

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

ACTION
November 19, 1971

TOP SECRET

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: K. Wayne Smith *KWS*

SUBJECT: ARVN in Cambodia

Attached at Tab A is a back-channel message for Ambassadors Bunker and Swank as requested by you (Tab B).

John Holdridge and Dick Kennedy concur.

RECOMMENDATION

That you approve the back-channel message for dispatch (Tab A).

NSS, DOS
Reviews
Completed.

MORI/CDF per C05125491

TOP SECRET

TAB A

BACK-CHANNEL FOR AMBASSADORS BUNKER AND SWANK

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

VIA CAS CHANNEL

I am pleased that the GVN is launching attacks into the Cambodian base areas. I know you and General Abrams will continue your efforts such that this attack provides second front, perhaps drawing enemy forces back from their present positions where they are applying considerable pressure on FANK.

Beyond this operation I am concerned that we move toward full meeting of minds among the GVN, GKR and ourselves on the role of ARVN in eastern Cambodia.

We should not be expected to train, supply and equip duplicating ARVN and FANK forces targeted on the three NVA/VC divisions in eastern Cambodia, leaving it to the enemy to choose which he fights. Our assistance to the GKR should build up FANK's capabilities to supplement ARVN efforts against these divisions, but not to replace ARVN. Our assessment here is that ARVN has sufficient forces in MR-3 to apply steady pressure on the eastern Cambodian base areas without undue risks to security in MR-3. These ARVN forces should be the primary allied forces keeping pressure on the NVA in eastern Cambodia so long as Hanoi continues the deployment of these main force units there. These actions hopefully will preempt a movement of these forces either back into MR-3 or against Phnom Penh.

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It seems to us there is a priority requirement for the FANK to secure its roads to the west and south so that its economy can return to normal production and supply of the capital. The GVN should have an interest in economic normalcy in Cambodia as our support for the Cambodian and Vietnamese economies must come from the same limited appropriations.

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TAB B

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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ACTION

November 10, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: K. Wayne Smith *KWS*

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SUBJECT: ARVN in Cambodia

During his current trip Admiral Moorer has encouraged Lon Nol to seek early ARVN participation in a timely major operation against the NVA/VC base camps in eastern Cambodia (Tab B).

President Thieu told Secretaries Laird and Connally he plans to continue destruction of enemy bases in Cambodia. However, ARVN has not followed up the losses it inflicted on the NVA 7th Division when it made a preelection move into western MR-3 by continuing pressures on the Cambodian base camps where the 7th is refitting.

We should not be expected to train and equip duplicating ARVN and FANK forces targeted on the three NVA/VC divisions in eastern Cambodia, leaving it to the enemy by his geographic choice of operating area to choose which he fights.

Our assistance to the GKR should build up FANK's capabilities to supplement ARVN effort against these divisions, but not to replace ARVN. The MR-3 ARVN forces are not needed against the small other threats in MR-3 and are not likely to move north unblocking Saigon from the NVA forces in Cambodia. Thus these ARVN forces should be the primary allied force keeping pressure on the NVA in eastern Cambodia.

The enemy has now committed his 9th division against FANK to the west of his base camps. This move could be a temporary shift of attention away from Vietnam in an effort to hand FANK a decisive defeat and

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discourage further FANK advances toward the enemy bases and supply lines. It is also possible that the enemy is discouraged about his possibilities of mounting major successful operations in southern Vietnam during the next several months and intends to concentrate on FANK before U.S. efforts to strengthen FANK are fully effective. In either case the deployment of one of the three divisions against FANK gives the ARVN an opportunity to exploit the opportunity against the NVA base areas.

The U.S. view that ARVN MR-3 forces should keep up the pressure on NVA forces in eastern Cambodia to preempt their return to South Vietnam and that FANK should supplement, not replace, ARVN in eastern Cambodia apparently has not been forcefully communicated to the GVN and GKR.

The possibility of reduced U.S. MAP and supporting assistance availabilities increases the importance of stressing to both the GVN and GKR that nothing but the best cooperation between them can be supported. The GVN should realize that its MR-3 main forces cannot afford to leave the NVA to the Cambodians merely because they are temporarily in Cambodian sanctuaries. The Cambodians should give priority to securing their key roads and populated countryside while leaving the main burden of the fighting in the east to ARVN.

Shouldn't this view be communicated to the GVN and GKR?

If you agree, I recommend it be handled in a phone call or a back-channel message from you to Ambassador Bunker.

Approve HK Disapprove _____

I will tell Bunker _____

Prefer regular telegram _____

cc: Mr. Holdridge
Mr. Kennedy

*Please draft -
JW & K's
Approval*

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