

~~TOP SECRET SENSITIVE~~

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Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS
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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

Ch V (66)

8 1 MAR 1970

Honorable William P. Rogers
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D. C. 20520

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Dear Bill:

I am concerned that we may not be taking all the steps that we could or should to prevent the Cambodian situation from developing in a way which we would wish to avoid. It would obviously seriously undermine our position in Vietnam if the present government were overthrown and a Communist-oriented government were to replace it; on the other hand, we will be in a difficult position if Cambodia asks the U. S. Government to become militarily involved in that country. There may be no way to control events there, but I think it may be possible to take steps which would strengthen the present government while being consistent with maintenance of its neutrality. These would be designed to do three things:

- make evident to the people of Cambodia the success of their government and therefore provide a basis for its popular support;
- relieve military forces which formerly were committed because of threats from Thailand and the Republic of Vietnam, and
- provide military assistance which may be required without U. S. forces becoming involved.

Set forth below are possible courses of action which should be studied with these purposes in mind.

To provide a basis for popular support the following actions might be considered:

- the GVN could relinquish their claim to the \$25 million now in a blocked account in Paris and jointly claimed by the GVN and RKG, thus enabling its use for pressing RKG needs;
- the GVN might propose to the RKG that discussions be initiated on any one of their current border disputes, indicating GVN willingness to resolve the dispute in favor of the RKG;
- a similar course of action could be followed with regard to the current GVN-RKG dispute concerning territorial jurisdiction over several small off-shore islands;

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- as an alternative to these proposals, the GVN could make a general statement to the effect that: they recognized the sovereignty of the territory within the RKG borders and were prepared to begin discussion designed to resolve these ancient disputes.

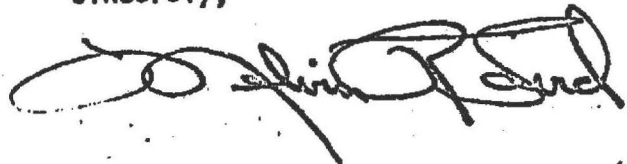
To reduce military threats and, hence, relieve military forces, the following might be considered:

- the RTG could offer to remove some of their troops from the border of Cambodia thereby reassuring the RKG that there would be little danger to them in shifting their own forces from these border areas for the more urgent use of controlling their country or confronting the VC and NVA.

To provide military advice and a conduit for any military assistance which may be required, the Australians should be encouraged to take an active role. I understand that relations between the two countries have been particularly good and we might encourage Australia to send in some military advisers as a first step. Australian support might also be expanded in the economic field.

These are by no means the only actions which we should consider. I believe it important that we take positive actions and not let things develop haphazardly. To enable us to react quickly and have accurate and timely assessments of the situation we should improve our communications without delay. I believe this best could be achieved by establishing a CAS station with its integral communication capability. I strongly favor this action, regardless of other steps which may be taken.

Sincerely,



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