underline the importance which

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, WSAG Minutes, Originals, 1970–1971, Cambodia 6/15/70. Top Secret; Sensitive; Nodis. The meeting was held in the White House Situation Room. Kissinger's staff produced a summary of the President's remarks at this meeting and Kissinger sent it to the participants on June 17 with the caveat that it was "absolutely for your own personal use and should not be distributed elsewhere." (Ibid.) At 7:45 p.m. on July 15, the President called Kissinger to ask if he thought that the WSAG "got the message?" Nixon continued: "They said they were trying so I just hope they got it. No doubt about what we were going to do—we were going to take some gambles and risks." Kissinger responded that it was "useful" that the President addressed the group, "you couldn't have made it more plain." Nixon stated: "Maybe they are going to come up with some things. I am going to watch it every 24 hours." Kissinger agreed that what was needed was, "more urgency." The President asked "What do you have in mind about the Lon Nol government?" Kissinger replied: "I don't think your position is that we tie ourselves to the man." Nixon exclaimed: "Never!" Kissinger stated that "Just as long as it is a non-communist government in Phnom Penh. There is no problem about that." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 363, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

the President attached to preventing Cambodia from going Communist, and to assure that a maximum effort would be made to achieve that objective. He wanted everyone to understand that this was national policy, and that within the policy guidelines under which we were operating, to see that the proper steps were being taken to supply arms and equipment, carry out air operations, to bring in what Asian forces could be gotten in, and to carry out a work program on which all had agreed. (Dr. Kissinger noted that it was his understanding there were no disagreements on this program.) It was his thought that the group would review where everything stands. One of the things for discussion was the movement of captured arms and equipment to Phnom Penh.

Admiral Moorer said that a message on this subject was in from General Abrams, but he was not satisfied with the message and was going back for further explanations. The list of equipment on hand or already turned over seemed too small. Mr. Packard remarked that a study had been made of the Cambodian supply situation in the Laotian Panhandle, and the fact was there was very little coming through this source. He offered to provide a briefing. The group decided, however, to defer this until later.

Admiral Moorer reiterated that he questioned the amounts on General Abrams' list of what was to be turned over to the Cambodians. It seemed too low. He would require that information be obtained from the GVN on what it had captured. General Abrams had promised a machine listing of all data, which would be a full-fledged inventory. Dr. Kissinger recalled that Lon Nol had said crew-served weapons were needed above all. Admiral Moorer observed that in the current list, there were only 30 crew-served weapons along with 800 individual weapons plus ammunition. General Abrams was apparently standing by with another long list, and was checking with Phnom Penh as to when the arms could be received.

Dr. Kissinger wondered if these arms were of any use to the ARVN, to which Admiral Moorer replied that some could be employed by the RF/PF. Mr. Packard noted that the issue was whether to send all stocks on hand, or rather to provide the arms as fast as the Cambodians could make use of them. Dr. Kissinger agreed that delivery should be related to the Cambodian's capacity to put the arms to use. Was Colonel Ladd also available to help out yet? Had any reports come in from him? Ambassador Johnson replied in the negative—Colonel Ladd had only been in Phnom Penh for three days, and in any event would be reporting through Rives.²

² Retired Colonel Jonathan "Fred" Ladd, the special liaison official sent to Phnom Penh to coordinate military assistance to Cambodia, had a special channel that did not go through Rives; see Document 328.

Admiral Moorer said that a meeting was going on in Saigon now between MACV and representatives from Phnom Penh on the captured weapons, and that we were pressing hard to be forthcoming within the bounds of real life. The machine runout which he had mentioned of the entire inventory would be pouched from Saigon on June 16 and would reach here in 24 or 48 hours. It was too long to be put in a cable message. This list was being added to all the time, and the weapons stocks were being examined as to condition. Some needed reconditioning and repair, but our representatives knew what was wanted and would make the stocks available to the extent that the Cambodians could absorb them.³

Dr. Kissinger turned to the diplomatic side, and asked Ambassador Johnson what progress had been made in this field. Ambassador Johnson responded with the information that on personnel in Phnom Penh, [2 lines of source text not declassified] that Defense had been told to add five DIA personnel. Admiral Moorer added that the directive had already gone out on the Defense personnel. Dr. Kissinger asked if this was all that could be absorbed, and when these people would be in place. Admiral Moorer said that only two days would be required, since the personnel would come from within the area. He agreed with Dr. Kissinger that we could expect an improvement in our intelligence as a result. [1 line of source text not declassified]

At this point the President entered, and after explaining that he had been reading the daily progress reports over the weekend, said that he thought it would be useful for him to give his feeling of things as he saw them so that the members of the group could know what he believed ought to be done, and how much risk might be taken. The first point he wanted to raise was the question of whether it was in our interest to defend Cambodia; in answer to which he would say definitely "yes." It was important for Suharto and the Indonesians, as well as for the Thai and the Lao, to know that we were standing firm. There was a psychological factor here. The question was, too, could we with our resources and with the resources of others prevent the Cambodian Government from falling, and if that were the case, what measures were we justified in taking? The situation might appear dubious but he would equate the current views with the decisions which he had made on March 17 regarding the defense of Long Tieng in Laos. There we had decided to use our air power and commit the Thai battalions.

³ On June 19 Kissinger sent the President a summary of military assistance—both from the United States and other countries—sent to Cambodia since April 28. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 509, Country Files, Far East, Cambodia, Vol. VII, 5 June 1970–19 June 1970)

It had been a close decision, but this decision had eventually had some effect. We had perhaps saved the situation for another year. In addition, we had bought time for the leaders of Vietnam, who now had a chance to go forward with Vietnamization.

Turning to Cambodia, the President remarked that we would have a much more serious problem there if Cambodia had gone down with the sanctuaries unstopped and with all the supplies still in them. Having moved, we had accomplished a great deal and could ask now what more Cambodia was worth to us and what we could afford to risk. We could make the argument that the U.S. shouldn't risk too much, so that if Cambodia did go down the U.S. would not be held responsible; however, world opinion would blame us anyway, in the way that the other side had blamed us when Lon Nol had taken over. Accordingly even if Cambodia were to fall, we would have to assume some of the responsibility. The advantage of keeping Cambodia independent was two-fold: one, it would be extremely useful in assuring the goals of the Vietnamization program to deny Sihanoukville and the sanctuaries from being used by the other side, and two, there would be a serious psychological impact if things went the other way. In this latter respect, knowing the attitudes of the Thai, Lao, and even the South Vietnamese, and taking into consideration the work of the Djakarta Conference, which was an effective effort made collectively to maintain Cambodian independence and neutrality, one reached an obvious conclusion.

Another factor which argued for taking the risks, the President continued, was that it was no secret that arms and training were being provided by the South Vietnamese, and in addition the Indonesians would be sending arms as a result of our providing them with more modern weapons. In the light of this help, it seemed important to determine in our own minds that we should do everything we could to shore up the Cambodians psychologically and militarily, and to take what heat we needed to take now rather than to let things alone and then fail through not trying. He wanted everyone to take a confident line with the press and in backgrounders. Perhaps Lon Nol would go down the tube; this could happen, but the Lon Nol Government appeared to have increasing support among the people.

The President observed that one of the best things which had occurred recently was the Djakarta Conference. However, more visibility was needed concerning the Conference to show that eleven Asian nations had gathered together to say that they wanted to help. Conceivably the diplomatic impact of this conference might also have a restraining influence on the North Vietnamese and on the Soviets, who in contrast to the Chinese appeared to want an international conference on Indo-China.

On the military side, the President said, he would urge the following things, which were not really new: first, to be sure that the very inadequate Cambodian Army received arms to the extent that we could supply them. These did not need to be sophisticated weapons such as tanks. There should be a greater sense of urgency, and not merely reports that the arms were awaiting shipment at the end of the runway. It would be a great psychological advantage to the Cambodians to know that we were helping. The President's second point was that it would be very helpful to get the Indonesians involved. When President Suharto was here he had spoken of a very modest program of providing Soviet arms in return for modernization, and we should cooperate with the Indonesians in this respect. This would be a very good thing to work out.

Regarding the Thais, the President mentioned that he knew the legal arguments and problems, but even Frank Church and several other Senators who had objected to Americans in Cambodia understood the principle of Asians helping Asians. This might be a costly business, and Congress didn't like it, but the South Vietnamese, the Thai, the Indonesians, and others had an economic excuse for not assisting on their own. In addition, there would be a great psychological effect.

On intelligence, the President said that we needed to know more of what was going on. There would be a problem in having too great a U.S. presence in Phnom Penh, but we should feel our intelligence was adequate, since so much rode on what we got. General Abrams had reported that even if the North Vietnamese were wandering around the country, they had not held any important positions; this suggested that they did not have too much muscle and were launching hit-and-run raids to create apprehension in the Capital. This also suggested that they did not have a great degree of staying power.

Another point raised by the President was keeping the South Vietnamese loose. He respected the views of General Abrams and others that the first responsibility of the South Vietnamese forces was the situation in South Vietnam, but this situation would be much more difficult if Cambodia were completely under Communist control. Or, looking at things in another way, the situation in South Vietnam would be much better if Cambodia were kept free of the Communist control. Therefore, the South Vietnamese forces should be kept loose both now and after June 30 so that if the North Vietnamese hit one place or another, the South Vietnamese would be in a position to do something. One of the main deterrents of the North Vietnamese actions was the actions of the South Vietnamese, and we needed to keep holding this over the North Vietnamese heads.

The President said that the last point he wanted to bring up was that of our air power and our activities. He had already talked about this in the NSC meeting two weeks ago, and gathered that it was un-

derstood what we would do between now and July. It was also understood that after July 1 we would continue our interdiction. This interdiction, the President stated, should be interpreted broadly, and it was very important that everybody in Defense knew this. The President reiterated that he believed it necessary to take risks now regarding public opinion, so as to see that Cambodia maintained its neutrality and independence. Perhaps there were those who would disagree, but the President himself felt that we should take these risks.

He asked the group to come up with positive action steps.

In his opinion things were going well on the diplomatic front, but it seemed to him that on the military front and supply front we were thinking too defensively. We should not be afraid of a negative reaction, but should think in positive terms. He wanted to see a report every day on what we are doing in the Cambodia area on the diplomatic, intelligence, military, and supply sides, and would watch closely the developments in these fields. It was his judgment that it was no good going way out, but it was worth taking risks. It was his intuition that the present Cambodian Government could be saved. He didn't know for how long, but that was the way we had to think. If we did not make enough effort, we would still be blamed by the international community. We should not worry about this—we should make sure we did enough, so that if we were blamed, it would be worth it.

Mr. Packard asked to say a few words on the situation on aerial interdiction. He was aware that the President was concerned about our not seeming to do much, but we were watching developments very closely, and knew that while the enemy was keeping his supply lines open in the Laotian Panhandle, he was not getting much in. There were very few targets. The President asked if we were supporting the South Vietnamese, to which Mr. Packard replied that we were doing so but that it was not feasible for us to go deep in as far as, say, Siem Reap with tacair because we had no way of telling enemy from friendly forces. There was also a weather problem, and our radar was not good enough for close air support. He wanted the President to understand, though, that we were doing everything we could, but that there were real limits.

The President stressed that he wanted an imaginative, positive approach. For example, if as the South Vietnamese moved around and there was any action they could take we should let them go. Admiral Moorer said, adding to what Mr. Packard had just reported, that up to the end of last week we had taken action to help extend reconnaissance throughout Cambodia, and had commenced to infiltrate teams of indigenous ground personnel. CIA was increasing its activities and we had finally taken steps to increase our ability in Phnom Penh to react quickly to intelligence data. Dr. Kissinger mentioned that a Vietnamese air unit had been established in Phnom Penh, and the President noted

he much preferred a Vietnamese unit to an American unit. Admiral Moorer mentioned that two intelligence officers were being sent to Phnom Penh who were experienced in evaluating the ground situation from the air, and who could fly with the South Vietnamese.

Ambassador Johnson stated [*2½ lines of source text not declassified*]. We could not pay the kind of allowances we had paid elsewhere, but we could hope that the Thai were sufficiently interested to go in anyway. The President expressed the thought that the Thai must indeed have a great interest in this matter, for if Cambodia and Laos were both to go, they would be deeply threatened.

The President noted that he had just received the new Cambodian Ambassador and wondered if we were planning to upgrade our representation.⁴ Ambassador Johnson said that everyone was of the opinion it was now time to do so. Dr. Kissinger stated that a memorandum to this effect was now on the President's desk.⁵

The President then urged everyone to stick with it even more, and not to worry about the consequences. If we were to look around the world, as far as the U.S. was concerned it was very hard not to see difficulties. However, we had to face up to them. This of course did not mean that we should do the wrong things. As far as Cambodia was concerned, we hadn't wanted Lon Nol to act or Sihanouk to run off, but this had happened, and Lon Nol had opted for us and for neutrality. So we were in the box. Ambassador Johnson questioned whether our objective wasn't more to maintain a non-Communist Government rather than just to maintain Lon Nol, and the President agreed. The problem was not only like that in Vietnam, but also to establish a non-Communist Government in Cambodia which would not allow the North Vietnamese to wander around. The President understood Sirik Matak was the better of the two; in fact the President had once met him. The Cambodian Ambassador had brought a bowl from Matak and had said that Matak was an old friend. The President added that we were not backing any particular government, and that what we wanted was an independent, neutral government. If Lon Nol was not enough, we would not want to support him; we should not try to pull out the rug, though, until we see how well he does. Sihanouk had been for many years taken as the only leader, and no others had developed. This time, we might want to look around.

⁴ The President met from 11:37 a.m. to 12:33 p.m. on June 11 with five ambassadors who were presenting their credentials. Ambassador Sonn Voeunsai of Cambodia was one of them. (Ibid., White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary)

⁵ Reference is to a June 11 memorandum from Rogers to the President that recommended four senior foreign service officers for the post of Ambassador to Cambodia. (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 509, Country Files, Far East, Cambodia, Vol. VII, 5 June 1970–19 June 1970)

The President asked Admiral Moorer if there were any good people in the Cambodian Army, and whether the Cambodians were fighting. Admiral Moorer explained that the problem for the Cambodians had been that the French had supplied all of the senior leadership, but they nevertheless were fighting, and were going back into the towns. In fact, for Cambodians they were not doing badly. Compared to Helms' Laotians, they were about a stand-off in military ability.

The President recalled that he had asked the Cambodian Ambassador about the popular attitude towards Sihanouk, and had been told that all Cambodians had loved Sihanouk but this love had been turned around when the Prince had gone to Peking. This may have been a self-serving observation. Ambassador Green remarked that the French had a lingering love for Sihanouk, but knew now he had gone completely over to the Chinese. The Russians felt the same way, and were yearning for an international conference. Dr. Kissinger asked if anything had been heard from Firyubin's visit and Ambassador Green responded negatively. The President underscored some of his earlier words on the need for an international conference on Cambodia. Ambassador Green referred to a cable just in from Moscow reporting the Australian Ambassador's conversation with Kapitsa, which had been very revealing.⁶ The Soviets had wanted to get something going towards a settlement in Indo-China, but their hands were tied because of the Chinese influence in Hanoi. They felt, though, that it was important to get Hanoi to move in the direction of a settlement, and were of the opinion the Paris talks offered a possibility.

The President thought that this was very interesting.

Addressing the group as a whole, the President spoke of the long hours which everyone present had put in, and expressed his appreciation for the excellent work which everyone had been doing. He was most gratified with all of their contributions. He left the meeting at this point.

Dr. Kissinger said that the group could review progress at the beginning of the next session. This would be on Wednesday, at 11:30 p.m.⁷ He referred to the Indonesian offer of 15,000 rifles, remarking if this was what they had in mind as the extent of their modernization program, we ought to be able to go ahead. Ambassador Green thought that they might be dragging their feet somewhat to which Dr. Kissinger spoke of conflicting messages coming in from Galbraith. Ambassador Green believed that the Indonesians would get moving after their meeting with the Soviets in Moscow on June 16. Our technicians for the Bandung ammunition factory were arriving on the 18th.

⁶ Not further identified.

⁷ June 17; see Document 327.

327. Editorial Note

No minutes have been found for the Washington Special Actions Group meeting of June 17, 1970. The June 17 briefing memorandum for the meeting from John Holdridge of the National Security Council Staff to Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger, indicated that the issues for consideration were those discussed at the last few meetings: review of positive steps taken to aid Cambodia with military assistance, intelligence and diplomatic support, radio transmitters for Cambodia, costs of U.S. assistance to Cambodia, shape of the Cambodian Military Assistance Program for fiscal year 1971, and the Green Triangle situation. Holdridge suggested that Kissinger ask a series of questions to determine what had been done in these areas and to encourage the relevant departments and agencies to do more. Check marks next to most of the questions suggest that Kissinger asked many of these questions at the meeting. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-075, WSAG Meeting, Cambodia, 6/17/70)

Prior to the meeting at 8:25 a.m. on June 17, Nixon called Kissinger and issued a series of orders: "I think one of the first projects for your group [the WSAG] is to get that town on the Sihanoukville Road opened. You know the one I mean? Tell them to get the whole South Vietnamese army, bomb them, everything. Tell them to get off their butts and get going and I want a report in two hours." The President hung up without a response from Kissinger. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 363, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File) At 8:35 a.m. Kissinger called Packard to tell him that "The President just read the newspaper . . . that there are 1500 troops in Kompong Speu and 5000 on the outside. He said that anyone who says they can't find targets there now should look for another job." Packard replied: "Well then maybe we should look for another job." Kissinger continued: "He [the President] wants the road opened if it takes the whole South Vietnamese Army and he wants a report in two hours, not of what can't be done, but of what can be done." Packard explained: "The problem is that they are holed up in the town. We got it surrounded. But the trouble with air strikes—the enemy's in the middle of the town—we could bomb it but it would destroy the town." Kissinger said not to do that: "My job is to transmit orders, but also to make some sense of them." He asked if Packard could provide a report in 2 hours. Packard said he would try. (*Ibid.*)

328. Backchannel Message From Colonel Jonathan Ladd to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Phnom Penh, June 18, 1970.

1. After four duty days in Phnom Penh, in which two were required to get into direct contact with highest level Cambodian officials, I believe things are beginning to move in accordance with President Nixon's desires.

2. My relations with Embassy staff have progressed, so far as I can tell, from curiosity as to why I was sent here to confidence that I will be an asset to Embassy operations and personal friendships and willing assistance in all that I have endeavored to accomplish.

a. I shall make this an interim report as I am not yet prepared to address meaningfully every aspect of your message to me.²

3. When I arrived, Sunday the 14th, my first impression was that this was a "business as usual" atmosphere and that little of the environment of urgency I encountered in Washington and at MACV existed. My arrival, the visit of Admiral Butts and Amb. Koren from CINCPAC, the growing rumors of attack upon Phnom Penh and the cables announcing the intelligence augmentations all have served to

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 85, Country Files, Far East, Cambodia, Phnom Penh (Mr. Ladd 4 of 4). Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. [text not declassified] In a telephone conversation on June 18 at 6 p.m., the President told Haig to initiate actions to get additional South Vietnamese forces engaged in Cambodia, open up Route 1, and get a Thai regiment to Cambodia. Haig told the President that he had received a message from Ladd. Nixon asked: "Is he on the job and working?" Haig responded that Ladd was "going to start screaming for shipments. For stuff they need for psychological reasons." Nixon stated: "If they need trucks and armored vehicles, get them in there. Just get them in there. There are certainly plenty of them over there. I hope he realizes what we expect of him. Needle the hell out of him. I expect a report every 12 hours." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 363, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

² In a backchannel message to Ladd, June 17, Haig informed him that the President wanted his personal assessment of five issues described in the footnotes below. Haig also informed Ladd that the "President wants any and all administrative bottlenecks and red tape cut in order to take those steps now needed to prevent a takeover of Cambodia by Communist forces." Haig suggested that "the coming days and weeks may be critical and that in large measure the outcome may pivot on psychological issues rather than military power." The North Vietnamese were intent on giving the impression that they were "systematically rolling up Cambodian countryside and isolating Phnom Penh by overwhelming military strength, with a view toward placing maximum psychological pressure on Cambodian regime." Haig stated that "we question whether enemy strength would permit takeover." He asked for Ladd's views. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 430, Backchannel Messages, Jonathan F. Ladd [Part 2])

change my first impression. Our principal problem internally is to organize this outfit into an effective staff to respond to the many requirements and tasks facing us. Heretofore the Embassy apparently operated as almost a "one-man-show." This is no longer possible and the fact is recognized by all concerned. I am receiving full cooperation from Mr. Rives. The Attachés are probably adequate professionally but are not the types to inspire confidence nor are they particularly well organized to tackle the problem at hand. They are now working directly under my control and I am attempting to get them productive.

4. Lon Nol met with Mr. Rives and me yesterday and again I met with him today after a full morning with his logistics staff. He has agreed to all of our recommendations concerning establishing realistic priorities, getting his requests funneled through me and not every Tom, Dick and Harry going to Saigon and to evacuate the forces he has in the Green Triangle.

5. Today FANK staff and I hammered out a priority list for receipt of captured enemy weapons and ammunitions and I sent it to MACV by back channel this morning advising GOC is ready to begin receiving priority one items immediately. A detailed breakdown of items by priority will be sent out front channel as soon as I finish this message.

6. With regard to your number one:³ US response to reasonable requests from the GOC has been excellent. MACV is well organized and eager to assist and has had to play it almost by ear in the past. Requests sent by DAO were vague, incomplete and in some cases just efforts to make some high level Cambodian official happy. This has been corrected. The system as now established will work fine and as soon as the Cambodians get used to it I'm sure everything will smooth out.

7. Your number two:⁴ So far as I have been able to determine the GVN assistance (material, training plans, transportation and the establishment of an effective liaison mission here in Phnom Penh) has been thorough, efficient and responsive. So far as the Thais and other countries are concerned, I know only what I read in the cables and although there is much talk, it seems all such offers end with a phrase or two about the assistance "of course" being paid for by Thais or Cambodian MAP. I will look into this in greater depth and report later. I assume action has already been taken to encourage our Embassies in po-

³ In the June 17 backchannel message to Ladd, Haig stated that the first assessment needed from Ladd was: "Adequacy and responsiveness in both type and quantity of U.S. shipments of military equipment to Cambodia and responsiveness of the current system in response to Cambodian military." (Ibid.)

⁴ Requested assessment number 2 reads: "Scope and effectiveness of assistance measures, including provision of troops, military supplies and economic assistance by GVN, Thais and other countries." (Ibid.)

tential loner countries of Asia to talk to their host governments about the regional nature of this crisis, the opportunity for Asians to help Asians and the necessity for them to shoulder some of the expenses in a common cause.

8. Your number three:⁵ So far as ground operations are concerned, except for the Green Triangle area, the air support in the form of flare dropping aircraft has been most helpful in defense of several towns. I will have to get the details for you. The gut problem so far as close tactical support is concerned is experienced ground controllers and personnel who can direct the airborne FALs to the targets. Right now I am told by DAO that some of the twenty-odd PRC25 given to the Cambodians are being used for this purpose (some carried in the back seat of a T-28 and some with units on the ground). How these people communicate with U.S. or VNAF aircraft, I just don't know but will find out and report later.

9. Your number four:⁶ My early impression is that the most critical problem of command and control in FANK is communications. The defense of Phnom Penh relies primarily on the municipal telephone system which is not good under ordinary circumstances and would probably be inoperative if the city was attacked. Most troop units in the field rely upon runners and visual signals. I do not believe FANK has any reliable communications system with its major headquarters and garrisons throughout the country. Just before I arrived, MACV made a communications survey over here but I have not seen it nor am I a communications expert. I will try to get some meaningful data on this but suggest you ask MACV for a report on the survey. Next to communications, I consider the greatest handicap to tactical operations is lack of mobility. FANK uses broken down commercial busses and trucks to move troops on the ground. They have a few C-47's they could use if airfields happened to be available and not under enemy control or interdiction. Roads are reported to be "cut" by the enemy but I am inclined to feel "subject to interdiction" might be a better way to put it. Regardless of the wording, FANK has no effective reconnaissance vehicles (armored or non-armored) to keep the roads open or find and fix any enemy that may be there. I will report later on my findings on the FANK tactical planning capability. So far, I have had

⁵ Requested assessment number 3 reads: "Adequacy and responsiveness of current U.S. and VNAF air support. Is scope and timeliness of US/VNAF air support adequate to influence critical ground actions as they occur and what should be done to improve system through expanded authorities or improved technical and control capabilities?" (Ibid.)

⁶ Requested assessment number 4 reads: "Measures which should be taken to improve proficiency of FANK operations, to include command and control and planning for effective tactical operations." (Ibid.)

time only to get deeply into the logistics problems. For the logistics field, however, I am impressed with their higher level capability to plan, extent and accuracy of their records and reports and their common sense approach to their problems. Their logisticians aren't dumb, they just haven't got much to work with.

10. Your number five:⁷ To raise FANK military capabilities on a short term basis I think that:

a. They must obtain a means to communicate effectively from at least battalion level upward through FANK headquarters. Also, the Phnom Penh defense command must be able to communicate between its major elements.

b. They must have some better mobility capability (the 40 trucks scheduled for delivery in a couple of weeks will help ground mobility). They also need access to some rotary wing troop lift capability so they can move reinforcements of at least battalion size in a reasonable length of time.

c. They need weapons, mostly small arms and compatible ammunition, to arm the units of volunteers now undergoing training without weapons. I will try to refine this by precise weapons and numbers they can assimilate as soon as possible.

11. I agree with your assessment of the overall situation and concur that the outcome may indeed pivot on psychological issues rather than raw military power. I gather Lon Nol is encouraged by what we are trying to do but he left the definite impression with me that he was discouraged by the "much talk but little positive action" on the part of his Asian neighbors. He is grateful for all the RVN is doing but is concerned about not being able to get any definite commitment from them on how much help he can expect after 30 June. He also told me he knew that practically every nation that has offered him help intended to do so only if the U.S. paid for it.

12. Will begin update every three days as directed and augment if necessary.

⁷ Requested assessment number 5 reads: "In light of the responses to foregoing, measures which you think must be taken on a priority basis to raise FANK military capability on short-term basis." (Ibid.)

329. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, June 18, 1970.

SUBJECT

Positive Steps to Aid Cambodia

As you requested, there follows a report on the positive steps since June 15 which have been taken by the various U.S. Government agencies to provide assistance to Cambodia.²

Supply

—Arrangements have been made to provide *radio transmitters* to the Cambodians to broadcast into areas of Cambodia which Radio Cambodia presently cannot reach. An EC-121 will be used temporarily for this purpose.

—The *Indonesians have offered to provide 15,000 rifles*. U.S. technicians arrive in Indonesia June 18 to study conversion of the *Bandung ammunition plant* to handle AK-47 ammunition.

—The Japanese have offered \$2 million in humanitarian aid; we will attempt to stimulate more.

—The GRC has reportedly offered to furnish light and medium weapons to equip two divisions. We are considering this.

—Efforts are being made to stimulate aid from *Australia* (communications equipment) and *New Zealand*.

—970 individual and 30 crew-served captured weapons have been turned over by ARVN to Cambodian forces along with 37,000 rounds of ammunition.

—1950 individual and 250 crew-served captured weapons under U.S. control are ready for delivery when the ability of the FANK to use

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 509, Country Files, Far East, Cambodia, Vol. VII, 5 June 1970–19 June 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive. A stamped notation reads: "The President has seen." Holdridge and Kennedy sent this memorandum to Kissinger on June 17 with the recommendation that he sign and send it to the President.

² At 9:12 a.m., June 17, the President telephoned Kissinger to complain about the lack of action since he had met with the WSAG on June 15 (Document 326). The President insisted that Kissinger obtain an up-to-date report on aid to Cambodia. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-074, WSAG Meeting, Cambodia, 5/19/70)

them has been determined. CINCPAC and MACV have been directed to work closely with our Defense Attaché in Phnom Penh to provide as much captured material as can be effectively used. MACV is reviewing all captured material for this purpose.

—40 U.S. trucks are ready in Vietnam for delivery to the Cambodians; Cambodian drivers and mechanics are being moved to Saigon on June 18.

Military Assistance

—A Presidential Determination is being forwarded to you to *add another \$1 million to the present Cambodian FY 70 MAP of \$7.9 million; \$25 million in military assistance and \$10 million in defense support is being arranged for FY 71. A detailed program is being developed by CINCPAC and MACV. The support funds will in part be used to support 2500 Khmer–Krom troops (of whom 2,000 are now deployed) and 4,000 Thai–Khmer troops (of whom 1,000 have now been recruited). Two additional Khmer–Krom battalions in training in South Vietnam will be deployed to Phnom Penh on July 14.*

—Four 1000-man packs have been positioned for the Thai–Khmer troops and will be sent in when their training begins on July 1.

—The Thai have been informed of *our willingness to train and equip two Thai regiments for deployment to Western Cambodia, and to consider indirect means for supporting pay and allowance bonuses which we cannot legally provide directly.*

—*Five Cambodian T-28 aircraft are being repaired in Thailand, and five Thai T-28's have been loaned to Cambodia. Ten additional T-28's are being airlifted from the U.S. to Thailand for further loan or transfer to Cambodia.*

—MACV is drawing up a plan for the *full use of U.S. air assets and of GVN ground and air assets in Cambodia to ease NVA/VC military pressure on the Cambodian forces.*

—Proposals for *paramilitary operations* against NVA/VC supply lines in South Laos and Northeast Cambodia are being drawn up.

—A *South Vietnamese Air Force advanced base* is being established in Phnom Penh with aircraft, helicopters, supplies, and security. Planning for this base has been expedited.

Intelligence

—*CIA has stepped up its intelligence collection [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] activities in Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos; [1½ lines of source text not declassified].*

—*Five military intelligence officers are being added to [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] Phnom Penh for assessment and validation of intelligence.*

—*Five 5-man road watch teams* have been sent from South Laos to Northeastern Cambodia, and *five more are being readied*; native Cambodians will accompany these teams.

—On June 16 MACV was directed to make *maximum use of indigenous ground reconnaissance teams* for intelligence, target identification for air attacks, and forward air control of air strikes.

—MACV was directed today to encourage the South Vietnamese to establish a *Joint Information Center in Phnom Penh* to coordinate intelligence collection, evaluation, and dissemination. MACV and the Defense Attaché in Phnom Penh will assist and participate.

—MACV has been requested to *expedite stationing at Phnom Penh of two or three South Vietnamese light observation aircraft*.

—U.S. *tactical air reconnaissance* over Cambodia has been increased to include COMINT, ARDF, and photography.

—*MACV is introducing sensors* in Northeast Cambodia to assist in detecting enemy movement and locating targets.

Diplomatic

—We are *following the activities of the post-Djakarta Conference three-nation team* (Malaysia, Indonesia, and Japan) to see where we might be helpful. This team will press for an international conference on Cambodia, international actions by the 1964 Geneva powers, and increased support for the international position of the Cambodian Government.

—The *French* are going ahead with \$5 million loan to Cambodia and are maintaining teachers, doctors and their military mission in Phnom Penh.

—We are approaching Australia, New Zealand and Japan renewing our pressures for assistance to Cambodia.

330. Memorandum From Richard Smyser of the Operations Staff of the National Security Council to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, June 18, 1970.

SUBJECT

The Conclusions of the VSSG Cease-fire Analysis

One of the committees (panel 2) formed by the VSSG to review cease-fire options has produced what I—as well as others—consider a rather drastically pessimistic conclusion regarding the possible outcome of a cease-fire under stand-still or regroupment conditions. (A copy of this conclusion is attached at Tab A.) Basically, it concludes that the GVN under those conditions would have suffered “major and serious losses in control” which are “likely to be irreversible without the reinsertion of massive U.S. troops.” 25 or 18 out of 44 provinces would allegedly be lost in a year under the respective proposals. This is because of the great strength of the VCI as compared to the GVN administrative structure. On the other hand, under conditions involving NVA withdrawal, the GVN would emerge largely on the winning side after a year.

Unfortunately, I am not able to argue this in the same context in which it is presented. I do not have myself or on my staff the expertise or material at hand to challenge the detailed studies of each individual district and province. You may therefore wish to dismiss my reservations, but I would at least urge that you pose the following problems to those responsible for the analysis:

—How can the VCI itself, without Main Force support, sweep in to gain control of 25 or 18 provinces in a year, unless the terms of the cease-fire are very loose or unless we and the GVN are prepared to sit by with complete passivity while they violate those terms?

—What assumptions are being made about Viet Cong activity, about U.S. withdrawals, about Vietnamization, and about the relative impact of a cease-fire on the morale and effectiveness not just of the GVN but also of the VC?

—If the VCI is such a formidable instrument with the Main Force in place or regrouped, how do they suddenly become so helpless that the GVN can prevail when the NVA and the U.S. forces are withdrawn?

—If this is such a good proposition for the Viet Cong, why does Hanoi not go for it?

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 118, Vietnam Subject Files, Vietnam Special Studies Group. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Sent for information.

I do not favor a cease-fire proposal, and I have favored a VSSG analysis of what it would produce on the ground before we even considered it seriously. I even believe that we will suffer some loss in security under the conditions posed. But I wonder whether we have not loaded the assumptions or the conclusions too much.

Tab A

**Conclusions of the Vietnam Special Studies Group Paper
on a Cease-Fire Option**

Washington, undated.

We believe that the detailed analysis of the broad range of data available for our province assessments support several major overall conclusions:

—A ceasefire now in accordance with packages 1 or 2, i.e. without NVA withdrawals, would create a situation a year from now in which the GVN would have suffered major and serious losses in control. Package 1 (in place) is least favorable, resulting in predominant GVN control in only 19 provinces compared with 44 today. These GVN provinces would encompass 44% of the rural population compared with 40%, in provinces controlled by the VC. Package 2 (regroupment) would favor the GVN in only 26 provinces a year from now. The GVN share of the rural population would be 62% versus the VC's 26%.² In both of these cases, the losses suffered by the GVN are likely to be irreversible without the reinsertion of massive U.S. troops; and barring that, the enemy's prospects for a military victory would be greatly enhanced. At best South Vietnam would be a divided country with the enemy in control of I and II Corps and the control of GVN in III and probably IV Corps. However, this situation might not be stable, making further GVN deterioration a possibility. At worst the GVN would grow weaker and fall, by political or military means, to the Communists. As bad as these outcomes may appear from the perspective of the situation in the countryside, the enemy, who seeks to gain control in Saigon, may not be satisfied with these outcomes because of the risk that GVN forces may be able to defend the major centers of political power in South Vietnam.

—With genuine NVA withdrawal (Package 3), the GVN could eventually overcome the residual VC forces, providing the significant

² A handwritten note at this point, apparently by Smyser, reads: "Is it much higher now under the new HES [Hamlet Evaluation System]?"

underlying social and economic problems were solved. The final outcome would depend on the eventual political settlement reached. However, the GVN would retain the option of defending itself if the enemy reverted to a military strategy.³

—A year of continued hostilities (assuming continued U.S. redeployment) will:

—Not result in major changes in the control situation, although the VC/NVA will probably be in a better position to continue hostilities at the end of that year.

—Likely see marginal improvements a year from now for the GVN vis-à-vis its present ceasefire position. However, these gains would not significantly change the ceasefire outcomes from what they would be if a ceasefire were agreed to now. Because of the significant decline in allied forces, the VC/NVA will have less incentive to agree to a ceasefire a year from now than they would today.

³ A note in the same handwriting at this point reads: "Not under 1 and 2?"

331. Minutes of Washington Special Actions Group Meeting¹

Washington, June 19, 1970.

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT AT WSAG MEETING

The President said he thought he would stop in for a moment to get the latest up-to-date report on Cambodia. Following the meeting the other day,² he had been concerned on one thing—it seemed to him

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, WSAG Minutes, Originals, 1969–1970, 6/19/70. Top Secret; Sensitive. These minutes contain the record of the meeting only when the President was present. In an undated memorandum Haig informed Nixon that he had discussed with Kissinger the President's suggestion that he meet with members of the WSAG "to emphasize again your desires for positive action in the Cambodian situation." Haig stated that Kissinger thought it would be "constructive," but suggested that it would be "most constructive" if the President's appearance was brief and that he "avoid any statement which appears to be a directive that Thai forces be introduced into Cambodia." Rather, Kissinger suggested that the President "urge positive action to resolve difficulties which now stand in the way of a Thai decision to move forward." Haig attached talking points for Nixon. (Ibid., Box H-075, WSAG Meeting, Cambodia, 6/19/70)

² See Document 326.

that it was as important as anything else to pay attention to the psychological effect of such matters as stories in the *New York Times* listing attacks on 30 towns, roads cut, and oil and rice shortages in Phnom Penh. The history of politics shows that psychological pressures could bring governments down as well as military attacks.

The President then noted he had read reports to the effect that two main roads radiating from Phnom Penh were still open, and asked what the situation actually was. From news reports, he had understood that the enemy had cut these roads or was interdicting them. Admiral Moorer replied that Route 1 was open between Saigon and Phnom Penh, and that trucks were moving along it. He referred to the possibility that the press might pick up exaggerated reports from the people saying that they were attacked, and make it appear that something more was happening. The President asked how recent the report was of Route 1 being open, and Admiral Moorer replied that this information had just been received. General Kraft (MACV Director of Operations) had been to Phnom Penh, and had arrived back in Saigon only three or four hours ago; he had flown down the road and saw traffic. In addition, it was possible to keep the Mekong River open. On June 17 the Shell people had brought in a tanker containing a three months' supply of aviation fuel.

The President asked about the situation on the other road. Admiral Moorer replied that Route 4 between Sihanoukville and Phnom Penh was open at least as far as Kampong Speu. Enemy forces which had been in the town had retreated to the south, and while they had the capability of interdicting the road he did not believe that they could cut it.

The President stated that he had the impression that Phnom Penh was surrounded and under siege. What did the people in Phnom Penh think? The stories of Phnom Penh being surrounded had come from press representatives writing from Phnom Penh. Mr. Packard said that he had checked this morning, and that enemy forces numbering anywhere from a few hundred to a few thousand were in the vicinity of Phnom Penh. Reports from the enemy spoke of attacks on the 18th against the airport and the power plant. The problem in defending Phnom Penh was it is greatly spread out, and required lots of troops; there are 15,000 Cambodian troops in Phnom Penh. The President asked if the Cambodian forces were well positioned, and Mr. Packard replied affirmatively. Nevertheless, small enemy units could sneak up. Although the city was not in danger of falling, this created a psychological problem. The same was true with respect to the roads—small enemy bands could move around the countryside, and cut a tree or place mines to block communications temporarily. We would simply have to live with this situation.

The President inquired about the oil supply in Phnom Penh. Were supplies sufficient only for two weeks? Admiral Moorer reiterated that supplies could reach Phnom Penh, especially via the Mekong. The President agreed that if shipments could come up the Mekong, the situation was not serious. The President understood, too, that there was rice on hand in Phnom Penh for six weeks. This was quite a bit.

Mr. Packard noted that he had looked into Cambodian oil supplies. In one category there was only a 28-day supply, but in everything else there was more. He concurred with Admiral Moorer on the possibility of getting tankers up the Mekong regardless of conditions on Route 4. Admiral Moorer added that the South Vietnamese were continuing to bring refugees out by river.

The President wondered in terms of psychological warfare if it would be useful to have the South Vietnamese run another task force up the Mekong to Phnom Penh. This could be for the ostensible purpose of bringing rice. He didn't have the slightest idea if this would work, but he was not talking in terms of actual warfare but rather in terms of psychological matters and politics. For example, it was possible that the Thai forces in Laos wouldn't fight unless attacked, but their very presence there had given a great psychological lift to the Lao.³

Mr. Helms observed that in addition to making psychological moves, we needed better press responses. The President agreed, and wondered if we could do something about the U.S. press. Mr. Helms said that CIA was, in fact, trying to arrange for "leaks" to the press in Phnom Penh [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]. The President indicated that he was not thinking in terms of misleading the press. However, we needed to recognize that we could lose psychologically rather than militarily, and had to play a positive game. This was what the other side was trying to do by running around the countryside and shooting things up. He thought, though, that without Sihanoukville and the sanctuaries, the enemy forces must be running short of ammunition. How were they moving it—on their backs, or on trucks? Mr. Helms stated that the enemy was using captured trucks and pedi-cabs. He described the enemy attacks as going into the ghettos and terrorizing them.

³ In a June 22 memorandum to the President Kissinger summarized an attached report of June 1 from the CIA on the Thai defenders (one regiment consisting of two artillery battalions and three infantry battalions) at Long Tieng in Laos. The report gave the Thai high marks for defensive skill, leadership, and discipline, but noted their dependence on logistical support and their lack of aggressiveness in forward patrolling. Still the CIA ranked their performance as admirable, to which Nixon remarked in the margin of Kissinger's memorandum: "Good." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 432, Backchannel Files, Angkor/Erawan reports)

Would it be to our advantage, the President asked, to see if the South Vietnamese couldn't be encouraged to get in a few more fights? He asked how many South Vietnamese units were in Cambodia. Admiral Moorer said that there were ARVN units at Kampong Speu and that South Vietnamese Marines were at the ferry crossing at Neak Luong. The President emphasized that one thing was important: the South Vietnamese had to stay. In addition, we needed to get the psychological line out that more might come in. He had said on June 3⁴ that all U.S. troops would be out by the end of the month, but the South Vietnamese were different. It was alright for the American people to know that all U.S. forces would be out, but not for the enemy, since it removed the uncertainty about our actions. It was therefore important to get stories out that the South Vietnamese were there, and would not allow the Phnom Penh–Sihanoukville axis to be destroyed. As he had told Secretary Rogers, while it might actually be necessary for the South Vietnamese to go in, this could be avoided if we handled psychological matters correctly. For example, we should do everything we could right now in terms of giving arms to the Cambodians. If enough was going in to give the appearance that we are really supporting them, they would get a big boost.

Admiral Moorer remarked that according to a report from General Abrams the South Vietnamese joint general staff fully appreciated the desirability of keeping Cambodia out of NVA/VC hands. The President emphasized he wanted to be sure that we did not discourage the South Vietnamese from this. General Abrams had said earlier that the mission of the South Vietnamese was to hold South Vietnam. He appreciated this consideration, but also knew the importance of seeing that all of Cambodia didn't fall. We had to be sure that their position was balanced. Admiral Moorer assured the President that General Abrams understood the President's point. Within the framework of his guidance General Abrams had developed a good relationship with the Cambodians to assist them as well as the Vietnamese in Cambodia. The Vietnamese for their part had increased their liaison team in Phnom Penh to 24 people including representatives of the principal service functions. They had reached agreement with the Cambodians that both could operate 16 kilometers on either side of the border, and also had agreed on areas of operation. The South Vietnamese would deal with anything beyond 60 kilometers from the border on a case-by-case basis. Highway 1 was open to two convoys per week, and the South Vietnamese were looking into the matter of keeping Route 4 open. He re-

⁴ Reference is to the President's June 3 Address to the Nation; see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1970*, pp. 476–480.

iterated that the Mekong could be kept open. A discussion on the utilization of the Mekong ensued with the fact emerging that the river depth was 17 feet all the way to Phnom Penh. The President thought that this point should be made publicly. Was the South Vietnamese Navy good? Could Vietnamese forces hold the river open? Admiral Moorer said that the South Vietnamese forward base at Neak Luong contained supplies for 15 days, and a brigade of the Vietnamese Marine Corps was there to assist in keeping the road open. Behind these forces was the 9th ARVN Division, which contained combat engineers. An airfield was being developed for reconnaissance tacair, helicopters, and gunships. All these were South Vietnamese. This advanced base was better than Phnom Penh for the South Vietnamese, since it was closer to South Vietnam, outside the reach of reporters, and easier to defend. Continuing, Admiral Moorer noted that South Vietnamese FAC's would be sent to Kampong Thom tonight to provide tacair support as further examples of South Vietnamese assistance to Cambodia.

On the shipment of captured weapons, Admiral Moorer reported that a plan had been worked out. The first shipment would be on June 19, in which rifles and mortars would be flown in. The South Vietnamese had also agreed to train 80 Cambodian companies, thirty to be given refresher training, and 50 recruit training, with the latter completed by October. The U.S. was providing supplies, and the Cambodians the men and the food. Two Khmer Krom battalions had been trained in South Vietnam and would be in Phnom Penh between July 1 and 13. Thieu had said that this operation had to stop, but had later agreed to go ahead; 1,000 more would be recruited. With respect to the fighting, General Abrams had reported that the South Vietnamese had borne the brunt but appreciated the consequences of a Communist takeover of Cambodia. They were receptive to the idea of supporting Cambodia, amenable to General Abrams' suggestions, and responsive to reasonable requests. Admiral Moorer noted he was sending General Vogt to Saigon that afternoon to inquire into intelligence and communications matters. In passing, Admiral Moorer noted that the South Vietnamese had furnished a number of 4-man teams with radios to be sent out into the countryside around Phnom Penh.

The President asked if the South Vietnamese had furnished ground observers for our air. It was understood, he said, that our air would have a free hand. Admiral Moorer described the Salem House teams, which were composed of indigenous personnel who had been trained by the South Vietnamese but worked with us. Such teams were assisting beyond the 30 kilometer limit, and should help in our interdiction.

The President declared that it was important for people at State to talk positively and confidently. There should be no worry about being proved wrong, nor should there be any distorting. What was the pub-

lic relations situation at Phnom Penh? Ambassador Green replied that there was a good public affairs officer at Phnom Penh, but that we had been deficient in giving him guidance. The President stressed that we should remember our purpose here. We had to remember that news reporting could affect the outcome of a battle. There was the question of having a more positive view. We should lay out the facts positively, and explain what the Cambodian Government has going for it. For example, the Government had stronger popular support now than it did under Sihanouk. Was it true that the Cambodian forces had basically stayed in place, and hadn't run? Admiral Moorer referred to reports of some recruits having run away, but he and Mr. Packard agreed that the 30–40,000 Cambodian regular troops had done rather well. Admiral Moorer cited a report from our Defense Attaché that the Cambodian forces had counter-attacked. The President described the enemy situation in Cambodia as being different from that in South Vietnam, in that the North Vietnamese were in a hostile country and did not have the support of guerrilla forces in the countryside. Now that we had removed fear of the U.S. in North Vietnamese minds, we needed to leave a stronger fear of what the South Vietnamese would do. This was very important, and State and Defense should both consider sitting down with a few reporters, and give a backgrounder.

The President referred to an item in this morning's *New York Times* by Tad Szulc. Szulc was a brilliant fellow, but he was not out to do us any good. The President did not blame him for this story, but blamed us. We needed to face the fact that there were a great number of people in the press and in Congress who have a vested interest in seeing us fail. This was a game for them, and we should counterplay. We had a story to tell which was not being told. Thinking back to the period of April 10–30, four provincial capitals had fallen during this time. He had said that our sanctuary operation was concerned with South Vietnam and not Cambodia, and this was indeed our major goal. Nevertheless, Cambodia did not need to go. With our power, it would be a major failure to let it go without making a significant effort. We should send in arms, send in more South Vietnamese, go up the Mekong and undertake more reconnaissance. Admittedly this would not have much of a military effect, but would have an enormous effect psychologically. The President recalled to Ambassador Green the importance of psychological factors to Asian leaders, citing President Suharto as an example.

Ambassador Green noted that while we had our problems, the enemy had terrific ones, such as supply and communications. The President strongly concurred, referring to the way the enemy was spread out in South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. Ambassador Green referred also to Khmer nationalism as a problem for the enemy. The President said that it was important to support Cambodia diplomatically; he had

been glad to see that the three Djakarta conference nations had at least been heard by the Soviets. He concurred that Khmer nationalism was a useful factor. Ambassador Green stated that it was not just Communism involved, but fear of Tonkinese, who could be distinguished from South Vietnamese. The President noted that the elements of the Civil War which were present in Vietnam were not present here. It was not important who ran the government—Lon Nol, or Matak. The main point was that Cambodia should be neutral and independent. Ambassador Green suggested that in the forthcoming SEATO meeting, we might make a point of speaking in favor of respecting Cambodia's neutrality.

The President referred to the possibility that Alec Home might be named as the new British Foreign Minister. If so, he might be helpful. The President had talked with Heath, who would be making a mistake if he did not appoint Home. With the Conservative victory, the British might start to play a more positive role, both here and in the Middle East. Heath was a tough man as indicated by his expressions three years ago on British policy east of Suez. He couldn't reverse things, but would do something. It would be good to have some help and not to be alone. In Jordan and Lebanon, it would be good to have somebody with us. Ambassador Green thought that if Home were to attend the SEATO meeting, he could be extremely helpful.

332. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, June 22, 1970.

SUBJECT

Enemy Weapons Losses in Cambodia

You recently asked on what CIA based its assessment that we had captured a relatively small number of weapons in Cambodia in comparison to amounts believed to have been in the enemy's stockpiles. Attached at Tab A² is a CIA report explaining the stockpile derivation

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 510, Country Files, Far East, Cambodia, Vol. VIII, 20 June 1970–20 July 1970. Secret. A notation on the first page of the memorandum reads: "The President has seen."

² Attached but not printed.

and giving specific estimates of the numbers of individual and crew-served weapons. Estimated enemy requirements are based on a number of factors, including consumption resulting from wear, requirements to re-equip local forces with more modern weapons, and losses to allied forces. Although there is considerable uncertainty, CIA believes that the weapons captured thus far in Cambodia are approximately the following percentages of the stockpiles.

<i>Weapons</i>	<i>Captured in Cambodia</i>	<i>Stockpiles</i>		<i>Percent Captured</i>
		<i>Low Estimate</i>	<i>High Estimate</i>	
Total tons	161	565	950	17%–29%
Individual #'s	20,033 ³	70,000	117,750	17%–29%
Crew-served #'s	2,359	9,120	15,330	15%–26%

An assumption that the above estimate is valid raises several questions:

—Why have only seventeen to twenty-nine percent of the enemy's weapons been found after six weeks of operations?

—Why is this indicator of progress not consistent with other categories of captured equipment?

Estimates of food (63%–107%) and ammunition (71%–119%) captured are fairly close to each other and would appear to be more reasonable based on the amount of territory covered and level of effort of operations in Cambodia. A possible explanation is that the enemy put priority on and was successful in moving weapons out of the stockpiles prior to allied attacks. The enemy may have used a number of these weapons to arm its rear service units; considered weapons essential, both psychologically and militarily, to developing cadres throughout Cambodia; and reasoned that the weapons were the most valuable, difficult to replace, and most easily extracted items within the stockpiles. On the other hand, it seems more likely that the many uncertainties in the weapons stockpile calculations contributed to an over-estimate.

CIA is continuing to analyze this problem and to refine their calculations. I will provide you with the results as soon as they are available.

³ Some of the weapons recently captured by ARVN may have belonged originally to the Cambodian Government rather than coming from enemy sanctuaries. [Footnote in the source text.]

333. **Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon**¹

Washington, June 23, 1970.

SUBJECT

Recent Policy Decisions in Hanoi

There are a number of indications that Hanoi, after a period of indecision following the Cambodian coup and our actions against the sanctuaries, has decided to emphasize military effort over the intermediate term. Hanoi's preparations in the military field and in diplomacy, together with statements by major figures, have given clues to this decision. They have also shown that Hanoi will demand continued major sacrifices from its people and cooperation from Communist states.

Actions in the Field. Hanoi has made a number of military moves and preparations:

—The Laos infiltration network, usually closed during the rainy season, is being kept open. It has been warned to expect major infiltration. So far six battalion groups, about 3,300 men, have been sent into the trail. It is not yet clear where they are going. The evidence so far suggests that they will stay in Laos, presumably to defend the trail against possible GVN-Thai incursions.

—Hanoi has stepped up action in the trail area, capturing Attopeu and Saravane.

—Hanoi has also stepped up the pace of Communist military actions in the I and II Corps areas of South Vietnam.

—Communist military pressures in Cambodia remain high.

Diplomatic Moves. In the diplomatic arena, Hanoi has done the following:

—Clearly indicated that it expects no serious work to be done in Paris in the intermediate future.

—Decided to send a mission to Communist states to explain recent policy decisions. This indicates that a significant decision has been taken in Hanoi. The Secretary of State's memo on this subject is at Tab A.²

Hanoi Statements. In order to convey the seriousness of its new decisions to the population, the Hanoi leadership has also taken a number of political steps in North Vietnam:

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 147, Vietnam Country Files, Vietnam, 1 June 1970. Secret; Sensitive. Sent for information. A stamped notation on the first page reads: "The President has seen."

² This June 12 memorandum from Rogers to the President is attached but not printed.

—It convoked a session of the National Assembly two weeks ago. This is a very rare occurrence which usually marks the leadership's desire to gain a veneer of "popular" approval of major decisions.

—Premier Pham Van Dong and Assembly leader Truong Chinh in their speeches to the Assembly repeatedly cited the "new situation," the "immediate" and "urgent" tasks, and the "great advantages and possibilities."

—Those speeches also hinted that the U.S. may resume bombing; they spoke several times of accomplishing their tasks "under every circumstance," a veiled reference to a bombing resumption which is probably understood by every North Vietnamese.

—The speeches, including one by a leading economist, reflected concern about the costs of the renewed effort and about the economy's ability to bear more intensified warfare. They hinted that Hanoi would ask for greater help from foreign nations.

—An accompanying article by General Giap, Hanoi's military chief, repeatedly spoke of "protracted war." This indicates that Hanoi has decided that it must now emphasize long-run military pressure rather than hope for an early victory or early settlement.

—Giap also replied to apparent feelings of concern within the North Vietnamese army and party about the Cambodian reversal. He spoke several times of a "difficult" situation and said that "if there is retrogression, this is only partial and temporary." He also spoke repeatedly of "sacrifices."

—His speech does not suggest any planning for a Tet-type offensive, but for a general step-up in military pressure, particularly against the pacification program; other indicators point to I and II Corps as the principal areas for intensified Communist actions.

—Other statements and indications suggest that Hanoi's main effort in the near term will be in Cambodia rather than in any part of South Vietnam, although the Communists will also keep up pressure in Vietnam in order to divert potential South Vietnamese assistance to Cambodia. It is thus possible that the units now being started through the infiltration pipeline will continue on to Cambodia rather than remaining in Laos or going to Vietnam.

—Giap pledged that the North Vietnamese would fight "shoulder to shoulder" with the Lao and Cambodians and would "lead the national liberation undertaking of the Indochinese peoples to complete victory."

I have asked the State Department for further information on the expected visit by a North Vietnamese delegation to Communist nations, and for their recommendation on actions we should take in the face of this.

334. Editorial Note

No minutes have been found for the Washington Special Actions Group meeting of June 24, 1970. According to a June 23 briefing memorandum for Henry Kissinger, prepared by John Holdridge, the main purpose of this meeting was to have a quick rundown of steps being taken to aid Cambodia before President Nixon's departure for San Clemente on June 25. In addition Holdridge informed Kissinger that "our aid to Cambodia is running into big money:" \$25 million for the Cambodian Military Assistance Program for fiscal year 1971, \$59 million projected as added on to the Military Assistance Programs for Thailand and South Vietnam for Cambodian-related expenses, a potential additional \$75 million for paramilitary forces in the southeast Laos–northeast Cambodia–northwest South Vietnam triangle, and unspecified funding for Indonesian support to Cambodia. The Department of Defense and Central Intelligence Agency were both having difficulties with the funding. Finally Holdridge alerted Kissinger to the fact that the Lon Nol government was running out of money and might be out of cash within a month or so. Holdridge suggested Kissinger review the Washington Special Actions Group Working Group plan for paramilitary operations in south Laos, northeastern Cambodia and northwestern South Vietnam. Plans to drop propaganda leaflets over Cambodia and to use enemy documents captured in Cambodia were "unexceptional" and could be discussed if time permitted. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-078, WSAG Meeting, Cambodia, 6/24/70)

335. Memorandum From Richard Kennedy of the Planning Group of the National Security Council to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, June 25, 1970.

SUBJECT

Combined VSSG Meeting on Ceasefire Proposals and Senior Review Group Meeting on Diplomatic Initiatives (NSSM 94)

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-046, SRG Meetings, Indochina, 6/27/70. Top Secret; Sensitive. At the top of the page Kissinger wrote: "Why p. 15 withdrawal within one year? What if this is not part of the package—Pres has never focussed on it."

You called this joint meeting in order to consider possible cease-fire proposals in conjunction with diplomatic initiatives leading to a conference on Vietnam and Indo-China. Our objective should be to be sure that the conclusions of the VSSG study are reflected in the consideration of proposals for diplomatic initiatives.

Specific objectives for your discussion of the VSSG paper² are contained in Larry Lynn's memo to you.³

As to the Diplomatic Initiatives paper (NSSM 94)⁴ you will want to get agreement to a restructuring of the paper to (a) eliminate options which are non-starters (b) package the various proposals in a more meaningful way which would be the basis for a full scenario approach.

—The paper is not now constructed in a way which would give the President alternative courses of action—it is in the nature of a laundry list from which one could select specific actions. No attempt has been made to put the actions together in the context of a complete course of action.

—Ambassador Sullivan prepared a slimmed-down version of the paper at your request.⁵ It does get out most of the unrealistic options but still misses the mark. It has not been distributed (at Sullivan's request) and cannot be raised at this meeting. It could be a springboard for a quick rewrite.

You also will want to have reflected in the NSSM 94 paper the conclusions on ceasefire which will be drawn out of the discussion of the VSSG paper. Some of the proposed initiatives leading to a conference in the NSSM 94 paper include as an ingredient a ceasefire proposal. In any event if a conference were to be convened, the ceasefire question would arise soon. Thus the implications of a ceasefire are an essential consideration in the review of the diplomatic initiatives proposals.

Relationship Between the VSSG Paper and NSSM 94

At present, there is not very much relation at all between the two papers.

² For an analysis and the summary conclusions of the VSSG paper on a cease-fire, see Document 330 and the attachment thereto.

³ Lynn's undated memorandum to Kissinger reviewed issues for which the VSSG paper did not provide back up details or explicit agency views. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-046, SRG Meetings, Indochina, 6/27/70)

⁴ The draft response to NSSM 94, June 9; for a summary, see Document 324.

⁵ Attached to a June 23 memorandum from Sullivan to Kissinger. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-046, SRG Meetings, Indochina, 6/27/70)

—*The VSSG paper* outlines three packages for analysis. Those are:

- (1) Ceasefire in place;
- (2) Ceasefire with regroupment;
- (3) Ceasefire with withdrawal.

—The VSSG paper concludes that the only one of the three which would be to our advantage in absolute terms is package 3, ceasefire with withdrawal. The others would cause us to lose at least some and perhaps considerable control over the countryside over the next year, although the exact amount of the loss is under dispute and is probably impossible to determine in advance.

—The VSSG paper also concludes that Hanoi will probably not accept any ceasefire proposal right now, and is not likely to make one of its own. It particularly concludes that Hanoi would not accept package 3 without favorable political conditions.

—NSSM 94, on the other hand, proposes three ceasefires which are essentially standstill ceasefires:

—an agreed unconditional ceasefire (which the VSSG says would work to our disadvantage on the ground and Hanoi would not accept anyway);

—an agreed local ceasefire (which the VSSG does not address, but would probably consider disadvantageous);

—a unilateral US/GVN limited ceasefire (which the VSSG does not address at all).

In order to take care of this problem, the drafters of NSSM 94 should be asked to frame their proposals in the same terms in which the VSSG has framed them, or the VSSG should be asked to evaluate the results of the proposals listed in NSSM 94.

We recommend that you take up the *VSSG paper first* and then proceed to consider the Diplomatic Initiatives Paper (NSSM 94).

Your book⁶ contains:

—Talking Points for the VSSG ceasefire paper (with Larry Lynn's memo to you);

—Talking Points for the Diplomatic Initiatives Paper (NSSM 94);

—VSSG–Ceasefire Paper;

—NSSM 94 Paper (with John Holdridge's summary and Winston Lord's analysis papers);

⁶ Attached but not printed.

—Revised NSSM 94 Paper prepared by Ambassador Sullivan (with a brief analytical summary);

—NSSM 94.

The book was prepared with the assistance of Larry Lynn, John Holdridge and Dick Smyser.

336. Minutes of Combined Vietnam Special Studies Group and Senior Review Group Meeting¹

San Clemente, June 27, 1970, 10:10 a.m.–12:20 p.m.

SUBJECT

Vietnam Cease-fire and Peace Initiatives

PARTICIPANTS

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

Defense

David M. Packard

State

Amb. U. Alexis Johnson

William Sullivan

JCS

Adm. Thomas H. Moorer

CIA

Gen. Robert E. Cushman

Thomas H. Karamessines

George Carver

NSC Staff

Col. Richard Kennedy

Laurence E. Lynn

Richard Smyser

Keith Guthrie

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-111, SRG Minutes, Originals, 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive; Nodis. The meeting was held in the Conference Room at the Western White House in San Clemente, California. Jeanne Davis sent these minutes to Kissinger on July 4. Kissinger wrote the following note on the transmittal memorandum: "Put also in my files. HK"

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

*VSSG Cease-Fire Study*²

The VSSG Working Group will revise the study as follows:

1. A brief statement of the rules of engagement that would apply under each cease-fire package will be prepared.
2. The description of each cease-fire package will include data on the location of both enemy and US and Allied main force units covered by the cease-fire. For Package 2, anticipated regroupment areas will be specified.
3. Best possible, probable, and worst possible outcomes will be formulated for each cease-fire package. The factors which affect the outcome will be clearly identified and fully described. To assist in analyzing outcomes, Defense will provide assumptions about anticipated progress on Vietnamization, and JCS will supply data on projected US withdrawals, including the specific units involved and the anticipated timing.
4. Cease-fire outcomes will be evaluated on the basis of two alternative assumptions regarding withdrawals: (a) that all US forces will be withdrawn within one year after a cease-fire takes effect, and (b) that withdrawals will continue according to the present schedule. In evaluating outcomes under the two withdrawal assumptions, the VSSG Working Group should consider (1) whether it may be desirable to retain certain US units as a deterrent to cease-fire violations and (2) how much it might be feasible to slow down the rate of US withdrawals once a cease-fire is effected.

The revised VSSG study is to be submitted to Dr. Kissinger by July 8.

*NSSM 94 Study*³

The NSSM 94 study is to be revised as follows:

1. Options clearly unacceptable in terms of US interests are to be deleted. From the list of proposals the US might make to induce a peace conference, the options to be eliminated will include (a) acceptance of the NLF Ten Points and (b) unilateral and unconditional withdrawal. As a substitute for the latter option, a new option will be prepared providing the bargaining US withdrawal in exchange for some concession by the communists.
2. The paper should provide a full discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of various forums and US proposals which might be used to induce negotiations for a peace settlement in Indochina. It should clearly distinguish between concessions to get negotiations

² For analysis and summary conclusions, see Document 330.

³ For a summary, see Document 324.

started and those which might be made in the courses of negotiating a peace settlement. It should also distinguish between public initiatives and steps that might be taken privately to launch negotiations. In particular, the paper should discuss the role that a new US senior negotiator in Paris might play in getting talks underway.

3. The paper should include recommendations on the optimum membership for an all-Indochina peace conference.

The NSC staff will prepare a first draft of the revised study and submit it to the Ad Hoc Group established under NSSM 94. The completed paper is due to Dr. Kissinger by July 14.

Mr. Kissinger: Let's first take up the VSSG paper. It is an important contribution toward understanding what a cease-fire would look like. I gather that everyone prefers Package 3, since it produces what is obviously the best outcome. If we were to get a cease-fire agreement today, what would the difference be between Package 1 and 2? Since there are very few enemy main force units in South Vietnam right now, we would be better off with Package 1, since Package 2 would require us to regroup our forces.

Mr. Lynn: It's not true there are few enemy main force units presently in South Vietnam.

Adm. Moorer: Two NVA regiments are moving into the vicinity of populated areas in I Corps.

Gen. Cushman: Many of the NVA forces in I Corps have pulled back and are already regrouped.

Mr. Kissinger: They don't lose anything if their forces are already regrouped; yet, U.S. forces would have to regroup. Where would the enemy forces in I Corps be regrouped?

Mr. Lynn: To the north.

Mr. Packard: Where they regroup makes a difference.

Mr. Kissinger: When we speak of regroupment, does anyone know exactly what we would ask for?

Mr. Lynn: No, although it is contemplated that their forces might be in II Corps.

Gen. Cushman: In principle, we want them as far away as possible from the population centers.

Amb. Sullivan: In III and IV Corps, they have already withdrawn.

Mr. Carver: They have some troops there. Regroupment involves the overlap problem, that is, determining who is in control of what area.

Amb. Sullivan: Regroupment applies only to NVA forces and U.S. and Allied main forces. In III and IV Corps there aren't any NVA units, except in the U Minh forest.

Mr. Lynn: There is also the question of regrouping NVA fillers assigned to VC units.

Amb. Johnson: Is there any possibility of achieving that?

Amb. Sullivan: In the NSSM 37 study,⁴ it was assumed the fillers would stay.

Mr. Lynn: With an in-place cease-fire what would prevent fillers being introduced?

Gen. Cushman: There could also be infiltration of fillers from the regroupment areas.

Mr. Lynn: Under Package 1, is infiltration to be taken as an indicator of non-compliance with a cease-fire?

Mr. Smyser: The paper assumes there will be infiltration.

Mr. Kissinger: Suppose we offer a standstill cease-fire today. Would that not be better than regroupment?

Mr. Lynn: The paper makes very clear that it would definitely not be better.

Mr. Kissinger: Yes, but I like to challenge my staff. Why would a standstill agreement not have the same practical consequences as cease-fire with regroupment? Under Package 1 we remain in the vicinity of the populated areas; under Package 2 we would have to regroup. A standstill agreement today would find enemy main force units out of the country. What we need is a definition of what is meant by a standstill agreement and what is meant by regroupment.

Mr. Packard: We should also consider what other activities we will be undertaking under each of these situations. For example, what will we be doing on pacification and on economic problems? We should broaden our definitions to include these aspects.

Mr. Lynn: Annex A describes what would be going on under each package. It is, of course, possible to quarrel with the assumptions used in formulating the packages.

Mr. Kissinger: Does the Annex tell what is meant by an in-place cease-fire?

Mr. Lynn: Yes. The paper says "Large unit contacts in South Vietnam would cease. Small unit contacts would decrease sharply but would probably not cease until patrolling limits became stabilized."

Mr. Kissinger: That describes the *consequence* of an in-place cease-fire. It doesn't say what would actually be happening.

Gen. Cushman: It would be like the Christmas truce. Large units would avoid engagement; some small unit contact might continue.

⁴ For a summary, see Document 91.

Mr. Kissinger: You can't tell troops just to cease contact. You have got to tell them what to do and what not to do.

Mr. Lynn: We haven't grappled with the question of what we would be negotiating about when arranging a cease-fire.

Mr. Kissinger: Leaving aside the question of negotiations, what exactly is it that units may or may not do? Do they stay in their base camps? Can they move out? Are they free to conduct sweep operations within their own lines?

Mr. Lynn: We assume all main force units would remain mobile but would not actually seek contact with one another.

Amb. Sullivan: General Abrams has pointed out that a standstill cease-fire under favorable circumstances would have the advantage of permitting military movement that would not be possible with regroupment. He is more inclined toward a Thieu-type standstill.

Mr. Lynn: That can't be verified.

Mr. Kissinger: Tom, what do you think?

Adm. Moorer: When we start discussion, they will adjust their positions. I think Packages 1 and 2 are both dangerous. The problem of verification bothers me. There is the question of distance asymmetry; they withdraw a few miles, while we withdraw several thousand. The timing is not too good, since a cease-fire proposal would come just when we have brought about a change in the situation in Vietnam. Furthermore, we ought to look at it from the standpoint of the overall situation in Indochina.

Amb. Johnson: Each package presumes a U.S. withdrawal.

Mr. Kissinger: I hadn't understood that before.

Mr. Lynn: The most vulnerable parts of the country are terribly significant. In southern I Corps and northern II Corps, there is a sizable prospect that a large part of the country would be detached from the GVN.

Amb. Johnson: I thought a cease-fire would be like the Christmas truce, but extended indefinitely.

Mr. Lynn: It is assumed that the NVA and the VC would take as much advantage of a cease-fire as they can without overtly breaking it.

Amb. Sullivan: Our people would do the same.

Adm. Moorer: We would carefully observe the rules of engagement, but they will exploit a cease-fire in much the same way they did the 1968 cessation of bombing.

Mr. Kissinger: Right now we need some rules about who can do what. It is one thing to have a Christmas truce and another to have an indefinite cease-fire. If we could draw a line separating the two sides'

forces, we could arrange a classical cease-fire. But in Vietnam, we can't do that.

Gen. Cushman: The enemy will not accept unless they see an advantage. I would be worried if they did agree to a cease-fire.

Adm. Moorer: So would I.

Mr. Kissinger: We will never get a negotiation started that way.

Mr. Carver: Verification of the cease-fire would be unequal. We would have the whole press corps and the television networks policing our observance of the cease-fire.

Mr. Lynn: And we would also lose valuable sources of intelligence about enemy activities.

Mr. Smyser: There are two possible situations. The enemy might really want a cease-fire. Or they might want a cease-fire only so that they can exploit it. The papers to date assume the second situation. However, the other is also possible.

Mr. Packard: There are many things they can do without violating a cease-fire. The paper notes that their forces could be expected to move back into the countryside and support guerrilla operations.

Gen. Cushman: They can just disavow whatever activities they undertake during a cease-fire. They might consider it desirable since it would permit them to work on their personnel problem. They could live with a cease-fire if we observe it.

Amb. Sullivan: While the U.S. might abide by the Marquis of Queensberry rules, our South Vietnamese friends might not be so inhibited.

Mr. Lynn: In that type of struggle, the VC have a comparative advantage. They have a better infrastructure, long experience with clandestine operations, lots of penetrations that we don't have, and the willingness to use any means, including terrorism and assassination.

Mr. Packard: Terrorism is important. It would have to be included in a cease-fire.

Gen. Cushman: If it were not, there would be an erosion of control.

Adm. Moorer: The NVA can always attribute violations to the VC, as they have in the case of violations of the DMZ.

Amb. Johnson: According to the VSSG projections, if fighting continues, what will we be gaining in the countryside?

Mr. Lynn: The paper has two views. The first is that we would continue to gain despite the U.S. withdrawals. Vietnamization would continue to bring gains in GVN control. The second view is that at best we would stay about where we are, with some slight declines. My personal view, which is not reflected in the paper, is that there will be significant declines.

Gen. Cushman: There is a basic split in the estimates. The station in Saigon says that the VC insurgent threat would decline if operations continue. However, with the drawdown of U.S. forces there will be some erosion of the situation. (To Carver) Will those estimates go into our paper?

Mr. Carver: Yes. It will be ready next week.

Mr. Kissinger: We need a clearer description of the rules of engagement under each cease-fire hypothesis. This is not as important in the case of withdrawal as with a standstill agreement. In I Corps a standstill would be close to the same thing as regroupment. Under the VSSG analysis we lose southern I Corps and northern II Corps under both a standstill and a regroupment. Does everyone agree that the outcome in I Corps would be bad?

Mr. Packard: It depends on how you define control and on what the GVN does. If they make progress on the economy and winning the hearts and minds of the people, things may go better. If they sit down, it will be bad.

Mr. Kissinger: How can they replace 150,000 U.S. military troops and come out better militarily?

Mr. Packard: They might if they could take over some U.S. military responsibilities and at the same time make some progress on building up the economy and support among the people.

Adm. Moorer: It also depends on what they can do about infiltration.

Mr. Kissinger: Does anyone think the South Vietnamese would do better than is indicated by the VSSG projections?

Mr. Packard: Nobody's guess can be very good. It is important to get the whole effort in Vietnam oriented back toward Vietnamization following the Cambodia operation. It depends on what the South Vietnamese can achieve. We ought to see what happens during the next couple of months. Then we will be in a better position to make an assessment.

Amb. Johnson: If things go downhill, we will be worse off than now as regards trying to arrange a cease-fire. If the situation improves, our position will be better.

Mr. Packard: If the situation deteriorates and we then propose a cease-fire, we would be no worse off than if we seek a cease-fire now and then things go downhill. Later on if we want to propose a cease-fire and accept some degradation of our position, we can do so.

Adm. Moorer: Another factor would be whether NVA forces in South Vietnam continue to decline.

Gen. Cushman: It would be an advantage to us if the NVA main force units were not in the fight. Can the ARVN and the local forces handle things without us?

Mr. Kissinger: How are we to present the issues to the President so that he can make a judgment?

The three cease-fire packages in the VSSG paper should be rewritten to include very brief statements of the rules of engagement applicable in each case and the rough locations of troop units under each package. Outcomes should be formulated in terms of the best possible, the probable, and the worst possible; and the factors that will affect the outcome should be specified. For example, if more rapid Vietnamization is identified as a factor, the paper should explain exactly what that means.

Mr. Lynn: The key to answering those questions is to know exactly which of our units are leaving.

Mr. Packard: The JCS has rough projections underway. We can get that information and provide it to you.

Mr. Kissinger: Alex has pointed out that for each cease-fire package the VSSG paper assumes a total U.S. withdrawal within twelve months. I thought the cease-fire was related to something like the present withdrawal schedule.

Mr. Lynn: We can examine the outcome using the assumption that withdrawals take place according to the present schedule.

Amb. Sullivan: This would have a major effect on the estimate of the results of a standstill agreement.

Mr. Lynn: Not necessarily. We will be down to 32 U.S. maneuver battalions by April 1971 and to 25 by the end of the fiscal year. That is not much combat strength.

Mr. Kissinger: In that case, why not pull out all the forces?

Mr. Lynn: Because without a cease-fire their firepower is needed.

Mr. Kissinger: But if there is a cease-fire, is it good or bad to retain some troops twelve months after it takes effect?

Mr. Lynn: Under a cease-fire the firepower provided by the remaining units would not be useable.

Gen. Cushman: But those troops would act as policemen.

Mr. Kissinger: Then we have two questions. Can we assume that a cease-fire will hold? And is there a need to have a U.S. force as a deterrent?

Mr. Packard: It might be easier to keep more troops in Vietnam if they are not fighting.

Mr. Lynn: Can we get a couple of assumptions on whether we can get away with it if we retain more forces in Vietnam following a cease-fire?

Amb. Sullivan: Would the deterrent be principally against main force or against guerrilla activities?

Gen. Cushman: I think it would primarily serve as a shield against enemy main force activities.

Mr. Carver: It would also be a confidence-builder for the GVN. During the next year the GVN will in theory be increasing the regional and provincial forces by 50,000 men. Quantitatively this can offset the U.S. withdrawals, although qualitatively it would not compensate completely. Nevertheless, there would be some offset.

Mr. Packard: We need to study what we can do to make the South Vietnamese exert more effort.

Mr. Carver: There are a number of imponderables. How bad has the Cambodian operation hurt the enemy? How much will the morale boost to the ARVN from Cambodia carry over into subsequent operations in Vietnam? How much is the planned South Vietnamese buildup going to be a mere paper exercise?

Mr. Packard: That's why I think we should wait three months to assess the situation.

Mr. Carver: We will be able to make a clearer intelligence estimate in a few months.

Mr. Smyser: When the French arranged a cease-fire in 1954, their air force provided a deterrent capacity against terrorist attacks.

Amb. Sullivan: Our paper (NSSM 94) presumed that the present withdrawal schedule would be retained. Why did the VSSG study use a different assumption?

Mr. Lynn: One of the task forces working on the paper inserted the assumption of withdrawal within one year.

Mr. Kissinger: Why?

Amb. Sullivan: Does using the one-year assumption make the cease-fire look worse?

Mr. Lynn: Yes. But the question is how much worse. We can do an analysis based on the present schedule.

Mr. Packard: In the VSSG study, was any assumption made that a ban on infiltration of supplies would be one of the conditions for a cease-fire?

Mr. Lynn: No.

Mr. Packard: That would be a good condition to insist on.

Amb. Johnson: It would not be feasible, however.

Mr. Lynn: I don't know whether the assumption of total withdrawal in one year cooks the results or not. We will have to see.

Mr. Kissinger: There are two things we need to look at. If we remove U.S. forces, what will happen in South Vietnam? What is the possible value of retaining some forces in Vietnam as a deterrent against violation of the cease-fire?

Mr. Lynn: Of course, the South Vietnamese might become more aggressive if they believe they can rely on U.S. troops to bail them out.

Amb. Sullivan: On the other hand, retaining U.S. troops might make the South Vietnamese less aggressive. They might assume that they could depend on us to take all the risks.

Mr. Kissinger: Has the issue of the one-year projection of the situation with or without a cease-fire been settled?

Mr. Lynn: No. DOD and CIA have one view. Others are more pessimistic about the outlook.

Mr. Packard: Our view is that our position will be better in a year if we continue operations.

Amb. Sullivan: We think that we will not be significantly better off.

Gen. Cushman: What happens if we propose a cease-fire and it is rejected?

Mr. Kissinger: Why would we be significantly better off in a year?

Mr. Packard: We can offer some reasons.

Mr. Lynn: The one-year projection is the hardest part of the study. We need some help on this. The working group just took a rough cut at it.

Mr. Kissinger: If you pose the question of a cease-fire a year from now, when there will be no U.S. combat forces present, what would be the answer?

Amb. Sullivan: If the circumstances are like the present—a U.S. drawdown and the NVA following a protracted warfare strategy—the situation will be about the same as now. However, if there has been a significant rise in NVA main force activity, we will be worse off.

Mr. Kissinger: Why won't that happen even without a cease-fire?

Mr. Lynn: With a cease-fire all main force operations on our side cease.

Mr. Packard: And small units have more freedom to maneuver.

Mr. Lynn: The results will not look much better in a year. Our main force power—which constitutes our principal advantage—will be gone.

Mr. Packard: Our biggest advantage this past year has been the influence we have had on pacification.

Mr. Kissinger: Can we do without the main force activities?

Mr. Lynn: We have been most successful when our units engage in joint operations with local and provincial force units.

Mr. Packard: We have not had troops operating in IV Corps. The experience there gives some confidence that the South Vietnamese can manage by themselves.

Mr. Lynn: In IV Corps, GVN control is improving in four provinces, declining in eight, and in four is about the same.

Mr. Carver: The NVA put in five regiments and a division headquarters there. Without these reinforcements, the GVN would have

done even better in IV Corps. Generally speaking, the VSSG paper suggests a degree of certitude that is not felt by many observers. There are a number of imponderables, such as the calibre of provincial chiefs.

Mr. Lynn: We have tried to assess the contribution of the leadership factor under current conditions.

Mr. Carver: But it is subject to change.

Mr. Kissinger: How long will it take to get the paper in a form suitable to give to the President?

Mr. Lynn: When do you want it?

Mr. Kissinger: By July 8.

Mr. Lynn: We can have a much better version by then. It can include a description of the terms of engagement under each package, and we can grind in assumptions on various withdrawal schedules (one year vs. the existing schedule). We can also get from Defense some assumptions about the success of Vietnamization, and we can specify best, probable, and worst outcomes.

Amb. Sullivan: You might explicitly state how much the assumption of a one-year withdrawal affects the estimate of the outcome under the various cease-fire packages.

Mr. Kissinger: We will do that.

Amb. Johnson: What kind of a dialogue have we had with the GVN on these various cease-fire hypotheses?

Amb. Sullivan: We have discussed the matter a good deal with the GVN. Thieu prefers a standstill arrangement.

Mr. Kissinger: Why?

Amb. Sullivan: I imagine he thinks a standstill would make the U.S. public tolerate an indefinite U.S. presence in Vietnam.

Mr. Packard: We could go slower on pulling out but could not stay indefinitely. We ought to consider how much slower we can withdraw if we are not fighting.

Mr. Carver: We know there has been a good deal of informal discussion within the GVN about a cease-fire. Some of them feel more confident about it.

Mr. Kissinger: Do they know what a standstill cease-fire means?

Amb. Sullivan: Thieu does. He is thinking of the 1954 situation.

Mr. Smyser: The earlier VSSG paper⁵ assumed that the U.S. would propose a cease-fire. Is that true?

⁵ Smyser is apparently referring to the cease-fire section in the May 13 VSSG paper entitled, "The Situation in the Countryside." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-002, VSSG Meetings, 5/20/70)

Mr. Carver: No. The VSSG assumption is that a completely neutral party would make the proposal.

Mr. Kissinger: What difference does it make?

Mr. Lynn: It is a question of the psychological disadvantage incurred by the proposer.

Mr. Kissinger: You can argue that both ways. Some say that proposing a cease-fire would strengthen our domestic position.

Now let's take up the NSSM 94 study. This is a laundry list of options. We want to eliminate those that are clearly non-starters and leave only the reasonable ones for presentation to the President. Then we should get a full analysis of the reasonable options.

I have a number of questions about the paper. First, do we all agree that this is the time to launch an initiative? Or should we concentrate on exploiting our successes and delay any peace proposal?

Mr. Packard: In a month or so it might be a good time to take an initiative.

Amb. Johnson: I agree.

Adm. Moorer: I generally agree, but we would want to examine the matter very carefully and be sure what we would be conceding.

Mr. Kissinger: Assuming we wish to take an initiative, should we limit our effort to Vietnam or broaden it to include Indochina as a whole?

Mr. Packard: Given the Cambodian developments, the situation in Laos, and the Thai involvement, I believe it should deal with Indochina as a whole.

Gen. Cushman, Amb. Johnson, and Adm. Moorer: I agree.

Mr. Kissinger: Should our initiative consist of a bilateral approach to Hanoi or should it be in a broader framework? There are several alternatives to a bilateral approach. We could go through the French, the Geneva Co-Chairmen, U Thant, or the Djakarta Conference Group.

Mr. Packard: If we are going to address something more than just Vietnam, we will need a broader base.

Mr. Kissinger: There are a number of choices. One would be a public call by the President. Another would be to have the President ask U Thant, the French, the Co-Chairmen, or all three together. We could try secret talks with the Soviets or talk directly with the North Vietnamese in Paris.

Mr. Packard: There would be no sense having a conference in which the North Vietnamese were not involved.

Mr. Kissinger: It would be an interesting conference if it included the Soviets and not the North Vietnamese.

Amb. Johnson: There are two aspects to the question. One is the public posture we wish to take. The other is what we may wish to do privately.

Mr. Packard: The key question is what is most likely to move the North Vietnamese.

Mr. Kissinger: But we also want to consider which forum would be the most manageable for us. The two are not necessarily the same. Alex, what do you think?

Amb. Johnson: I am open-minded. The Djakarta Group has a good deal of appeal but offers no chance of getting North Vietnamese participation. If we go through the Geneva Co-Chairmen, we won't be able to get the Chinese.

Mr. Kissinger: It would be a strange conference if Hanoi has to maneuver publicly between the Chinese and the Soviets.

Amb. Johnson: U Thant and the UN seem a weak reed. We could start out bilaterally but would then have to expand the talks to cover all Indochina.

Adm. Moorer: With the new government we might get the British in the act.

Amb. Sullivan: The British are still a weak reed.

Amb. Johnson: The bilateral talks in Paris constitute the one existing channel. We would have to decide where we wanted to proceed from there.

Amb. Sullivan: The Soviet channel is always open.

Amb. Johnson: As a private channel but not for a public initiative.

Gen. Cushman: What have the French proposed?

Amb. Johnson: Not much. They have just said that there ought to be negotiations.

Mr. Kissinger: Would it be best to try Paris or at least begin there?

Mr. Packard: Why not? We want to upgrade the talks.

Amb. Johnson: I would tend to prefer Paris.

Mr. Kissinger: What do we do there?

Mr. Packard: We could propose a conference to discuss the whole Indochina problem.

Amb. Sullivan: The drafters of the NSSM 94 paper think we are unlikely to get a conference that would include all the needed membership. If we publicly called for a conference, there might be some psychological and political effect in terms of domestic opinion in the United States and putting the onus on the other side. But there is no reason for great hope that a conference would actually materialize.

Mr. Kissinger: At what level would it be possible for us to achieve something?

Amb. Sullivan: Bilaterally in Paris with the North Vietnamese and in secret negotiations with the Soviets. In Paris the North Vietnamese are highly suspicious and always think that any step we take is aimed at deceiving them. We might be able to dispel some of this mistrust by our public posture and through secret talks with the Soviets.

Mr. Packard: What about a public appeal to the prospective attendees of a conference?

Gen. Cushman: They have all said no.

Amb. Sullivan: The North Vietnamese have been careful to leave the question open. They said they did not want a conference *at this time*.

Mr. Kissinger: The Soviets have taken the same position.

Mr. Carver: The North Vietnamese mind-set at this time is such that if you really want to explore the prospects for a settlement, you have to show willingness to discuss the division of political power in South Vietnam. After Cambodia, they don't want to appear to be operating from weakness.

Mr. Kissinger: But when they are in a strong position, they have the same attitude.

Mr. Carver: For them, negotiations are not the principal objective; they are interested in political power.

Mr. Kissinger: Then under every conceivable circumstance, a division of political power is the only way to get the North Vietnamese to the conference table?

Mr. Carver: Yes.

Amb. Sullivan: That is their public position. But they might talk privately about military matters.

Amb. Johnson: I agree.

Mr. Carver: The North Vietnamese will insist on having a high-level U.S. representative.

Amb. Johnson: The North Vietnamese have two concerns—achieving political power and securing the withdrawal of U.S. forces.

Mr. Carver: Politically they are not interested in a free competition which they might lose.

Mr. Kissinger: Would we have to give up something fundamental?

Mr. Carver: Yes.

Mr. Kissinger: If it is true that under no circumstances will the North Vietnamese negotiate, then the question is to decide what is the propaganda proposal best calculated to place the onus of preventing a peace settlement on the enemy. Admittedly the question doesn't seem to make much difference to our own public. On the other hand, if there is some prospect of getting negotiations started, we need to decide what combination of forums and proposals would best protect our interests.

If we are aiming only at a propaganda advantage, what forum and what type of proposal would be best?

Amb. Sullivan: We would need to have a senior man go to Paris. We can say he is going for an Indochina conference, or we can say he will discuss with the North Vietnamese matters affecting all of Indochina.

Mr. Smyser: If we say he is going to talk about Indochina as a whole, won't that make Lon Nol nervous?

Amb. Sullivan: It won't bother Souvanna, and it won't make Lon Nol any more nervous than he is now.

Mr. Kissinger: Do we have to say anything at all about the purpose of appointing a senior man?

Amb. Johnson: No.

Mr. Carver: Appointing a senior representative would show we are at least trying to explore a settlement.

Mr. Kissinger: There would be a delay of several weeks before he would actually go to Paris.

Amb. Johnson: We don't have to state the objective publicly.

Mr. Kissinger: We all agree that sending a senior man to Paris would be a significant initiative and that the subject matter of the Paris talks would have to be expanded to include all Indochina. We are not agreed that this should be done publicly or on the forum for launching expanded talks. Could our representative start by raising the matter privately with the North Vietnamese?

Mr. Carver: They would not be receptive.

Amb. Sullivan: I don't agree. Of course, there may be delay. The senior man might have to come back. They may wait a while to respond. In the meantime, we just say that we will have interesting things to talk about.

Mr. Kissinger: Should we address our initiative to any particular forum? U Thant would not be acceptable to the North Vietnamese and the Chinese. The Co-Chairmen are not acceptable to the Chinese. The North Vietnamese and Chinese would reject the Djakarta Group. And we don't want the French.

If we just make a public call for a conference, we can be ready whenever a conference can be constructed. In the meantime, we can talk privately to both Hanoi and the Soviets.

Amb. Sullivan: The President will have his own views on what would be desirable in the light of the domestic situation.

Mr. Packard: Just naming a high-level negotiator would have some favorable domestic impact. By the time he gets to Paris we might be prepared to propose a cease-fire. Our man goes to Paris, Le Duc Tho

returns, then we might propose a cease-fire and conference. This gives us two months to see what happens in Vietnam. We can be doing some further work on our studies.

Amb. Johnson: That seems very sensible.

Mr. Smyser: We should decide whom we want at a conference.

Amb. Johnson: In our own minds we should decide.

Amb. Sullivan: We won't get a conference anyway.

Mr. Kissinger: We might for our own use have a list prepared of the optimum reasonable composition of a conference.

Mr. Packard: We ought to consider the things we could do in Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand that might make it acceptable to go a little further toward a settlement in South Vietnam.

Mr. Kissinger: We would in any event have to consider Indochina as a whole. Can we have the arguments about the various types of a conference written up? We also ought to specify why the best public approach might be just a simple call for a conference (coupled with quiet talks with the Soviets). (to Sullivan) Could you give some thought to the optimum composition of a conference?

Amb. Sullivan: We have already looked at this. We think 15 countries might be included: the five powers (U.S., U.K., USSR, France, China), the three ICC countries, the GVN, the PRG, the Lon Nol regime, Sihanouk, Souvanna, Souphanavong, and the North Vietnamese. That stacks up eight to seven.

Mr. Packard: What about the Japanese?

Amb. Sullivan: If we introduce the Djakarta group, many countries would have to be added.

Amb. Johnson: We can work out the exact list later. Our objective should be to get countries that are interested and have responsibilities.

Mr. Kissinger: Why not substitute Indonesia and Japan for Great Britain and France? It would be desirable to have the largest possible Asian participation.

Amb. Johnson: I agree.

Amb. Sullivan: If there is little likelihood of actually having a conference, why offend a lot of people by trying to invite certain countries and delete others?

Mr. Kissinger: How about inviting only the Djakarta Three?

Amb. Sullivan: In our own mind we could have an optimum list of participants.

Mr. Carver: We can call for maximum participation and let other countries turn down attendance if they wish.

Mr. Kissinger: Let's talk about proposals. NSSM 94 has three cease-fire proposals, two of which are different from those analyzed by the

VSSG. The two different proposals should be analyzed in terms of the criteria used in the VSSG study. The VSSG working group can undertake this.

Amb. Sullivan: Our group was not unanimous that these two cease-fire proposals merited serious consideration. They were included at the insistence of one member.

Mr. Kissinger: A local cease-fire is an interesting option. Who proposed including these cease-fires?

Amb. Sullivan: ISA.

Mr. Smyser: NSSM 94 also includes an all-Indochina cease-fire.

Amb. Johnson: That is worthwhile looking at.

Mr. Kissinger: Both the local cease-fire and the all-Indochina cease-fire are interesting proposals. The President has talked about a local cease-fire. Let's take a look at the NSSM 94 list of proposals the U.S. might make to induce a conference.

Amb. Sullivan: We think that the option of accepting the NLF Ten Points would be contrary to our interests and therefore not worth proposing.

Mr. Kissinger: Let's drop it then.

Amb. Johnson: Would it be possible for us to arrive at some interpretation of the Ten Points which we could use?

Mr. Carver: We might do that. But as interpreted by the NLF, the Ten Points would not be in our interest.

Mr. Kissinger: There is no reason why we have to accept the Ten Points if they want to talk. Our public position already is that we will discuss anything. This should be dropped. The President won't accept it anyway. The same is true of a unilateral and unconditional withdrawal.

Amb. Johnson: Aren't we already on that road?

Mr. Kissinger: If we set a deadline for withdrawal, then what are they required to do?

Amb. Johnson: We can set conditions to our offer to withdraw.

Mr. Kissinger: We have always said that if there is a settlement we will withdraw in one year. However, that is not unilateral and unconditional withdrawal. Unless they pay some price for non-compliance with our withdrawal proposal, we are giving them an alternative to negotiations.

Amb. Sullivan: Our option originally included a quid pro quo. If we maintain this option, we should rewrite it so that we bargain withdrawal in exchange for some concession from them.

Mr. Kissinger: That's an interesting suggestion. Can you rewrite the option along those lines?

Amb. Sullivan: Yes.

Amb. Johnson: The only thing available for bargaining is the timing of withdrawal.

Mr. Carver: There would also be the possibility that we would indefinitely maintain a residual force in Vietnam. The North Vietnamese don't want to end up facing a viable ARVN.

Adm. Moorer: What do we do if they don't comply with a settlement after we withdraw?

Adm. Johnson: That is one of the risks of the game.

(There was a break in the meeting at this point, during which there was some informal discussion of steps being taken to reorganize the economic section of the Embassy in Saigon.)

Col. Kennedy: The question of unilateral withdrawal relates to Proposal Seven [setting a time limit for getting negotiations started while continuing withdrawals].⁶

Mr. Kissinger: Let me suggest that in redrafting the paper a distinction be made between what we pay to get a conference and what we pay to get a settlement. I think we should pay very little for a conference. They have already sold negotiations many times over. We have paid by halting bombing and by allowing the NLF to participate.

One of the suggested proposals is that "we show readiness to make concessions on a political settlement." Just what can we propose as an incentive beyond the April 20 statement?

Amb. Sullivan: Our panel was rather cynical on this point. We can't get much without throwing the baby out with the bath water. Some people feel, however, that we could flesh out the April 20 proposals by giving specifics on a territorial accommodation.

Mr. Kissinger: Who suggested this?

Amb. Sullivan: Some of the lower-level members of our negotiating team.

Mr. Kissinger: Can you spell out exactly what you propose? One practical consequence of a standstill cease-fire would have to be territorial accommodations.

There are thus three possibilities—a standstill cease-fire involving a territorial accommodation, a territorial accommodation without a standstill cease-fire, and a combination.

Amb. Johnson: Can you have an accommodation without a cease-fire?

Mr. Kissinger: It might be done on a local basis. As territorial accommodations are reached in different localities, cease-fires are established.

⁶ Brackets in the source text.

Mr. Smyser: Hanoi is not interested in a local settlement. They want power in Saigon.

Mr. Kissinger: To sum up, the paper should be redrafted to provide a discussion of (1) forums for getting a conference started, (2) the role to be played by a new senior negotiator, and (3) what would be necessary to induce a conference as compared to what we might pay in order to negotiate a settlement. The non-starters among the options should be taken out. This should be completed by July 14. If you prefer, we can try an initial draft and turn it over to you.

Amb. Sullivan: That would be all right.

Mr. Kissinger: In that case Kennedy and Smyser can do the preliminary draft.

Amb. Johnson: Could we discuss the situation in Thailand? Our position there is in a mess as a result of the accelerated withdrawal of our forces. We might want to maintain substantial forces in Thailand, but the Defense Department has budget problems. I have held up a telegram to Ambassador Unger instructing him to raise the matter with the Thais.

Mr. Kissinger: We have a study in preparation on air operations in Southeast Asia.

Mr. Lynn: The NSSM 51 study is about ready.⁷

Amb. Johnson: We are going to get some backlash from the Thais.

Mr. Kissinger: I am disturbed about the problem. We need the Thai bases.

Mr. Packard: Perhaps there is some way of conducting discussions. We might just discuss the first step of our programs with the Thais, without raising the whole package.

Amb. Johnson: That would help if you can live with it.

Mr. Kissinger: The President shares Alex's concern. He thought the tactical air study might pre-empt our position.

Mr. Packard: Our tactical air study might allow a drawdown in our forces while improving tactical air support.

Amb. Johnson: I am disturbed about going to the Thais with a big package and then coming back later with a turnaround.

Mr. Packard: The tactical air study could result in improvements, such as more effective aircraft and laser-guided bombs. These improvements could be made while reducing our total forces.

Amb. Johnson: The immediate operational problem is how we talk to the Thais.

Mr. Kissinger: We can coordinate on this.

⁷ The study, August 5, was in response to NSSM 51, April 26, 1969, which called for an analysis of U.S. programs in Thailand. (National Archives. RG 59, S/S-I Files: Lot 80 D 212, NSSM 51)

337. Diplomatic Note From the United States Government to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam¹

Washington, undated.

The note of June 5² has been studied with great care. The U.S. Government agrees that the negotiations to be fruitful should be conducted free of pressure by either side. The appointment of a new Ambassador to the Paris peace conference is a sign of its good will and serious attitude. In the temporarily suspended talks between Le Duc Tho and Xuan Thuy on one side, and Kissinger on the other, it was agreed that these meetings would establish a framework of basic principles for implementation in the formal sessions. For this reason, the U.S. Government proposes a new meeting between Le Duc Tho and Xuan Thuy on one side and Mr. Kissinger on the other to develop new approaches to peace in Vietnam. Mr. Kissinger can meet in Paris on any weekend from July 25 onwards.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 853, For the President's File—Vietnam Negotiations, Sensitive, Camp David, Vol. V. No classification marking. A note on the top of the page reads: "Typed Jul 1, 1970 & cy [copy] given Gen. Walters." Walters delivered the message on July 5.

² Printed as an attachment to Document 320.

338. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

San Clemente, July 3, 1970.

SUBJECT

Your Meeting with Acting Secretary Johnson and Ambassadors Bruce and Habib, Saturday, July 4, 10:00 a.m.²

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 189, Paris Peace Talks/Meetings, 1 July 1970–September 1970. Secret; Sensitive. Sent for information. A notation on the first page reads: "The President has seen."

² The President and Kissinger met with Bunker, Habib, and Johnson from 9:56 to 11:52 p.m. There were two breaks in the meeting: from 10:03 to 10:08 apparently for press photographers and from 11:45 to 11:52 a.m. when the President and Bunker made brief statements to the press corps. (Ibid., White House Central Files, Daily Diary) The texts of the statements are in *Public Papers: Nixon, 1970*, p. 562. No other record of the meeting has been found.

You will be meeting on July 4 with Acting Secretary U. Alexis Johnson, Ambassador David K.E. Bruce, and Ambassador Philip C. Habib. The meeting is in part designed to underline our peace initiative. It also gives you the chance to outline your basic views to your negotiators in the presence of Alex Johnson and against the background of recent unhelpful press reports on possible changes in our position.

I suggest you meet for about an hour and a half in your office and that you then take Ambassador Bruce and me to your house for a private session from about 11:30 to 12:30. (Alexis Johnson and Phil Habib know that you plan to do this.) This will give you a chance to talk frankly to Bruce about:

- Your general philosophy about the negotiations
- The manner in which you want Ambassador Bruce to conduct them and the procedures you plan to follow.

Their Positions

—*Ambassador Bruce* will be mainly interested in informing himself about the current state of the talks, what the problems are, and what the prospects are. He will also wish to know how he can best prepare himself for this mission.

—*Ambassador Habib* will want to brief you and Ambassador Bruce on the current situation in Paris. His recent views on the prospects for the talks have not been optimistic, since he doubts that the present framework of negotiations can cover all the problems which need to be discussed for a settlement throughout Indochina.³

—*Alexis Johnson* may raise a negotiating initiative which the State Department is seriously considering. Their proposal, as framed by Ambassador Sullivan, would essentially combine the offer of a ceasefire with a stipulated time period for withdrawal of US/Allied forces.⁴

Your Positions:

You may wish to make the following points:

—Any public or private statements by either Ambassador should emphasize that we see this change in our representation as a substantive move, made against a background of repeated reports that the level

³ On June 3 Habib sent Kissinger a letter outlining his views of the objectives of the negotiations and suggesting five options which were not mutually exclusive: 1) relying on Vietnamization and gearing for the long run; 2) wider conference in Paris; 3) cease-fire and wider Paris conference; 4) wider conference, supervised cease-fire, offer to withdraw U.S. and Third Country forces within fixed time; and 5) cease-fire and withdrawal with no formal conference. (Attached to a July 2 letter from Kissinger to Habib; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 189, Paris Peace Talks/Meetings, 1 July 1970–September 1970)

⁴ The proposal was presented formally to the President in Document 345.

of our representation in Paris was a bar to serious negotiations. We have now removed that bar. We do not regard this merely as cosmetics, but as a sign of our sincere desire to find a negotiated settlement. We wish to see what the other side will do now.

—You should emphasize that there has been too much loose talk recently about new U.S. initiatives, including a possible change in our position on a coalition government. You made your views clear on this issue in your Wednesday night TV interview.⁵ You want all departmental spokesmen to stay mum on possible U.S. moves in the Paris negotiations, in particular, on the questions of a coalition government or a fixed unilateral U.S. withdrawal.

—*You believe our essential negotiating position is sound.*

- We should steer away from talk of a coalition government.
- Linkage of a ceasefire and a fixed U.S. withdrawal timetable in effect accepts the other side's demand that we take out our forces unilaterally in return only for a guarantee of their safe passage.
 - In any event, as you pointed out on television, a fixed timetable for our withdrawals removes the incentive for the other side to negotiate.
 - As for ceasefire itself, you don't think it should be linked to our unilateral withdrawals. You might be willing to consider a separate ceasefire initiative in late summer, but first you want to let the South Vietnamese continue their pacification efforts in the wake of the Cambodian operations.

—You would welcome Ambassador Habib's views on the negotiations and what we might expect from Hanoi in terms of their delegation and their positions.

—You wish to thank Ambassador Habib for the outstanding job he has done as Acting Chief of Delegation through a most difficult period. You hope that he will stay on for a few months to assist Ambassador Bruce in getting started.

⁵ Reference is to the President's conversation on July 1 in Los Angeles with television journalists Howard K. Smith of the American Broadcasting Company, John Chancellor of the National Broadcasting Company, and Eric Sevareid of the Columbia Broadcasting Company. At the beginning of this question and answer session, Nixon announced the appointment of Bruce. Text of the conversation is in *Public Papers: Nixon, 1970*, pp. 543–559.

Status of Talks

You may wish also to give Ambassador Bruce our general impression of where the talks stand at this time, recognizing that he will be receiving more detailed briefings later:

—At present, the talks are completely deadlocked and the gaps between the respective positions are very wide.

—We have taken the following basic positions on key issues:

- *Military Issues.* We have indicated our readiness to withdraw all our forces in twelve months as part of an overall settlement including their reciprocal withdrawals. We do not expect them to announce their withdrawals publicly, but we cannot leave while North Vietnamese forces remain.

- *Political Issues.* We believe that this is a subject which the South Vietnamese should work out among themselves. Given the GVN–NLF stalemate, however, we have said that we are willing to discuss a political settlement but that the South Vietnamese must participate in the discussions as serious negotiations proceed. We and the GVN have proposed free elections, internationally supervised, with an electoral commission to ensure fairness. The NLF could sit on this commission and participate in the elections. We would accept the outcome.

- *POWs.* We attach great importance to this issue. We think that an early exchange of prisoners should be arranged. Barring that, we want to use whatever means we can to ensure proper treatment.

—The *North Vietnamese* and *Viet Cong* have taken the following positions:

- *Military.* They say that we must pull out all our forces in six months and that in exchange they will guarantee the safety of the withdrawing forces. They also have demanded as a precondition that we should state our calendar for unilateral withdrawal before they will negotiate seriously. (This is almost the position that Ambassador Sullivan is suggesting except that he would envisage a longer timetable, i.e. eighteen months, for our withdrawals.)

- *Political.* They propose the formation of a temporary coalition government to run elections, which would lead to a permanent coalition. They want to determine who can be in these coalitions. They also have stated as a precondition that we must abandon the South Vietnamese government before they will negotiate seriously.

Attached at Tab A is biographic information on Ambassador Bruce.⁶

⁶ Attached but not printed.

339. Memorandum From President Nixon to the Chairman of the Washington Special Actions Group (Kissinger)¹

Washington, July 7, 1970.

SUBJECT

U.S. Operations in Cambodia

Upon the successful conclusion of U.S. ground operations in Cambodia, I want to re-emphasize to you and, through you, to the Washington Special Actions Group and the Departments concerned, that I place great emphasis on the need to redouble our efforts to provide appropriate military equipment and supplies to the Government of Cambodia.

I continue to believe that it is in our best interest to prevent Cambodia from falling under Communist control and I expect the Washington Special Actions Group to concentrate its efforts toward that end.

Termination of U.S. ground operations in Cambodia also underlines the desirability of maintaining maximum pressure on the enemy in Cambodia through U.S. and allied air efforts. For this reason, I want to reaffirm until further notice, all authorities heretofore promulgated for the conduct of U.S. air operations over Cambodia.

Richard Nixon

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 510, Country Files, Far East, Cambodia, Vol. VIII, 20 June 1970–20 July 1970. Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. On July 9 Kissinger, who had drafted this memorandum on July 4 at Nixon's request, sent it to Rogers, Laird, Moorer, Helms, Johnson, and Packard. (Ibid.)

340. Minutes of Washington Special Actions Group Meeting¹

Washington, July 10, 1970, 11 a.m.

SUBJECT

Support for Cambodia

PARTICIPATION

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

CIA

Mr. Richard Helms

Mr. Thomas Karamessines

Mr. Nelson

JCS

Admiral Thomas Moorer

General Vogt

Defense

Mr. Nutter

Admiral Flanagan

State

Ambassador Johnson

Mr. Moore

Mr. Tom Pickering

NSC Staff

Col. Richard Kennedy

Mr. John Holdridge

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

Dr. Kissinger spoke first on several matters related to military aid to Cambodia before turning to the funding question. On paramilitary operations in South Laos and Northeastern Cambodia, Admiral Moorer said that a JCS plan had been developed which had been sent to MACV and CINCPAC for comments.² *Dr. Kissinger called for an end to the study process by the following week so that a decision could be reached, and called on State and Defense to coordinate on this.*

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, WSAG Meeting Minutes, Originals, 1970, 7/17/70. Top Secret; Nodis. The meeting was held in the White House Situation Room.

² JCS telegram Tango 34 to CINCPAC and COMUSMACV, July 3, the cable and a summary of it are *ibid.*, Box H-78, WSAG Meeting, 7/10/70.

Admiral Moorer described a JCS communications report or plan which proposed installation of a multi-channel scatterwave tropospheric system for use by the U.S. mission in Phnom Penh to communicate externally with Bangkok and Saigon. This was essential to deal with the communications load. Installation would be by 34 U.S. military personnel, with operation later by civilians. In addition, provision of U.S. spare parts or replacements for existing Cambodian equipment was called for in the report. These costs were estimated at \$1.2 million. *Dr. Kissinger directed that the figure for Cambodian MAP to be given to the President should include such communications equipment as a top priority matter. He requested that the JCS communications plan for the scatterwave system be circulated to all those present so that it could be taken up at the next WSAG meeting; everyone should reflect on the political implications of the U.S. military personnel to install the system. (He suggested that these might commute from Saigon by air, and at night.)*

Turning to funding, Dr. Kissinger first brought up Thai activities with respect to Cambodia. It emerged that Senator Russell did not want CIA to finance Thai activities in Cambodia, and that Senator Stennis on the other hand believed that CIA rather than Defense should finance these activities. On the equipment costs for the Thai/Khmer regiment (\$1.2 million) following a discussion of alternatives including Cambodian MAP, CIA funds, Thai MASF, or PL-480 trade-offs, *the decision favored using prior-year Thai MASF, but with the possibility of using some Cambodian MAP. Action was assigned to Mr. Nutter.*

In addressing the question of [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] operations in Western Cambodia, *it was agreed that RTAF operations took precedence over providing the initial equipment for an RCT. The initial equipment costs for the RCT seemed highly loaded. The funding route of using prior-year Thai MASF, with replacement of run-downs via PL-480 funds used to make purchases from U.S. military sale was agreed upon. This would be used first to support a sortie rate by the RTAF of 900 per month. Ambassador Unger would be asked to discuss this with the Thai, and also to review with them the requirements for the RCT. This cable should reflect the urgency of the need for Thai air support. In the course of this discussion it was brought out that there was no economic justification of a PL-480 program for Thailand, but that there was no choice other than to go for a PL-480 program up to \$20 million as a source of funds for trade-offs.*

The issue of Thai training for 15,000 Cambodian troops was raised, with several members questioning the effectiveness of such training. It was generally accepted that all training should be carried out in South Vietnam, where the job could be done more effectively, more quickly, and more cheaply. *However Admiral Moorer would be asked to look into a comparison of South Vietnam versus Thailand for training Cambodians, to include an estimate of the training times required.*

The question of pay and allowances for the Khmer Krom and the Thai/Khmer units was addressed, with the alternatives being Defense funds, AID supporting assistance, the AID contingency funds, or CIA funds. *The decision was made to rely on Defense funds for the 1st quarter of FY 71 and AID supporting assistance used later, subject to the views of the Secretary of Defense.* (This was based on the assumption that an increase in the AID appropriation for general supporting assistance would not get through Congress at this time; Mr. Nutter, however, quoted Secretary Laird as believing that the issue should be carried to the Hill now.) A Defense switchback would be required to pay separation allowances of \$1.7 million for the Thai/Khmer and Mr. Nutter agreed to talk to Mr. Packard on this. The size of the Cambodian MAP was considered. The consensus was to go for a Presidential Decision calling for a \$40 million Cambodian program to be drawn from other programs and to ask for a supplemental later when Congressional response might be better. The \$40 million was estimated as being sufficient to carry through January or February 1971. Admiral Moorer felt that this sum was insufficient.

The meeting agreed to consider the retention of Thai forces in Laos at the next session. Agreement was noted on providing SAR operations in Cambodia for the RTAF, and on providing communications jeeps to Cambodia for use in air-to-ground control.

[Omitted here are the 10-page minutes of the meeting.]

341. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, July 14, 1970.

SUBJECT

Reassuring Report From Our Political and Military Counsellor in Phnom Penh

We have received a report from Mr. Ladd, our political and military counsellor in Phnom Penh, which presents a reassuring picture of

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 510, Country Files, Far East, Cambodia, Vol. VIII, 20 June 1970–20 July 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive. Sent for information. A notation on the memorandum reads: "The President has seen."

the strategic situation in Cambodia and of future developments. (The full text of the message is at Tab A.)²

Mr. Ladd begins by discussing the earlier military situation in Cambodia, noting that our operations against the sanctuaries forced the enemy to develop his plans too rapidly to implement the plan for Cambodia which he then appeared to want to carry out, which was to bring about the rapid downfall of the Lon Nol Government. The enemy struck at many different Cambodian centers at the same time, but in doing so his forces became dispersed, his logistical support was not viable, he did not have time to prepare his battlefields, his communications were spotty, and he lacked a functioning infrastructure and the support of the people. Against this, the Cambodians could and did fight despite their lack of training, weapons, and experience. Together with U.S. and South Vietnamese assistance, they were able to hold, while the enemy was unable to take and hold any of the strategic points which he attacked. The enemy's hope of bringing down the Lon Nol Government quickly has now failed.

Looking ahead, Mr. Ladd believes that further enemy attacks can certainly be expected, but that the NVA/VC forces will attempt to organize themselves better and that this will require time. The Cambodians will be able to utilize this time to reinforce critical garrisons, distribute supplies and munitions, improve communications, coordinate defensive plans, work out South Vietnamese and Thai assistance, train troops, and gain support from other nations.

Meanwhile, the enemy is faced with the strategic choice of either bringing more pressure to bear against Cambodians, in which case he cannot exert a maximum effort against Vietnam and against Vietnamization, or redeploying at least some of the enemy forces now in Cambodia to Vietnam, thus relieving to some extent the current pressures against Cambodia. In either case he must operate over greatly extended lines of communications and in an environment generally lacking in local cooperation and intelligence factors. At the same time, it will become increasingly evident that his operations in Cambodia are nothing but absolute aggression which should put NVA/VC operations in Cambodia in ever-growing unfavorable light.

² Dated July 10; attached but not printed. Haig sent Kissinger a July 11 memorandum commenting on Ladd's report. Haig thought the report to be "extremely optimistic, maybe too much. But on the other hand, I think it accurately portrays the strategic importance of the Cambodian decision and the dilemma now faced by Hanoi. I am especially sympathetic because it confirms the original assessment I made during my visit to Phnom Penh in April." See Document 219. Kissinger asked Haig to prepare a memorandum for the President. Haig had Howe do it on a "rush" basis.

Finally, Mr. Ladd considers that the Cambodian situation has the very positive aspects of inspiring free Asian nations to help work together against a common regional enemy. He cites the assistance being provided by the South Vietnamese, the Thais, and Australians and then assumes that other countries may join in this effort. The United States' role can be limited to providing a helping hand without the involvement of U.S. forces or U.S. military advisory missions.

Comment: While I do not believe we should allow ourselves to become euphoric about Cambodia, I agree with the general line put forward by Mr. Ladd. Undoubtedly a hard fight lies ahead in Cambodia, but the enemy's strategic and practical military problems are considerable, and the Cambodians do appear to be pulling themselves together.

342. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, July 14, 1970.

SUBJECT

Thoughts on Cambodia Policy From Our Chargé in Phnom Penh

Our Chargé in Phnom Penh, Rives, set forth his views on the Cambodian situation and the U.S. policy in preparation for an East Asian U.S. Chiefs of Mission Conference which has just taken place in Tokyo (Tab A).²

You may find his views of some interest. In brief, he says:

He is more sanguine than a few weeks ago, as a result of Cambodian efforts plus U.S. and other outside help.

The positive factors are Cambodian nationalism, continued support of the GOC by vital opinion groups, VC/NVA failure to win over the peasants in their areas, continued unity within the GOC, general high morale, the fact that the Khmer are a homogeneous race, recognizably fighting external aggression, and supply and organizational difficulties being experienced by the VC/NVA.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 510, Country Files, Far East, Cambodia, Vol. VIII, 20 June 1970–20 July 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive. Sent for information.

² Tab A, a retyped copy of telegram 1519 from Phnom Penh, July 7, is attached but not printed.

He notes also the Asian support for Lon Nol, and the prospect that most countries, even France and the USSR, wish for a peaceful settlement and may influence Hanoi.

Among the negative factors, Rives lists FANK weakness, the poor economic situation, and the failure of the GOC officials to get out into the countryside.

Rives also expresses disappointment at the failure of most Asian countries to make a truly regional effort to protect one of their own members.

As to U.S. policy, Rives suggests:

—that we continue to act within the Nixon Doctrine, avoid direct military ground support and resist the temptation to move in and run things.³

—that we plan on FY 71 MAP support of at least \$75 million.⁴

—that we launch an economic assistance program in cooperation with other sources, planning on a U.S. contribution of some \$15–20 million.

—that we help with English teaching to enable the Cambodians to communicate with their neighbors and with us.

—that we redouble our diplomatic effort to persuade Asian countries to give concrete help and diplomatic support. (He wonders why we can't persuade India to be less unhelpful, given our enormous assistance program.)

—that we encourage closer coordination between Cambodia and its three neighbors.

—that we institute limited guerrilla type interdiction efforts along Cambodia's northern border.

Over the longer term, Rives believes that a military takeover is possible. If on the other hand, the nation moves towards a republic, it could either remain strongly pro U.S. or move towards a nationalistic and rather radical line. Much of the present support for the Lon Nol Government comes from opponents of Sihanouk who in normal times would be quite radical. Rives suggests that we look toward encouraging the flow of private capital in the post-war period, and plan for reconstruction of the Cambodian infrastructure together with interested states such as France and Japan.⁵

³ Nixon wrote "(correct)" in the margin next to this suggestion.

⁴ Nixon wrote "(probably needed)" in the margin next to this suggestion and underlined the phrase, "plan on FY 71 MAP support of at least \$75 million."

⁵ Nixon underlined the last clause of this sentence and wrote: "This report makes a great deal of sense."

343. Minutes of Washington Special Actions Group Meeting¹

Washington, July 17, 1970, 4:11–5:05 p.m.

SUBJECT

Cambodia

PARTICIPATION

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

State

Mr. U. Alexis Johnson

Mr. Marshall Green

Mr. Thomas Pickering

Defense

Mr. G. Warren Nutter

Mr. Dennis Doolin

JCS

Adm. Thomas H. Moorer

Gen. John Vogt

CIA

Mr. Cord Meyer

Mr. William Nelson

Mr. William Wells

NSC Staff

Col. Richard T. Kennedy

Mr. John H. Holdridge

Mr. Keith Guthrie

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. *MAP for Cambodia*. The WSAG was informed of the President's desire not to request Congress at this time to make any addition to MAP appropriations to provide funds for Cambodia. Instead, he favors allocating as much as \$50 million from existing appropriations to Cambodia by means of a Presidential determination. The amount may have to be limited to \$40 million because of the serious effects of further reductions to other programs if the additional \$10 million is allocated to Cambodia now.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, WSAG Minutes, Originals, 1969–1970, 7/17/70. Top Secret; Nodis. The meeting was held in the White House Situation Room. Jeanne Davis sent these minutes to Kissinger on July 25; he initialed her covering memorandum.

Dr. Kissinger requested that the forthcoming Under Secretaries Committee report on the overall MAP point out the possible need to request a supplemental appropriation including additional authorization for Cambodia about January 1971.

2. *Interdiction in Southern Laos and Northeast Cambodia.* The WSAG was informed of plans already under way to recruit, train, and equip additional Lao special guerrilla units. The WSAG approved going ahead with a program to set up four battalions of Cambodian irregulars for use in interdiction operations in Southern Laos. The State Department will sound out Souvanna about increasing the strength and depth of interdiction operations in Laos involving South Vietnamese and Cambodian personnel, and the JCS will obtain General Abrams' views on the feasibility of conducting expanded interdiction operations with largely Vietnamese personnel and without US personnel. The WSAG agreed that Defense and CIA should work out arrangements to upgrade weapons for existing special guerrilla units.

3. *Communications Equipment for Cambodia.* State, Defense, and CIA will examine the feasibility of alternatives to the proposed tropospheric scatter system for out-of-country communications involving fewer American personnel than the proposal prepared by JCS. State will ask views of Embassy Phnom Penh. A report will be submitted to Dr. Kissinger by July 21.

4. *Funding for Thai-Khmer and Khmer Krom Units.* The WSAG was informed that Defense had agreed to provide \$929,000 for Khmer Krom units. Defense will examine the possibility of providing \$862,000 for Thai-Khmers on the basis that AID will arrange an offset in South Vietnamese programs after passage of the AID appropriation bill later this year.

5. *Armored Vehicles for Cambodia.* The WSAG concluded that, in view of maintenance and training difficulties for Cambodia associated with such vehicles, they should not be provided at this time.

6. *AK-47 Ammunition.* Defense will prepare prior to the next WSAG meeting a study of the problems involved in obtaining AK-47 ammunition for Cambodia. In light of the AK-47 ammunition shortage, the proposed Indonesian shipment of AK-47 rifles to Cambodia will be re-examined and consideration will be given to direct US shipment of weapons to Cambodia.

7. *Thai Troops in Laos.* The WSAG agreed in principle that the Thai troops should be retained, but noted that the Laos Ad Hoc Group was reviewing this matter and will have a report completed by July 23. A decision was deferred pending WSAG review of the Ad Hoc Group report.

8. *US Search and Rescue for Recovery of Cambodian Air Crews.* The WSAG agreed that the US should be willing to assist with search and rescue if requested by the Cambodians through the South Vietnamese (VNAF). However, the Cambodians are not to be informed that this is the US position.

[Omitted here are the 10-page minutes of the meeting.]

344. Record of Meeting¹

Washington, July 18, 1970, 10:45 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

RECORD OF PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH THE FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY BOARD

PARTICIPANTS

The President

Board Members:

Chairman, George W. Anderson, Jr.

Gordon Gray

Franklin B. Lincoln, Jr.

(Dr.) Franklin D. Murphy

Robert D. Murphy

Other:

Henry A. Kissinger

B/Gen. Alexander M. Haig

Gerard P. Burke (Exec. Sec. PFIAB)

SUBJECT

Southeast Asia

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 276, Agency Files, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, Vol. V, 1 August 1970–31 December 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. According to an August 4 covering memorandum by Lord, this was a "boiled down" version of the meeting. Lord wrote in a postscript: "This is pretty dicey, close-hold material." A full version of the meeting is *ibid.* Haig prepared a summarized version of the meeting, July 18. (*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, 1 May 1970–31 July 1970)

The members of the PFIAB met with the President to report on their recent visits to Southeast Asia.² Following is a summary record of the highlights of the meeting.

Intelligence for Cambodia. The Board members believed there had been no significant improvement in our intelligence capabilities in Cambodia as of their July 5 visit, and the President expressed his displeasure. Dr. Kissinger noted interagency disagreements on the facilities required; he said that local communications had been improved but those between Phnom Penh and the outside were still unresolved due to State's desire to maintain a low-US visibility. The President stated that more COMINT on Cambodia was needed and that Mr. Fred Ladd's arrival in Phnom Penh had greatly improved the reporting from there.

US Personnel in Cambodia. The Board confirmed the President's impression that US Chargé Rives was in over his head in Cambodia and that Mr. Ladd was doing an exceptionally good job, although overworked and needing some help. The President asked Dr. Kissinger to accelerate Ambassador-designate Swank's Senate hearings and get him to Phnom Penh.

Sihanoukville. The President asked the PFIAB to look very carefully into the entire background of the intelligence community's misreading of the importance of Sihanoukville as an entry point for communist supplies in Cambodia. Although the military had consistently maintained that Sihanoukville received a very substantial amount of communist material the civilian agencies persisted in discounting its importance until we had begun our sanctuary operations. CIA had described the flow of materials through Sihanoukville as only a trickle while evidence now indicates that about 70% of communist supplies in Cambodia had been brought in through this port. The President wondered, if such mistakes could be made on a fairly straightforward issue such as this one, how we should judge CIA's assessments of more important developments such as Chinese communist military capabilities. He emphasized again later in the meeting that the Board should give very close attention to the case of Sihanoukville which represented one of the worst records ever compiled by the intelligence community.

² Four members of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board visited Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines, and CINCPAC in early June. The members and their special interests were Admiral Anderson (military matters), Gordon Gray (American and foreign intelligence capabilities), and Franklin Murphy (economic, civil action, and public affairs). Franklin Lincoln, another member of the Board, did a separate 3-week survey of U.S. intelligence operations in Vietnam, Thailand, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan during May and June. The five members wanted to meet with the President to give their impressions prior to submitting a formal report. (Memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, undated; *ibid.*)

CINCPAC Plan for Cambodia. The Board thought that phase I, which is concerned with preserving the southern half of the country, seemed generally practicable although it had some defects, i.e. third country mercenaries rather than Americans should be used as helicopter pilots. The Board could not support phase II which would involve offensive actions in northern Cambodia. Dr. Murphy noted that Admiral McCain's estimate of \$85 million per year for phase I could be substantially on the low side.

Dr. Kissinger explained that the CINCPAC plan was still in the bureaucracy although the WSAG was moving generally in the same direction and was informed about parts of the plan. The problem was to transform the plan into a complete integrated proposal that was useful to the President. The President stated that none of our planning for Cambodia had any clear conceptual base or long-range perspective. He added that he had asked Admiral Moorer to submit a complete plan, that it should include intelligence requirements, and that he must have the proposal soon because of its budgetary aspects. He added that there were ways of making funds available indirectly for Cambodia if Congress is unwilling to supply them directly.

US Air Support in Cambodia. In reply to Admiral Anderson's comment that the US should be as liberal as possible with its air support, the President said he understood fully and was thinking along the same lines. The President later said that he fully agreed with Mr. Gray's view that if the US is to provide tactical air support in Cambodia we should get away from the notion that it can only be in the form of interdiction in support of our own troops.

US Bombing of North Vietnam. Admiral Anderson said the group was very concerned about the restrictions placed on the US military since the October 1968 bombing halt. He said that a resumption of the bombing could be the only blue chip that the US has left in trying to achieve a settlement and recalled the civilian-military disagreement over the bombing's effectiveness in stopping the input of communist supplies to South Vietnam. The President remarked that this chip had already been spent for domestic political reasons and he could no longer play it unless given sufficient provocation. Dr. Murphy said it was important that the President be given an accurate fix on the effectiveness of the bombing, particularly now that other supply routes were eliminated, at least for the time being. He thought that the military should be asked to develop a plan for bombing resumption for contingency purposes in case the communists gave the President sufficiently serious provocation. The President said this was a very good point and noted it.

Overall Approach to Southeast Asia. Dr. Murphy believed there was no integrated economic/military/political approach to Southeast

Asian problems and that a high level government group should examine the region and propose coordinated actions to the President. There was a particular need to explain the Nixon Doctrine and the context of US withdrawals from the area.

US Intelligence. The President stated that the US is spending \$6 billion per year on intelligence and deserves to receive a lot more for its money than it has been getting. He could not put up with people lying to him about intelligence or giving warped evaluations; he wanted to know if intelligence was inadequate or if it depicted a bad situation. Many reports from the intelligence community were cautiously bland and therefore completely meaningless, while others were written to fit a preconceived philosophy. He believed that those responsible for deliberate slanting of reports should be fired. The time may be coming when he would have to read the riot act to the entire intelligence community. He said that perhaps the most important function for the PFIAB would be to help eradicate subjective judgments from intelligence reports.

Miscellaneous. Several other subjects were touched upon. The President commented that the Cambodian operations had shown real teamwork at last among the various South Vietnamese forces. The Chairman noted that Vang Pao often risked his personal safety in combat and the President said we should prevent him from doing this in view of his importance to the effort in Laos. The Chairman declared that our knowledge of the intentions of Peking and Hanoi were essentially nonexistent; for example, we might be passing over too casually the possibility of Chinese communist volunteers in Southeast Asia. The Chairman also stated that the critical factor in Eastern Asia during the next few years will be the Russian decision about what to do about Chinese nuclear weapons delivery developments. The President agreed with Dr. Murphy that Indonesia was a key country with whom we should maintain a good relationship.

345. Memorandum From Secretary of State Rogers to President Nixon¹

Washington, July 20, 1970.

SUBJECT

NSC Consideration of Diplomatic Initiatives

There seems to be a fairly broad consensus among the agencies participating in the preparation of papers concerning diplomatic initiatives on Indochina. That consensus has produced an agreement at the Under Secretary level that we should propose initiatives based upon a package that involves (a) an Indochina cease-fire, (b) an enlarged Indochina Conference, (c) an acceptance of the principle of U.S. withdrawals, (d) an exchange of prisoners of war, and (e) an international supervisory presence in the Indochina states.

In order to provide a focus for further consideration of this package in the NSC meeting of principals scheduled for three o'clock tomorrow, July 21, I have asked for the development of a scenario which would lay out the various actions the United States Government should take to implement the sort of package being considered. I do not wish to put this forward as a Department of State position, but merely submit it as a paper which I believe will be of assistance to our deliberations.

It is my recommendation that this paper be distributed on a tightly held basis to the various participants in the NSC meeting for their consideration prior to tomorrow afternoon's session.

William P. Rogers

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 27–14 ASIA SE. Secret; Sensitive; Nodis. Drafted by Sullivan on July 20. Eliot sent this memorandum under a July 20 covering note to Rogers for his signature. Eliot wrote: "The scenario has been amended to add the two points you asked to be included: consultations with Lon Nol and the ICC involvement in ceasefires for Laos and Cambodia." On July 20 Kissinger sent this memorandum, which he described as "an illustrative scenario for diplomatic initiatives on Indochina . . . only as background information for the July 21 National Security Council" to the principal members of the NSC with copies to Moore, Bruce, Bunker, and Habib. (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-028, NSC Meeting, Vietnam: Ceasefire and Diplomatic Initiative, 7/21/70)

Attachment

INDOCHINA: SCENARIO FOR DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVE

Introduction

It is assumed that the scenario for our diplomatic initiative on Indochina will start from the concept of a package of proposals which would concentrate primarily upon the military aspects of the problem while leaving the political problems unresolved. For purposes of this paper, the package will be considered to include:

- (a) a cease-fire throughout all Indochina,
- (b) an acceptance of the principle of U.S. withdrawals,
- (c) an exchange of POW's,
- (d) an international supervisory presence,
- (e) a call for an enlarged negotiation on all Indochina to be composed of "interested parties".

While this package is accepted as the concept which will guide our initiative, it is not necessary that we place all of it on the table at one time. Furthermore, consideration must be given to the way in which we will wish to present the various elements of it. The following scenario projects a realistic time frame for the actions contemplated.

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| July 21 | NSC decision on negotiating package. Instructions given to Ambassadors Bunker, Bruce, and Habib. |
| July 22 | Ambassadors Bunker and Bruce to Saigon. Ambassador Habib returns to Paris. |
| July 24–25 | Discussions in Saigon with President Thieu. These would be of a preliminary nature and would give only a general outline of our thinking. However, they would also touch upon the involvement of Lon Nol in the development of our position. It might be suggested that Thieu invite Lon Nol, Sirik Matak, and Koun Wich to Saigon where they could consult with Thieu and Bunker in order to assure Cambodian acceptance of our proposals. |
| July 27–August 2 | Refinement and preparation of U.S. position in light of preliminary consultations with President Thieu. |
| August 3 | Ambassador Bruce arrives in Paris. His statements to the press indicate that U.S. and GVN will propose new negotiating initiatives. However, he will refrain from giving any details. |
| August 4–5 | Ambassador Bruce makes appropriate courtesy calls in Paris. During these calls, he informs inter- |

locutors that we will shortly have some new proposals. He makes clear that these will be serious moves designed to move toward serious solutions and will not be mere propaganda moves. However, he will again refrain from details.

- August 6 Ambassador Bruce attends his first negotiating session, regardless of rank of those on the other side of the table. His remarks will be general in nature, but will avoid harsh rhetoric. He will make clear that he has come to open serious negotiations and that our side will have some new proposals. When greeting DRV and PRG negotiators informally, he will assure them that we wish serious negotiations. He will arrange to have DRV informed that we wish to renew private talks, with their representatives.
- August 7–10 (a) Ambassador Bunker consults with President Thieu on form and manner in which we propose to make our initiative and obtains his concurrence. (b) Embassies Vientiane and Phnom Penh consult with Souvanna and Lon Nol to obtain their concurrence in general lines of our proposed initiative. They are constrained to hold information most closely.
- August 10 Australian, New Zealand, Thai and Korean key figures are informed of general outlines which we intend to put forward. They are asked to hold information most closely.
- August 11 (a) Djakarta Three (Indonesia, Japan, and Malaysia) are informed of general outlines of our proposal and asked to render their support. They are advised that we and the Indochina states will count on them for aid in observing and supervising the cease-fire. (b) British and Soviet Co-Chairmen are given generalized outline of our proposals and are assured of our desire to pursue them seriously in negotiation.
- August 12
H–8 hrs to
H–2 hrs (a) U Thant, Pope Paul, French, Indians, Canadians Poles, and NATO allies are informed in general terms of our proposed initiative and asked to give public support. They are also informed that we intend to negotiate seriously on these proposals.

- H-2 hrs (b) Congressional leadership of both parties invited to White House and given advance briefing of proposed initiative. They are then kept as “captive audience” to listen to President’s TV presentation of initiative.
- H hour (c) President Nixon goes on nationwide TV (with overseas satellite broadcast) to put forward our proposals.

In his speech, the President emphasizes four features of the proposals:

- (a) Indochina cease-fire,
- (b) acceptance of withdrawal principle,
- (c) call for an Indochina negotiation among “interested parties”,
- (d) mutual release of POW’s.

He will deliberately leave the nature of a cease-fire vague, but will stress the need for its application in Laos and Cambodia, as well as Viet-Nam. He will also emphasize the requirement for international supervision and will leave the impression that we consider the ICC alone to be inadequate for a satisfactory control. He will suggest the need for the presence of some Asian states in this effort.

In stating our acceptance of the principle of withdrawal of U.S. forces, the President will avoid use of the word “unilateral” and will also avoid any suggestion of a timetable. However, he should leave the clear impression that he is talking about unilateral action on our part and that we are willing to negotiate about a timetable.

Again, on the question of the composition or venue of an Indochina negotiation among “interested parties”, the President will avoid specifics. He will indicate that we prefer a broader composition of participants than the current “our side-your side” group in Paris, but that we are not willing to pay any price to obtain that new structure. He will make it clear that, if Hanoi turns down a broader form and composition, we are quite prepared and willing to pursue our negotiations in the Paris forum.

On POW’s, the President will be as categorical as possible. The proposal should be couched in terms of a mutual release of all prisoners of war within a specified period after the cease-fire takes place, with no linkage to other events. The release would be unconditional and would permit those released to return to the area of their choice. The ICC, or other supervisory body, would be charged with the responsibility for their safe transportation.

Although he will not touch upon it in his speech, the President may face subsequent questions about the conceptual framework in which cease-fires could be arranged in Laos and Cambodia. Our gen-

eral answer to this will be that we would foresee no problems in this proposal if the other side accepts the idea of an enlarged Indochina negotiation. In the event we are constrained to the Paris forum, we would look upon the ICC mechanisms in those two countries to be the principal instruments for effecting a cease-fire.

August 12 Press backgrounding, press and television coverage, and USIA handling will assure world-wide coverage of the President's proposals. Instructions will be sent to all our diplomatic representatives abroad to bring the proposals to the attention of foreign governments and to seek their support. A major information campaign will begin in its support.

The White House will similarly direct a campaign in the domestic media to obtain the broadest coverage and the widest support.

Immediately after the President speaks, President Thieu in Saigon (August 13 Saigon time) will make a statement endorsing the proposals and indicating his association with their development. Leaders of other Asian allies will make similar statements in order to demonstrate unanimity. Souvanna and Lon Nol will do likewise.

August 13 At the Paris talks, Ambassador Bruce will formally table the President's proposals. He will indicate his readiness to negotiate their substance.

On the same day, either he or Habib will propose private talks with the North Vietnamese in order to establish the arrangements for a more detailed exploration of the negotiable portions of the proposals.

August 14 and thereafter Negotiations in Paris proceed on two levels, public and private. The private talks will be essentially between US and DRV representatives. However, our representatives may from time to time supplement these channels with the Soviet channel, whenever that is considered useful.

346. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, undated.

SUBJECT

NSC Meeting July 21, 1970—Negotiating Strategy and Paris Talks

The purpose of the meeting is to review our negotiating situation in Paris and to set the stage for decisions as to our course there over the next few months. Your appointment of Ambassador Bruce, coming on the heels of the conclusion of our operations in Cambodia, has given rise to some expectation that you will move soon to major new diplomatic initiatives aimed at an early solution. The meeting will give an opportunity for a full discussion of the issues. *I recommend, however, that you reserve decision and advise the NSC that you will announce decision later before Ambassador Bruce's arrival in Paris on August 6.*

The meeting will focus on four immediate issues for period ahead when Ambassador Bruce takes up his post in Paris:

- Should we propose a ceasefire?
- Should we propose a broader conference on Indo-China?
- How should Ambassador Bruce proceed in Paris?
- How should we deal with the Russians?

These issues are essentially tactical. The fundamental question which we will need to answer in the coming months is—what strategy should we pursue?

—The Paris talks continue to be on dead center. The North Vietnamese, despite a forthcoming attitude on our part and our tabling of reasonable proposals, have continued to demand as the price for negotiations (1) a guaranteed and accelerated schedule for complete U.S. withdrawal and (2) an abandonment of the present South Vietnamese government.

—In effect the other side is saying that it should have a major say in our withdrawal plans. Clearly, however, both the pace and scope of our withdrawal are matters for us to decide unilaterally. The other side in effect also is saying that negotiation for a settlement cannot proceed unless we are willing to dump the present South Vietnamese government. But what is there left to talk about at that point?

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-028, NSC Meetings, Vietnam: Ceasefire and Diplomatic Initiative, 7/21/70. Top Secret; Sensitive.

—We have three broad choices:

—Concentrate on disengagement and leave the question of political settlement entirely to the North and South Vietnamese.

—Make a major effort to seek a political settlement and hinge our withdrawals on this objective.

—Continue on a middle course, withdrawing while attempting to build South Vietnamese strength and meanwhile seeking a political resolution.

—If we continue to follow the middle course we will be able to keep our options open for a time. But we must recognize that at some point we will face a decision to move to one or the other of the remaining courses—the point will come when our withdrawals are no longer a major bargaining card. We will have proceeded so far with withdrawals that there will be little incentive left for the other side to respond on political issues to further withdrawal proposals of ours.

(I provided you a separate memorandum which discusses these strategy options more fully.)²

Should We Propose a Ceasefire?

The most important single proposal to move toward a settlement, or even for public relations effect here and throughout the world, clearly is that of some form of ceasefire. President Thieu is suggesting this.

—Both State and Defense favor a ceasefire—State because it would be a dramatic new initiative; Defense because it would help alleviate its budgetary difficulties.

—The major problem, however, is one of timing. We need time, now that our Cambodian operations have been concluded successfully and Ambassador Bruce has been named, to (1) assess Hanoi's strategy and (2) see what success the South Vietnamese will have in their accelerated pacification program.

—Accordingly, *I recommend* that you do not make any decision on a ceasefire proposal at this meeting.

Should We Propose a Broader Conference on Indo-China?

—Vietnam is the key, of course, but Laos and Cambodia always have been a part of the problem—the source of the problem in all three is Hanoi. Our main concern would be to avoid complicating efforts toward resolving the Vietnam question.

—A variety of forums for a broader conference are possible and we could live with any of them. It would be difficult, however, to get

² Document 347.

agreement of the two sides as to who should participate in any conference which might be called.

—There is general agreement that we have nothing to lose and may gain some propaganda advantage by proposing such a conference in general terms and by indicating willingness to participate if others propose it.

—Again, however, timing is important. *I recommend* that you agree in principle but defer announcing any decision for a few weeks until we can assess reaction to Ambassador Bruce's presence in Paris.

The Role of Ambassador Bruce

—You have taken a major step in naming him. That is a sufficient price to pay at this juncture. We cannot be sure yet that the other side will budge very much, but we should wait to see.

—Accordingly, *I recommend* that he begin his role as senior negotiator in the context of our present course and that he do so soon after his joining the delegation—we do not want to give the impression that he will participate *only* if the other side reciprocates. We can put the burden of response on North Vietnam.

—The major thrust of Ambassador Bruce's effort, however, should be to get private talks started with the North Vietnamese. This will help us assess their strategy and find out if they have anything to say. Equally important, it will gain us at least a month to assess their position and attitude.

How Should We Deal with the Russians?

—So far the Russians have been helpful only when it was in Hanoi's interest for them to be so. I am not persuaded that, as State or our Paris delegation may argue, we need the Russians to interpret our views to the North Vietnamese. They might be helpful to this end *after* we have explored the issues through other channels with the North Vietnamese.

—Accordingly, *I recommend* that you do not authorize regular consultations with the Russians in Paris now until private talks have been started with the North Vietnamese and we have had a chance to explore other channels. The channel to the Russians can be kept open for use on a case-by-case basis should we want to do so.

I recommend that you conduct the meeting by first asking Director Helms for a review of the North Vietnamese attitudes in Paris and their attitudes on the political situation in Vietnam, and on the military situation in South Vietnam and Cambodia (he is prepared to do this). I would then outline the issues, dealing first with the question of various ceasefire proposals and then moving to an outline of the question of our posture in the immediate period ahead. Discussion would follow. Your talking points proceed in this way.

Your book contains:³

- Your talking points.
- A summary of the interagency paper on diplomatic initiatives.

The complete Ceasefire study and the Interagency paper on Diplomatic Initiatives (NSSM 94) are included in a separate background book for your information.

³ Attached but not printed.

347. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, July 20, 1970.

SUBJECT

Alternative Vietnam Strategies

Many specific diplomatic initiatives, forums and proposals for Vietnam will be considered over the coming weeks, starting with the July 21 NSC meeting. Before weighing these tactical elements we need first to examine our basic strategic choices. Where is our current policy on negotiations and withdrawals leading us? Will we have to accent either our search for a settlement or our unilateral disengagement at some point? Which of these two courses is more likely to accomplish our objectives?

The Basic Strategic Choices

As we look at our strategic situation we face two insistent enemy demands on us—withdraw unilaterally and dump Thieu. Many domestic groups are beginning to press us in this direction. One thing is clear, however, at the outset: *there is no reason for us to do both*. If we withdraw unilaterally we have no conceivable motive to solve the

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-028, NSC Meeting, Vietnam: Ceasefire and Diplomatic Initiative, 7/21/70. Top Secret; Sensitive. Kissinger sent this memorandum to Nixon under a covering note of July 20, suggesting that the President would want to read this before the NSC meeting. On another copy of this memorandum, Lord is given as the drafter, except for the conclusions, which were rewritten by Holdridge and Kissinger; the drafting date given is July 20. (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 861, For the President's File—Vietnam Negotiations, Camp David Memoranda, 1969–1970)

Communists' political problem for them. Withdrawal is *our* option, to play as we wish.

The central question on withdrawal then, is whether we use it as a bargaining counter for a political settlement. We have two choices:

- we can withdraw at our own pace, leaving the political future to a contest between the South Vietnamese; or
- we can offer a more rapid withdrawal in an effort to make a political settlement.

We need not choose between these options now. For a time we can pursue our present policy of both withdrawing and negotiating without committing ourselves firmly either to unilateral disengagement or political settlement.

But somewhere down the road—probably no later than next April when the present slice of withdrawals nears completion—we will have to choose. The reasons briefly are as follows:

Our present policy continues to hold open the two options of a negotiated end to the war if possible and a gradual U.S. disengagement from Vietnam in the absence of a settlement.

To date this strategy has been reasonably successful. There has been military and pacification progress, we have transferred an increasing combat burden to the South Vietnamese, and we have maintained substantial American support with our troop reductions and negotiating proposals.

However, if we stick to our present negotiating stance there will probably be no breakthrough in Paris. The other side might not really insist on both its conditions of unilateral U.S. withdrawal and coalition government, but it will not budge without concessions on at least one of them. Thus at some point our present policy will turn into either negotiations, with our withdrawal schedule part of the bargaining, or into a unilateral withdrawal, with the pace non-negotiable. We will have to choose either to seek actively a settlement while our remaining forces can be used as leverage, or to leave the political settlement strictly to the South Vietnamese, whether by negotiation or force of arms, while we withdraw more or less unilaterally.

Going for a settlement would mean seeking a genuine compromise, not a subterfuge for capitulation. We would maintain something like the current pace of our withdrawals, using it to extract concessions.

Going for unilateral disengagement could mean either a slow winding down of the war along present lines or disengagement on a fixed timetable that would give the GVN a fair chance. We would not press the negotiations, having no interest in helping the Communists get a share of political power in South Vietnam. That's their task, either through bargaining or battling the GVN.

While we don't have to choose now, we should at least recognize this fork in the road ahead. We need first to consider these basic strategic options of our present middle course and the two alternatives before contemplating diplomatic proposals, forums or tactics.

The Negotiated Settlement Route

We have consistently maintained that our prime objective is a rapid negotiated settlement to end the war, while our Vietnamization/withdrawal policy is a less preferred course in the absence of progress in Paris. Indeed, Vietnamization is designed to induce the enemy to negotiate by posing the prospect of a gradual American disengagement that maintains our domestic support while successively strengthening the South Vietnamese forces. Meanwhile we have put forward proposals and elaborated principles that are meant to persuade the enemy that we are ready to make genuine compromises at the conference table. We hope to convince the other side that the future offers no more, and possibly less, chance of striking a politically attractive bargain.

While we have made substantial progress toward disengagement, we have made little concrete advance in the negotiations. The only nibbles we have had have been my conversations with Le Duc Tho. But these were aborted in part by Sihanouk's overthrow. The basic problem has been that to date the enemy has been able to calculate that we have greater problems than they do, that protracted struggle is preferable to real negotiations to accomplish their objectives. They thus stick with their two demands of unconditional unilateral American withdrawal and the overthrow of the Saigon regime.

However, at some point, we might judge that negotiation offers better prospects than the alternative of unilateral disengagement, not only for a quicker ending to the conflict but also for achieving our objectives in Indochina. For gradual disengagement without a settlement carries its own fundamental danger: at some point we could reach a crunch point where we are caught between an ally that cannot withstand any further American withdrawals and a public that will not stand for any further involvement.

If this were our judgment, we might decide to go for a negotiated settlement while our position is strong and while our troop presence is still large enough to be an effective negotiating tool. We should then conduct withdrawals at the slowest pace our domestic structure can stand for bargaining purposes and search for new political formulas to induce negotiating movement.

We would accordingly:

—try to extract some concessions for accelerating or fixing our unilateral withdrawals;

—inject ourselves in the political bargaining, because of the other side's refusal to deal with the GVN and the latter's disincentives to put forward its own proposals.

This active search for a negotiated settlement² would assume that the enemy would be prepared to modify their position and negotiate seriously. Given their own problems, the aftermath of our Cambodian operations, and the costs of continued conflict they might be prepared to bargain at last.

There are major risks, of course, in this strategy. Hanoi may well swallow our proposals and sit back and wait for further concessions. To the extent that we inject ourselves directly in the political negotiations, we cut across our thesis that the South Vietnamese should shape their own political future. We could undermine GVN confidence and morale by appearing to bargain away its future. We would be more directly responsible for whatever political settlement is worked out.

We would have two essential levers in this negotiating process: (1) our remaining forces and the schedule for their withdrawal, and (2) the increasing strength of the South Vietnamese. The enemy would be induced to negotiate to speed up our withdrawals and give the GVN less time to build up its strength. Thus for maximum impact on the negotiations we would keep our withdrawal process relatively slow. (This in turn could cause problems here at home. In this sense your April 20 announcement of withdrawals totaling 150,000 over a year was a sound move—the figure was large for American domestic consumption, but the pace looked slow to Hanoi.)

² If we decide to work toward a compromise political settlement there are several alternatives we could consider to bridge the gap between the competitive allocation of power which the Communists distrust and the negotiated allocation of power which the GVN refuses.

We could try to meld the two sides' positions on elections and coalition government through the mixed electoral commission concept or a "broadening" of a government still headed by Thieu. Or we could move toward a nationwide ceasefire, either standstill or with opposing forces regrouped, which would produce de facto territorial accommodation.

Both the options of sharing power and de facto territorial accommodation establish a framework for continued struggle; they do not construct a permanent political settlement. Any arrangements that are truly negotiated—as opposed to a face-saving solution that one side imposes on the other through military pressure—must leave both the Communists and the GVN the potential for eventual national control and leave the U.S. with a reasonable period after its extrication during which the final outcome is at least in doubt.

In short a definitive national solution at the outset would require one side's working its will on the other, granting only some cosmetic concessions in a negotiating facade. A settlement with genuine compromise would require the NLF's dropping at least temporarily its goal of national power while consolidating its efforts at the local level. And it would obligate the GVN in return to grant the enemy substantial areas of local autonomy and/or some broadening of the cabinet and assembly. [Footnote in the source text.]

By the same token the more we move toward the final increments of our withdrawals, the less the incentive for the other side to make political concessions in order to accelerate our pullouts.

The Vietnamization/Withdrawal Route

The basic premise for pursuing this course would be that we are convinced that the other side has no intention of negotiating seriously. Their track record of intransigence in Paris supports this view. So does the memory of 1954—in retrospect they believe they threw away at the conference table their chance for reunification which they had all but won on the battlefield. They may well look at anti-war pressures in this country and calculate they can sit tight until progressive American withdrawals or political concessions undermine the GVN. Time is on their side—the U.S. exodus from the South is irreversible and the GVN can never stand on its own.

Thus we would judge that the other side would not budge from its two conditions of unilateral U.S. withdrawal and a coalition government. There would be nothing for us to negotiate about except the terms of allied capitulation. We would be better off concentrating on withdrawals of our own design, either swift to end our involvement or measured to give the GVN a chance.

If we wished merely to disengage rapidly from Vietnam without regard to the political consequences, there is no sense in our helping to arrange Thieu's removal at the same time. Nor would we really need to negotiate the terms of our pullout. Once we announced we were getting out, Hanoi would have every incentive to allow our troops safe passage and no reason to risk a halt in the process by attacking our departing forces. They have in fact already made clear they would allow us to leave under "honorable" conditions.

If, on the other hand, we choose to continue a policy of measured withdrawals keyed to South Vietnamese performance, one could argue that we shouldn't be in the business of probing for a political settlement with an adversary that is bent on toppling the Thieu regime. Delicate proposals designed to arrange sharing of power in South Vietnam could only cause us difficulties. Either Thieu would resist and we would be caught between Hanoi and Saigon. Or we might bring Thieu along at the risk of his alienating some of his colleagues and supporters, including the army on which he must rely to carry out Vietnamization successfully. In short, the prospect could be the enemy's gobbling up any of our political initiatives short of outright coalition government, while the political fallout in Saigon would increasingly shake the GVN.

Thus under this strategy we would hold fast on our substantive positions. We would proceed with Vietnamization and withdrawals,

keying our pace to South Vietnamese readiness and American public opinion.

In any disengagement option³ our basic premise would be that withdrawal on our own terms was preferable to bargaining about these terms with the enemy in an attempt to make a political settlement.

Conclusion

While theoretically we could settle now on either the negotiated settlement or the unilateral disengagement course, I think we should be prepared to continue our present policy, leaving both options open for about six months. We should not at this time either write off the possibilities of a political settlement or make a withdrawal proposal in an effort to bring one about.

On the one hand there is no reason to give up on a negotiated settlement. Hanoi has its share of problems, compounded by the Cambodian operations. My private talks last February suggested some negotiating possibilities. We should see whether the longer term fallout of Cambodia and the Bruce appointment generate some movement.

On the other hand, we should not announce a fixed timetable for our withdrawals—either for disengagement or negotiating purposes:

—A schedule sufficiently compressed to impress Hanoi and our domestic critics would cause a collapse of will in South Vietnam. A schedule long enough for GVN survival would cause us more problems than benefits at home;

—The North Vietnamese are likely to reject a proposal now, either because they believe we are making it out of weakness and to appease domestic opinion; or because they don't wish to negotiate shortly after suffering the setbacks of our Cambodian operations; or for both reasons;

—During the next six months we will see whether we can resurrect the private talks with Le Duc Tho and whether they can produce significant results;

—Our studies project significant pacification gains for the coming months. We will be able to judge whether these gains will provide us with a cushion for the withdrawal of very substantial additional forces.

³ Under this option of unilateral disengagement we would have several alternatives. We could continue our present withdrawal policy of pullouts and aim for a winding down of the war to the point where the GVN could manage on its own. We could fix a long term timetable in order to shore up our domestic support by pointing to the end of the road while still allowing the GVN enough time to be worrisome to Hanoi. Or we could offer to fix a timetable for our unilateral withdrawals only if the other side agreed to negotiate directly with the GVN on political issues—we would then proceed to disengage unilaterally and leave a settlement entirely up to the South Vietnamese. [Footnote in the source text.]

Accordingly, I believe we should:

—During the month of August take the position that Ambassador Bruce is exploring the situation in Paris;

—Early in September, you should make a speech calling for an Indochina conference and include high on the agenda the subject of cease-fire and the exchange of prisoners. This will get us whatever propaganda dividends there are and, in addition, launch discussions on cease-fire.

By early next spring, we may well have to choose definitively between the paths of negotiated settlement and unilateral disengagement. We will be in a much sounder position to do so than we are now.

348. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, July 21, 1970, 3–4:45 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

President Nixon
Secretary of State William P. Rogers
Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird
Director of Emergency Preparedness General George A. Lincoln
Director of Central Intelligence Richard Helms
Acting Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John D. Ryan
Attorney General John N. Mitchell
Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs U. Alexis Johnson
Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs Marshall Green
Amb. Ellsworth Bunker, Amb. to GVN
Amb. David K. E. Bruce, Chief U.S. Delegate to Paris Conference on Vietnam
Amb. Philip C. Habib, Former Chief U.S. Delegate to Paris Conference on Vietnam
Assistant to the President Henry A. Kissinger
Col. Richard T. Kennedy, NSC Senior Staff
Lawrence Lynn, NSC Staff
Ronald L. Ziegler, Press Secretary

SUBJECT

NSC Meeting: Vietnam Ceasefire and Possible Diplomatic Initiatives

¹ Source National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-109, NSC Meeting Minutes, Originals, 1969–1970. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting was held in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

President: Dick [Helms],² will you start off?

Helms: Events in Cambodia have altered the situation in Southeast Asia. Hanoi saw opportunities—and possible gains—resulting from the fall of Sihanouk in March. Hanoi certainly discounted the possibility of a U.S. move. The action we took did throw them off stride, but did not alter Hanoi's determination to increase its activity in Cambodia. The domestic reaction in the U.S. convinced Hanoi that our actions would be restricted. They will continue their long-haul, low-profile activity. They may become more active in the northern provinces. Their tactics in Cambodia have become bolder. They have shown interest in sowing confusion in the countryside and saving the indigenous insurgency.

In Laos, we have seen a new Hanoi move in the works. They are making a new proposal for talks. Their goal in the past has been to get a halt to U.S. bombing in Laos. They may waive this condition this time. They are clearly worried about more pressure on the ground in the panhandle in Laos. They may think Souvanna may call for a bombing halt.

There is a new consensus in the Hanoi leadership. They look to the long haul but they are confident they eventually will win. They see their difficulties as great but they are willing to take it. They are willing to accept the privation and the manpower losses. To keep their economy afloat they need Soviet and Chinese help. The rivalry for leadership between the USSR and China makes it difficult for either one to reduce its aid to Hanoi. Their manpower losses are actually not overwhelming.

What does this mean for the prospect of negotiations with the U.S.? They believe that if they wait long enough we will negotiate on grounds that they can accept. I would expect little movement in negotiations generally or in Paris in particular for some months. They haven't looked at the Cambodia balance sheet yet. The political situation is not favorable in South Vietnam now to the Communists and major concessions are unlikely. Hanoi appears convinced that the U.S. won't negotiate unless it means an evident North Vietnamese defeat. Their demands will still be our withdrawal.

President: Thank you, Dick. Ellsworth?

Bunker: The South Vietnamese are more confident now after Cambodia. Their apprehensions about U.S. redeployments have largely disappeared. They feel the war will diminish, though it may go on for a long time in a no-war, no-peace situation. I would say with respect to

² All brackets in the source text.

Cambodia that it was more difficult for the Communists to create an infrastructure there than in South Vietnam because the Cambodians don't like South Vietnamese. President Thieu thinks that with adequate equipment support Cambodia can hold on. He thinks they should concentrate on protecting the population centers. The South Vietnamese want to continue main force operations against the North Vietnamese in Cambodia. The main problem in South Vietnam itself is the economic situation now.

President: I want to create as much doubt in the minds of the enemy about what we will do in Laos and Cambodia and complete doubt as to what South Vietnam will do. We won't be pinned down on what interdiction is. I want to be sure we give no signal to the enemy. We will continue the bombing in North and South Laos. I want to leave the policies as they are. We have no plans for U.S. activity in Laos but I want to leave it there. I do not want to indicate that the South Vietnamese are planning large scale activities in Laos but we don't want to be pinned down. We'll say only "there are no present plans." Leave the enemy concerned. Air power will be used in Laos to interdict supplies. I want everyone here to follow this line.

[Dr. Kissinger then briefed, following the Talking Points.]³

Bunker: Thieu argues for an in-place ceasefire now. Earlier he preferred a ceasefire with regroupment.

President: MACV thought a ceasefire a year ago would be a disaster. But now their view seems to have changed.

Bunker: The situation has changed—the enemy has in part regrouped. That is one reason Thieu prefers an in-place ceasefire now. It may help his political posture.

Kissinger: It is hard to visualize regroupment except as a first step for a U.S. withdrawal.

Bunker: In case of a breakdown in the ceasefire, it is harder for us to react from a regroupment posture. That is MACV's view.

Rogers: Regrouping looks like conceding to the Communists in some areas.

Laird: We are in the best military position now we'll be in for a long time in SVN. Pacification is going well; June was the best month for several months.

With the appointment of a new Paris ambassador,⁴ now is the time to take a new initiative. The JCS prefer a ceasefire with withdrawal,

³ Apparent reference to the President's talking points; see footnote 3, Document 346.

⁴ David K. E. Bruce, head of the U.S. Delegation to the Paris Peace Talks.

but as Henry said, past history suggests that Hanoi won't accept it. Either of the other two would be a help. I suggest we begin the talks in August and then reveal a proposal in September for domestic impact. I go along with the Rogers paper but I think it goes too fast.⁵ A North Vietnamese negotiation may not show up—we should wait till they do. But now is the time—since the situation is good, the casualties rate is lower, the GVN is stronger, and the Cambodia successes, we should move out in the next 60 days with an initiative.

Ryan: MACV favors a ceasefire with verified withdrawal; otherwise, if we must choose, then they would choose a ceasefire in place.

Rogers: Thieu is not only willing but is taking the lead—but he doesn't think Hanoi will accept. As to timing, I'm not wedded to the time frame of the paper. We should not emphasize the broader forum. But the ceasefire is the key—it should cover all of Indo-China—and we accept the principle of withdrawal, and POW exchange. We should insist on the options from the DOD paper.⁶

I suggest the President make a TV appearance and advise of his decisions. We should move on the details in Paris.

President: You think they won't accept a ceasefire?

Rogers: No, they won't accept.

Helms: I doubt they will accept.

Habib: They won't accept but they may probe for something less. After they reject the whole thing, they may take less—this gives us a chance to see whether they will take less than their full two demands.

Lincoln: Now is the time to move.

President: Let's talk about timing. What do we do in the next two weeks? I feel it would be a mistake for Ambassador Bruce to go into Paris with a whole new offer by August 15. If we don't believe the enemy will take it, the timing relates to the effects here. It would be better to be more deliberate. Bruce should meet the negotiators on the other side and see if we can get private talks, and give reformulation of what we have already presented. There is no need to prove something by hurrying; we should be deliberate. I have taken care to be sure to say our Ambassador has latitude to talk and I am anxious to hear his views. As to the enemy, to move toward them quickly might reduce the chances of their taking the offer. They might see a quick move as the timing comes closer to early September, in my view. This gives time for Bruce and Bunker to get set.

Rogers: There is no difference of view on this. The timing can be adjusted.

⁵ Document 345.

⁶ Not further identified.

President: It will have an effect on American opinion. I don't want to have a dud fall on the schools and bring down public opinion and weaken our position vis-à-vis the enemy. It also gives us a chance to see how the military situation develops.

Vitally important are our press conferences. I believe Bruce should keep a low profile and low key. [Ambassador nods agreement] There should be no regular press meetings each week in Paris. I want to see a whole new stance—low-key and quiet. I want us to take time too to feel the way—because really we want to make a proposal that has a chance of some acceptance. Thus we want to take time.

We all must leave the questions in context. Say, "I am not going to discuss instructions." We have made significant proposals in the past publicly and privately. The timing of the move must be closely held.

As to the Russians, I don't believe we ought to ask the USSR to help here—we have other fish to fry with them. I don't think we should press Vietnam with them.

In Paris it should be a confident game—we are moving well and on schedule.

Rogers: Can't we stick to the line of your press conference?⁷ [All agree] We should be careful about saying anything about private meetings.

Habib: We have had the practice in the past of making a regular courtesy call on the Russians.

President: We need to show discipline and we have a chance. They have the same problems. They have not shown the push we expected in Cambodia.

What is the situation with the rainy season?

Ryan: It ends about the end of October.

President: One last point: There is one weakness in our position now: The enemy assumes our divisions will bring us down. They are wrong. My position is I won't. Secondly, the restrictions they think Congress will impose they believe will hurt our ability to respond. The bombing of the North will be ended in exchange for something. Our responses in retaliation have been successful in the past. If as we now go into significant withdrawal they sharply step up their attacks imperiling our remaining forces, we will have to take action. Their assumption that we cannot is wrong. It will be difficult but we will act if necessary.

This is the incentive for them not to up our casualties. This is the fourth understanding on the bombing.

[The meeting ended.]

⁷ Nixon's unscheduled press conference on July 20; for text, see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1970*, pp. 602–611.