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SUBJECT: Countering Possible Use of Cambodian and Laos Bases by North Viet-Nam, Post-War

The following are some thoughts on steps we might take to inhibit NVA use of Cambodian and Laotian base areas and logistic routes following a negotiated mutual withdrawal from South Viet-Nam.

a. Making US withdrawals contingent on NVA withdrawal from Laos/ Cambodia

In addition to pressing for withdrawal of North Vietnamese forces all the way to North Viet-Nam, we could make it clear that we would be ready to halt our own withdrawal at any time we were not satisfied that the North Vietnamese were not fulfilling their side of the bargain. We might, however, find it difficult to deliver on such a threat once the momentum of our own withdrawals was established. Furthermore detection of anything less than major NVA use of the Cambodian and Laotian bases might be extremely difficult. Nevertheless, taking this type of position on withdrawal would probably be the single most effective measure we could take to inhibit North Vietnamese withdrawal to cross-border bases. It would probably also be the only leverage we could use to bring the DRV to agree to any effective supervisory arrangements as suggested in paragraphs b and c below.

b. Improving the supervisory arrangements in Laos and Cambodia

There are two ways in which we might improve the ability of the supervisory mechanism to prevent NVA retention of major bases and lines of communication in Laos and Cambodia:

1. Assuming a new and presumably more effective supervisory mechanism emerges from the Viet-Nam settlement, the ICC's of Laos and Cambodian might be restructured in a similar manner. If this change could be accomplished merely by new instructions from the co-chairmen, it would not necessarily require renegotiation of the Geneva Agreements of 1954 (Cambodia) and 1967. However, since the new mechanism would hopefully promise more effective performance than is now the case, extending it to Cambodia and Laos would probably encounter considerable opposition.

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2. The new supervisory mechanism for Viet-Nam might be empowered to operate in restricted portions of both Laos and Cambodia where North Vietnamese bases exist and at critical points along lines of communication. In this connection Paris and Vientiane have suggested the posting of ICC teams at several "choke points" in the Laos corridor, e.g. Nape, Mu Gia and Ban Karai passes. Although Laos and Cambodia might be inclined to accept this procedure as affecting only a small, and in many places relatively unpopulated area, of their country, a change in the function of the ICC as suggested might require some renegotiation of the 1954 Agreements on Cambodia and the 1962 Agreements on Laos. Any renegotiation of the Geneva Agreements would raise the awkward problem of Chinese Communist participation. If they refused to take part, the legality of the renegotiated agreements might be called into question. Another problem is that introduction of the question of supervision in Cambodia at Paris might stimulate a Cambodian demand for full-fledged participation in talks.

c. Establishing a Permanent Supervisory Body for Southeast Asia

Tied to the supervisory mechanism for Viet-Nam, Cambodia and Laos there could be a permanent, perhaps floating, Geneva-type conference composed of representatives at the Ambassadorial level of concerned nations. The nations involved would not necessarily be those who participated in the two Geneva Conferences; there should be greater Asian participation with Japan at the top of the list. The Chinese Communists should be invited even though they might refuse to participate. The supervisory body would perform the same functions as the present Geneva co-chairmen, but would have the advantage that its full time attention would be directed to the problem of maintaining peace in Indo-China. It could demand reports from the ICC, or from whatever supervisory mechanism were established, publicize them and impose sanctions, possibly involving the use of military forces in the area. Such a body could serve as a super peace-keeping organ for Southeast Asia, playing a role similar to that of the UN Security Council. There would be, of course, many problems in establishing a Southeast Asia supervisory body and there is no guarantee that it would be any more effective than the present co-chairmen arrangement, but it would be worth a try. Hopefully the pressure

created by the existence of such a body would spur the international supervisory mechanism in the former Indo-China area to more vigorous and effective action.

d. Establishment of diplomatic relations with Cambodia

The establishment of an official US presence in Phnom Penh might have some utility in heading off flagrant North Vietnamese abuse of Cambodia territory. However, our mission would probably have to maintain a low posture in Cambodia and the likelihood is that it would be permitted very little freedom to develop many useful sources of information.

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