

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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INFORMATION

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March 14, 1972 *@*

MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL HAIG  
FROM: RICHARD T. KENNEDY *RTK*  
JOHN D. NEGROPONTE *JDN*  
SUBJECT: Phnom Penh 1646

Ladd has replied to your queries (Tab A). His views and our comments are summarized as follows:

1. Dampening of Khmer Nationalist Fervor: Ladd doesn't think this is happening. Rather he sees it as a maturing process and an adjustment to the facts of life, including acceptance of the fact that we are not bankrolling them to the extent we have countries elsewhere. In any event, Ladd thinks we are giving them as much as they could possibly absorb.

Comment: All the evidence we have suggests that Ladd is absolutely right in his estimate that we will provide everything the Cambodians can absorb. We know of no instances in which they did not have available what they needed. Moreover, we have continued to deliver at a rate calculated to develop and support their forces in accordance with the plan we had about 200-220,000, whereas they have not actually been able to recruit and hold anywhere near this total figure. There is a long way to go in terms of organization and planning for the force expansion which has brought the GKR from less than 40,000 to somewhere near 180,000. Our efforts should be concentrated on helping them develop an organizational structure, command and control, and a logistic support system which the new forces need. Cleland is well aware of this need and is moving in that direction.

2. Discouragement as the Realities of the Long-term Conflict Crystalize: Ladd says this is evident among some sectors of Khmer Society but Ladd would classify most Khmer as stoics rather than optimists or pessimists. He thinks the Khmer will continue to do the best they can although we must expect a certain feeling of discouragement so long as the light at the end of the tunnel doesn't seem to get noticeably brighter.

Comment: Given their history and their tendency toward taking things as they come, some discouragement is inevitable as they see a quick solution to be impossible. Clearly Lon Nol's earlier concept of a quick and decisive

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ARMY and JCS reviews  
completed.

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2

move to rid the Northeast of the NVA was just one manifestation of the lack of realism with which they earlier faced their situation. Now the realities have begun to sink in and they know that they have a long term problem for which they are at best ill-prepared. Our task will be to get them to increasingly view the problem realistically and to take steps necessary to concentrate their efforts on doing the attainable rather than dissipating their resources in futile efforts to do the impossible in the short run. Our country team must keep hammering home the message that they can do much more than they have and can succeed if they have the will to do so. We will help, but they have to look forward to a long hard fight. We want to encourage them to do what is possible as a means of building their confidence. There is a new item in suggesting that FANK is planning a more realistic strategy. We are sending it forward separately.

3. Lack of a Positive Attitude Within Our Country Team: This concerns Ladd, particularly what he considers to be a contempt on the part of the Ambassador and DCM for everything the Khmer do. Ladd has never heard a word of praise from them for the way the Khmer care for their war victims, keep their streets clean, withstand enemy probes, have lost only two M-113's in Cambodia and kept all major LOC's open. Additionally Ladd does not believe the Embassy is staffed with first-team quality people at the operational level and the top leadership does not inspire or demand first team efforts from anyone.

Comment: This goes to the point made in the preceeding paragraph. Our country team must take a positive attitude of encouragement. We should, of course, bring shortcomings to the attention of the GKR, but in a positive way which gives them both incentive and ideas to overcome the shortcomings. They look to us for counsel and evidence of support. We must provide both.

4. MACV's Lack of Interest in the Affairs of Cambodia and General Preoccupation with Their Own Withdrawal Problems: Ladd speculates that the MACV staff sees the dumping of MEDTC support to be a neat way to save spaces. Referring back to the period of 1962 Ladd notes that MAAG had no more than 10 or 12,000 people and supported its people adequately--so he does not understand why admin and aircraft support of a 113 man MEDTC cannot be worked into MACV residual missions. Ladd further speculates that pressures are being applied to MACV from CINCPAC and possibly others and hopefully establish MEDTC as a separate command based in Cambodia. Ladd believes this could lead to political embarrassment and contribute to the possible loss of the entire program.

[John Negroponte informally asked the JCS about aspects of this issue without giving the reasons which prompted the inquiry. The action officer explained that informal negotiations are now underway between MACV and Embassy Phnom Penh to eliminate the MEDT spaces in Saigon and transfer what-

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3

ever is needed to Phnom Penh.]

Comment: As Ladd points out in his Phnom Penh 1648, the JCS is apparently moving ahead to relocate the MEDT-rear to Cambodia. This is going to give serious problems if it is allowed to continue. We will face the necessity of increasing the authorized personnel ceiling with attendant political flak on Capitol Hill. This could work against our efforts to keep a high level and viable program, put an administrative burden on the MEDT in Cambodia which will detract from its already strained capability to give the Cambodians the kind of help they need to make good use of our assistance, and necessitate developing all kinds of logistic support for our own people. We see no reason why MACV could not continue to provide this sort of administrative support and lessen the burden on the MEDT. We have incorporated this question in the new revised Vietnam NSSM sent forward to you today.

5. Political and Diplomatic: Most of Ladd's comments are essentially overtaken by political developments and our exchange with Swank on the negotiating issue. We can only hope Ladd is right in his judgment that the GKR is willing and able to provide a responsive link in the free world chain of influence in Indochina if we are prepared to continue to provide it with sufficient material and economic assistance.

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TO : BRIG. GEN. HAIG, THE WHITE HOUSE

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*Copies { Kennedy  
Negoponte*

*What do you  
think?*

*@*