

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

INFORMATION

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER
SUBJECT: Situation at Phnom Penh Airport

We have now received several reports from Mr. Ladd which provide a clearer picture of the situation at the Phnom Penh airport following the attack and an assessment of current needs and actions being taken. Mr. Ladd reports that:

-- In their meeting following the attack, General Lon Nol requested two helicopters for liaison and command and control purposes. These have been made available and are expected to arrive tomorrow morning.

-- A US airfield security and engineer team has arrived to survey the situation. Barrier and defensive materials will be provided by MACV as soon as needs are firmly fixed.

-- The main runway and unloading ramp on the civilian side of the field are now clear and open for use.

-- Regular delivery of MAP supplies and equipment are scheduled to resume tomorrow morning.

-- Weapons being held for future training needs have been diverted to permit the arming of local commando and para-military units for increased defense of vital areas around Phnom Penh.

-- The Cambodians have requested the stationing of a few South Vietnamese attack aircraft at Phnom Penh airport in order to be responsive to local tactical air needs. In the interim, local actions are being supported by allied tactical air from South Vietnam.

-- All those concerned with the recovery operation are responding magnificently.

ARMY review
completed.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

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2

The attack appears to have been a well planned and coordinated effort to destroy military facilities at and adjacent to the airfield. The attack apparently occurred in the following sequence:

-- At midnight local time there was a probing attack against a FANK garrison some 15 miles to the north of Phnom Penh.

-- At about 2:30 a.m. charges placed by sappers detonated in an area occupied by a transportation brigade in an area just north of the airfield, destroying more than 100 tons of ammunition and most of the facilities of the brigade. Simultaneously, a small group of sappers began placing charges on aircraft and at other airport facilities.

-- As the sapper party withdrew, after about an hour, a three hour mortar barrage began. Toward the end of the attack eleven large rockets impacted the base but did not cause heavy damage.

-- A naval base on the east side of the City also was attacked by mortars but damage was very light. Another FANK garrison in the vicinity was also subjected to a light mortar attack.

-- Several enemy forces were spotted in the area and air strikes were conducted. FANK units were also sent to intercept them.

Mr. Ladd also provided some additional details concerning damage to the airport.

-- The taxiway on the military side is extensively damaged and will require major repair.

-- Two MIG hangars have probably been destroyed.

-- The South Vietnamese Air Force fuel and ammunition dump was reportedly destroyed, but the similar Cambodian Air Force facility was undamaged.

-- At least two C-47s and one T-28 are undamaged and several other aircraft are repairable.

Although the attack has been very costly, it appears that excellent progress is being made to recover from this setback.

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