

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

July 22, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. HENRY KISSINGER

FROM: R. T. Kennedy & John Holdridge

SUBJECT: Communications Equipment for Cambodia

Out-of-Country Communications

CINCPAC/MACV proposed a tropo-scatter system to link Phnom Penh, Saigon, Bangkok and Clark Field (Philippines) relay.

-- Ambassador Johnson reviewed the proposal and concluded that neither State have need for the additional communications proposed.

-- He concludes that the only essential requirement which the system will serve is secure voice for tactical air control communications between the centers in Phnom Penh and Saigon -- the volume of the traffic and need for secure voice (as contrasted with teletype) is not clear -- according to Ambassador Johnson review.

Ambassador Johnson is expected to recommend to Admiral Moorer that:

- The present control center (in downtown Phnom Penh where electrical interference is high) be moved to a more suitable location.
- Provide voice codes for use by Phnom Penh and Saigon centers.
- Data on traffic volume and need for secure voice be compiled as basis for reevaluation of the proposal. (He requested -- see below.)
- Steps be taken to provide Embassy Phnom Penh telephone circuit with secure voice equipment.

Ambassador Johnson sent a cable yesterday asking for additional information traffic volume on which to base his recommendation to you.

JCS completed review for PACOM

ARMY, State, OSD reviews completed.

ON-FILE NSC
RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS
APPLY

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Returned to Kennedy 7/30/70

*We must
now*

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This must be settled
AUG 8 1970

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From the foregoing it is clear that the principal justification for the tropo-scatter system is tactical air control. The traffic now may be comparatively light (we just don't know). But with increasing Thai and SVN air support and U.S. "interdiction" efforts, the traffic may increase substantially. Moreover MACV is convinced that no "voice codes" will be secure for long.

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The decision, therefore, rests primarily on the need for better tactical air control. Ambassador Johnson has requested an estimate of the volume of this traffic (a reply is expected today). We would guess that any reply will be a highly qualified one -- there are just too many variables for a firm projection of future traffic of this kind.

The advantages of this system would be:

- It would provide rapid and secure voice communications between the Direct Air Support Center, in Phnom Penh, and the Tactical Air Control Center in Saigon (and later Bangkok).
- It would provide secure telephonic communications between Phnom Penh and Washington/Saigon.
- It would provide a support for SSO communications of a higher quality and capacity capability

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- It would provide room for expansion if necessary.

The disadvantages would be a larger number of personnel in Phnom Penh -- at least ten contract or other U.S. civilian personnel -- increased U.S. visibility at Phnom Penh Airport -- four large vans and an antenna tower requiring security protection. There is at present no secure communication between the airport and the Embassy in Phnom Penh -- this could be provided.

We recommend that we wait until the reply to Ambassador Johnson's query to the field is received today. Then, unless the predicted traffic volume for tactical air control is at a low level, we recommend immediate approval of the project.

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Tactical Communications

- The FY 70 Cambodia MAP included 883 tactical radios -- 131 of these have been delivered to Cambodia. The remainder are available in Vietnam and are being provided to Cambodian units and personnel as they are trained in use of the equipment.



- Additional radios are being included in the FY 71 MAP as they are requested by MACV and Phnom Penh.

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Inter-Regional and Inter-Province Communications

- High frequency radio nets -- Intra Province -- are being employed now using 44 USAID furnished radio sets (TR 35).
- Phnom Penh to Military Region high frequency nets are being set up now using radios furnished from U.S. Army stocks (funding from FY 70 MAP Cambodia).
- 14 KWM-2A sets have been made available from U.S. stocks in Vietnam and Thailand.

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