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## DEPARTMENT OF STATE TELEGRAM

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APPROVED FOR RELEASE DATE: 13-Sep-2010
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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-06 H-02 INR-06 L-03 NSAE-02  
 NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 AID-20 SCI-04  
 RSR-01 /098 W

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R 070255Z SEP 71  
 FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON  
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9600  
 INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 14311

SUBJECT: CAMBODIAN HERBICIDE OPERATION

REF: (A) STATE 141273

(B) PHNOM PENH 3967

1. AMBASSADOR BUNKER HAS RECEIVED LETTER FROM DR ARTHUR WESTING, CHAIRMAN HERBICIDE ASSESSMENT COMMISSION OF AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE (AAAS), REQUESTING INTER ALIA COMMENTS ON SPRING 1969 HERBICIDE OPERATIONS IN CAMBODIA.

2. SPECIFIC WESTING QUERY FOLLOWS: "WOULD YOU CARE TO COMMENT ON THE ALLEGATION BY SENATOR FRANK CHURCH (SEE PARA TWO OF ENCLOSED LETTER OF 26 JULY 1971) THAT HERBICIDE ATTACK ON CAMBODIA IN THE SPRING OF 1969 WAS CARRIED OUT BY THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, PRESUMABLY WITHOUT CONSENT OR EVEN KNOWLEDGE OF YOUR MISSION OR OF MACV OR SEVENTH AF? WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THIS MISSION?"

3. SENATOR CHURCH'S COMMENTS ON CAMBODIAN HERBICIDE INCIDENT CITED BY WESTING ARE CONTAINED IN CHURCH LETTER TO DR E. W. PFEIFFER, PROFESSOR OF ZOOLOGY AT UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA. CHURCH NOTES THAT STATE DEPARTMENT HAS OFFERED MAKE AVAILABLE COPY OF SEVENTH AF STUDY OF CAMBODIAN HERBICIDE INCIDENT, BUT THAT HE HAD NOT HAD OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY

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IT. CHURCH LETTER CONTINUES: "I HAVE BEEN TOLD, HOWEVER, THAT AIR AMERICA WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CAMBODIAN DEFOLIATION. MY SOURCE WAS NOT THE STATE DEPARTMENT, BUT RATHER AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS IN A POSITION TO KNOW THE FACTS IN THIS MATTER." SENATOR CLOSES HIS LETTER BY EXPRESSING NEED TO HAVE "FULL STUDY" OF EXTENT AND EFFECTS OF SEA DEFOLIATION OPERATIONS.

4. UNLESS DEPT OR PHNOM PENH HAVE OBJECTIONS, WE PLAN DRAW ON REFTELS AND OUR OWN INFORMATION TO ANSWER WESTING ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

BEGIN TEXT SENATOR CHURCH'S INTEREST IN A FULL STUDY OF EXTENT AND EFFECTS OF DEFOLIATION PROGRAM IN SEA SHOULD BE SATISFIED BY PRESENT PROJECT OF NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES ORDERED BY CONGRESS AND BY REPORT OF YOUR AAAS HERBICIDE ASSESSMENT COMMISSION WHICH DR MESELSON RECENTLY INFORMED ME WOULD BE PUBLISHED SOME TIME NEXT YEAR.

SENATOR CHURCH'S INFORMATION THAT AIR AMERICA WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CAMBODIAN DEFOLIATION IN THE SPRING OF 1969 IS INCORRECT. AS A MATTER OF FACT, NO AIR AMERICA AIRCRAFT BASED IN SVN IS CONFIGURED TO CARRY OUT DEFOLIATION OPERATIONS. I BELIEVE YOU ARE AWARE THAT USG HAS MADE CAREFUL INVESTIGATION OF USE OF HERBICIDES IN AREAS NEAR CAMBODIAN BORDER DURING APRIL-MAY 1969 PERIOD, WHICH CONFIRMED THAT NO RPT NO DEFOLIATION OPERATIONS WERE AUTHORIZED IN CAMBODIA AND WHICH FAILED TO REVEAL IDENTITY OF AIRCRAFT WHICH REPORTEDLY CARRIED OUT A DIRECT APPLICATION OF HERBICIDES IN DISTRICTS OF KREK AND MINOT IN KOMPONG CHAM PROVINCE. NEVERTHELESS, USG HAS RECOGNIZED IT IS POSSIBLE THAT ONE OF ITS AIRCRAFT MAY HAVE CARRIED OUT THIS APPLICATION DESPITE FACT NO SUCH APPLICATION WAS AUTHORIZED. USG HAS BEEN DISCUSSING WITH GKR CLAIMS WHICH WERE PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED ON BEHALF PLANTATION COMPANIES AND SMALL HOLDERS IN AFFECTED AREA. END TEXT.  
BUNKER

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