

PS
file subj.
date sub-cat.
1/73

AFP
1/28/73

SIHANOUK SKEPTICAL OF ELECTIONS IN VIETNAM

Paris AFP in French 0046 GMT 28 Jan 73 C--FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

[Text] Peking, 27 Jan--by Pierre Comparet--Prince Norodom Sihanouk has expressed strong skepticism with regard to the holding of general elections in Vietnam. The prince, who met with a group of seven foreign correspondents for 3 hours at his home in Peking, said that he was convinced that the Americans will never let the Viet Cong win the elections and that, nevertheless, the Viet Cong would win the elections if there were true elections. Prince Sihanouk said: I am sure that the United States will push Nguyen Van Thieu toward violating the Paris agreement.

With regard to the International Control Commission, the prince said: Those who do not want to be controlled will not be controlled. The members of the commission will not be able to control.

With regard to Cambodia, he said that if the commission seeks to interfere, its envoys will be considered invaders and the liberation forces will open fire against them. The prince said that the most important point of the Paris agreement is American military withdrawal, and especially the withdrawal of the U.S. Air Force. He added: It is the U.S. Air Force which has been the major obstacle in the liberation of Indochina.

Prince Sihanouk said that he may make his first trip to Cambodia since the Phnom Penh coup d'etat within the next 2 months, but that it would be a short trip. The prince added that in the event the internal resistance sought to impede his return, he would then be forced to resign and, no longer a Cambodian, he would seek French hospitality.