

8. *US Search and Rescue for Recovery of Cambodian Air Crews.* The WSAG agreed that the US should be willing to assist with search and rescue if requested by the Cambodians through the South Vietnamese (VNAF). However, the Cambodians are not to be informed that this is the US position.

[Omitted here are the 10-page minutes of the meeting.]

344. Record of Meeting¹

Washington, July 18, 1970, 10:45 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

RECORD OF PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH THE FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY BOARD

PARTICIPANTS

The President

Board Members:

Chairman, George W. Anderson, Jr.

Gordon Gray

Franklin B. Lincoln, Jr.

(Dr.) Franklin D. Murphy

Robert D. Murphy

Other:

Henry A. Kissinger

B/Gen. Alexander M. Haig

Gerard P. Burke (Exec. Sec. PFIAB)

SUBJECT

Southeast Asia

¹Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 276, Agency Files, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, Vol. V, 1 August 1970–31 December 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. According to an August 4 covering memorandum by Lord, this was a "boiled down" version of the meeting. Lord wrote in a postscript: "This is pretty dicey, close-hold material." A full version of the meeting is *ibid.* Haig prepared a summarized version of the meeting, July 18. (*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, 1 May 1970–31 July 1970)

The members of the PFIAB met with the President to report on their recent visits to Southeast Asia.² Following is a summary record of the highlights of the meeting.

Intelligence for Cambodia. The Board members believed there had been no significant improvement in our intelligence capabilities in Cambodia as of their July 5 visit, and the President expressed his displeasure. Dr. Kissinger noted interagency disagreements on the facilities required; he said that local communications had been improved but those between Phnom Penh and the outside were still unresolved due to State's desire to maintain a low-US visibility. The President stated that more COMINT on Cambodia was needed and that Mr. Fred Ladd's arrival in Phnom Penh had greatly improved the reporting from there.

US Personnel in Cambodia. The Board confirmed the President's impression that US Chargé Rives was in over his head in Cambodia and that Mr. Ladd was doing an exceptionally good job, although overworked and needing some help. The President asked Dr. Kissinger to accelerate Ambassador-designate Swank's Senate hearings and get him to Phnom Penh.

Sihanoukville. The President asked the PFIAB to look very carefully into the entire background of the intelligence community's misreading of the importance of Sihanoukville as an entry point for communist supplies in Cambodia. Although the military had consistently maintained that Sihanoukville received a very substantial amount of communist material the civilian agencies persisted in discounting its importance until we had begun our sanctuary operations. CIA had described the flow of materials through Sihanoukville as only a trickle while evidence now indicates that about 70% of communist supplies in Cambodia had been brought in through this port. The President wondered, if such mistakes could be made on a fairly straightforward issue such as this one, how we should judge CIA's assessments of more important developments such as Chinese communist military capabilities. He emphasized again later in the meeting that the Board should give very close attention to the case of Sihanoukville which represented one of the worst records ever compiled by the intelligence community.

² Four members of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board visited Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines, and CINCPAC in early June. The members and their special interests were Admiral Anderson (military matters), Gordon Gray (American and foreign intelligence capabilities), and Franklin Murphy (economic, civil action, and public affairs). Franklin Lincoln, another member of the Board, did a separate 3-week survey of U.S. intelligence operations in Vietnam, Thailand, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan during May and June. The five members wanted to meet with the President to give their impressions prior to submitting a formal report. (Memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, undated; *ibid.*)

CINCPAC Plan for Cambodia. The Board thought that phase I, which is concerned with preserving the southern half of the country, seemed generally practicable although it had some defects, i.e. third country mercenaries rather than Americans should be used as helicopter pilots. The Board could not support phase II which would involve offensive actions in northern Cambodia. Dr. Murphy noted that Admiral McCain's estimate of \$85 million per year for phase I could be substantially on the low side.

Dr. Kissinger explained that the CINCPAC plan was still in the bureaucracy although the WSAG was moving generally in the same direction and was informed about parts of the plan. The problem was to transform the plan into a complete integrated proposal that was useful to the President. The President stated that none of our planning for Cambodia had any clear conceptual base or long-range perspective. He added that he had asked Admiral Moorer to submit a complete plan, that it should include intelligence requirements, and that he must have the proposal soon because of its budgetary aspects. He added that there were ways of making funds available indirectly for Cambodia if Congress is unwilling to supply them directly.

US Air Support in Cambodia. In reply to Admiral Anderson's comment that the US should be as liberal as possible with its air support, the President said he understood fully and was thinking along the same lines. The President later said that he fully agreed with Mr. Gray's view that if the US is to provide tactical air support in Cambodia we should get away from the notion that it can only be in the form of interdiction in support of our own troops.

US Bombing of North Vietnam. Admiral Anderson said the group was very concerned about the restrictions placed on the US military since the October 1968 bombing halt. He said that a resumption of the bombing could be the only blue chip that the US has left in trying to achieve a settlement and recalled the civilian-military disagreement over the bombing's effectiveness in stopping the input of communist supplies to South Vietnam. The President remarked that this chip had already been spent for domestic political reasons and he could no longer play it unless given sufficient provocation. Dr. Murphy said it was important that the President be given an accurate fix on the effectiveness of the bombing, particularly now that other supply routes were eliminated, at least for the time being. He thought that the military should be asked to develop a plan for bombing resumption for contingency purposes in case the communists gave the President sufficiently serious provocation. The President said this was a very good point and noted it.

Overall Approach to Southeast Asia. Dr. Murphy believed there was no integrated economic/military/political approach to Southeast

Asian problems and that a high level government group should examine the region and propose coordinated actions to the President. There was a particular need to explain the Nixon Doctrine and the context of US withdrawals from the area.

US Intelligence. The President stated that the US is spending \$6 billion per year on intelligence and deserves to receive a lot more for its money than it has been getting. He could not put up with people lying to him about intelligence or giving warped evaluations; he wanted to know if intelligence was inadequate or if it depicted a bad situation. Many reports from the intelligence community were cautiously bland and therefore completely meaningless, while others were written to fit a preconceived philosophy. He believed that those responsible for deliberate slanting of reports should be fired. The time may be coming when he would have to read the riot act to the entire intelligence community. He said that perhaps the most important function for the PFIAB would be to help eradicate subjective judgments from intelligence reports.

Miscellaneous. Several other subjects were touched upon. The President commented that the Cambodian operations had shown real teamwork at last among the various South Vietnamese forces. The Chairman noted that Vang Pao often risked his personal safety in combat and the President said we should prevent him from doing this in view of his importance to the effort in Laos. The Chairman declared that our knowledge of the intentions of Peking and Hanoi were essentially nonexistent; for example, we might be passing over too casually the possibility of Chinese communist volunteers in Southeast Asia. The Chairman also stated that the critical factor in Eastern Asia during the next few years will be the Russian decision about what to do about Chinese nuclear weapons delivery developments. The President agreed with Dr. Murphy that Indonesia was a key country with whom we should maintain a good relationship.