

Haig Trip
Dec 1970

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State Dept and DIA reviews
completed.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

MORI/CDF per pages 2-23,
C03322900

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY/VIA CAS CHANNELS~~

TO: DR KISSINGER, THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

FROM: BGEN HAIG, MACV, SAIGON 

1. Will see President Thieu at 6 p.m. local tonight, just prior to departure. Ambassador Bunker will accompany. I met privately with Ambassador Godley last night and discussed operation being proposed by General Abrams. Godley warmly supports operation and believes Souvanna will go along. Contrary to our public posture, he believes we should assure Souvanna of heavy U.S. involvement. Godley also believes duration of operation could be important factor in Souvanna's attitude.
2. We have thoroughly explored ^{DRUG} ~~depe~~ issue and will be prepared to report in detail re this difficult problem. I have also explored in depth MACSOG capabilities to execute ^{COVERT} ~~current~~ actions President has been emphasizing. Our flexibility is somewhat limited, however I am confident that excellent program supplementing other operations can be devised.
3. Will cover with Thieu political initiative and also mention military campaigns with which he is already in complete agreement. We are departing here approx 7:30 p.m. local and should be in DC late Friday night. Visit has been most beneficial to all concerned. Best Wishes.

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Saigon 015

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TO: DR. KISSINGER, THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON, D. C.

FROM: BGEN HAIG, MACV, SAIGON

2. I remain impressed with the competence, self-assurance
1. Spent morning and early afternoon with LTG Davison
who commands US forces in III Corps and met briefly early
this a.m. with General Tri, CG of ARVN III Corps. I was far
favorably impressed by solid progress which has been made
since last visit. The absolutely irrefutable evidence of
success of Cambodian operations can be seen everywhere. US air
III Corps has enjoyed almost complete respite from
enemy military activity since operations began in Cambodia.

The economic benefits of this improved security are also
3. While my impressions thus far convince me that US with-
manifest. Unrestricted personnel and commercial traffic
drawal schedules between now and 1 May and even 1 June are
is now possible from Saigon west to Cambodian border on
sound, I am equally convinced of the absolute necessity of
routes 1 and 13 and more importantly lumber exploitation
insuring viability of Cambodian regime to prevent
has begun on a large-scale in border provinces of III Corps
reestablishment of NVA/VC sanctuaries in Cambodia. I am
as far north as Bu Dop which has been a "no man's land" since
also confident that operations now planned for dry season
the early days of the insurgency. Most significantly, however,
will guarantee this for at least another six months and
former sanctuary areas in Zones C and D are now devoid of main
have the potential of achieving decisive results with
force activity and under close physical surveillance of ARVN
respect to the entire conflict in Southeast Asia
and US forces. This visit has assured me that military aspects
of Vietnamization program based quite largely on Cambodian
operations are now completely in hand. Draw-down of US forces
programmed through 1 July 1971 in III Corps area is sound and
workable. Struggle in this area occurs increasingly within a
political context, through some isolated exceptions remain
ARVN forces now provide primary security for all border

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provinces with US First Air CAV covering infiltration routes

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in Zone D from border to the east coast of SVN.

and many operations can be better assessed. One fact stands

2. I remain impressed with the competence, self-assurance, and

and aggressive style of General Tri. His airborne forces

now operating in Kampong Cham area of Cambodia have executed

complex air mobile operation with great precision. Thus far

they have been able to move and supply all forces relying

almost totally on VNAF assets - a feat which no one anticipated

could be accomplished this soon. Decision to minimize US air

role in this operation was sound though I do not anticipate these

5. I am scheduled to meet shortly with Admiral McCain and

restraints will be possible in future operations of larger scale.

will discuss with him your and President's concept for dry

3. as While my impressions thus far convince me that US with- talk

drawal schedules between now and 1 May and even 1 June are

sound, I am equally convinced of the absolute necessity of

6. As you can judge, I am greatly encouraged by visit thus

insuring viability of Cambodian regime to prevent

far. Somehow perspective is much clearer here where

reestablishment of NVA/VC sanctuaries in Cambodia. I am

realities are more evident and the skill and competence of

also confident that operations now planned for dry season

our country team accessible to close scrutiny. President

will guarantee this for at least another six months and

should be aware that Ambassador Barker and General Abrams are

have the potential of achieving decisive results with

solidly in tune with his thinking re Cambodia and every

respect to the entire conflict in Southeast Asia.

indicator viewed thus far suggests President Thieu and GVN

4. I have discussed drug problem, reported troop spring's

inactivity and FY 72 troop levels at some length with General

Abrams and LTG Davison. To a large extent, future draw-downs

will be governed by success of dry season campaign and firm estimates

should be delayed until late February or early March when allied

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TO: DIRECTOR, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, WASHINGTON, D. C.


and enemy operations can be better assessed. One fact stands out however, US combat forces are not now under employed when issue is weighed in light of currently approved draw-down schedules. The drug problem is real as is the racial problem. Both however, are amenable to management and sensitive leadership. Neither should be allowed to become operative considerations with respect to US force levels. Levels should be determined only by our overall security objectives.

III Corps has enjoyed almost complete respite from

5. I am scheduled to meet shortly with Admiral McCain and will discuss with him your and President's concept for dry season. Will meet tomorrow a.m. with President Thieu and talk to Ambassador Godley tonight, at Ambassador Bunker's residence.

6. As you can judge, I am greatly encouraged by visit thus far. Somehow perspective is much clearer here where realities are more evident and the skill and competence of our country team accessible to closer scrutiny. President should be aware that Ambassador Bunker and General Abrams are solidly in tune with his thinking re Cambodia and every indicator viewed thus far suggests President Thieu and GVN military share his viewpoint on this subject. Last spring's Cambodian decision stands as watershed for US leadership here and momentum achieved should and can be strengthened over coming months. in this area occurs increasingly within a political context, through some isolated exceptions remain.

ARVN forces now provide primary security for all border

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VIA CAS CHANNELS

TO: DR. KISSINGER, THE WHITE HOUSE, WASH DC

FROM: BGEN HAIG, MACV, SAIGON

1. General Abrams and his staff have proven totally responsive to problem areas developed as a result of visit to Phnom Penh and special requests made to me by Lon Nol. Brief status report follows:

A. IMPROVED HELICOPTER SUPPORT: Starting immediately, six helos will be made available to Cambodians each day for command and control, liaison, medevac and other emergency requirements;

B. ARTILLERY: MACV will update shipment of 6 tubes immediately with 2 additional batteries hopefully provided by 1 January. Remainder of artillery in program will be expedited;

C. ARMOR: MACV hopes to man 10 of 25 APC's in program as soon as possible, hopefully within the week with the balance by mid January;

D. SMALL ARMS: 10,000 M-15 rounds will be moved by 1 January, and 45,000 M-1 carbine rounds should arrive by March;

E. RIVERINE FORCES: Seven PBRs will be shipped immediately and the remainder of 19 in the program will be expedited. This may require pressure on the Department of Navy through DOD and JCS.

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F. BULLDOZERS FOR AIRPORT REPAIR: Kampong Cham is cut off entirely except for slow water entry and has no operating air field. MACV indicates a special mission with aerial crane and borrowed ARVN dozer can and will be set up immediately;

G. IMPROVED ARVN/VNAF RESPONSIVENESS: General Abrams, as a result of the letter he received last week from the President has placed General Weyand in overall charge of coordinating ARVN, FANK and U. S. activities in Cambodia. ARVN has appointed LGEN Nguyen Van MANH to work in new coordinating triumverate and Cambodians will soon designate their representative. General Abrams envisions that group will meet in Phnom Penh or SVN at least weekly and on quiet basis to insure activities of all forces are well coordinated and requirements properly assessed. I am confident system will greatly facilitate exchange of information and more effective operational programs for ground, sea and air operations in support of Cambodia.

GP-1

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VIA CAS CHANNELS

TO: DR. KISSINGER, THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON DC
FROM: BGEN HAIG, MACV, SAIGON

1. I have completed detailed discussions with General Abrams and Ambassador Bunker on three-phase military operational concept discussed with you prior to departure. I have also discussed with Ambassador Bunker the political initiative which we will discuss with Thieu on Thursday, December 17. General Abrams has assured me that he has discussed each of the phases with General Vien who has in turn cleared the concept with President Thieu. Ambassador Bunker has also been fully apprised and concurs wholeheartedly.

2. The first operation would involve an armor and infantry thrust westward along Route 7 to Chup Plantation. General Abrams has stepped up jump-off time from original estimate of 1 February to approximately 15 January. He states earlier jump-off would be impossible due to need for cross-country ~~trac~~ ability for armored vehicles as well as requirement of all involved forces to make necessary maintenance preparations. General Abrams thinks that this operation will cause maximum disruption in rear and in base areas of VC 9th division and NVA 7th division currently ^{THE} on ~~Route 7/6~~ ^{SIX-SEVEN-MEKONG TRIANGLE} in the Mekong Delta. As you know ARVN launched Kampong Cham relief operation yesterday and I am just informed initial contact has already been made south of Route 7 with what appears to be elements of 272 regiment.

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VIA CAS CHANNELS

EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

This operation is planned for termination in ten days but if it proves lucrative, as it well may, there is a good chance that General Tri will decide to coordinate Chup operation with linkup ^{with} ~~to~~ forces now in Kampong Cham.

3. General Abrams this morning approved several raid proposals targetted against North Vietnam. He has been under great pressure from Admiral McCain to develop these plans. They have also been coordinated with VNAF through General Vien who is enthusiastic. General Abrams is somewhat skeptical of operations in North Vietnam which must depend on intelligence which lags by 45 days. For this reason, his proposal will probably be based on Naval raids. I will speak with Admiral McCain and suggest that raid programs be timed for initiation concurrent with operations in Laos sometime in ~~March~~ ^{February}.

4. General Abrams has just forwarded a proposal which has been coordinated fully with President Thieu and General Vien, and which has developed largely as a result of Vietnamese initiative. General Abrams describes it as the most ^{SIGNIFICANT} ~~decisive~~ operation of the war thus far and one which he considers as potentially decisive. I will bring the details of the operation with me. In brief, it would involve a two-division ARVN force moving westward over Route 9 to ^{Tchepone} ~~Kampot~~. ~~It would also include a paratroop drop of Vietnamese armed force and a subsequent linkup with ground~~

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EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

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EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

General Abrams, President Thieu, and General Vien all feel strongly that Tchepone is the decisive target area in Laos which offers the most potentially lucrative results. General Abrams has considered both the Route 19 operations favored by General Westmoreland and the operation developed by ISA and he has rejected both as being marginally effective. In his view both of these plans provide an inadequate configuration of supplies given the disposition of enemy forces and the size of the target area. General Abrams is confident that Tchepone is the vital NVA/VC ^{LOGISTIC NERVE CENTER PROVIDING} logistic support not only to Cambodia and Southern South Vietnam, but to Laos and I and II corps as well. All here are extremely enthusiastic about this operation, even in view of obvious political difficulties which it will encounter in Washington.

In addition
5. to the three operations described above, General Trung, Commanding General ARVN IV corps, plans to initiate operations in Southern Cambodia with the ARVN 9th division starting 1 February. This operation according to Trung would be designed to ^{ENGAGE ?} ~~contact~~ the 1st NVA division and will include an area of operations running as far west as route 4 and will include operations around Takao and Kompot south to the coast.

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TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY
VIA CAS CHANNELS

TO: DR. KISSINGER, THE WHITE HOUSE, WASH DC

FROM: BGEN HAIG, MACV, SAIGON

1. This will give you a few general impressions of our Cambodian stop and cover our second day activities which included long visits with Lon Nol and Sirik Matak, a lunch given in our honor by Lon Nol, and a tour of the FANK training camp at Kampol.
2. The basic impression I carry away from Cambodia is one of uncertainty as to just what is going on outside of the capitol either militarily or politically. I have already mentioned the serious problem of our Attaches not getting outside of Phnom Penh and relying almost totally on the FANK who also appear to lack a good grasp of the situation. On the political side the Ambassador has made only one field trip to Kampong ^{CHAM} ~~Sam~~ and other officers have not been able to get out frequently either. The fundamental danger of our failure to acquire accurate assessments of the actual situation on the ground is that Lon Nol, the FANK, and to a degree, US Embassy Phnom Penh, are forced to make judgements largely on the basis of instantaneous rumors or very stale factual data which finally reaches the capitol at a point in time when operational or logistic decisions have already been made.

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EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

I have discussed this problem with General Abrams and General Weyand, and they agree that they can assist in the intelligence collection effort by making aircraft available to US Embassy Phnom Penh, supplementing intelligence collection through coordinating factual reports and, as necessary, launching observer aircraft from South Vietnam. I am meeting with J-2 this afternoon in an attempt to work out a detailed program for improving our collection effort. In any event, arrangements worked out here will have to be supported at the Washington level through State Department channels. In my view Ambassador Swank must be formally instructed by State to take immediate corrective action even at the risk of increased danger to Attache personnel and possible public exposure of these activities.

3. Lon Nol was much more self-assured than when I saw him last May. He demonstrated a basic confidence about the future which might be somewhat unrealistic. Unlike May, he presented no exorbitant demands for military hardware, confining his requests to:

A. Requiring that RVNAF maintain the necessary float to insure that the six (06) helicopters now furnished to FANK remain available on a continuous basis. Last week five (05) of the six (06) assigned helicopters were inoperative, causing serious command and control problems and making the evacuation of casualties

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EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

extremely difficult. Lon Nol actually asked for twelve (12) helicopters. I have worked out an arrangement this morning with MACV, approved through channels to CINCPAC and OSD, which will guarantee the necessary float to keep six (06) helicopters available to Lon Nol on a full-time basis. This should relieve the problem to a large extent.

B. Immediate shipment of additional artillery within MAP program.

C. The provision of a bulldozer capability to enable FANK to prepare air strips in certain critical locations.

D. The immediate provision for some armor capability.

E. The immediate shipment of 50,000 small arms, (arrangements for which have already been made).

F. An improvement in VNAF responsiveness to emergency requests. This is a key item which I have discussed with General Abrams and Gen Weyand, and based on this mornings discussions I am confident that remedial action is now underway.

G. The immediate provision of a riverine capability to enable Lon Nol to maintain water supply routes more effectively. This is a difficult and high priority item which I am discussing with J-4 this afternoon and which will ultimately require action at the Washington level.

H. An increase in FANK manning levels from 210 thousand currently programmed to 260 thousand. As you know our supplemental request included direct support for 300 battalions for

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EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

a ceiling of 125 thousand. Ambassador Swank and Ladd are acquainted with the request and will supply us with recommendations as to how it should be handled. ^{18/} Lon Nol exercises firm control over the whole military campaign, down to the movement of battalions, working through Sak Sutsokanh, FANK Chief of Operations. In my view either Lon Nol does not quite comprehend the seriousness of the situation or he believes that a confident optimistic stance will elicit a more forthcoming US attitude. In either event, his optimism tends to influence overall attitudes of US Embassy Phnom Penh.

5. Sirik Matek was more realistic about his country's problems and is generally very concerned about the impact that the continuing interdiction of main road and water arteries will have both on the nation's economic viability and ^{ON} the political loyalty of the Khmer people who will increasingly feel the effects of escalating inflation. Matek, who reportedly has good contacts, believes Hanoi may well be ready to negotiate and cited the Son Tay raid as a contributing factor. However, he did not give me anything concrete on why he felt Hanoi might negotiate. I told him we still hoped for negotiations but were not very optimistic at this point.

6. We constantly ran into the problem of ARVN misbehaviour in Cambodia which could become a serious political problem for Lon Nol. The Cambodian leadership, ~~as does~~ ^{AND} the South Vietnamese

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EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

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leadership recognizes the explosiveness of this issue. Lon Nol and the others know they must have GVN support over the near term to survive. In fact, Lon Nol was meeting the Cambodian press yesterday afternoon in an attempt to get them to cool down the increasing anti-South Vietnamese articles and cartoons. Nevertheless, the stories and rumors about the grudging nature of some GVN help and the misbehaviour of the ARVN are running strong and I believe both countries must make greater efforts.

~~6. This morning 450 additional troops and 4 more howitzers were airlifted into Kampong Cham raising the total number of troops on-scene to approximately 2000. 10 howitzers have now been airlifted in.~~

7. Despite their problems, the morale and cohesiveness of the Cambodian leadership remains good and if the spirit displayed at the training camp is representative, the enthusiasm and nationalism of the people persists. Whether these basic positive factors are confined to the capitol, whether the basic optimism of the leaders is misplaced, whether a few sharp military setbacks might start unraveling the situation -- these are all unknown. One doesn't get the answers in two days in Phnom Penh, and given the present state of our intelligence in the country I don't think one would get the answers during a much longer stay. GP-1

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EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO RUEAOCW/DCSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 264

RUEKJCC/SECDEF

INFO RUHHHGA/CINCPAC

RHMSMVA/COMUSMACV

RUMTBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY 1294

RUMJIR/AMEMBASSY SAIGON 1516

RUMJFS/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 674

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SECRET PHNOM PENH 3416

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SAIGON 1516 GENERAL HAIG

16 DEC 1970

CATEGORY I VISITOR	
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SUBJECTS: CONVERSATION WITH LON NOL

GENERAL HAIG, LT. COL BONNER (INTERPRETER), AND I HAD ONE
 AND A HALF HOUR CONVERSATION DECEMBER 14 WITH GENERAL LON NOL.
 LON NOL WAS MORE THAN USUALLY DIRECT AND COMMUNICATIVE, AND IT
 WAS THE MOST SATISFACTORY AND PRACTICAL DIALOGUE IN WHICH I HAVE
 SEEN HIM ENGAGE. GENERAL HAIG CONVEYED PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL
 GREETINGS AND ADMIRATION FOR KHMER LEADERS AND PEOPLE AND ALSO

CLASSIFICATION	<i>SECRET</i>										COPY	<i>1 of 11</i>	PAGE	<i>1</i>	OF	<i>5</i>
SECTION	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X						
O/S	<i>X59</i>	SJS	J1	J2	J3	J4	J5	J6	AG	CHAP						
CICV	CIIB	CSD	COMPT	COROS	FWMAO	HC	HST	IG	JOIR							
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EXPLAINED STATUS OF CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION OF SUPPLEMENTAL HIGHLIGHTS OF LON NOL'S PRESENTATION, FOR WHICH HE HAD OBVIOUSLY PREPARED HIMSELF WITH MORE THAN ORDINARY CARE, WERE AS FOLLOWS.

2. AFTER OPENING EXCHANGE OF REMARKS PRIME MINISTER MENTIONED HIS DESIRE TO INCREASE AUTHORIZED LEVEL OF HIS ARMED FORCES BY 50,000 MEN TO 260,000. HE EXPLAINED THAT CAMBODIAN EXPERIENCE THIS FAR INDICATED NEED FOR THESE ADDITIONAL MEN.

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3. HE SAID UPCOMING RICE HARVEST WAS VERY IMPORTANT ON ECONOMIC, MILITARY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL LEVELS. HE HAD PREPARED A SPECIAL LETTER TO TROOPS TELLING THEM THAT THIS HARVEST MUST BE DENIED TO ENEMY AND PRESERVED FOR POPULATION. IN LINE WITH THIS, HE MENTIONED HE KNEW THERE WERE ABOUT 50,000 SMALL ARMS COMING TO HIM OUTSIDE MAP. HE WOULD LIKE 10,000 AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO ARM FARMERS SO THEY COULD PROTECT THEMSELVES DURING HARVEST. IF NEED BE, THEY CAN DROP THEIR SHEAVES AND PICK UP ARMS.

4. HE SAID THEY FOUND THEIR BATALLIONS LACKING IN HEAVY SUPPORT WEAPONS. HE NEEDED SOME ARTILLERY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE; EVEN A FEW TUBES WOULD HELP; PARTICULARLY IN FUTURE DEFENSE OF BATHEAY.

5. IN ORDER TO PROVIDE FOR POSSIBILITIES OF AIR DELIVERY TO

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ISOLATED AREAS HE PROPOSED TO IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE AT KOMPONG CHAM, BATTAMBANG, KOMPONG THOM AND REAM IN ADDITION TO POCHENTONG. IN LINE WITH THIS HE MAY ASK FOR A BULLDOZER OR TWO TO CONSTRUCT A STRWP AT KOMPONG THOM. IT WOULD ALSO BE NECESSARY TO AIRLIFT THE BULLDOZERS TO KOMPONG THOM WITH A FLYING CRANE.

6. HE REITERATED HIS NEED FOR HELICOPTERS TO BRING OUT WOUNDED AND CARRY COMMANDERS. HE SAID HE COULD USE A DOZEN AND IF TWO OR THREE WERE LEFT IN SAIGON THEY COULD BE USED TO REPLACE THOSE OUT OF COMMISSION FOR MAINTENANCE. *B/S*

7. THE SUBJECT THEN TURNED TO SOUTH VIETNAMESE OPERATIONS IN CAMBODIA. HE SAID HE ONLY ASKED FOR GVN HELP INFREQUENTLY AND THAT RESPONSES WERE NEITHER SURE NOR TIMELY. HE CITED EXAMPLES OF BATHREAY AND TAKEO WHERE HELICOPTER LIFT HAD BEEN REFUSED IN THE FORMER AND ARMORED DOMONSTRATIONS IN THE LATTER. HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE SOME ORGANIZATION SET UP IN SAIGON THAT WOULD RESPOND QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY TO HIS FEW REQUESTS. HE SUGGESTED THAT COMUSMACV ORGANIZE, EQUIP AND TRAIN ABOUT 3-4000 CAMBODIANS LIVING IN VIETNAM AND KEEP THEM THERE READY TO RESPOND TO GKR REQUEST FOR OPERATIONS IN CAMBODIA. HE SAID THIS FORCE COULD COME COMPLETE WITH ALL SUPPORT NECESSARY (ARTILLERY, AIR, ETC.), ACCOMPLISH THEIR MISSION, AND THEN RETURN TO VIETNAM.

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8. HE THEN WENT TO SOME LENGTH EXPLAINING THAT HE UNDERSTOOD NECESSITY FOR PLANNING IN A MILITARY AID PROGRAM AND FOR THE MOST PART WAS ENTIRELY IN AGREEMENT WITH THIS. HOWEVER, WAR IS WAR AND THERE ARE CERTAIN OCCASIONS WHICH DEMAND SPECIAL MEASURES. HIS SPECIAL REQUESTS FELL INTO THIS CATEGORY AND HE PLACED FOLLOWING PRIORITIES ON THEM.

1. ADDITIONAL SMALL ARMS
2. ARTILLERY
3. ADDITIONAL HELICOPTERS
4. ARMORED VEHICLES
5. BOATS TO REPLACE THOSE RECENTLY LOST IN THE NAVY.

4/5

9. GENERAL HAIG SAID THAT WHILE IN SAIGON HE WOULD ENDEAVOR TO LOOK INTO THESE REQUESTS AND THAT HE FELT CERTAIN MORE SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE WORKED OUT FOR HELICOPTER USAGE. HE MADE NO OTHER COMMITMENTS.

10. THROUGHOUT MEETING LON NOL DISPLAYED GREAT CONFIDENCE IN ULTIMATE TRIUMPH OF KHMER CAUSE, NOTING THAT HIS FORCES, ONCE "THE ATTACKED", ARE GRADUALLY ACHIEVING AN OFFENSIVE CAPABILITY. HE SAID THAT FANK MAY LOSE A FEW BATTLES, BUT TIME AND DESTINY ARE ON SIDE OF THE KHMER IN THIS STRUGGLE.

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1. COMMENT. THESE REMARKS SHOULD BE READ AGAINST BACKGROUND OF HIS TWO RECENT TRIPS TO COMBAT ZONE AND HIS FIRSTHAND KNOWLEDGE OF FANK'S PROBLEMS AND COMBAT LOSSES. YET HIS CONFIDENCE SEEMED UNDIMINISHED. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THIS MEETING GENERAL HAIG SPENT HOUR WITH GENERAL SIRIK MATAK. NOTHING NEW OR OF SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE EMERGED DURING THEIR CONVERSATION.

SWANK

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VIA CAS CHANNELS

TO: DR. KISSINGER, THE WHITE HOUSE, WASH DC

FROM: BGEN HAIG, MACV, SAIGON

1. Lord, State Representative, Lieutenant Halperin, and myself arrived Phnom Penh 0630 local Sunday Dec 13. I spent day in discussions with Ambassador, Ladd, Col Amos, DATT, CAS Chief, and other members of Embassy Staff. I discussed with LADD the possibility of his returning to Washington but he and I both agreed that given the present situation it would not be wise for him to leave at this time.

2. Met Sunday p. m. with BGEN Sak Sutsakanh, FANK Chief of Operations, who had just returned from personal tour of battle areas along route 7. He assessed ^{THE} general situation as follows: suggests the enemy has been able to rebuild their forces and logistic support. They appear to be adjusting their tactics to minimize the effectiveness of Allied air operations, which may explain the increasing number of enemy attacks initiated at night.

3. Discussions here confirm that FANK performance has been spotty, tactics poor and command and control very weak. Despite shortcomings and several sharp setbacks in past two weeks, there has been no evidence of shaken confidence or morale problems. Greatest single problem appears to be inability of FANK to evacuate and care for wounded. I will raise this with MACV tomorrow in Saigon.

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4. I am disturbed by the failure of Attache personnel to leave Phnom Penh and personally observe situation on the ground. This leaves Embassy totally at mercy of second hand reports from FANK headquarters, which suffers from a similar inability to visit sites of reported actions. This is a most serious shortcoming, which I discussed with Embassy, and Joint Staff last spring. Ambassador Swank informs me he has discouraged field trips by Embassy personnel due to obvious dangers and resulting political repercussions. I consider that risks of this kind must be accepted if our intelligence reporting is to be factual and our strategic assessments valid. I will discuss measures to improve this critical problem with Gen Abrams.

5. There were several significant ground actions over the past 48 hours during which I was able to discuss this morning. Yesterday afternoon there were two sharp attacks against ^ePray Totung in which the VC are reported to have lost approx 300 men and 60 weapons. They succeeded in splitting friendly forces and have taken control of the town of ^ePray Totung. At least 8 Cambodians were killed and 200 were wounded. FANK forces have ^{now} been successfully resupplied. In a separate action yesterday, FANK took the hill at Batheay, opening route 6. Chenla column is no longer cut off, although it remains to be seen how permanent this is. This morning at 0800 the two ARVN airborne battalions were airlifted into Kampong Cham and secured a bridgehead near the airfield. One additional brigade will be airlifted in tomorrow prior to the commencement of operations. My initial assessment of the military situations is that it is serious but not, repeat not critical.

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point in the dry season. Tactics confirm that they intend to ~~attack~~ **ATTACK**
FANK forces to the maximum extent.

6. I met at considerable length this morning and afternoon with Lon Nol
and Matek. Details will follow.

7. Warm regards, GP-1 Staff. I discussed with LAMPHU **BT**
BT according to Washington he and I both agreed that given the present
situation it would not be wise for him to leave at this time.

Monday p.m. with BGEN S.A. Sutechakul, FANK Chief of Operations,
who had just returned from personal tour of battle areas along route 7.
He assessed general situation as follows: suggests the enemy has been able
to provide their forces and logistic support. They appear to be adjusting their
tactics to minimize the effectiveness of Allied air operations, which may
explain the increasing number of enemy attacks initiated at night.

8. Observations here confirm that FANK performance has been erratic. Tactics
and command and control very weak. Despite shortcoming and
past setbacks in past few weeks, there has been no evidence of
tactical or logistic problems.

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Will discuss tomorrow in Saigon

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