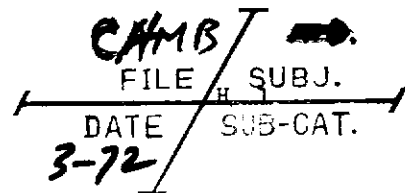


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C A M B O D I A



SIHANOUK SAYS CHOU ASSURED HIM, PHAM VAN DONG OF FULL BACKING

Tokyo KYODO in English 1006 GMT 9 Mar 72 T

[By James Pringle]

[Text] Shanghai, March 9, REUTER-KYODO--Premier Chou En-lai has assured North Vietnam and Cambodia's exiled Head of State Prince Norodom Sihanouk of China's full backing "until total victory," the prince said here today.

The Chinese premier made the assurance at a meeting with North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong and Prince Sihanouk since President Nixon's visit here last month, but the prince would not say where the meeting took place.

Diplomats in Peking believe the meeting was in Hanoi last Saturday.

Speaking in Shanghai, where he is staying following his own visit to North Vietnam, Prince Sihanouk said Mr Chou had told President Nixon that China would not act as an intermediary between Washington and the Indochinese governments.

Prince Sihanouk, who is on a private visit to Shanghai, said President Nixon had drawn a blank in efforts towards settlement of the Indochina problem during his eight-day visit to China, which ended on February 28.

The prince said China's 73-year-old premier had told him Nixon was informed Peking would not act, even secretly, as an intermediary.

He said Chou had told Nixon the Indochinese problem was something which could be solved only between the Americans and the resistance movements of the Indochinese people.

"Mr Chou told me it was China's duty to support these resistance movements until total victory," the prince said as he sat in the same brown leather armchair he said President Nixon used 12 days ago in the 15th floor suite of Shanghai's plush Ching Kong guesthouse.

The prince said Mr Chou told President Nixon the U.S. should solve the problem of Indochina before that of Taiwan.

Prince Sihanouk said the North Vietnamese premier had told him Vietnam appreciated China's support in the Indochina war.

He added that he left Hanoi feeling more optimistic than ever about the outcome of the Indochinese conflict.