

**NATO-SECRET**  
ORGANISATION DU TRAITE DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD  
NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANISATION

NATO SECRET

PLACE DU MARECHAL DE LATTRE DE TASSIGNY, - PARIS (XVI<sup>e</sup>) - TEL. KLE. 50-20

BUREAU DU REPRÉSENTANT  
DU GROUPE PERMANENT

OFFICE OF THE STANDING GROUP  
REPRESENTATIVE

LOM 116/64

1 April 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR : Secretary, Standing Group

SUBJECT : US Statement on SOUTH VIET-NAM, LAOS and CAMBODIA.

1. Copies of the statements made by the US Permanent Representatives on South Viet-Nam, Laos and Cambodia, at the Council meeting, on 25 March, are enclosed for your information.
2. Your attention is invited to the fact that these statements were made in the restricted session of the Council.

*H.A. Twitchell*  
H.A. TWITCHELL  
Major General  
STANDING GROUP REPRESENTATIVE

Enclosure : a/s.

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UNITED STATES DELEGATION  
TO THE  
NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

NATO CONFIDENTIAL

March 25, 1964

Dear Colleague:

I am enclosing copies of the statement on South Viet-Nam which was read by Ambassador Finletter at the Council this morning, together with copies of the statements on Laos and Cambodia to which he also referred.

Sincerely yours,



C. E. Gatti  
Acting Secretary of Delegation

Encls:  
a/s

NO: Secretaries of Delegations  
Lord Coleridge

NATO CONFIDENTIAL

STATEMENT ON SOUTH VIET-NAM

The US Government, in response to the new situation in South Viet-nam and in line with recommendations of Secretary McNamara's recent mission to South Viet-Nam, has reaffirmed its support of the Government of Gen. Nguyen Khanh and its decision to assist and support South Viet-Nam for as long as it takes to bring the insurgency under control. Therefore, the US will provide needed military materiel and will support the improvement of Vietnamese military and security forces and their expansion by at least 50,000 persons. The US will also assist in developing an effective guerrilla force which can carry the war into Viet Cong base areas, additional pay raises and other benefits for paramilitary forces, i. e. civil guard, self defense corps, hamlet militia, etc., will be supported in order to improve the efficiency of forces vital to the counterinsurgency effort at the province, village, and hamlet levels. The US will expand the fertilizer support program with the view within two years of tripling the amount of fertilizer available to the peasant. Finally, the US will further assist efforts by the Government of Viet-Nam to improve and expand its civil administrative apparatus at the local level aimed at the kind of civil programs in economic and social fields which will generate positive support for the Government.

The situation in South Viet-Nam remains critical. The Viet Cong, directed and supported by Communist North Viet-Nam, continue to wage all-out guerrilla and subversive war throughout the countryside. Viet Cong terrorism is widespread and guerrillas are attacking both in platoons and small units and in company and battalion strength. Targets are not merely Vietnamese army and security forces but also the populace in villages and hamlets,

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communication and transportation facilities, and vital parts of the nation's economy.

Although the Viet Cong depend on local resources for the bulk of their manpower and weapons, all evidence points to increasing material support from outside. Heavy weapons (recoilless rifles, machine guns, rocket launchers, and mortars) and weapons parts of Chinese Communist manufacture have been captured, as have been substantial amounts of infiltrated explosive materiel. An appreciable number of elite military and political cadres have been infiltrated from North Viet-Nam, providing leadership and backbone for the Viet Cong guerrilla and subversive apparatus. Captured Viet Cong have repeatedly testified to their regroupment and training in North Viet-Nam.

However, the Khanh Government is moving with energy and decisiveness, is showing good judgment, and has exhibited a certain political flair. By his "Government of national union", Khanh has encouraged political activity and has created probably the most broadly-based government to assume office since the early days of the Ngo Dinh Diem regime; regional religious, and political interests are represented. Khanh has sought to improve his public image and boost public morale by frequent trips to the countryside and has raised the pay of military and security forces. The Khanh government also has proceeded to revise many aspects of the Diem regime's military - political counter-insurgency program and incorporate these revisions into a comprehensive national pacification effort. For example, the old strategic hamlet program is being revamped and consolidated so that it can be carried out strictly according to the basic principle of proceeding gradually from

more secure toward less secure areas, with emphasis on improving the socio-political position of the peasant. Finally, Khanh has dramatically articulated a broad program of social and political action under a high-level interagency committee. The program in turn is tied to the mobilization of all manpower and material resources to put the nation on a war footing.

We, therefore, believe that, with continued vigorous leadership by Khanh and his government, with effective implementation of Vietnamese plans, and with increased US support, the situation in South Viet-Nam can be significantly improved in the coming months.

STATEMENT ON LAOS

Although the military situation in Laos is for the moment relatively quiet, there is no ground for complacency about the future of either political or military developments. The military capabilities of the Communist side continue to pose a grave threat to neutralist and conservative positions while the proposed tripartite "summit" meeting in the Plain of Jars at which the Prime Minister hopes to bring about the resumption of active Pathet Lao participation in his government has not yet materialized.

Souvanna's position is further complicated by continuing friction in Vientiane between neutralist and conservative elements which was aggravated recently by the assassination of a conservative officer. The Prime Minister has threatened to remove himself and the neutralists in Vientiane to neutralist headquarters in the Plain of Jars unless conservative "harassment" of neutralists ceases. Such withdrawal could not help but set back the degree of cooperation which has been achieved by neutralists and conservatives, thus weakening non-Communist opposition to Pathet Lao efforts to gain control of Laos. Every effort must be made to prevent further deterioration and improve neutralist/conservative cooperation since this is vital to the survival of the non-Communists.

Meanwhile a series of preliminary talks have been underway in Vientiane between representatives of the three political factions to make security arrangements for the "summit" meeting in the Plain of Jars between leaders of the three factions. At a recent meeting, a cease-fire was agreed upon which would pacify virtually the entire plain, where there has been skirmishing sporadically for almost a year. The main subject at the "summit" will be the temporary transfer of the seat of government from Vientiane to neutralized Luang Prabang as a precondition for resumption by the Pathet Lao of active participation

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in the coalition government. Souvanna Phouma apparently has no illusions about the difficulty of working with the Pathet Lao but is determined to restore the coalition if at all possible.

By majority vote (Indian and Canadian) March 3, the ICC finally agreed to begin an investigation of the cease-fire violation by the Pathet Lao in the Na Kay area as requested by the Prime Minister January 16. Because of delays in arranging appropriate facilities in Thakhek, ICC military teams had not yet left Vientiane as of March 23.

The Prime Minister made a five-day state visit to Cambodia early in March, partly to sound out Prince Sihanouk's real intentions regarding association with the Communist Bloc. During the visit, Sihanouk tried and failed to obtain Souvanna's concurrence in a bilateral agreement that included inter alia mutual recognition of territorial integrity. Souvanna told Sihanouk he did not have the authority to conclude such an agreement. Despite mutual expressions of harmony and identity of views at the conclusion of the visit, Sihanouk later attacked Souvanna for having territorial designs on Cambodia and for joining the "imperialist bloc."

General Phoumi Nosavan, with Souvanna's approval, met with General Khanh at Dalat March 14, where they agreed to resume normal relations between their countries. As a result, Khanh agreed to re-open the Vietnamese Embassy at Vientiane and to send an Ambassador. The Lao Ambassador is to return to Saigon.

Souvanna Phouma plans visits to Hanoi and Peking in that order in early April. He plans to ask both the North Vietnamese and the Chinese Communists about their proposals and intentions with regard to Laos, Viet-nam and Southeast Asia in general. He would then discuss their replies with General de Gaulle and with others, including the United States and the Soviets, to see how the Lao situation can be improved. He will visit Paris in late April accompanying the King on an official visit to France.

STATEMENT ON CAMBODIA

Since late 1963 Prince Sihanouk has been actively engaged in an attempt to obtain international recognition of Cambodia's territorial integrity and neutral status under the 1954 Geneva accords. These are threatened, in his view, by both Thailand and South Viet-nam, Cambodia's Western-oriented neighbors. Indeed, Sihanouk claims to see an orchestrated plot, also involving the United States, designed to dismember Cambodia. In pursuit of the guarantees he seeks, Sihanouk has made a number of overtures including (1) a call for a Geneva conference, (2) a call for a quadripartite conference involving Cambodia, Thailand, South Viet-nam, and the United States whose result would then perhaps be noted at an eventual Geneva conference, and (3) varying indications of willingness to engage in bilateral talks with Viet-nam and Thailand.

On the question of a Geneva conference, we have not excluded eventual United States participation, but we have noted the necessity of prior agreement among the parties directly concerned as to the outcome, in order to prevent the conference from degenerating into an exchange of charges and counter-charges without practical results. We believe a quadripartite conference can offer hope for a solution and we have urged the Thais and the Vietnamese to be equally forthcoming. We have seen as most desirable of all the possibility of successful bilateral negotiations between Cambodia and her neighbors.

The attack on Chantrea village by Vietnamese forces is regrettable and has undoubtedly given Prince Sihanouk a new sense of urgency in his pursuit of guarantees for Cambodia's territorial integrity. Such incidents, however, have little to do with basic respect for Cambodia's territorial integrity or its neutral status; they are rather a function of Communist insurgency in Viet-nam. In our view the attack on Chantrea village in fact underlines the desirability of an agreement between



Cambodia and Viet-nam on border questions which presently divide them and the necessity for movement toward some form of bilateral policing of the frontier which would help to control the use of Cambodian territory as a supply route and sanctuary for the Viet Cong. We find it regrettable but understandable that the Vietnamese and Cambodians now appear to have recessed negotiations just begun; we will continue to urge both parties to return to the negotiating table.

We believe a successful conclusion of Cambodian-Vietnamese discussions might lead Thailand to be receptive to a Cambodian overture for the resumption of relations and initiation of similar talks. Thereafter, or perhaps alternatively, the next move might be a quadripartite conference.