

MEMORANDUM

REFER TO DOS

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

FILE

SECRET

July 11, 1973

DOS REVIEWED 18-Mar-2011: NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION.

MEMORANDUM FOR: HENRY A. KISSINGER
 FROM: L. S. EAGLEBERGER
 SUBJECT: DOD Views on Cambodia

HK

Bob Hill just called and said that he had been instructed by Bill Clements to try to see you to pass on DOD's views on Cambodia. Hill, recognizing the tightness of your schedule, instead called me and asked me to pass on to you the following views which derived from a meeting between Schlesinger, Clements, and Bob Hill, which took place after the WSAG yesterday.

- Lon Nol to the U.S.: We have only 34 days to go before the bombing halt, and therefore should not try to get Lon Nol out of Cambodia. If he comes to the U.S. and his government then falls, we will be blamed. Any attempt on our part to lever him out of PHnom Penh right now would look to the present government like the beginnings of an effort to dump the entire government.
- Sihanouk: DOD feels strongly that it would be "catastrophic" for you to have any conversation with Sihanouk when you are in Peking. This would "pull the rug out from under" the present Phnom Penh government. Any conversations with Sihanouk would "undercut our reliability and the confidence of others in us. It would be grievous, tragic, and immoral".
- Alternatives: Our only choice at this point in time is to continue to work with Lon Nol. We must leave it to the Cambodians to work out their own coalition government. If the present Cambodian government should fall after the bombing halt, it will be obvious to all that it is the fault of the Congress. If, on the other hand, you negotiate with Sihanouk and Lon Nol is brought to the U.S., the Nixon Administration will be blamed if the government falls after the bombing halt is imposed.

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-- Resupply: Schlesinger feels very strongly that we must do what we can to maintain air resupply of the Cambodians after August 15. Clements has talked to Mahon about this to see if he can determine what support we might have on the Hill for air resupply, reconnaissance, etc. Clements also intends, with Hill, to talk with others, including Jerry Ford.

One final point, Hill says that Admiral Moorer believes strongly that we must get Lon Nol out of Cambodia because it is impossible to work with him.

Bob Hill is prepared to come to your office to talk with you if you would like.

Comment: The lines are getting very hard in DOD. I think you will want to be very careful about letting them have any indications of your own views on how you must proceed.