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SECRET/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY

Dispatched Feb. 8, 1974

February 7, 1974

ADC

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TO: AMBASSADOR KINTNER, BANGKOK

FROM: BRENT SCOWCROFT, WHITE HOUSE *10*

I appreciate your letter of January 24 and your cable comments on our PARA statement.

No decision has been made on the OV-10's, and we are well aware of your concerns. I cannot promise that in the end they will be available, because of the need for them in our own active forces. We will do all we can, however, and keep you posted. I will also get your photographs.

As for our projected troop levels in Thailand, I appreciate the stress you are putting on the developing Thai internal situation and on the weight we must now give to this factor. As you know, it is not the only factor we are considering, but we are sensitive to all its implications.

We are going to review all these issues in greater detail over the coming weeks. I understand you are returning here for a visit that should give us the opportunity to talk over these matters and to get the benefit of your views firsthand.

Warm regards.

NSS, USAF, OSD, State
Dept. reviews completed

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MEMORANDUM

469 -X

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

SECRET/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY


ACTION

February 4, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR

BRENT SCOWCROFT

FROM:

W. R. Smyser 

SUBJECT:

Messages from Kintner on Our Forces in Thailand

You have recently received two communications from Ambassador Kintner regarding our troop levels in Thailand.

The first is a letter (Tab C) in which Kintner reports Doolins' claim that the transfer of OV-10 aircraft to Thailand has been ruled out -- contrary to Kintner's earlier understanding. Kintner asks you to look into this. He also encloses some memcons of marginal interest and asks for signed photographs, which I can handle separately.

The second is a telegram, provoked by our PARA policy statement, that argues that we should reduce our forces faster than we have been planning because of the Thai internal situation (Tab B). It also raises questions about the adequacy of our consultations with the Thai on base planning and

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These issues are so messy that there is no sense going into them right now. But we want to be polite to Kintner and underscore our awareness of his concerns.

[FYI: We now have about 36,000 troops in Thailand. These are to be reduced to 32,200 by the end of FY 74, and to 24,700 by "latter" 1975. DOD is now presenting plans for the drawdown over the next few months, and we have some questions about those plans that we are handling in separate memoranda to the Secretary.]

Recommendation

That you sign the attached telegram backchannel to Kintner at Tab A.

Approve _____

Disapprove _____

SECRET/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY - GDS

***** S E C R E T ***** COPY

Handwritten notes:
JAF
Please see me.
To: B
I will
I will to some of you
need to write
message for 1-c.

OP [redacted] #0645 0361407
O 051200Z
FM BANGKOK 25X1

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TO THE WHITE HOUSE

S E C R E T 051200Z FEB 74 [redacted]

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FM AMBASSADOR KINTNER, BANGKOK 645
TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY FOR
GENERAL SCOWCROFT
REF: WHITE HOUSE 40354

1. I VERY MUCH APPRECIATE YOUR DRAFT STATEMENT OF U.S. POLICY TOWARD THAILAND. THIS STATEMENT FILLS A LONG FELT NEED AND, WHEN FINALLY APPROVED, WILL GIVE US A BASIC FRAMEWORK FOR OUR POLICY TOWARD THAILAND WHICH HAS THE CONCURRENCE OF THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. THE FOLLOWING ARE MY COMMENTS ON THIS DRAFT: YOUR MESSAGE AND BY COMMENTS HAVE BEEN SHOWN TO ASST SECY INGERSOLL WHO CONCURS.

2. FIRST, TO ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE, I AM DELIGHTED TO SEE THAT THIS POLICY STATEMENT STRESSES THE HIGH VALUE WE ATTACH TO OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THAILAND AND RECOGNIZES THE CONTRIBUTION WHICH THAILAND HAS MADE OVER MANY YEARS TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF OUR INTERESTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. IF I READ THIS STATEMENT CORRECTLY, IT ALSO SAYS THAT WE PLAN TO CONTINUE TO PLAY A ROLE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. I WELCOME THIS INDICATION OF OUR LONG TERM INTENTIONS.

3. THE DRAFT STATEMENT RIGHTLY RECOGNIZES THAT, TO MAINTAIN THAI COOPERATION IN AREAS IMPORTANT TO US, WE WILL HAVE TO ASSIST THE RTG IN MEETING ITS PRIORITY REQUIPEMENTS. IN THIS CONTEXT, THREE PORTIONS OF THE PAPER ARE PARTICULARLY WELCOME: THOSE SETTING FORTH OUR INTENTION TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE; OUR WILLINGNESS TO TURN OVER EXCESS DEFENSE ITEMS TO THE RTG TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE; AND OUR WILLINGNESS TO USE THAILAND AS A SUPPLIER OF MATERIALS FOR THE REHABILITATION OF INDOCHINA. IN THIS CONNECTION, I SUGGEST WE ALSO ADD A STATEMENT TO THE EFFECT THAT WE WILL SEEK WAYS TO INCREASE THAI EXPORTS TO THE UNITED STATES IN ORDER TO REDUCE WHAT THE THAI REGARD AS A POLITICALLY SENSITIVE ADVERSE BALANCE OF TRADE.

4. THE MAJOR SHORTCOMING OF THE DRAFT STATEMENT, AS I SEE IT,

***** WHSR COMMENT *****

SCOWCROFT MCFARLANE RODMAN

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***** S E C R E T ***** COPY

S E C R E T

*****S CDPV

IS ITS FAILURE TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE CURRENT THAI POLITICAL SITUATION. AS WE HAVE REPORTED IN A NUMBER OF MESSAGES, THE THAI ARE BECOMING FAR MORE ASSERTIVE AND INDEPENDENT. THIS IS A NEW BALL GAME FROM THE OLD DAYS WHEN THE THAI AGREED TO ALMOST ANY REQUEST WE MADE OF THEM. STUDENTS, POLITICIANS AND OTHERS ARE FOCUSING ON THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE AND U.S. INFLUENCE IN THAILAND IN GENERAL. THIS SITUATION IS LIKELY TO INTENSIFY AS WE MOVE TOWARD ELECTIONS WITHIN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS OR SO. I SUGGEST LANGUAGE REFLECTING THIS FACT BE INCLUDED.

5. WHILE THE RTG HAS NOT PRESSED US UNDULLY DURING THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, TO REDUCE OUR MILITARY PRESENCE IT CAN BE EXPECTED TO DO SO AS THESE PRESSURES GROW. I BELIEVE IT IS MUCH IN OUR INTERESTS TO STAY AHEAD OF THE GAME AND REDUCE OUR PRESENCE BEFORE THIS BECOMES A MAJOR POLITICAL ISSUE. BY OWN GUESS WOULD BE THAT RETAINING 24,700 PERSONNEL HERE UNTIL LATE 1975 IS MORE THAN THE TRAFFIC WILL BEAR. WE WOULD HAVE TO HEDGE OUR BETS FOR THE PRESENT UNTIL WE SEE THE POLITICAL COMPLEXION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT FOLLOWING ELECTIONS, BUT I THINK WE WOULD BE WISE TO REDUCE TO THE FORMER 32,200 CEILING BY TAKING OUT UNESSENTIAL PERSONNEL JUST AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE AND SHOOT FOR SOMETHING BELOW 20,000 AFTER THE 1975 DRY SEASON. EVEN THIS COULD BE TOSSED INTO A COCKED HAT IF A HIGHLY NATIONALISTIC OR NEUTRALIST-LEANING GOVERNMENT TAKES POWER AFTER THE ELECTIONS.

6. I BELIEVE IT ALSO IMPORTANT THAT THE PARAGRAPH ON FORCE REDUCTIONS CLEARLY STATE THAT THIS IS SUBJECT TO CONSULTATION WITH THE RTG.

7. AS A SECOND MAJOR SUGGESTION, I BELIEVE THE POLICY STATEMENT SHOULD STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCUSSING WITH THE RTG OUR INTENTIONS REGARDING SOUTHEAST ASIA BEYOND 1975. WILL WE WANT TO KEEP ONE OR MORE OF THE THAI BASES BEYOND THAT TIME? IF SO, WE NEED TO START PREPARING THE THAI FOR THIS NOW. OTHERWISE WE MAY FIND THAT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MEANTIME CLOSE OUT CERTAIN OPTIONS FOR US. TO A CERTAIN EXTENT WE HAVE DONE THIS--AT LEAST TO THE EXTENT OF KEEPING THE THAI INFORMED ON IMMEDIATE DEVELOPMENT--BUT ALL TOO OFTEN WE HAVE FOUND OURSELVES TELLING THE THAI ABOUT IMPORTANT U.S. DECISIONS AFFECTING THE FUTURE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA ONLY HOURS OR MINUTES BEFORE A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT IS MADE. THE THAI DO NOT REGARD THIS AS THE TYPE OF TRUE CONSULTATION WHICH THEY, AS A LOYAL ALLY, EXPECT.

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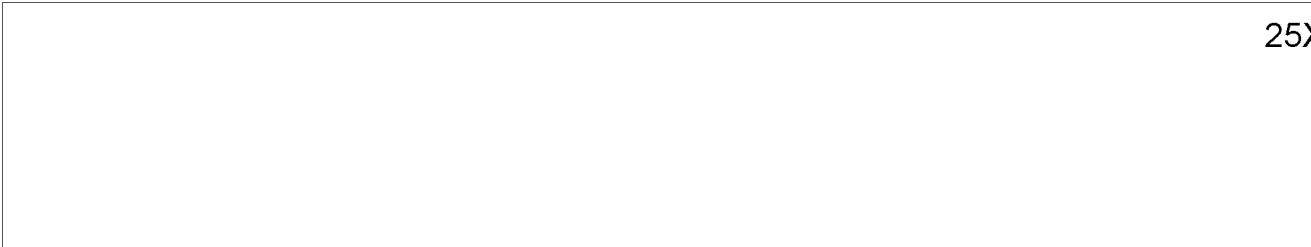
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9. AT YOUR REQUEST WE HAVE SHOWN YOUR MESSAGE TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY INGERSOLL. HE IS IN GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH OUR COMMENTS.

10. THANKS AGAIN FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE DRAFT STATEMENT. IT SHOWS A GREAT DEAL OF THOUGHT AND WILL FILL A DEFINITE NEED. I LOOK FORWARD TO RECEIVING IT AGAIN THROUGH STATE CHANNELS.

11. SUGGEST YOU SHOW THIS MESSAGE TO SECRETARY KISSINGER AND, IF THEY HAVE SEEN THE DRAFT STATEMENT, TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE AND DIRECTOR OF CIA.

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12. WARM REGARDS.
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action-froche

January 24, 1974

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Dear Brent:

As you undoubtedly know, we have been having a rather hot time in Thailand because [redacted] I am enclosing two memcons which will give you a more personal feel of the situation. The first report is on my conversation last week with the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. The second report is on the conversation I had yesterday with Air Marshal Dawee, General Surakit and General Kriangsak. In the second, you will note that a discussion of this incident will take place at the National Legislative Assembly on February 1. I am confident that we will ride out the storm, but as both of these memoranda indicate, the senior people in the Thai government are still receiving a great deal of flack [redacted]

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On another subject, Dennis Doolin, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, has been here for almost a week. He informs me that the OV-10 transfer has been ruled out because of legal considerations by Secretary of Defense Schlesinger. As you recall, prior to coming out here, I was categorically assured by both yourself and the Deputy Secretary of Defense Clements that these aircraft would be made available for transfer to the Royal Thai Air Force. As things now stand, it would require the intervention of the Secretary of State or the President to override the DOD decision. What are the chances?

100

Major General Brent Scowcroft
Assistant to the President
National Security Affairs
The White House
Washington, D.C.

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Again on another matter, I am still waiting for the signed photographs of the President, Al Haig and the Secretary of State. Before I fix up my office, it would be helpful if I receive these pictures. We can do the framing out here. Larry Eagleburger was supposed to produce the photographs, signed by Henry, so you might give him a call.

I am enjoying the challenge and I like the heat in the kitchen. With all good wishes.

Sincerely,

William R. Kintner

Enclosures:

As stated.

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