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[Redacted Box]

PEKING 94

NOVEMBER 22, 1974

TO: THE SECRETARY
FROM: GEORGE BUSH
SUBJECT: CAMBODIA

1. IN PREPARATION FOR YOUR PEKING VISIT WE HAVE BEEN CONSIDERING CAPEFULLY WHAT MIGHT USEFULLH BE SAID CONCERNING CAMBODIA, AND HAVE FOUND THAT THE STICKING POINT IN ANY ASSESSMENT WE MAY MAKE IS UNCERTAINTY OVER WHETHER OR NOT CHINESE HAVE ANY REAL INCENTIVE TO WANT THE FIGHTING IN CAMBODIA BROUGHT TO A CLOSE SHORT OF A COMPLETE COMMUNIST VICTORY. WE HAVE SEEN NOTHING CONCLUSIVE IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN TO SUGGEST THAT SUCH AN INCENTIVE EXISTS OTHER THAN THEIR EDITING OF CERTAIN SIHANOUK STATEMENTS TO ELIMINATE DEROGATORY REFU BY HIM TO "COALITION GOVERNMENT" AND "TALKS" (REFERENCES TO THE SITUATIONS WORKED OUT IN LAOS AND SOUTH VIETNAM), WHILE ON THE OTHER HAND THE CHINESE HAVE PUBLICLY SUPPORTED BOTH KHIEU SAMPHAN AND SIHANOUK IN CALLING FOR A COMPLETE DEFEAT OF THE LON NOL GOVERNMENT. NOR HAS THERE BEEN ANYTHING OF A PRIVATE NATURE WHICH TO US APPEARS INDICATIVE OF A CHINESE HOPE TO SEE THE FIGHTING ENDED VIA A POLITICAL SOLUTION OF SOME SORT. AS YOU KNOW, THE CHINESE HAVE EVEN TURNED OFF SENATOR MANSFIELD FROM VISITING CHINA IN ORDER TO LAY AT REST ANY HINT THAT A POLITICAL ARRANGEMENT COULD BE IN THE MAKING.

State Dept. review completed

2. HOWEVER, THERE IS A STRONG FEELING AMONG CERTAIN OF OUR COLLEAGUES IN THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS HERE, WITH WHICH WE TEND TO AGREE, THAT THE CHINESE DO IN FACT WANT TO SEE A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN CAMBODIA BECAUSE IT WOULD BE THE SOLE MEANS OF PREVENTING THE NORTH VIETNAMESE FROM DOMINATING CAMBODIA, AND PERHAPS ULTIMATELY ALL OF INDOCHINA. A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT ABOUT THIS POINT IN TIME WOULD ALSO BE THE LLY WAY THAT A POSITION OF SOME IMPORTANCE FOR SIHANOUK COULD BE ASSURED IN A POST-HOSTILITIES CAMBODIA. (SIHANOUK'S CHARM HAS PROBABLY WORN OFF AS FAR AS THE CHINESE ARE CONCERNED, BUT HE IS STILL THEIR BOY AND THEY ARE STUCK WITH HIM.) THE LOGIC OF EVENTS

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

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SIHANOUK'S STAR WOULD SURELY FADE IF A COMMUNIST VICTORY WERE ATTRIBUTABLE SOLELY TO THE FORCES ON THE GROUND, AND SIHANOUK HIMSELF PLAYED NO PART.

3. OUR REASONING IN ASSUMING THE EXISTENCE OF A CHINESE INTEREST IN A SETTLEMENT ALSO INVOLVES THE TRADITIONAL CHINESE DESIRE TO MAINTAIN SECURE BORDERS. GIVEN THE BLOODY-MINDEDNESS OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE, IT SEEMS TO US THAT THE CHINESE WOULD MUCH PREFER AN INDOCHINA DIVIDED INTO FOUR PIECES WITH NO ONE PART OVERWHELMINGLY STRONG THAN AN INDOCHINA UNITED AND DIRECTED BY A VICEROUS AND VICTORIOUS HANOI. IN OUR JUDGEMENT, THE CHINESE OUTRAGE OVER THE INDIAN MOVES AGAINST SIKKIM MIGHT BE A TOKEN OF THE BASIC CHINESE ATTITUDE TOWARD HAVING YET ANOTHER POTENTIALLY STRONG AND INDEPENDENTLY-MINDED COUNTRY ON ITS FLANKS, EVEN IF THAT COUNTRY IS A "FRATERNAL SOCIALIST STATE."

4. IF THIS HYPOTHESIS IS CORRECT, THE CHINESE AT SOME POINT DURING YOUR VISIT MAY INDICATE A WILLINGNESS TO SEE MOVEMENT TOWARD A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. WE BELIEVE, THOUGH, THAT THEIR PRICE WOULD BE HIGH. THEY WOULD WANT THE U.S. TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO CREATE CONDITIONS FAVORABLE TO TALKS IN ORDER THAT THEY THEMSELVES WOULD NOT TO BE VULNERABLE TO CHARGES THAT THEY WERE SELLING OUT AN ALLY--CHARGES WHICH THE SOVIETS MIGHT PICK UP. THEY WOULD WANT U.S. RECOGNITION OF AN IMPORTANT ROLE FOR SIHANOUK. THEY MIGHT EVEN SAY THAT A VICTORY IN THE UN FOR THE FRIENDLY ASEAN-SPONSORED RESOLUTION WOULD MILITATE AGAINST A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. THEY WOULD CERTAINLY WANT LON NOL OUT OF THE PICTURE.

5. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE CHINESE WOULD HAVE A FEW CONTRIBUTIONS TO OFFER (OR TO BE ELICITED FROM THEM AS A QUID PRO QUO). THEY WOULD NEED TO EXERCISE INFLUENCE OVER KHIEU SANPHAN AND THE OTHER KHMER COMMUNIST LEADERS TO ACCEPT A SETTLEMENT WITHOUT A DECISIVE COMMUNIST VICTORY, AND ONE IN WHICH CHINA WOULD EMERGE IN A FAVORABLE LIGHT. THEY WOULD HAVE TO GAIN HANOI'S CONCURRENCE. THEY WOULD HAVE TO KEEP SIHANOUK SUFFICIENTLY UNDER CONTROL THAT HE WOULD NOT KICK OVER THE WHOLE DEAL.

6. IT THEREFORE APPEARS TO US THAT THERE IS AT LEAST A CHANCE THAT SOMETHING COULD BE WORKED OUT WITH THE CHINESE ON CAMBODIA, OR AT THE MINIMUM, THAT A BEGINNING CAN BE MADE. ~~THE U.S. LEVERAGE IS NOT TOO GREAT, BUT WE CAN AT LEAST POINT~~ OUT THAT THE FIGHTING CAN CONTINUE EVEN WITH A VICTORY OF THE UNFRIENDLY UN RESOLUTION, AND THAT U.S. AID FOR A POST-WAR CAMBODIA IS MUCH MORE LIKELY IF THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT WHOLLY A COMMUNIST CREATURE. THESE FACTORS, COMBINED WITH THE INCENTIVES FOR A SETTLEMENT WHICH WE HAVE TOUCHED ON ABOVE, JUST MIGHT BE ENOUGH TO GET THINGS MOVING.

7. WARM REGARDS.

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