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TOR:190931Z JUN 74

PENH _____

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CITE PHNOM PENH _____

TO: DIRECTOR INFO SAIGON.

_____ AIR OPS PERS

REF: DIRECTOR _____

1. AMBASSADOR DEAN HAS MADE TENTATIVE DECISION THAT A MISSION AIR OPS OFFICER IN PHNOM PENH IS NECESSARY, AND HE IS INVESTIGATING WAYS OF FINDING A SLOT FOR THE PCS ASSIGNMENT OF THIS INDIVIDUAL. HE BELIEVES A SLOT CAN BE FOUND, AND IT WILL BE SEPARATE FROM SLOTS PRESENTLY ALLOCATED TO THE STATION. NO TIMEFRAME HAS BEEN SET, BUT IN STATION'S LATEST DISCUSSION WITH HIM ON THIS SUBJECT ON 17 JUNE, HE DESIGNATED THE DCM AS THE REFERENT TO STAFF OUT THE AIR OPS OFFICER PROPOSAL AMONG THE VARIOUS MISSION COMPONENTS CONCERNED.

2. AMBASSADOR DEAN APPEARS QUITE FAVORABLY INCLINED TOWARD HAVING AIR OPERATIONS OFFICER BEING ASSIGNED FROM THE AGENCY. WE HAVE ASSURED HIM THAT THE INDIVIDUAL WHO WOULD MOST LIKELY BE NOMINATED. MR. _____ IS EXTREMELY WELL QUALIFIED AND IS KNOWN PERSONALLY TO COS, WHO HIGHLY RECOMMENDS HIM.

3. IN HIS TENTATIVE APPROVAL FOR AN AIR OPERATIONS OFFICER FOR

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THE MISSION, THE AMBASSADOR HAS BEEN QUITE EMPHATIC THAT THE AIR OPS OFFICER SHOULD WORK FOR THE MISSION AS A WHOLE, AND NOT REPEAT NOT SIMPLY BE A STATION AIR OPS OFFICER WHO WOULD COORDINATE AIR OPS OF OTHER MISSION COMPONENTS IN HIS SPARE TIME, SINCE APPROXIMATELY PERCENT OF ALL U.S. CONTRACT AIR HOURS FLOWN IN CAMBODIA ARE FLOWN FOR THE STATION. IN PRACTICE THE STATION WOULD DERIVE MUCH BENEFIT FROM THE AIR OPERATIONS OFFICER EVEN IF HE IS ASSIGNED TO THE MISSION AS A WHOLE RATHER THAN TO THE STATION. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE ASSIGNMENT TO THE MISSION AND ASSIGNMENT TO THE STATION IS IMPORTANT, BECAUSE IF THE AIR OPS OFFICER IS ASSIGNED TO THE MISSION, THE AMBASSADOR WILL PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL SLOT. IF HE IS ASSIGNED TO THE STATION, THE SLOT WILL HAVE TO COME OUT OF THE STATION'S HIDE, I.E., WILL HAVE TO COME OUT OF THE EXISTING ALLOCATION OF AUTHORIZED STATION POSITIONS.

4. THE AMBASSADOR HAS BEEN GIVEN A TENTATIVE JOB DESCRIPTION WHICH WE PROPOSE FOR THE AIR OPERATIONS OFFICER POSITION, WITH RESPONSIBILITIES AS FOLLOWS (THE JOB DESCRIPTION WAS PREPARED BY IN SAIGON):

A. FLIGHT SCHEDULING.

B. SAIGON/PHNOM PENH COORDINATION ON ALL AIRCRAFT REQUIRE-

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MENTS.

C. ENROUTE AND MISSION BRIEFING FOR ALL AIRCREWS.

D. CARGO AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT COORDINATION FOR ALL

SITES.

E. PERSONNEL AIRLIFT AND SPECIAL AIR MISSIONS.

F. AIRFIELD INSPECTION EVALUATION AND STATUS, REPORTING TO SAIGON.

G. AIR NAVIGATION AID EVALUATION AND STATUS, REPORTING TO SAIGON.

H. ASSIST COORDINATOR AND OTHER OFFICERS AS NECESSARY TO ENSURE SAFE EFFICIENT AND ECONOMICAL OPERATIONS.

5. WE HAVE ADVISED THE AMBASSADOR THAT IF THE AIR OPERATIONS POSITIONS IS FOR THE MISSION RATHER THAN THE STATION, WE WANT THE STATION'S AIR SCHEDULING TO CONTINUE TO BE DONE BY THE STATION. THIS STATEMENT WAS MADE TO THE AMBASSADOR PARTLY FOR BARGAINING PURPOSES, TO PROVIDE ASSURANCE TO THE AMBASSADOR THAT A MISSION AIR OPS OFFICER WOULD IN FACT BE WORKING FOR THE MISSION RATHER THAN FOR THE STATION. IN PRACTICE, WE BELIEVE THIS PART CAN BE WORKED OUT SATISFACTORILY ON A LOCAL BASIS.

6. WE DO NOT KNOW TO WHOM A MISSION AIR OPS OFFICER WOULD BE

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RESPONSIBLE, BUT POSSIBLY TO THE DCM. SAIGON STATION HAS PROPOSED THAT THE AIR OPS OFFICER BE PLACED IN PHNOM PENH UNDER AIR AMERICA COVER, BUT DIRECTOR USAID HAS PROBLEMS WITH THIS BECAUSE HIS AIR SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY CONTINENTAL AIR LINES. ONCE THE POSITION IS FIRMED UP, WE BELIEVE THE AMBASSADOR CAN FIND THE COVER.

7. THE STATION STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MISSION AIR COORDINATOR POSITION, AND WE ALSO FEEL STRONGLY THAT THE INTERESTS OF ALL CONCERNED WOULD BE BEST SERVED BY HAVING THIS POSITION FILLED BY AN AGENCY MAN. WE HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY CONCERNED OVER THE DECLINING LEVEL OF PILOT EXPERTISE IN AREA FAMILIARIZATION, AND RELATED AIR SAFETY FACTORS, AND FEEL THAT A MISSION AIR COORDINATOR IS THE BEST RESPONSE TO THIS AND RELATED AIR PROBLEMS. WE WILL PUSH FORWARD ON THIS POSITION AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE, AND WILL ADVISE FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS.