

WASHINGTON SPECIAL ACTIONS GROUP MEETING

November 29, 1973

Time and Place: 3:21 p. m. - 3:49 p. m. , White House Situation RoomSubject: IndochinaParticipants:

Chairman	Henry A. Kissinger	CIA	William Colby William Christison
State	Kenneth Rush Monteagle Stearns	NSC	M/Gen. Brent Scowcroft William Smyser William Stearman Col. Don Stukel Jim Barnum
DOD	William Clements Robert C. Hill		
JCS	Adm. Thomas H. Moorer V/Adm. John P. Weinell		

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONSMORI  
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... Defense will look into the feasibility of using the Udorn base facilities for the maintenance and repair of Cambodian Air Force aircraft;

... SR-71 flights over Vietnam are to be increased to one every ten days, to commence as soon as possible;

... Defense is to prepare, by close of business Monday, 3 December, an analysis of the military equipment South Vietnam has requested, including the Wall-Eye missile.

... Defense will look into the feasibility of training South Vietnamese in mine-laying techniques.

... a U. S. aircraft carrier will enter the Tonkin Gulf for a week.

NSS/NSC, DOS, USAF, OSD, JCS reviews completed

SECRET/NODIS/CODEWORD XGDS

*[ Attached to Scowcroft memo from Stearman/Stukel for HAKS, 29 Nov. 1973 ]*

Mr. Colby: Would you like me to brief?

Secretary Kissinger: Yes, go ahead.

Mr. Colby: Briefed from the attached text.

Secretary Kissinger: How long does that go on? (referring to high water in the Mekong hampering Communist attacks on resupply convoys).

Mr. Colby: A couple of months, give or take a week or two.

Adm. Moorer: It should start about 1 January. It's already late. The dry season has started.

Secretary Kissinger: Of all the great knowledge I have accumulated over these past years, the most significant is that I now know when the rainy season begins in each country. That's heady stuff--great for a cocktail party!

Mr. Colby: (Finished the briefing.) We have an Estimate (NIE) coming out...

Secretary Kissinger: I saw the last one. Can you gist this one for me?

Mr. Colby: Basically, it presents various prognostications about what is likely to happen over the next several months. It boils down to the Communists' putting the squeeze around Phnom Penh--cutting off the roads, like Route 5, which is closed, and Route 4, which is too.

Secretary Kissinger: And then they would presumably take over, right?

Mr. Colby: Yes, but we come down on the side that the government can survive, if it wants to.

Secretary Kissinger: Does the government hold anything but Phnom Penh?

Mr. Clements: Oh yes, they have control over lots of places, like Kompong Som, Takeo, Kompong Cham...

Adm. Moorer: They hold most of the major population centers.

Mr. Colby: Population wise, well over half the population is in government hands.

Adm. Moorer: That's why we have to feed them.

SECRET/NODIS/KEYWORD

Secretary Kissinger: Otto Passman is always on me about the rice. He calls every day.

Adm. Moorer: That's because it's Louisiana rice--Louisiana's best. You can tell him it's on its way.

Secretary Kissinger: We're here today to discuss two problems--Cambodia and the general situation in Indochina, Vietnam in particular. On Cambodia, everybody here, I know, realizes the political difficulties that would accrue to a Khmer Rouge military victory and that our policy is to stabilize the situation so that we can produce negotiations. All our support effort is geared to bring this about. Now, is there anything left to do that has not been done?

Mr. Clements: I don't think so, except that we need that \$200 million.

Mr. Rush: We know about that. Some \$250 million is to be used in Cambodia. The problem is that we don't have the replacements.

Mr. Clements: We still need that additional \$200 million.

Mr. Stearns: We have something to suggest. We could use Udorn as a supply and maintenance facility. We could work on about 190 aircraft a year. We figure it would cost DOD about \$3.5 million.

Secretary Kissinger: We can get that much money out of the Deputy Secretary of Defense's mess fund!

Mr. Clements: Three-and-a-half million for that?

Mr. Stearns: Yes, we can get 190 aircraft a year for that amount of money.

Mr. Clements: That's news to me. We'll look into that.

Secretary Kissinger: Yes, let's look into that.

Mr. Stearns: Three-and-a-half-million will get the Khmer Air Force about 190 T-28s.

Secretary Kissinger: Let's talk about the situation in Vietnam. I get the impression--after October 6--there is going to be an offensive in every part of the world. I guess everybody is agreed on that.

Mr. Colby: Our latest Estimate (NIE) says that it's going to be close. But that was our view a few weeks ago. We now think that the chances are less than half that an offensive, like Tet, will happen. This is based on more recent intelligence. We still think there will be a big increase in activity, however.

Secretary Kissinger: Yes. When I was in Tokyo last time, (Ambassador) Martin thought there was less than a 50-50 chance of an offensive. Nevertheless, we should do what we can to prevent it from happening.

Mr. Colby: Our estimate is based on the number of people they are putting through the pipeline.

Secretary Kissinger: You're right. There is no use in putting people in the pipeline if you are not going to do something with them.

Mr. Colby: The people in the pipeline is a projection. We haven't actually seen them, but at the rate that they are going down....

Secretary Kissinger: What can we do to make it clear to Hanoi that we are certain to intervene? What is it, two SR-71 flights that we have made?

Mr. Colby: Yes, that's right.

Secretary Kissinger: If we had a flight every ten days, would that be worthwhile?

Adm. Moorer: Yes.

Mr. Colby: In terms of intelligence, no. We'd get some additional coverage, but not much more than what we are now getting.

Mr. Christison: Except that in the coming weeks we're going to have good weather. We'd get better coverage--something we haven't had.

Secretary Kissinger: Let's start doing that.

Adm. Moorer: One SR-71 flight every ten days?

Secretary Kissinger: Yes, let's get started on that as soon as we can. Where are the carriers now?

Adm. Moorer: One is off the Straits of Malacca. One is at Subic, and one is at Yokuska, ready to go.

Secretary Kissinger: Can we put one in the Tonkin Gulf for a week--off the coast?

Adm. Moorer: Yes, no problem.

SECRET/NODIS/CODEWORD

Secretary Kissinger: That would help. Now, in respect to equipping South Vietnam. Are we doing everything possible to help them prepare for the offensive?

Adm. Moorer: Yes, I think we are. You've probably seen their long shopping list.

Secretary Kissinger: Yes, I understand they are asking for some \$400 million worth.

Mr. Stearns: There are two lists. One long one for about two billion dollars worth. They have pared it down over there (Saigon) to \$200 million to meet the imminent threat.

Adm. Moorer: Yes, it's like this. (Adm. Moorer read from USDAO Saigon 20110.)

Secretary Kissinger: This place reminds me of an African tribe the way things get around here. This morning I get a cable from (Amb. ) Martin informing me that there is to be a WSAG today. I'm surprised he didn't ask what position I'm going to take.

Mr. Rush: I'm surprised he didn't ask for Israel's \$2.2 billion.

Secretary Kissinger: (to Mr. Smyser) How did he get that? (referring to the information on the WSAG meeting).

Mr. Smyser: I don't know, maybe from the AP (Associated Press) file.

Adm. Moorer: Many of the things he wants, Israel wants too. We have to make some decisions.

Secretary Kissinger: I've always had this secret desire to get Golda (Meir) into negotiations with (President) Thieu. What a scene that would be! They both deserve each other.

Mr. Clements: We ought to take a good look at that list--study it over.

Adm. Moorer: Yes. We should take a look at it. For example, they're asking for such things like the Maverick.

Secretary Kissinger: We should look it over, but don't study it to death. Time is important here. The re-equipment could make a difference early next year. Can you study it until, let's say opening of business Tuesday, (4 December)? And, give me your recommendations on what should and should not be considered. (to Adm. Moorer and Mr. Clements).

SECRET/NODIS/CODEWORD

Adm. Moorer: We can do that. But we've got some problems. Do we go at the same tempo with our present equipment? We are also operating our own Air America C-130 tankers to supply fuel. We can't break loose any more. We're being fueled from the Singapore refinery, but that's being cut off. I understand there is a 40 to 50 day supply now, but what about the future?

Mr. Rush: How much POL is needed if the refineries are cut off?

Adm. Moorer: That's hard to tell. We'd just take what we need from the States.

Secretary Kissinger: And leave our military elsewhere crippled.

Mr. Clements: That's right! I was talking to the Shell Oil people the other day, and they were saying that we can move more petroleum through the Singapore refinery and relieve our pain. They trade off here and there--I don't know the details on how they do it, but it can be done. It's complicated, but can be done. We're being squeezed to death on this petroleum thing. Our military position all over the world is bad. And, it's going to get a lot worse. Damn, that European situation is a sorry picture! We're having to cut back here and cut back there. We've already reduced our reconnaissance for December by 30 percent on account of the fuel thing.

Secretary Kissinger: And you don't know now if your 30 percent cut is enough, right?

Mr. Clements: Yes, that's right. We made a judgement on the fuel. We don't have anything firm to go on because we don't know what we will have.

Mr. Stearns: And that includes reconnaissance flights over the Lao Panhandle.

Mr. Clements: It's not uniform. We tried to make it even, but can't.

Secretary Kissinger: Well, by close of business Monday, we'll have a look at the equipment request. The mine-laying capability of the South Vietnamese. Have you looked into that?

Adm. Moorer: Yes, we think that the Mark-56 mines are the best. They are the easiest to handle, simple.

Secretary Kissinger: Does it work?

Adm. Moorer: Sure. It's an effective method. You know, for one million dollars we closed off all ships going into Haiphong for nine months. That's damn cheap!

SECRET/NODIS/CODEWORD

Secretary Kissinger: Yes, that was impressive. Can South Vietnam get up there? Do they have the capability to lay the mines?

Adm. Moorer: Yes. All they need to do is sink one ship. They would close it off.

Mr. Clements: But once the word got out that they were mining, it would get more difficult.

Mr. Christison: How do they get the mines up there, by airplane?

Adm. Moorer: Yes.

Mr. Christison: But they have good anti-aircraft defenses there now.

Mr. Clements: It can be done. They'll lose a few, but it can be done. Would A-7s do it?

Adm. Moorer: They don't have any.

Secretary Kissinger: Give them some....

Adm. Moorer: The problem is the range. It's a long way up there for the A-7.

Gen. Scowcroft: A-1s could do it. The A-7s don't know where they are going at night.

Adm. Weinel: We got away with it once— using surprise.

Mr. Smyser: It has been our experience that the South Vietnamese have had little success in gaining surprise, anywhere.

Adm. Moorer: There was a reason for doing it before.

Secretary Kissinger: Do the South Vietnamese have anybody who can do it?

Mr. Colby: They could split off a group and train them with no problem.

Secretary Kissinger: I think it should be done (training of South Vietnamese to lay the mines). If North Vietnam realizes that mine training is going on, it won't hurt.

Mr. Clements: We could have the carrier have an extra exercise.

Mr. Colby: I have a related item--SIGINT collection over Laos. We are preparing a paper--it has a set of options. I'm trying to get them to come up with an action paper. Anyway, it recommends that we go to a high-level SIGINT collection over Laos, supplemented by low-level coverage, either by South Vietnamese pilots or drones. The high-level and low-level would give us a continuing level of SIGINT coverage. But, we need a decision from you.

Secretary Kissinger: What kind of decision do you need?

Mr. Colby: State has some objections. Technically, the high-altitude flights would be in violation of the Agreement. It's a legal thing.

Mr. Stearns: We don't have any real problem.

Mr. Kissinger: There won't be any problem at my office!

Mr. Colby: We'll have the paper on its way.

Secretary Kissinger: When?

Mr. Colby: We'll have it to you tomorrow night (November 30).

Secretary Kissinger: Okay. Are there any other problems? On resupplying South Vietnam on a one-for-one basis, we're all agreed that we will stick close to that, but are not tied to it. You all understand that, don't you?

Mr. Clements: Yes, absolutely. The policy under which we have been working is a one-to-one basis, but we don't feel tied to it. We're trying to give them all the equipment they can use.

Secretary Kissinger: On the critically short items, I want it understood that we don't feel we have to stick to the one-to-one formula.

Mr. Clements: There are some types of equipment that were not heretofore given.

Adm. Moorer: Anti-aircraft, for example. Here's some of the figures. They're authorized 200, they have 193 on hand.

Secretary Kissinger: They're supposed to resupply on a one-to-one basis, but they have violated that time and again. We're not going to be put in the position of honoring the Agreement if they are not.

SECRET/NODIS/CODEWORD



Mr. Rush: We're giving them more than they can use now.

Secretary Kissinger: For example? They don't have the Wall-eye do they?

Adm. Moorer: No.

Secretary Kissinger: That's the sort of item we don't want to deny them just because they didn't have it before.

Mr. Clements: The problem is that it's at a sophisticated level.

Secretary Kissinger: Tell us what you recommend, and flag those items that would cause trouble.