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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCYWASHINGTON, D.C. 20505
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21 October 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Brigadier General Alexander M. Haig
Deputy Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs

The following message (Phnom Penh 357) for Brigadier General Haig was received from Jonathan Ladd this morning, 21 October 1970:

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"To: Brig. Gen. Haig, The White House

"From: Mr. Ladd, Phnom Penh 357

"1. This message is an updating of previous assessments.

"2. The enemy situation has not changed very much during the past few weeks. There have been no major enemy unit movements and I have not been able to find any significant reinforcements of units that have been directly oriented against the Cambodians. Indications are that the enemy continues to experience difficulties in the logistics, communications and medical evacuation fields. Enemy responses to limited FANK operational initiatives have not been impressive and for the most part enemy activity has been characterized by defensive tactics and occasional harrassing fires. There are growing indications that fractures are occurring in the VC/NVA-Khmer Rouge relationship in several locations. I believe the enemy is building the structure for a logistical base area in the vicinity of the triangle formed by Prek Kak (WU 6560), Kompong Thma (WU 1481) Chamkar Leu (WU 3050) and that the Chenla operation constitutes a threat to this project - particularly if the operation turns to the east. Although the flood waters have commenced to subside a bit, it will be several weeks before the terrain dries up to the point

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where the enemy can move overland with reasonable ease. Patterns have not developed yet to indicate definitively that the enemy intends to make his main effort in Cambodia. I anticipate little change in the local enemy situation during the next 4 to 6 weeks.

"3. Within the limitations of its capability and the level of assistance provided from all sources, FANK continues to develop and to conduct both defensive and offensive operations in a most satisfactory and encouraging manner. U.S. materiel military assistance has been, and continues to be, utilized properly. Those FANK forces trained in South Vietnam and equipped by MAP which have returned to Cambodia have given FANK the flexibility to conduct limited offensive operations against known enemy concentrations. These operations have forced the enemy to react to modest FANK initiatives. Stated another way, FANK has moved from Phase I of its previously reported strategy (defense and preparation) into Phase II (defense, preparation, and limited offensive).

"4. The continuation of the wet season and apparent enemy difficulties in several respects have, of course, also played a part in permitting the continuing FANK development and the transition to the second phase of its strategy.

"5. High morale and determination to establish national independence continue to characterize almost every aspect of the Cambodian effort. All official and most unofficial visitors to Cambodia with whom I have had contact during the past two months, seem to have been impressed with the commendable progress made by the Cambodians. This is not to say that serious problems do not face this young republic as there are many gaps to be filled both militarily and economically. Rather, it simply means the Cambodians are conscientiously trying to do their best with what they have and I believe they can be counted on to continue to do their part.

"6. Operation Chenla is currently occupied with political warfare and village defense training programs for the people in the areas FANK now controls along, and adjacent to, Route 6 between Skoun and Tang

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Kouk. Preparations are being made to continue the advance north and to the east of Tang Kouk at a date not yet determined or revealed to me. Kompong Cham will soon be reinforced by at least one of the MSF battalions.

"7. On 14 October FANK initiated an operation to attack the enemy to the south along Route 2, from Phnom Penh toward Takeo. Four battalions are pushing south along Route 2, with two battalions behind them in reserve. Two battalions are moving eastward toward Chambak (VT 7940) from Route 3. Two additional battalions are prepared to move northward along Route 2 from Takeo. This operation has not yet developed any significant enemy resistance and all contact has been on FANK initiative. The head of the main force advancing southward is in the vicinity of Chambak.

"8. On the morning of the 18th I left for Bangkok to attend a meeting to discuss the modest development of a FANK UW capability. If we can work out a mutually satisfactory arrangement with the Thais, I think FANK and Thai Special Forces type units can work in combined teams to show the flag and conduct psychological warfare in the northern and northwestern provinces of Cambodia where there is presently no significant GOC presence. I am insisting this time that all of the U. S. officials concerned are singing from the same sheet of music before we bring either the Thais or Cambodians into the picture. I don't want another "Thai/Khmer volunteer regiment" misunderstanding to develop. CINCPAC and MACV had representatives at the Bangkok meeting. CINCPAC has a concept for UW operations in Northeastern Cambodia that far exceeds my analysis of FANK's capability to conduct and support such operations. Fortunately, MACV concurs with me, so we can probably keep this otherwise worthy project within the realm of reality.

"9. Lon Nol sent a message to Admiral McCain through Embassy channels requesting that General Sak Sutsakahn visit McCain in Hawaii before McCain leaves for the U. S. late on the 25th. We forwarded the message and you probably know of it already. We, of course, are fully aware of the content of the briefing Sak Sutsahanh will present. With the possibility of an eventual ceasefire in the offing, General

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Lon Nol hopes to expedite his strategy and be able to establish a FANK presence as far forward as possible before a cease fire occurs and to have the maximum back up in country before his support from us is possibly curtailed or cut off. He knows we can't support him in his total concept to the extent he would like, but he nevertheless wants to present his revised and expedited strategy to the highest level with which he now feels he has a close personal relationship - that is Admiral McCain, of course.

"10. An unusual situation concerning Vietnamization is beginning to arise that no one anticipated when Vietnamization plans were developed or even as late as June of this year. The Cambodians are currently actively engaged with and are occupying the attention of at least four VC/NVA division equivalents. In III and IV Corps in Vietnam and in most of II Corps the war has slowed up considerably since the sanctuary incursions and the enemy campaign against Cambodia. The attention of these VC/NVA units on Cambodia continues to relieve considerable enemy pressure from South Vietnam and thus contributes rather markedly to Vietnamization. The Cambodians are in quite close contact with these major enemy units and are beginning to carry the fight to him with fairly satisfactory results. As long as the Cambodians are able to do this, they are certainly contributing to Vietnamization in a most positive and direct way. The Cambodians need among other things some artillery augmentation, training for their 12 helicopter pilots, a company or troop of M113's, PDO web equipment, helmets and flak jackets turned in by departing US troops, radios, etc. I am informed that to obtain these things for Cambodia now will apparently "impact unfavorably on Vietnamization". Therefore, they are not available for Cambodia in spite of the fact they are in general abundance in Vietnam and are being provided to the Vietnamese for "Vietnamization". I, of course, recognize the vital importance of Vietnamization, but serious consideration should be given to the rather significant part the war in Cambodia is playing in making the concept work. As long as the Cambodians keep the 1st, 5th, 7th and 9th enemy divisions occupied and off the back of III and IV corps, it certainly makes Vietnamization easier to achieve. If in addition to keeping those enemy units off the back of III and IV Corps, the Cambodians can kick them around a bit (and they are willing to do so if they are able), it will even further enhance Vietnamization. I understand that this matter of resource

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allocation is extremely complex and that it is most difficult to modify firmly organized plans. I also know that situations can and often do change considerably in short periods of time. I feel we should keep ourselves flexible enough to consider the alternatives and options that surface because of changed situations. Our planners should keep in mind that for each minor bit of military assistance we have given to the Cambodians, they have responded positively. From the near disaster of five months ago, FANK has worked itself into a position of relative military stability. My thought is that we have a good thing going for us and I hope we won't let it fade away for complete and absolutely inviolate adherence to a plan developed before we even knew what these people could do for us or themselves or for Vietnamization. I present this as food for thought. I guess what I am trying to say is that there should be some rather sophisticated thought given to the distribution of available material assets based on the degree to which one activity or another impacts on the ultimate goal of Vietnamization and not based upon a rigid plan for Vietnamization.

"11. The small arms and small arms ammunition situation is well in hand and on-going projects to provide additional weapons are contributing to standardization of weapons in main force units and to the arming of self defense and paramilitary outfits. In the communications field, vast improvement has been made but there are still critical requirements for PRC/25 radios. To fulfill operational needs of the past few weeks we have diverted some 30 PRC/25's we had in storage for the training program in Vietnam. We are still trying to find replacements for them. I am advised PRC/25's are short world-wide.

"12. With regard to the press, I think that for the most part they are slowly coming around to an understanding of what is going on here. At lunch the other day, John Wheeler told me he was doing a story on how wounded VC/NVA prisoners in the Cambodian military hospitals are getting the same treatment as FANK wounded. I don't know whether or not he will ever send it in or if it will be published, but it is a far cry from the course he was pursuing eight weeks ago. Henry Kamm told me recently that most of the journalists are experiencing serious doubts about their earlier and totally pessimistic

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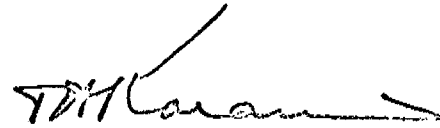
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analyses of the situation here. It may still take a while for their current feelings to make their way into print but I can sense a change in their attitudes.

"13. At the present time Generals Sak Sutsakanh and Sappana Nginn are enroute to Hawaii and Gen U-Say is at the UN in New York. These are the stalwarts with whom I normally work in whom I have most confidence. The fact that Lon Nol permits all three to be so far away at the same time reflects, I believe, his confidence in the current situation.

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Thomas H. Karamessines
Deputy Director for Plans