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CAMBODIA

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10/70

DOCUMENTS REVEAL LONG-STANDING N. VIETNAMESE PRESENCE IN CAMBODIA  
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10/70

SAIGON, -- NORTH VIETNAM AND THE VIET CONG WERE WELL-ENTRENCHED IN CAMBODIA AND WERE READYING A POLITICAL NETWORK TO RESTORE OUSTED HEAD OF STATE NORODOM SIHANOUK TO POWER LONG BEFORE ALLIED TROOPS INVADED THE COMMUNIST BORDER SANCTUARIES, THE UNITED STATES MISSION IN SAIGON MAINTAINS.

TEN CAPTURED DOCUMENTS, RELEASED BY THE U.S. MISSION OCTOBER 19, SPAN THE PERIOD AUGUST, 1969, TO APRIL, 1970, AND DETAIL THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE PLAN OF SUBVERSION IN CAMBODIA.

THE DOCUMENTS, RELEASED IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION, WERE CULLED FROM NOTEBOOKS, DIRECTIVES, CIRCULARS, REPORTS, MEMORANDA AND INTELLIGENCE SUMMARIES CAPTURED IN CAMBODIA; MOST OF THEM DURING THE JOINT SOUTH VIETNAMESE-U.S. MAY-JUNE THRUST INTO THE BORDER SANCTUARIES.

THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS PLACED A HIGH PRIORITY ON RETENTION OF THEIR BORDER BASES. ONE NOTEBOOK ENTRY EXPLAINS THAT "THE AREAS ALONG IT (THE FRONTIER) CONSTITUTE AN AREA WHICH DIRECTLY INFLUENCES THE RESISTANCE WAR IN SOUTH VIETNAM. SUPPLIES AND WEAPONS ARE BROUGHT THROUGH THIS AREA...THE BORDER AREA IS A VERY IMPORTANT AREA WHICH WE ARE STRIVING TO SECURE IN ORDER TO PROTECT OUR AGENCIES AND FORCES WHICH ARE LOCATED THERE TO SUPPORT THE BATTLEFIELDS."

UNTIL SIHANOUK'S OUSTER, THE COMMUNISTS ANTICIPATED NO PROBLEMS IN MAINTAINING THEIR BASES IN CAMBODIA. "WE HAVE THE SUPPORT OF SIHANOUK, WHICH INCREASES OUR PRESTIGE," WROTE A CADRE MEMBER OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE POLITICAL STAFF DEPARTMENT.

"OUR CHIEF MISSION," THE SAME CADREMAN WROTE, "IS TO CONTINUE TO WIN CAMBODIA TO OUR SIDE FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR FRONTLINES, OUR MESSING AND OUR BILLETING AT THE BORDER."

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ON MARCH 19 -- THE DAY FOLLOWING SIHANOUK'S DEPOSAL BY THE CAMBODIAN GENERAL ASSEMBLY -- THE COMMUNISTS ISSUED A POLICY DIRECTIVE CALLING FOR A STRONG EFFORT TO "MAKE THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLE SYMPATHIZE WITH AND SUPPORT SIHANOUK'S POLICY OF NEUTRALITY, ALONG WITH OUR ANTI-AMERICAN POLICY."

OVERTHROW OF THE CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT, ANOTHER COMMUNIST DIRECTIVE STRESSED, IS OF "INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE." THE DOCUMENT EQUATED DEFEAT OF CAMBODIA IN IMPORTANCE TO AN ATTACK ON SAIGON.

BUDDHIST MONKS AND INTELLECTUALS WERE TO BE TOLD THAT THE LEADER OF THE CAMBODIAN "REVOLUTION" IS SIHANOUK, WHILE "WORKING CLASS" CAMBODIANS WERE TO BE TOLD THAT THE "UPRISING" IS LED BY THE "PEOPLES REVOLUTIONARY PARTY."

ALTHOUGH URGING ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMUNIST PARTY APPARATUS SIMILAR TO THE ONE CONSTRUCTED BY THE VIET CONG IN SOUTH VIETNAM, THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF AVOIDING "THE IMPRESSION THAT SUCH ORGANIZATIONS ARE INITIATED BY THE SOUTH VIETNAM LIBERATION ARMY" (THE VIET CONG).

ANOTHER DOCUMENT OF THE MARCH, 1970 PERIOD INSTRUCTS CADRE MEN TO SOUND OUT CAMBODIAN OFFICERS FOR THE PURPOSE OF SUBVERTING THEM, ALONG WITH THEIR MEN AND EQUIPMENT, TO THE COMMUNIST CAUSE.

LATER INSTRUCTIONS REFLECT A LOW ESTIMATE OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CAMBODIAN FORCES. "THE REVOLUTION HAS ADEQUATE POWER TO DEFEAT THE KHMER ARMY EVEN IF IT IS SUPPORTED BY THE U.S. AND PUPPETS (ALLIED FORCES)," ONE NORTH VIETNAMESE SOLDIER RECORDED IN HIS NOTEBOOK. UNDER THE HEADING, "SHOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED AT ALL COSTS," THE COMMUNIST SOLDIER LISTED:

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"DESTROY THE MANPOWER OF THE WHITE KHMER (CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT

FORCES)" AND "ONE OBJECTIVE IS TO EXPAND OUR BASE AREA."

BY APRIL 25, 1970, COMMUNIST INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS WERE PREDICTING THAT SOUTH VIETNAMESE FORCES MIGHT "ATTACK OUR STORAGE FACILITIES AND AGENCIES," BUT EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE IN THE ABILITY OF THE COMMUNISTS TO WITHSTAND SUCH ATTACKS.

"THE TERRAIN IS VERY FAVORABLE, DUE TO DENSE FORESTS WHICH WILL FACILITATE THE CAMOUFLAGE OF OUR MOVEMENTS AND BIVOUAC AREAS DURING COMBAT," A CAPTURED NOTEBOOK SAYS, ADDING "THE LOCAL INHABITANTS ALONG THE BORDER ARE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE SVN LIBERATION ARMY...DEAL THE WHITE K (CAMBODIAN ARMY) A BLOW THAT WILL MAKE THEM FEAR US."

THE "PURPOSES AND REQUIREMENTS OF CAMPAIGN X" (AGAINST THE CAMBODIAN ARMY) RECORDED IN ONE NORTH VIETNAMESE SOLDIER'S NOTEBOOK INCLUDED:

"THE OBJECTIVE IS TO EXPAND OUR BASE AREA. FIRST OF ALL, TO ACCOMPLISH THE MISSION ASSIGNED TO F (DIVISION) WE MUST DESTROY TWO SUB-SECTORS ALONG WITH AIDING THE RED K (CAMBODIAN COMMUNISTS) TO BUILD UP THEIR GOVERNMENT." ITEM