

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Intelligence Information Cable

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04 SEP 68

DIST 4 SEPTEMBER 1968

COUNTRY CAMBODIA/CHINA

DOI 29 AUGUST 1968

SUBJECT COMMENTS BY PRINCE SIHANOUK ON CAMBODIA'S RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA, AND ON THE CONDITION OF THE AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

[REDACTED]

1.

CAMBODIAN CHIEF OF STATE PRINCE NORODOM SIHANOUK SAID THAT AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR CURRENTLY BEING HELD WERE SAFE AND WERE WELL LOOKED AFTER; HE SAID THEY HAD RECREATION AND EXERCISE AND HAD BEEN VISITED SEVERAL TIMES BY AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR DESCHAMPS. SIHANOUK SAID HE HAD NOT PARADED THE PRISONERS BECAUSE HE DID NOT WANT TO IMBARRASS THE AMERICANS, WHOM HE PERSONALLY LIKED, BUT HE COULD NOT ON THE OTHER HAND SURRENDER THEM UNCONDITIONALLY, AS THIS WOULD MEAN HE ACKNOWLEDGED THE FRONTIER WAS DISPUTABLE.

2. SIHANOUK COMMENTED THAT THE AMERICANS DID NOT SEEM TO UNDERSTAND THAT HE WAS NOT A COMMUNIST, BUT WAS MERELY PURSUING THOSE POLICIES WHICH WERE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF CAMBODIA AND THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLE. SIHANOUK SAID THAT THE UNITED

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WOULD DO WELL TO RECOGNIZE THE CAMBODIAN FRONTIERS; THEN THEY COULD SET UP A MISSION IN CAMBODIA STAFFED LARGELY WITH INTELLIGENCE PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR WATCHING VIET CONG MOVEMENTS. SIHANOUK SAID THAT IF THE UNITED STATES RECOGNIZED THE CAMBODIAN BORDERS, CAMBODIA COULD THEN SEEK UNITED STATES AID; OTHERWISE HELP WOULD HAVE TO BE SOUGHT FROM COMMUNIST CHINA OR FROM THE SOVIET UNION. [REDACTED] COMMENT. CAMBODIA HAS BEEN REGULARLY RECEIVING CHINESE COMMUNIST AND SOVIET AID FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS. SIHANOUK REJECTED UNITED STATES AID IN NOVEMBER, 1967 AND HAS SINCE VOICED HIS DISLIKE FOR UNITED STATES AID IN MANY OF HIS PUBLIC SPEECHES.)

3. SIHANOUK TOLD [REDACTED] THAT CAMBODIA WAS NOT SUPPORTING THE VC AS COMMUNISTS BUT AS RESISTERS OF FOREIGN OCCUPATION. HE SAID THAT SUPPORT TO THE VC IN NO WAY MEANT THAT CAMBODIA WAS A COMMUNIST COUNTRY OR PURSUING A COMMUNIST POLICY. HE SAID, ON THE OTHER HAND, THAT THE AMERICANS WERE MAKING A MISTAKE TO SUPPORT THE VIETNAMESE, BECAUSE HISTORY SHOWED THE VIETNAMESE HAD ALWAYS BEEN EXPANSIONISTS. HE STRESSED HIS FEAR OF AN EVENTUAL SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME OF THE PARIS PEACE TALKS, STATING THAT A UNITED NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM WOULD POSE THE GREATEST POSSIBLE THREAT TO CAMBODIA.

4. SIHANOUK ALSO SAID HE FEARED THE POSSIBILITY OF A FUTURE RECONCILIATION BETWEEN COMMUNIST CHINA AND THE U.S.

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HE SAID HE HAD CABLED CHOU EN-LAI THREATENING TO BREAK OFF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IF THE THE CHINESE ATTEMPTED TO EXTEND THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION TO CAMBODIA, AND SAID HE HAD BANNED THE PROPAGATION OF MAO'S THOUGHTS IN HIS COUNTRY. [REDACTED] COMMENT. SIHANOUK MADE HIS THREAT TO BREAK DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE CHINESE IN SEPTEMBER 1967.)

5. [REDACTED]

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