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TO: DIRECTOR INFO _____ PHNOM PENH.

_____ AIR

REF: DIRECTOR _____

1. FULLY CONCUR REF AND WISH TO ASSURE YOU THAT STATION WILL NOT GET OUT IN FRONT OF MISSION'S POSITION.

2. FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE THE PROBLEM OF FUTURE AIR SUPPORT TO U.S. MISSIONS IN VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA IS ILLUSTRATIVE OF CONTRADICTIONS AND INDECISIONS AFFECTING ENTIRE RANGE OF U.S. POLICY IN INDOCHINA. REDUCED TO NUTSHELL, THERE IS NOBODY IN CHARGE.

3. IN THE MEANWHILE BOTH PHYSICAL AND PERSONNEL ASSETS OF AIR AMERICA IN VIETNAM ARE SUBJECT TO ATTRITION. THIS HAS FUTURE IMPLICATIONS AS WELL BECAUSE UPCOUNTRY FLYING IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD HAS ALWAYS BEEN TRICKY BUSINESS REQUIRING NOT ONLY USUAL TECHNICAL SKILLS BUT ALSO AREA KNOWLEDGE. SITUATION NOW FURTHER COMPLICATED BY MILITARY ACTIVITIES AND ANTI AIRCRAFT SPREAD, WHICH FAR WORSE THAN IN 1972, OR AZ ANY OTHER TIME.

4. WE HAVE NO IDEA HOW LONG IT WOULD TAKE A NEW CONTRACTOR

(PRESUMABLY CASI) TO WORK UP A PROGRAM TO SUBSTITUTE FOR AIR AMERICA

APPROVED FOR RELEASE DATE: 18-Sep-2009

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BUT ASSUME IT WOULD TAKE SEVERAL WEEKS, EVEN IF AIR AMERICA PERSONNEL AND AIRCRAFT ARE TRANSFERRED TO THE NEW SERVICE AND LONGER IF NO SUCH TRANSFER ENVISIONED. WITH 30 JUNE DEADLINE MANDATED FOR AIR AMERICA, LATTER WILL HAVE TO START TO DISENGAGE BEFORE THAT DATE, THUS REDUCING BOTH ITS OPERATING EFFICIENCY AND AVAILABILITY OF ASSETS FOR PROMPT TRANSFER.

5. WE CONCLUDE FROM ABOVE THAT POTENTIAL FOR ORDERLY TRANSITION OF AIR SERVICES IS STEADILY DECREASING, WITH BOTH VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA MISSIONS NOW FACING REAL POSSIBILITY THAT EFFECTIVE AIR SERVICE WILL CEASE EVEN PRIOR TO 30 JUNE.

6. WE ARE CERTAIN THAT HEADQUARTERS IS DOING ITS UTMOST TO RESOLVE THIS DIFFICULTY AND THAT HEADQUARTERS RECOGNIZES THAT NEITHER PHNOM PENH NOR VIETNAM STATIONS COULD OPERATE UPCOUNTRY LOCATIONS WITHOUT AIR SUPPORT. THEREFORE WE CAN ONLY EXPRESS HOPE THAT MEANS WILL BE FOUND TO RESOLVE ISSUE AT HIGHER LEVELS. _____

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