

THE WHITE HOUSE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

: *WSAG Principals*

PARTICIPANTS:

OSD Review Completed. Declassify Only

State Dept. review(s)
completed.

JCS review(s)
completed.

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the
President for National Security Affairs
Richard Helms, Director of Central Intelligence
David Packard, Deputy Secretary of Defense
Warren Nutter, Assistant Secretary of Defense
for International Security Affairs
General Earle G. Wheeler, Chairman, JCS
General John A. Vogt, USAF
Amb. U. Alexis Johnson, Under Secretary of
State for Political Affairs
Marshall Green, Assistant Secretary of State for
East Asian and Pacific Affairs
Col. Richard T. Kennedy, NSC Staff

DATE & TIME:

Wednesday - May 6, 1970
11:33 a.m.

PLACE:

The Situation Room

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

SUBJECT:

Cambodia

Kissinger: Bus [Wheeler], can you provide a comparison of the results of the operations to date with previous clearing operations?

Wheeler: I will. Abe [Abrams] asked for authority to conduct tactical air photo reconnaissance up to 60 miles. I gave him the okay but it had to be unarmed beyond the 30 kilometers presently authorized depth and not over Phnom Penh.

Packard: We've noticed river traffic from Laos. That's another reason for reconnaissance.

Kissinger: I agree we should do it.

MORI/CDF per C03232978

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 2 -

Wheeler: The river area won't be covered by the 60 miles. We will submit a separate request.

Johnson: Should we notify Lon Nol? Should we share our information with him?

Kissinger: We can tell him we will do it. We can decide what we give him.

Helms: We don't want to scare him.

Kissinger: We control the information we give.

Johnson: We will express it in broad terms to Lon Nol. We'll tell him just eastern Cambodia.

[All Agree]

Johnson: Should we do overflights by tacair from Ubon?

Packard: How important is this?

Kissinger: We don't want to give Lon Nol the idea we are using Cambodia for our purposes.

Wheeler: Let's go out and ask Abrams how important this is. We are reluctant to open the Cambodian operation more than it is now.

Packard: He might consider a transfer of assets from Thailand for needs in South Vietnam.

Johnson: Market Time. We'll add a sentence to say it's aimed solely at NVA/VC seaborne traffic. To make clear we are not after third country traffic. We would go only to Kompot -- a little over 30 kilometers -- and directly related to the sanctuaries. Could we limit it to South Vietnamese? Shouldn't we note that we will withdraw Americans from the operation when we complete the base area operation?

Packard: It would be almost entirely South Vietnamese.

Johnson: They'd better have American commanders in the early stages.

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 3 -

[At 1146 Mr. Nutter arrives.]

Johnson: If we announce the Market Time operations at the same time as the riverine and other operations in the South, it would be smothered.

Kissinger: Any objection?

Helms: Let's do it while the heat is already on.

[All agree. No objection.]

Johnson: There are two international law principles that could possibly apply here. One is customs; the other is blockade. This is neither one. The rationale is and would have to be "self-defense."

Kissinger: If we are not stopping Chinese and Soviet equipment, what do you stop?

Wheeler: Only small ships. Market Time has chased the Soviet and Chicom trawlers away from South Vietnam.

Johnson: We don't want to get involved in intercepting third country traffic.

Vogt: It's limited to stopping trawler-type activity -- junk, etc. transfer. The harbors in the areas to be covered won't take ocean-going ships on shallow draft.

Packard: Shouldn't we make sure it doesn't reach third country and fishing fleets?

Kissinger: We should get precise rules of engagement. I want them for the WSAG tomorrow. We can go ahead with the general approach.

Do we have a legal opinion?

Johnson: It's not a very legal opinion. It's a self-defense thesis, for defense.

Packard: We should keep it under U.S. control in the early stages.

Helms: We made a mistake yesterday. There were no uniforms in the packs.

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 4 -

Green: We had sent a cable saying there were in.

Johnson: We will go out and clarify it on the 10 packs. We want a judgment on the nine packs after they see the first.

Kissinger: Don't we have additional AK-47 arms now, from captured stocks?

Wheeler: We should send this instruction to Abrams.

Kissinger: Particularly on ammunition.

Helms: It costs \$176,000 a month for the pay of four Khmer battalions.

Kissinger: How about uniforms?

Wheeler: We have asked Abrams and Rives -- no reply yet.

Helms: They are trying to work out a way to handle it.

Johnson: We have not told Lon Nol yet whether they will be paid.

We need to inform Rives of what we do. Thieu is going to make a statement. We need to advise him.

Helms: We will advise him as quickly as possible.

Kissinger: Is there any answer from the Air Attache yet on the A-1s?

Wheeler: No answer yet.

Johnson: Rives welcomes a MACV liaison man. Let's call MACV and Phnom Penh to work out the arrival after Lowenstein and Moose leave.

Wheeler: We will make sure he is French-speaking and we'll make sure it is for recurring liaison, not TDY.

Kissinger: I asked the President about sending a military man to Embassy Phnom Penh. The President thinks it's a good idea.

Johnson: What status would he have?

25X1

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 5 -

Johnson: In relation to the Attache and MACV liaison?

Kissinger: To give competent advice to Embassy and Cambodians

Helms: As special advisor to the charge with credentials from a cabinet officer?

Wheeler: We want to try to avoid "involvement," or misleading the Cambodians.

Johnson: Advice brings responsibility.

Helms: He has to have credentials. He can be sent by the Secretary of Defense to see how they are doing with our assistance.

Green: We might wait until we see how the liaison goes.

Johnson: Can we have somebody working for them?

Packard and Wheeler: We will look into the legal status of a retired officer and report tomorrow.

Helms: We know where there are 18 T-28s on the market. We will advise Packard. We'll report tomorrow on this.

Johnson: We have Phnom Penh 764, liaison arrangements with South Vietnam and a request for a South Vietnamese armored column and clearing area. Lon Nol is attacking with Khmer. Have we anything from Saigon?

Wheeler: Nothing from Abrams. Probably he will be reluctant to launch an armored column. His operation against 704 and the riverine begins 9 May into the same area.

Kissinger: Why not tell Lon Nol we are considering his request?

Johnson: We can inform him.

Kissinger: This is a good example of why we need someone there.

Wheeler: We could ask Abrams' comments. We will do it. I assume the South Vietnamese II Corps commander met with the Cambodians. What

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 6 -

about IV Corps liaison? [He refers to a cable.]

I didn't know about it but I see no problem.

Johnson: Another reason to have a man there.

We should not give a negative to any combined operation with the Cambodians.

[All agree.]

[Redacted]

25X1

Wheeler: It's all in train.

Johnson: We will have a broad guidance telegram tomorrow.

[Redacted]

25X1

SECRET/SENSITIVE