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INFORMATION

SECRET

May 7, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

FROM: Lindsey Grant

SUBJECT: Sihanouk's Shadow Cabinet

You may find the Department of State Intelligence Brief at Tab A of interest. It describes the formation of Sihanouk's "Royal Government of National Union", and concludes that this pushes the confrontation in Cambodia one step further, but does not necessarily mean an immediate Communist effort to reinstate Sihanouk in Phnom Penh by force of arms. Brief biographies of the Cabinet members are attached.

The paper skips somewhat lightly over what may be the key fact about this new "Government": the Communists have exacted a heavy price from Sihanouk, and have surrounded him with their men in the important positions. The Ministers of National Defense, Information and Propaganda, and Interior are young, dynamic leftists who fled Cambodia (perhaps for Hanoi) in 1967 when Sihanouk launched a drive against leftists out of fear of growing Communist influence in his Government. The Minister of Finance is known only as an erstwhile Communist propagandist in Paris. The "Minister Charged with Special Missions" is Cambodia's most notorious leftist, who had been in exile in France. The other Cabinet members, although they slightly outnumber the leftists, are with one exception a rag-bag collection of aging sycophants and has-beens.

Sophisticated Cambodians presumably will recognize the extent to which Sihanouk has been captured by the Communists. To make sure that the point is not missed,

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Attachment



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*Haldridge***INTELLIGENCE BRIEF**

DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

To : The Secretary
 Through: S/S
 From : INR - Ray S. Cline *by D.E.M.*

May 5, 1970

Subject: Cambodia: Sihanouk Forms His Government

The establishment in Peking of a formal government structure under Prince Sihanouk carries the Communists a step further in the confrontation over Cambodia but it does not necessarily mean that Sihanouk will be returning to Phnom Penh by force of Communist arms in the immediate future. We do, however, expect the Communists to mount a heightened ^{political and military} campaign against the Lon Nol-Sirik Matak government in Sihanouk's name.

New Government Announced. At a May 5 press conference in Peking, Prince Sihanouk announced the formation of a "Royal Government of National Union under the leadership of the National United Front of Kampuchea." According to the Radio Peking broadcast, Sihanouk retains his positions as Chief of State and Chairman of the National United Front (FUNK) while the cabinet is headed by Penn Nouth as Prime Minister. The eleven other cabinet ministers include four prominent Cambodian leftists in key posts, and four former Cambodian ambassadors who rallied to Sihanouk following his ouster (see attached list). Sihanouk described his government as the "only legal government of all the Khmer people." He called for the

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overthrow of the Lon Nol-Sirik Matak "racist, fascist reactionary regime" and for unity in the struggle against "all US imperialist schemes and aggression." Under his government's leadership, he said, Cambodia will remain neutral and non-aligned and united with "the peoples and governments of all peace-loving and just countries," and "will absolutely respect all international treaties, agreements, and pacts signed by Cambodia before 18 March 1970." Sihanouk also noted the "common struggle of all the Indochinese people, the victims of US imperialism."

Communist Reaction. Peking immediately announced (followed somewhat later by Pyongyang) recognition of the new government. In a message to Sihanouk, Chou En-lai also stated that Communist China would break relations with Phnom Penh and withdraw its embassy personnel and those Chinese technicians remaining in Cambodia. While relating complete support of Sihanouk to recent American actions in Cambodia, Chou did not announce support for a "people's war" in Cambodia. This, however, would seem a logical next step now that ties to the Phnom Penh government have been severed.

The Vietnamese Communists have not yet recognized the new government. However, statements by NLF Foreign Minister Madame Nguyen Thi Binh last week in Paris indicated foreknowledge of the composition of the cabinet; it can be assumed that Vietnamese Communist recognition will follow shortly. A Tass report datelined Peking of the announcement of the government gave no hint as to Moscow's diplomatic posture;

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Moscow thus far, and most recently in the Kosygin press conference, has been notably noncommittal on the Cambodian government legitimacy issue. However, the USSR is not likely long to withhold recognition.

Pro-Communists in Cabinet. Khieu Samphan, Hou Yuon, and Hu Nim, who are well known for their Communist orientation and fled Phnom Penh in 1967-68 after being accused of subversive activities by Sihanouk himself, have been named Minister of Defense, Interior, and Information respectively. Relatively young and capable, they have had some following among student and intellectual elements. Captured documents and reported statements by Mme. Binh indicate that the Communists plan to have these three play a leading role in the new government, with Sihanouk occupying a figurehead position. Chau Seng, probably the most prominent Cambodian pro-Communist, is Minister of Special Missions, an as yet undefined responsibility. Although little is known of the Minister of Economy, Thiounn Munn, he is suspected of leftist tendencies. General Duong Sam Ol, Minister of Military Equipment and Armament, has reportedly been pro-Western but has not been heard of since the coup and is on the Lon Nol-Sirik Matak blacklist. Moreover, Mme. Binh reportedly said on April 26 that General Duong was in Hanoi and that he would be one of the leaders of the "Cambodian Liberation Army."

Situation More Polarized. We expect Sihanouk's announcement to be followed by a much more active Communist political campaign in

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Cambodia, with Vietnamese military and local guerrilla activity carried out in Sihanouk's name. The new move also seems to eliminate any remaining possibility that the Communists would be prepared to reach a modus vivendi with the Lon Nol-Sirik Matak government. It does not necessarily follow, however, that Sihanouk will soon return to Cambodia as head of a government functioning in a "liberated area." Even if he were prepared to embark on life in the jungle, it is not at all certain that the Communists would want him to be even this far removed from their complete physical control. Nor does it seem likely that this announcement signals any imminent North Vietnamese intention to "liberate" Phnom Penh and establish a Communist regime there, claiming to control all of Cambodia. Communist calculations may change over the next few weeks, but at this time we believe that they would regard such an effort as adding more to their problems than they would gain, particularly since the local Communist apparatus is still small, untested, and in the early stages of a sizable build-up effort.

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COMPOSITION OF SIHANOUK'S ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNION

<u>Prime Minister:</u>	Penn Nouth	Long-time influential and trusted Sihanouk adviser and frequent Cambodian Prime Minister. In ill health for some time, he was with Sihanouk at time of his ouster and has served as Sihanouk's spokesman in Peking. Represented Sihanouk at preliminary Afro-Asian Non-Aligned Conference in Dar-es-Salaam last month.
<u>Minister of Foreign Affairs:</u>	Sarin Chhak	Career government official who has held several responsible posts in the Foreign Ministry. Ambassador to UAR at the time of the coup and rallied to Sihanouk. A political enemy of General Lon Nol and possibly related to him.
<u>Minister Charged with Special Missions:</u>	Chau Seng	Cambodia's most notorious leftist upon whom Sihanouk has in past relied extensively and entrusted with several key ministerial posts. In exile in France since 1968 when Sihanouk began a shift to the right.
<u>Minister of Education and Youth:</u>	Chan Youran	Pedestrian diplomat who rallied to Sihanouk's banner from his post as Ambassador to Senegal and other African countries.
<u>Minister of Public Health, Religious, and Social Affairs:</u>	Ngo Hou	Long-time Sihanouk sycophant who served Sihanouk as Air Force Chief of Staff and Minister of Defense and Public Health, as well as personal physician--not by virtue of competence but because of unquestioning, obsequious loyalty to Sihanouk.

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Minister of
Economy and Finance:

Thiounn Munn Virtual unknown, reportedly once resident in Paris where he was active in spreading Communist propaganda among Cambodian students.

Minister of
National Defense:

Khieu Samphan Young (38) hard-core leftist, like Hou Yuon and Hu Nim, but not regarded as quite the revolutionary firebrand as the other two. Like them, he received National Assembly seat and cabinet posts from Sihanouk in early 1960's and fled to jungle in 1967 when Sihanouk turned on the Cambodian left.

Minister of Military
Equipment and Armament:

Duong Sam OI FARK Major General regarded as extremely competent military leader, especially in fields of strategy and organization. Reportedly respected by other Cambodian officers, he has served as Minister of Defense, FARK Deputy Chief of Staff, and Inspector General. Was once regarded as a close friend and associate of Lon Nol.

Minister of
Information and
Propaganda:

Hu Nim Young (38), hard-core leftist, long regarded as Communist or pro-Communist whom Sihanouk allowed to win election to National Assembly and to whom he gave several cabinet posts. Along with Hou Yuon and Khieu Samphan he fled (perhaps to Hanoi) in 1967 when Sihanouk began to persecute internal leftist opposition.

Minister of Public Works,
Telecommunications
and Reconstruction:

Huot Sambath Arrogant, inept, and corrupt, his loyalty to Sihanouk particularly reflected in the vigor with which he implemented the Prince's anti-US instructions and won him important posts in bureaucracy, cabinet, and foreign service, including posts as Foreign Minister and Permanent Representative to the UN.

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Minister of Interior,
Communal Reforms,
and Cooperatives:

Hou Yuon

Relatively young (40), arrogant, hard-core leftist whose intelligence, dedication, and courage won him respect from many who disagreed violently with his views. Often the target of Sihanouk's wrath, the Prince, nevertheless, allowed him to win a National Assembly seat and gave him several cabinet posts. With Khieu Samphan and Hu Nim, he disappeared into the bush in 1967 when Sihanouk stepped up pressure against leftists.

Minister of Justice
and Judicial Reform:

Chea San

Career civil servant with experience in foreign affairs and the Information Ministry. Rallied to Sihanouk while Ambassador to Moscow, where he remains as Sihanouk's representative.

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