

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL


6066

DOS REVIEWED 16 MAR 2011 NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION

INFORMATIONSECRET

November 8, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: SECRETARY KISSINGER

FROM: WILLIAM L. STEARMAN 

SUBJECT: FANK Capabilities

Deputy Defense Secretary Clements has sent you an assessment of the Khmer armed forces (Tab A) which concludes that FANK still is hampered by a number of critical problems, but that as long as we provide adequate support, it should be able to contain the expected dry season offensive. This report, we believe, underscores the urgent need for additional MAP funding for Cambodia. We therefore recommend that action be taken immediately to proceed with the October 19 supplemental assistance requests for Israel and Cambodia.

The assessment -- prepared by the Chairman, JCS -- notes that FANK has performed better than anticipated and that given adequate manpower and equipment, it can resist enemy offensives. FANK, however, is still plagued by problems of leadership, discipline and, most critically, manpower. Last dry season's personnel losses probably will not be recouped before the next offensive, although FANK recently has made considerable progress with conscription.

The assessment notes that the enemy continues to hold the initiative and still benefits from the presence of NVA/VC cadre and advisors. Equally important, the Communists continue to be supplied by the NVA/VC.

Looking forward, the enemy clearly is preparing to rebuild for a strong dry season offensive. Additional FY '74 Cambodia MAP funds must be made available to meet ammunition requirements and to provide needed extra firepower to FANK. As long as the Khmer are provided the necessary equipment, ammunition and spare parts, they should be able to contain the expected dry season offensive.

OSD REVIEWED 15-Mar-2011: NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION

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No Objection To Declassification in Full 2011/04/28 : LOC-HAK-41-4-4-7



THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

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2 NOV 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY
AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: FANK Capabilities (U)

(U) I forward for your information an assessment of the current capabilities of the Khmer Armed Forces which was provided me by the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

(C) I am encouraged to see that the Khmer are beginning to make progress in getting military conscription started, as reported in Phnom Penh 11281/171130Z Oct 73.

(S) The need for additional funds for Cambodia MAP for FY 74 was addressed in the President's request to the Congress, dated 19 October 1973.

H.P. Clement

Attachment

DECLASSIFIED

Classified by ASD/ISA
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE OF
EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652. AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED
AT TWO YEAR INTERVALS. DECLASSIFIED ON 31 Dec 81

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SEC DE: COMINT No. X-4546
No Objection To Declassification in Full 2011/04/28 : LOC-HAK-41-4-4-7

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FANK CAPABILITIES

1. During the defense of Phnom Penh and Kompong Cham, FANK have done better than anticipated. They have demonstrated that if given the manpower and equipment they can resist the enemy offensives. However, there are a number of problems which could have deleterious effects on FANK's effectiveness which, if not resolved in the near term, could be destructive.
2. The most critical problem is that of manpower. Several programs have been instituted centering around national conscription and the ability of FANK to properly account for its personnel. While a well-planned program has been established, FANK is having extreme difficulty facing up to and implementing the national conscription program. Without an assured supply of replacements it is doubtful that FANK can make it. We do not believe that personnel losses from February through August 1973, estimated to be in excess of 25,000, will be recouped before the dry season.
3. Other significant factors in FANK capabilities are leadership and discipline. The Khmer have not been blessed with a charismatic leader who is able to capture the loyalty and imagination of the people to rally to the cause. Furthermore, the nation's leadership ranks are limited resulting in all of the work being done by a few people. As a result of the limited leadership, the system of control by the established elite and the lack of national discipline, the majority of the people do not identify with and are not called upon or compelled to support the government. On the contrary the enemy can rapidly marshal resources to apply to their tasks and objectives.
4. Because of the inability to marshal resources, the GKR and FANK have ceded the initiative to the enemy. All actions to date since Chen La II in late 1971 are defensive in nature. The enemy continues to pressure FANK and retains the initiative and the ability to attack where he chooses. Kompong Cham at best was a psychological victory and has become a defensive liability. As a result of being on the defensive, FANK control of the territory and population has steadily diminished. It is fighting hard to keep Phnom Penh as a viable entity and to keep major LOCs open.

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5. An important factor in the enemy's combat capability is the continued availability of NVA/VC cadre and advisors. FANK has expanded approximately ten times without the use of US advisory personnel which are specifically precluded by the Cooper-Church Amendment. Although an adequate training base has been established, the training centers are essentially empty and have not been put to a test.

6. Khmer insurgents continue to be supplied by the NVA and VC over relatively secure lines of communication. FANK continues to rely heavily on US airlift. Their LOCs remain open at the discretion of the enemy. During the forthcoming dry season as the water level lowers on the Mekong, a concerted enemy effort could seriously impede, if not stop, supply convoys.

7. It is apparent that the effect of US airpower was even greater than previously supposed. US air broke the enemy offensive, prevented the enemy from regrouping prior to the wet season, and gave the FANK a breather during which he retrained and re-equipped a force which could better face the enemy without US air.

8. The FY 74 Cambodia MAP program as currently established does not contain enough funds to purchase ammunition required to continue the fight. Because of limited funds available purchase of new investment and attrition items have been deferred to provide funds for ammunition.

9. It is clear that the enemy is preparing to rebuild for a strong dry season offensive. Timing and location are up to him. In addition to personnel acquisition by FANK, additional firepower will have to be provided by the US since no meaningful outside assistance from any other source will be received.

10. The conflict in Cambodia is the last element in the Indochinese struggle which has not been the subject of a negotiated ceasefire. The US Government should make every effort to get negotiations started. Since the Khmer Republic is not likely to win an outright military victory, the enemy is certain to increase the pressure. In his view he is winning. At best we are engaged in a holding action. As long as the Khmer are provided the necessary equipment, ammunition and spare parts they should be able to contain the expected enemy dry season offensive.

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