SELECTED LIST OF READING MATERIALS FOR MEMBERS' REFERENCE
ENROUTE, JUNE 20–21, 1970

I. The following are documents from the Library of Congress
Legislative Reference:
“American Prisoners of War in Southeast Asia,” Jean B. Patitucci.
“The United States and Laos,” Larry A. Niksch.
“Developments in Cambodia Following the March 18 Coup,” Larry A. Niksch.
Fact sheet on Chronology of Diplomatic Moves Regarding Cambodia.
Fact sheets on Current List of Cambodian Personalities and of the United States Embassy in Phnom Penh.
Fact sheet on Officers and Leading Committee Chairmen of the Lower House of the National Assembly, RVN, 1969–70 Session.
Fact sheet on Thailand.

II. The following are documents from the Agency for International
Development:
“Program and Project Data, FY 71: Vietnam”
“United States Aid to Thailand”
Briefing package on AID programs in Thailand
“Report to the Ambassador from the Director of U.S. AID Vietnam, 1969”
“Statement of Hon. John A. Hannah, Administrator, AID, June 24, 1969” (on refugees and civilian casualties in RVN)
Six briefing papers on various aspects of the South Vietnamese economy
Brief on the AID programs in Laos
Two briefing papers on AID programs in the Philippines

III. The following are documents from the Department of State:
Background notes on the Republic of Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and the Philippines
Fact sheet on U.S. Military Assistance to Laos
IV. The following are documents from the Department of Defense:
   Briefing paper on U.S. Involvement in Laos
   Briefing paper on Allied Operations in Cambodia (as of May 4, 1970)
   Maps of Southeast Asia and Vietnam
   Pocket guides to Vietnam, the Philippines and Okinawa
V. The following are articles from *Foreign Affairs* by Edward G. Lansdale:
SELECT COMMITTEE MESSAGES SENT TO U.S. EMBASSY, SAIGON, WHILE ENROUTE IN AIRCRAFT, JUNE 20, 1970

From: G. V. Montgomery aboard Sam Jet 86972
To: American Embassy, Saigon, RVN

House Select Committee on Southeast Asia eager for session knowledgeable U.S. newsmen Monday A.M. if possible. Aim is frankly to get newsmen judgment on evolving situation SE Asia. From various sources committee members have been given following names: Shaplen of New Yorker, Bernard Kalb of New York Times, Lawrence CBS, Arbuckle of Washington Star, Foisie of Los Angeles Times, Stan Karnow, Mason AP, Smith New York Times, Keyes Beech, Sutherland UPI.

Realize many these and other correspondents traveling or otherwise unavailable.

Can mission nevertheless arrange session with representative group Monday A.M. Committee seeking persons experienced and knowledgeable Cambodia, Laos, Thailand as well as Viet Nam and would greatly appreciate such assistance from U.S. correspondents.

Signed: G. V. MONTGOMERY, Chairman.

From: G. V. Montgomery aboard Sam Jet 86972
To: American Embassy, Saigon, RVN

House Select Committee on Southeast Asia desirous meet representative editors Vietnamese and Chinese language Saigon Press. Would appreciate mission's recommendations for forum (reception, round table, buffet supper or other). Aim is frankest and fullest exchange of information on evolving situation. Can you have suggestions available for committee consideration Monday? Will appreciate your assistance.

Signed: G. V. MONTGOMERY, Chairman.

From: G. V. Montgomery aboard Sam Jet 86972
To: American Embassy, Saigon, RVN

House Select Committee on Southeast Asia desires meet officials and spokesmen, non-governmental, both pro- and anti-government organizations and groups. These include Catholic clergy and lay leaders, spokesmen for Buddhist sects, student and Saigon University organizations, Saigon University professors, opposition political leaders in and out of parliament, veterans organizations, and spokesmen for labor and business to extent available.

Monday schedule will probably permit some meetings with individual committee members or groups with others to be accommodated as remainder of program is developed.

Would appreciate assistance in developing such arrangements.

Signed: G. V. MONTGOMERY, Chairman.
From: G. V. Montgomery Aboard Sam Jet 86972  
To: American Embassy, Saigon, RVN  
House Select Committee on Southeast Asia desires to meet any available of following American missionaries on Monday or other mutually desirable date: Doug Cozzart and Reverend Hunt from World Vision of Vietnam, Bob Miller and James Stauffer of Mennonites.

Signed: G. V. Montgomery, Chairman.

To: S-86972  
From: Col. Baker, Embassy, Saigon  
Ref: Your request to hold session with knowledgeable U.S. Newsmen. Many not in town.  
Will invite others together with several additional correspondents to meeting with committeemen at 10:00 AM Monday.

Signed: Berger.
SELECT COMMITTEE CONFERENCE WITH MR. GENE AINSWORTH  
OF WORLD VISION, JUNE 22, 1970, SAIGON, RVN

(Entire Committee present.)
Paraphrased Transcription:
We are a volunteer agency to serve the Vietnamese people, not in support of a political activity, but to meet human needs. Resources are contributed by individuals and private agencies, not by governments. We conduct a school program and the "street-wide" program. We are involved with the people, and we get feedback from the people.
I share with the Vietnamese people their burden in that their country has been racked with war for many years. I can see the sociological effect on the people, and yet I can see a peculiar strength that has enabled them to overcome all the harassing for so many years and still stand strong.
A student who works for me told me, when I asked him about these student riots in Saigon, that there are only a few students making the trouble. The sheer burden of having to guard every street corner from criminal acts—and these are criminal acts, whether they be perpetrated by Viet Cong in war, killing is a criminal act—saps your strength to the point that a tremendous amount of energy is drained from the Vietnamese people. I think President Nixon has made a wise decision and has made me proud and has saved the lives of my friends, both Americans and Vietnamese. I believe the program of Vietnamization is going well with the Vietnamese. My attitude is very optimistic. There is a peculiar strength in the Vietnamese people that will cause them to hang on.
Dialogue:
Q: What has been the general attitude of the people of Vietnam since the Cambodian affair?
A: They are tickled to death.
Q: Are "they" the man in the street?
A: Yes.
Q: Do they feel that they will be able to take over the responsibility?
A: Yes sir.
Q: Will the Vietnamese be able to respond effectively within the timetable of American withdrawal?
A: They are doing the best with what they have in the present timetable. I may be wrong, but I think they (the Americans) can pull out even a little earlier.
Q: What is the reaction of the people in reference to Nixon's Cambodian decision?
A: They are pleased because they know that this (the supply and ammunition caches) has been sitting there for all this time.
Q: Will that feeling of euphoria continue if the Cambodian Government should fall? If Cambodia becomes a big sanctuary?
A: I think they will fight harder. I don't see the Cambodian Government on the verge of collapse.
Q: What is the attitude of the Vietnamese people toward their government and the government process in general?
A: I think the Vietnamese people are very much like the American people. They don't want to know. They don't have the education to want to know. How many people are actively involved in supporting you as a Congressman? A very small percentage of the population is involved. You can't expect them to be politically sophisticated. They are concerned about the economic situation because it affects their rice bowl. They blame it on the President. But I think most people would recognize the fact that President Thieu has done a phenomenal job.

Q: How long have you been in this country?
A: I've been here for 14 or 15 months, and I was here for five months in 1965. My first contact was in 1959 when a Vietnamese officer came to the States for pilot training. My interest in Vietnam has gone over a period of about ten years.

Q: The war has been a heavy burden on the number of orphans. Do you deal specifically with children? How many orphans are there in the categories up to 16 years of age?
A: I have about 85 boys. We have had more than 282 in the last year. Sometimes they are emotional orphans because they have been cut off from their families.

Q: Are some of them children of the U.S. personnel.
A: Some are, but none in my group. No one knows how many there are in Vietnam.

Q: Does the Government of South Vietnam have its own program along those lines?
A: Our program is almost totally supported by the Ministry of Social Welfare.

Q: Why is the training of South Vietnamese pilots so slow?
A: These guys are good: give them a chance, it could be the availability of qualified people.

Q: Back to student unrest. Only a few hundred students: Are you saying that these individuals close up all the schools for two months? Your statements seem to be in very sharp contrast to insertions in the Congressional Record about repression by the Government of students participating in dissent. There has been an indication of a very strong movement by the government to crush student unrest— including torture. How can these two things be reconciled?
A: I believe that out of the 50,000 students you would get a very small percentage (of students participating in dissent).

Q: Why were the schools closed for two months then?
A: I believe that this government is so afraid it will be criticized by opposition for being undemocratic. The schools were closed because the students were throwing rocks at people who were going by on the streets and burning Hondas.

Q: Do you know if the allegations of prison torture are accurate?
A: That also happens in the United States, in Arkansas, with people being killed and buried. Is there any difference?

Q: Yes, there is a difference when it is sanctioned. Do you know if the allegations of prison torture are accurate?
A: Imprisonment in the Orient is not the same. I don't know, but but it is possible.
Q: Do you think this police force is generally cruel to the people?
A: I do not believe that these police are purposefully cruel.
Q: When your boys do something bad, what happens to them?
A: If they are picked up for vagrancy or something like that, they may be locked up until we go down and get them out. Or if they beat another boy until his face is all puffed out, they might be punched in the nose.
Q: What do the people in Vietnam think of the growing unrest in the States?
A: I doubt that the average Vietnamese peasant is aware of it.
Q: One of our interests is in the narcotics problem. Would you address yourself to the problem of drugs and narcotics?
A: They are very easy to get. My boys can go down the street and get a shot of opium for 30 piasters.
Q: How about the American soldiers; did you hear much about the American GI involved in marijuana?
A: Just from reading the papers. I don't think the problem exists among GIs to any great extent.
Q: Do you have many GIs interested in your project?
A: Yes, we have GIs coming down. There is one soldier who comes down from MACV and plays with the boys quite a lot. He wrestles on the floor and gets dirty and sweaty with them, and they love things that we don't have time to do.
Q: Is it easy for a U.S. serviceman to acquire marijuana cigarettes?
A: From the local bar, or a boy on the street.
Q: Do they smoke the marijuana right in the bars?
A: Yes.
Q: Is it illegal?
A: Yes, but the police are busy guarding the street corners.
Q: The hard-core Saigon businessman: What is his reaction to the Americans getting out?
A: I am sure he is very sad.
Summation: The biggest problem in Vietnam is an economic problem. The people may want a change, but I think, generally speaking, the Thieu Government is a popular government.
SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF THE U.S. PRESS, JUNE 22, 1970, SAIGON, RVN

(Entire Committee present.)
Press members present:
Mr. Laurence Stern, Washington Post
Mr. Keyes Beech, Chicago Daily News
Mr. George McArthur, Los Angeles Times
Mr. John Woodruff, Baltimore Sun
Mr. Wendell Merrick, U.S. News & World Report
Mr. Maynard Parker, Newsweek
Mr. Dan Sutherland, Christian Science Monitor

Representative Montgomery introduced the journalists to the members of Congress at 10:20 a.m. to open the informal meeting. He told the members of the press that his Committee's purpose in visiting Vietnam is to try to gather as much information as possible. He added that a formal report would be delivered to each member of the House of Representatives.

Each journalist offered his viewpoint of the current situation in Vietnam prior to a question-and-answer session. Following are synopses of the journalists' reports.

LAURENCE STERN:
Mr. Stern told the Committee members, “It seems to me that you can come away from here with any impressions you want to come away with.” He said that he found, during a recent visit to II Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ), that there is “an intensified low-level war going on with greater frequency since Cambodia than had been going on before.” He said he also found in II CTZ that “the pacification score has gone down. We don’t know that this is a response to the Cambodian operation. It may be.” On the political situation in Saigon, he opined that there are “stresses and strains and an indication of polar discontent.”

KEYES BEECH:
Mr. Beech described the Cambodian operation as “an unqualified success in purely parochial military terms.” “We have already seen some of the effects from it,” he added, stating, “The military activity in III CTZ has already dropped rather sharply. There is an awful lot of terrorism going on in these two corps (III and IV CTZ). You have about 70 percent of the population (in the III and IV CTZ area). We hit them where it hurts, where the people are. I think that overall we are in better shape in South Vietnam than we have ever been.

On the subject of the South Vietnamese economy, Mr. Beech said, “The thing that is hurting this country most right now is inflation. I think it is easy to overestimate the seriousness of the situation. I think President Thieu is in control politically, which is not to say that I endorse President Thieu.” He added: “I think that we have more than discharged our obligations to the Vietnamese Government. I
think we have done all we can for them. I think we have over-aided them. I don't think we should pull out precipitously. I think Nixon's plan is reasonable. One of the mistakes we made here was in trying to do it ourselves."

GEORGE MC ARTHUR:
Mr. McArthur offered the following viewpoint: "In general terms, I think one of the things that struck me about Cambodia is that what was actually going on in Cambodia seemed irrelevant to those making policy in the United States. I don't think Nixon could have made any decision but the one he did. This war is going to be decided in Vietnam. It is not going to be decided in Washington."

JOHN WOODRUFF:
Mr. Woodruff said of the political scene in Vietnam: "Generally speaking you will find that it will be more profitable to think of politics in terms of the economic situation. Politics consists of the Army. In that respect, there is no question who controls the Army—the government does. In a longer time frame, you will have to ask: 'Are the people going to be able to bear the inflation?'"

Mr. Woodruff advised the Committee members that when they go into the field to gather facts that "you will see an awful lot of numbers on individual (captured) weapons. Ask specifically what the Army has in their TOE (Table of Organization and Equipment, what they have for a typical VC/NVA battalion." He admonished the Committee members that the term "individual weapons" does not necessarily mean the SKS rifles and AK-47 rifles with which Communist units are generally equipped. He also assessed the Cambodian operation as "a good thing—in purely parochial military terms, in terms of the enemy's apparent decision to cut back to low-level warfare."
"They are going to cut down on their expenditures, anyway," he added. "We probably won't get a chance to estimate how well we have cut into their strength because they had planned to cut down themselves."

WENDELL MERRICK:
Mr. Merrick described statistics of the pacification program as "very difficult to judge." He said, "Laos has been the same for the past 10 or 12 years."

On the status of the Government of Vietnam, he opined, "You will hear that Thieu is not necessarily popular among the people. Do not take that to mean that being anti-Thieu makes you pro-Communist. Certain members of the government aren't popular. The situation is much like it is in the United States."

MAYNARD PARKER:
Mr. Parker described the Cambodian operation as "a success." He added: "I question whether the sending of American forces in was necessary. It could have been done at a much lesser political cost. The entry has speeded up the North Vietnamese decision. I think the situation here is good but that doesn't mean that the war is won."

Mr. Parker described the American involvement in Vietnam and its effect on the Vietnamese economy in the following analogy: "It is like you were in a poor Spanish town and a movie company comes in and floods the town with money. When the company leaves, the
village has to find a way to make a living for itself. Now that we are
leaving, they are going to have to find a way to: (a) tax themselves,
(b) seek revenues and (c) export. The United States mission is widely
divided over what to do. Some favor seeing the Vietnamese pay
their own way."

On the political scene, Mr. Parker stated: “Although you are going
to see your colleagues in the Senate, do not be taken in by what you
see down there. This is a military government. Thieu does not have
complete free reign, but when you talk about the politics, you must
consider the military. The politicians you will be seeing do count for
something in an opinion-making sense. President Thieu has failed to
become publicly accepted by the people in the city. He is becoming
isolated, but he certainly seems to be in power.

Mr. Parker credited General Creighton Abrams with changing the
military operations in Vietnam and opined, “It has been a great im­
provement.” Assessing the Vietnamese military, he said, “There has
been a general improvement in the ARVN (Army of the Republic of
Vietnam) but the improvement has not been that great.”

He opined further: “I think the only thing we can do now is to
rapidly disengage from Vietnam. We should have a timetable. With a
timetable we could put the pressure on the Vietnamese either to
perform or to reach some conciliation with the other side.”

DAN SUTHERLAND:
Mr. Sutherland said of the North Vietnamese: “I think their best
bet, the way they see it, is to wait for the withdrawals. I think they do
have the determination and the strength to do this.” He added: “We
don’t hear any talk about negotiations or broadening the base of the
Vietnamese Government. The word now is efficiency. The economic
situation will tend to undermine the efficiency. Going along with in­
fation is the problem of corruption, which has not really improved.

Concerning the June elections in Vietnam, Mr. Sutherland admon­
ished: “You should be somewhat skeptical of what importance this
(the act of voting) has to the Vietnamese. They go through the exercise
because they are fearful that if they don’t they will have trouble with
the authorities. People will follow the guidelines set down by the local
authorities.”

Following are questions posed by the members of the Congressional
Committee and the responses of the press corps:
Q: Are the Viet Cong not as strong as they used to be?
A: Everything points to that. (Mr. Sutherland)
Q: What is the advisability of establishing and publicly announcing
a scheduled withdrawal?
A: You have to assume that the main risk is the enemy risk if we
announce a timetable. United States units have not, in the past, been
harassed when they started leaving. They might harass us, but I
don’t think we will have a disaster like the Tet Offensive. (Mr. Parker)

There is a timetable for withdrawal, but I am opposed to publishing
it. We are the only country in the world that announces six months
in advance what we are going to do militarily. I think the least we
can do is leave some doubt in the enemy’s mind. (Mr. Beech)

We should also leave some doubt as to how we are going to get out.
Total withdrawal would be disastrous. (Mr. McArthur)
As for the negotiating table, I have never thought that we would ever have a negotiated peace. That would mean that Hanoi would not get South Vietnam, and that is what it is all about. I disagree that if we are nice to the guys on the other side they will reciprocate. That is the ultimate folly. You don’t get anywhere being nice to these people. (Mr. Beech)

I would agree if we were facing Nazi Germany or Japan. There is an element of negotiation in this thing. It is between Washington and Saigon. They operate in terms of years, not months. I don’t think there is any disadvantage in having Hanoi know (about a withdrawal timetable), but there is a specific advantage in having Saigon know. (Mr. Woodruff)

Q: In the long run, most of you seem to be fairly pessimistic.
A: Pessimism is indigenous to Vietnam. It represents our belief that we know Vietnam. We have seen them (mess) up so many times in the past. (Mr. McArthur)

The country is fragmented by religious and social sects. (Mr. Parker)

Q: If we have the complete withdrawal that you are talking about in one-and-a-half years, will we give the Vietnamese the chance to take over? How many of you believe that there should be complete and total withdrawal within a two-year period?
(Mr. Parker and Mr. MacArthur said that they would agree to the removal of all but 20,000 American troops within a two-year period. The other members of the press did not indicate agreement. Mr. Sutherland had retired from the meeting prior to the question. When the question was amended to a shorter time period—by January 1972—none of the correspondents agreed to it.)

Q: How many of you would vote for the Cooper-Church Amendment? (Mr. Parker was the only journalist who indicated that he would vote for the amendment.)

Q: Will it take four, six or eight months to turn the Cambodian operation over to the Vietnamese?
A: The object of our going into Cambodia was to make it more comfortable to expedite the withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam. It assured us a far greater chance for an orderly withdrawal. (Mr. Beech)

Q: What would be the consequences of complete withdrawal within one-and-a-half years, and is there some way to use these military supplies in relation to the inflation problem?
A: I don’t think the equipment will have anything to do with the government’s economic situation. (Mr. McArthur)

Q: What would be all the consequences of getting out of here? Is this refugee problem a big problem?
A: You have to be realistic and look at the history of this situation. If we let this thing happen overnight to these people, with no breathing space in-between, it would probably be the most horrendous moral catastrophe in the history of the United States. The worst part of it might be the brainwashing of the people (in the event of a Communist takeover after an American withdrawal). (Mr. Woodruff)

Q: We hear a great deal that we should have complete and immediate withdrawal. How would this affect our troops? Would their safety be in jeopardy?
A: To what extent does five years of intensified war here work? Are we prepared to assume that if American troops were withdrawn that there would be nothing to resist the Communist hordes? To what extent are these people now prepared to defend themselves? (Mr. Stern)

Q: What equipment does the RVNAF (Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces) possess? Do they have the attitude?

A: This is a basic problem. We came here with the idea that we were going to win a military victory. It was the wrong way to approach the thing. We should have tried to build something solid here. There is no viable alternative for the people to choose. (Mr. Woodruff)

Perhaps we are unduly pessimistic. It is a fragmented society. I would give them a sixty-forty chance of making it after we get out. (Mr. Beech)

Q: We have done all we can do for the Vietnamese: That is how the majority of the people at home feel. Do you think the majority of the South Vietnamese feel this way?

A: I don’t think they are at all convinced that there will be a complete withdrawal. A friend of mine said that now is the time to be as nasty to the Vietnamese as possible in order to get them to do the things they must do in order to survive. (Mr. Beech)

Q: What would you leave here?

A: If you assume even the worst, it seems to me we have an obligation to slow that (the worst) down. You can’t expect people who have been hating and killing each other for all these years to cool off and look at this thing in rational terms. Leaving enough troops is a stiffener. And pour in a heluva lot of economic aid.
The team composed of Congressmen Anderson, Keith and Watson and staff member Westphal departed Tan Son Nhat, Saigon, June 22, 1970 in a C–118 for Da Nang. We stopped at Nha Trang to discharge Messrs. Adair, Hawkins and Mollohan. We stayed at Headquarters, XXIV Corps, I Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ), and were met by Lt. Gen. James V. Sutherland. Gen. Sutherland and members of his staff held a discussion in the Officer's Club, followed by dinner.

The following day, June 23, we took a helicopter to Headquarters III Marine Amphibious Force, MACV (III MAF); Lt. Gen. Keith B. McCutcheon, CG III MAF, was our contact there. This is the Headquarters 1st Marine Division; Maj. Gen. Charles F. Widdecke, CG.

Gen. McCutcheon made the following points: 1.) There are 42,000 U.S. troops in the area. 2.) Guerrillas are the prime target of the pacification program. 3.) U.S. forces are engaged in a.) pacification and Vietnamization, b.) defense of Da Nang area, c.) action against enemy fire. 4.) Extensive reconnaissance activity is underway in the west. 5.) There are no ARVN forces in the immediate area but they are to the north and south. 6.) The Cambodian operation has had no noticeable effect, but there is some evidence that the North Vietnamese are disturbed by Cambodia—this may undermine the confidence of the NVN troops. 7.) The biggest single threat to Vietnam is in the north. 8.) ARVN is aware of U.S. plans to withdraw but are not too happy. 9.) ARVN has good leaders who have been on the job for some years. 10.) As the U.S. phases out, air support will be most missed, especially helicopter capability. 11.) ARVN has its own logistic support and can handle pacification program. 12.) Medical evacuation units of U.S. Army and Marines have given a morale boost to the ARVN and also evacuate civilians; and 13.) U.S. advisors are really liaison officers.

A helicopter flight took us to Ba Ren Bridge, Than My hamlet, scene of VC massacre three nights before. About 75 were killed; 74 wounded. We walked around the destroyed village and talked with locals.

Another helicopter flight took us to Quang Da Special Zone where we had discussions with Col. Thien, Commander. He discussed ARVN operations in the field and noted that the VC were short of food.

We then flew to Camp Eagle, 101 Airborne Division (Airmobile); Maj. Gen. John J. Hennessey, CG. Gen. Hennessey and staff made the following points: 1.) ARVN has 19 battalions; the U.S., 12 battalions. 2.) ARVN has no air support but is satisfactory in ground transportation. 3.) U.S. will have to supply air support and heavy artillery. 4.) Enemy capabilities are greater than in Tet offensive of 1968; they held Hue for three weeks with two divisions. 5.) Viet-
namization is going well. 6.) ARVN knows that U.S. will withdraw but wishes we would stay. 7.) 101st has 20,000 troop strength. 8.) The 101st forms a protective shield around populated areas (about 25 are killed in action each week; 75 wounded in action each week). 9.) Defoliation is coordinated with provincial chiefs. 10.) Pacification includes 10 rural districts (county)—about 500,000; Hue: three urban districts, about 200,000. 11.) About 95% of Tue Thien province is in condition A and B. 12.) Eighty-five villages and 388 hamlets have been settled. 13.) Mechanized farming has been introduced. 14.) Terrorist acts have increased, but few local officials have been killed by the VC. Enemy is trying to rebuild infrastructure.


We helicoptered to FSB T-Bone, Maj. Gen. Truong, CG, 1st ARVN Division. Gen. Truong is one of the veteran ARVN fighters, having served more than 16 years. He has 19,000 ARVN troops; they have taken over some areas from III Marines.

We next flew to FSB Barnett, CO, 1st ARVN Regiment, 1st Division. Barnett was built in three days and just completed. Here there are 464 ARVN, plus five U.S. The base gives support to ARVN operations in Ashau valley.

Our next stop was the town of Vin Nhan, Quan Phong Dien district, where we were met by Colonel Than, who is also Mayor of Hue. Of the 200,000 refugees in Thua Thien province, about 25,000 have yet to be resettled.

After flying into Hue, we met with Father Lap, former rector of Dalat University. He had just arrived in Hue to head a Catholic high school of about 1,300 students. We were joined by Mayor Than and Representative Nguyen Ngoc Nghia, opposition member in SVN parliament.

The following points were brought out in discussion: 1.) Defectors returning to SVN numbered about 600 in 1968; 400 in 1969; and, to date in 1970, about 190. The number is going down because the enemy has been pushed farther back from the lowlands. 2.) Student protests in Hue are due to rough treatment by the government, but demonstrations are orderly. 3.) It is natural that the U.S. should withdraw but this should be done in such a way that Communists will not take over. Timing is very important. Mayor Than stressed the importance of good timing and the need for flexibility in schedule. He feels it is important that withdrawal not be misunderstood by SVN, and that they understand that the U.S. is not running away. Decision on withdrawal should be made jointly by U.S. and SVN. 4.) ARVN will need U.S. weapons. 5.) SVN will need U.S. economic aid. 6.) NVN leaders cannot be trusted; they are not interested in survival of people. 7.) The opposition member said he would support the government when it is “right.” It was not too clear to us what his concept of “right” is. The opposition member is a former army officer and he was the first deputy to lead demonstrations in Saigon against the government’s tax program. He protested arrest of a deputy, and his mistreatment. He is opposed to Thieu’s economic policy since Thieu is asking for “special rights.” Land reform is not an important issue in Hue—only in the Delta.
Following these discussions, the team departed Da Nang for Nha Trang where we had dinner with Lt. Gen. S. A. Collins, CG, I Field Force, Vietnam, and Senior Advisor, II CTZ. We held discussions with the CG and his staff.

On June 24, team members were received at Hq. I FFV. We then had discussions with CG and CORDS (Civil Operations and Rural Development Support), Lt. Gen. Collins, Maj. Gen. Charles Brown and staff and Mr. Willard Chambers, DEP CORDS. The following points were made: 1.) Pacification embraces military, economic, political and social action to secure support of the people. 2.) There are 13 teams in II Corps, seven headed by military, six by civilians. 3.) We must assure that GVN is worthy of support. We must build up enforcement powers of SVN: ARVN, territorial forces, national policy. The GVN must explain itself to the people. 4.) A wide array of specialists are active in education, agriculture and engineering. 5.) GVN programs are suffering from successes of last year. More people are now encompassed, but GVN ministries are not able to provide sufficient services. 6.) There are 212 secondary schools; only 56 of them are run by government. 7.) Seventeen million books a year are made available through the Minister of Education. 8.) Economic stabilization and the fight against inflation are the most important factors. 9.) Disabled war veterans have demonstrated in four cities in II Corps. 10.) Number one failure of GVN and US is failure to communicate with the people. The enemy can get word around more easily. 11.) There is a four-station radio network being built with AID money, near completion. We should attack NVN with radio. According to an AVN defector: “The U.S. is not as good at telling the truth as the VC are at telling a lie.” 12.) There is no DVN television station in Nha Trang, but over 10,000 tv viewers watch Armed Forces tv. 13.) In the lowlands, about 50% have access to radio; in the highlands, 5%.

14.) As for the police force: there are 28 U.S. advisors in II Corps. It is the feeling that the police system must be established on a village and hamlet level. The pay scale is lower than that of a private. 15.) There are 1,900 military in civil-type activities. There are 264 U.S. civilians, 300 third country nationals and 1,500 locals. 16.) If presidential elections were held now, Thieu would get more votes than previously. 17.) Villagers are not much interested in politics. Provincial and district chiefs should get around more. The latter are now appointed by President Thieu, but this is changing and soon they will be elected. Most provincial chiefs are from the military. 18.) There is no trend toward mechanization of large landholdings. Mechanization, however, is used on small holdings. 19.) There is a shortage of leadership in all fields of activity. 20.) The Japanese are looking toward greater economic penetration.

We were accompanied by Maj. Gen. Brown and FSO Owens, assigned to CORDS, on our helicopter flight from Phan Rang Air Force Base. We arrived at Ninh Thuan province, Headquarters Advisory Team 45. Owens is Province Senior Advisor, Phuy Quy District Headquarters.

The following points were brought out: 1.) Ninh Thuan province is a medium size one; 480,000 people in four districts, about 65% of whom are Buddhists and 15%, Catholics. This is the driest province in Vietnam. Agriculture and fishing are the most important industries.
2.) There are 1,400 VC in the province, 100 PF platoons, 3,000 PSDF and 500 police. 3.) The objective of the program: to provide greater security and convince the people that the GVN offers a better alternative than does NVN. 4.) The VC often get into hamlets for a short time, about half an hour. But it is more difficult for them to get in now and more difficult for them to get local support. 5.) There is better local leadership. 6.) Eight seats are up for election, with 28 candidates; some depend on party affiliation. The voting age is 18. Qualifications: 30 months residence; one must be listed in family record.

A helicopter flight took us to Mong Duc hamlet where we met village officials and inhabitants. We learned that: 1.) There are 550 people living in Mong Duc; conditions here are better than five years ago. 2.) There is a medical station with one doctor. 3.) Interest in the June 28 elections is very high. 4.) There are five hamlets in the village; 90% have radios and hear Hanoi “lies.” 5.) Eighty percent are literate. 6.) The villagers want a community tractor. They must now hire one at 5,000 piasters per hectare.

At the Au Phuoc district, the village chief spoke to us. There are 9,943 people in the village; 759 voters. Recently village elections were held. There are 357 PSDF in the village; 285 weapons. Five percent are communists; ten percent listen to radio.

Following a helicopter flight to Soui Gieng, we visited with Montagnard village officials. A Filipino agricultural advisor has introduced sugar cane as a crop. We inspected the crop and found it to be very good. Wild mint growing in the fields gives a pleasant odor.

We then flew to Ba Rau village, composed of three Vietnamese hamlets and two Montagnard hamlets. French Father Beliard runs the recently finished school; he has been in Vietnam 27 years. We inspected the village rice mill.

Lastly, we visited My Thuong, a village near the South China Sea, and met briefly with village officials and inhabitants before departing Phan Rang for our return to Tan Son Nhut, Saigon.
Delegation conferred with Lt. Gen. S. A. Collins, Commanding General (CG), regarding pacification and Vietnamization. Gen. Collins told the delegation that it was no longer possible for the VC to militarily defeat the government. Inflation is the greatest problem and it could destabilize the government unless it is controlled. It is also the general feeling on the part of the Headquarters Staff that Vietnamization is progressing ahead of schedule, and that ARVN troops will soon be in a position to conduct their full defense in the II Corps.

Discussions with CORDS Deputy Director Willard Chambers showed his estimate to concur with that of Gen. Collins above.

Delegation, accompanied by the deputy of the province chief and his translator, met with Venerable Thich Bich Lam, Deputy Chief of the Central Buddhist Institute, who discussed generally the American involvement and noted that most Americans, particularly official Americans, did not see the average Vietnamese. Rather, they confer primarily with those who reside in “air conditioned rooms.” It should be noted that the governmental translator replaced the Buddhist monk’s translator during our visit. At the close of the visit, the monk’s translator informed Mr. Lester that the governmental translator had misinterpreted and distorted the Venerable’s remarks and extended an invitation to the delegation to visit with the monk that evening without the presence of a governmental retinue.

The delegation visited with the Rt. Rev. Nguyen Van Thuan, Roman Catholic Bishop of Nha Trang, who contended strongly that roads were a good deal safer than they had previously been, that the Roman Catholics in his province area were loyal to the Saigon government and are willing to serve it. In response to the observation of the delegation that the city of Nha Trang and the surrounding areas were in an advanced state of deterioration, the Bishop replied that the deterioration was substantially less than it had been three years ago, that there was very little tax structure to yield the funds necessary to rebuild. It was later learned that the Bishop is a nephew of the former Vietnamese President, Ngo Dinh Diem.

The delegation visited Binh Dinh Province Headquarters at Qui Nhon and conferred with the province chief who is primarily responsible for the defense of Binh Dinh, the largest province in II Corps. The delegation was assured by the province chief that Regional Forces (RF) along with Popular Forces (PF) had sufficient strength to carry primary responsibility for the defense of the province. The delegation inspected those defenses at Landing Zone Hardtimes, an RF command post. The RF had taken over the responsibility for this post from
the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG), which had been Green Beret-trained. The RF there was assisted by a U.S. Army Mobile Assistance Team.

The delegation also visited the PF post at Op Chao in the An Tuc district in Binh Dinh province. The Committee also inspected the resettlement hamlet at Dong Sha, near An Khe, where several thousand members of the Bahnar tribe of Montagnards had been relocated. The tribe previously resided in the mountains to the west, but because of hostile operations in which the tribe was caught in a cross-fire, and because of its vulnerability to VC coercion, the tribe had been relocated within a secure zone.

1 CORPS

The delegation began its inspection of 1 Corps with a conference at XXIV U.S. Corps Headquarters with Lt. Gen. James T. Sutherland. In 1 Corps, delegation conferred with Quang Tin province chief at Tam Ky. After meeting the province chief and Vietnamese and American officials responsible for security operations, the Committee visited the Chieu Hoi camp ("Open Arms" camp, which acts as a center for receiving VC defectors). The group interviewed one NVA officer who had come over to the GVN, Warrant Officer Nguyen Van Au, who said that he had come over because he realized that the NVA could not win.

In the village of Thien Te, delegation visited a regional civil-military-combined hospital. While there are four ARVN doctors assigned to the hospital, day-to-day operations thereof are conducted primarily by two American military doctors and a West German Red Cross doctor. The hospital is primitive and barn-like, lacking both electricity on a dependable basis and sanitation. Principle burdens of the hospital are the caring for of children suffering from malnutrition and sicknesses resulting therefrom, and the treatment of adults having various diseases and wounds.

While the Committee also visited the Americal Division Headquarters at Chu Lai and the PF post at Ha Lam, primary emphasis of investigation within the Thang Binh district was placed upon pacification progress. Specifically, the group visited the pacification village at Van Tien, Quang Ngai province, where approximately 2,000 Vietnamese peasants were moving back into a village previously inhabited by them. Prior to their return, they had resided in a resettlement camp while the area was made secure by intensive operations.

In tandem with pacification investigation, the delegation visited (artillery) U.S. Fire Support Bases Dottie and Liz from which American artillery fire support and individual security missions are conducted. Key to the overall pacification effort, in the opinion of the delegation, is the democratization of Vietnamese institutions. In pursuit of this investigation, an election rally for village council posts was observed. We found the villagers actively questioning prospective candidates (to be elected three days following). Candidates were closely questioned on their policies for employment, housing and other issues of major concern to the villagers.

To facilitate action regarding a previous telegram sent by the Committee to the North Vietnamese Government regarding prisoners of war, members of the Committee visited a South Vietnamese prison camp
at Da Nang. Organized in January of 1966, the Da Nang prison camp presently has some 1,200 prisoners: 1,100 VC and 100 North Vietnamese. The camp is inspected regularly every six months by the Red Cross. It was reported to the Committee that the camp received a high rating under the Geneva Conventions. Of the prisoners in captivity, nearly 750 are from rural hamlets in the I Corps area. Most of them were guards in hamlets controlled by the VC. Political rehabilitation is conducted throughout the prison with very little success regarding NVN prisoners and about 50% success among the VC prisoners. In some cases, those prisoners considered sufficiently rehabilitated are released. Within that category, nearly 80 have been released in the last six months.

The Committee found the camp to be clean, the prisoners to be well fed and cared for, and generally the camp was found to be well-run. Reading materials were available to most prisoners and the camp is generally uncrowded. It should be noted, however, that many prisoners who are not rehabilitated are sent to other prisons in South Vietnam, usually to Phu Quoc, off the Cambodian-Vietnamese southern coast in the Gulf of Siam.
SELECT COMMITTEE TEAM THREE VIETNAM FIELD TRIP REPORT FOR JUNE 22-24, 1970

The team was composed of Congressmen Neal Smith, Donald Clancy, Orville Hansen, and Staff Members C. C. Bryant and T. R. Harkin. It visited III CTZ (Corps Tactical Zone) on Monday evening, 22 June 1970, and stayed until Tuesday evening when the members traveled to IV CTZ before returning to Saigon Wednesday night.

22 June:

The third party departed Tan Son Nhut for Long Binh at 1630, 22 June, and proceeded to the office of Lt. Gen. Michael S. Davison. We went to his office for a briefing in the III CTZ area by him. There, Brig. Gen. F. Roberts and Gen. Davison gave a general rundown on the situation in III CTZ and outlined their activities in the Fishhook and the Flatiron areas of Cambodia.

Gen. Davison praised General Tri’s performance and said Tri had been very successful in Cambodia. However, because of the 30-mile restriction placed upon American involvement, our logistical and other support of Gen. Tri was limited. Gen. Davison briefly went over the Vietnamese operations in Cambodia prior to the U.S. involvement on 1 May. For these Vietnamese operations prior to 1 May, the U.S. had supplied logistic and air support. On 1 May was the first joint U.S./Vietnamese ground operation in Cambodia. The U.S. part of these operations is now being phased out prior to the 30 June deadline for withdrawal of U.S. troops. Personally, Gen. Davison had as his deadline 1800 hours and not thereafter. In response to a question, Gen. Davison said that captured documents indicated that the enemy had moved approximately 500 tons of material out of the sanctuaries prior to our capturing them.

Gen. Davison was asked about the element of surprise in our invasion into Cambodia. He replied that the VC and NVA were not strategically surprised in that they knew that the Vietnamese were coming in. They were, however, surprised by the depth and maneuverability of Gen. Tri’s troops. Concerning the U.S. employment of troops, Gen. Davison felt that they were surprised. Mr. Charles Whitehouse, CORDS Director for III CTZ, briefed the group on the CORDS situation. He briefly went over the organization, his deployment of advisors throughout the provinces and the present HES evaluation of the safety of the hamlets. Whitehouse said that 96% of the people in the III CTZ are living in general security, based on this HES evaluation. He brought out the point that there is no violent crime as such in South Vietnam. Therefore, everything that does happen is blamed on the VC. For example, the killing of a village chief may be for reasons other than political, such as a family quarrel, etc. However, the killing will be listed as an incident (act of terror). In response to a question, Mr. Whitehouse replied that there are presently 21,413 refugees in Tay Ninh Province. Whitehouse outlined what the Cambodian operation means to pacification in the III CTZ:
1. It has contributed to tranquility; 2. it made it much harder for incursions and terror by the VC; 3. it caused a change in the attitude of the people—they are much more aroused, their spirits are buoyed, etc.

At 2130 the group went over what they would be doing the following day in III CTZ. The itinerary was outlined.

1.) stop at Ben Cat; 2.) stop in the Fishhook area of Cambodia; 3.) stop at the Prek Area in Cambodia; 4.) stop at a fire support base in Tay Ninh Province for lunch; and 5.) then proceed to Tran Bang to visit with the village chief and local Catholic priest.

23 June:

We departed Long Binh and arrived at Ben Cat Village at 0830. There were three helicopters and Gen. Davison accompanied the group. We were also accompanied by Charlie Whitehouse and Mr. Rick Bock, a deputy to Mr. Whitehouse.

Arriving at Ben Cat, we were driven approximately one-half mile down the road to the district chief's office where we were briefed by the district chief, Colonel Thien. The district chief briefly outlined the primary need of this area, rural development. The Army had established a large base of operations next to Ben Cat and had operated from there for some time. Many of the people had left the farms to work for the Army, and subsequently, when the Army pulled out completely, many people were left without jobs. Most of the people who did work for the Army went back to farming, and as one result of this, the rice production in that area has increased. However, the rural area needs assistance in reestablishing its roads.

The district chief said that the school system had been poor since 1965, but this year they are reviewing the system in order to improve it. He also said that 80% of the population who are eligible to vote, voted. In response to a question on local support for the government, the district chief replied that approximately 80% supported the government, 20% were non-committed and 20% were pro-Communist. He went on to explain that those who were pro-Communist were so because of members of their families being in the VC or prisoners, or in some way affiliated with the VC or Communists.

Colonel Thien said that if the VC pressure increased, he thought about 50% of the people would remain loyal to the government. The district chief said that in 21 months no action by the government had resulted in complaints by the people. He did say that complaints by the populace were communicated to his office and that action is taken on these complaints. The district chief estimated that in the last year, one-third of the VC were ho chi chans (deserters). A question was asked concerning the ownership of land and the present land reform program. Col. Thien replied that his area is comprised mostly of very small farmers. He said that 10% of the people own the land but that only 10% of the land is rice land. In fact, all of the rice land is owned by the people. The rest of the land is comprised of old rubber plantations, the main one being the Michelin Rubber Plantation. However, these rubber plantations have not been in production because the value of the piaster does not encourage the reconstruction of the plantations.

In reply to a question to Mr. Whitehouse, he answered that the district chief was a military man appointed by Saigon to supervise that
district. He is not from that district. Mr. Whitehouse would not estimate how long it would be before district chiefs are elected. After the interview with the district chief, the group walked through the main street of Ben Cat Village. This procession was led by the Congressmen, Gen. Davison, the military aides, the district chief and the staff and was followed by eight jeeps. The procession moved through the main street of town and at the other end the members boarded the jeeps and returned to the helicopter pad. Total time spent at Ben Cat was 45 minutes. The helicopters left Ben Cat and proceeded to Fire Support Base Gonder in Cambodia, arriving at 1015.

We were met by Colonel Franklin and taken into the base. Gonder had 140 men and was being reinforced to 250 at the time of our visit. Just prior to our arrival, they had found a cache of 900 bicycles which had been removed before we touched down. Col. Franklin was reasonably certain that they had found the major caches in his area. Also on display was a table of various medical items that had been discovered in one of the caches which the medical officer said were of excellent quality and in excellent condition. He also said that the packaging and preservation of medical and other supplies was very sophisticated. While at Gonder, the members met and talked with men from their states and elsewhere. The members asked for and received various complaints from the GIs.

We departed Gonder at 1120 and proceeded to the Prek area in Cambodia. We arrived at Prek at 1205. This is the base of the 333rd ARVN Task Force under Lt. Col. Pham Van Phuc. Prek is located northwest of the “Dog’s Head” area of Cambodia. The base at Prek is comprised of 1,090 ARVN troops. It was assaulted two days prior to our arrival by an estimated enemy battalion, which was driven off. Col. Phuc said that his troops were well armed, each having an M16 rifle. In response to a question, the colonel said that the relationship between the populace and troops was excellent.

We departed Prek at 1235 and proceeded to Fire Support Base Warrior in Tay Ninh Province. At Warrior the group had lunch and was briefed by Lt. Col. Phillips and Maj. Gen. Bautz on the activities of the unit in Cambodia. Briefly, this unit went into Cambodia on 18 May and came out on 15 June. They had a total of 15 enemy KIAs, eight friendly KIAs and 62 friendly wounded, most of which were minor. When they came out, they had been at Fire Support Base Warrior since 15 June. Gen. Bautz said that he felt the ARVN troops in Cambodia would be able to handle the situation there after 30 June and that the 25th ARVN Division is well equipped and doing an excellent job. He said that the ARVN forces had borne the major brunt of the security of this area.

We left Fire Support Base Warrior and proceeded to An Hoa Village in the Tran Bang District of Han Nghia Province. The Tan Hoa Village has a population of 12,774, according to the village chief. The area is considered 100% secure during the day and 95% secure at night. It has a police force of 11 policemen that also operates at night. Three PF platoons provided security for the village. The village chief was elected on 29 March 1970. He was one of 12 elected to the village council. The council then met and elected the village chief from among their group. He said that more food was produced in this village this year than the previous year. The village chief
reasoned that better security enabled more land to be cultivated. Enemy harassment in the past consisted of the levy of heavy taxes and acts of terrorism to enforce tax collections. The VC taxes consisted of about 30% of the rice production. There is no current government tax on rice. The village gets money from the national fund to support community programs. Some local programs are supported by voluntary contributions from the village inhabitants. The people were happy to have U.S. units operating in this area. Land is available for any individual desiring to grow crops. About 50% of the people rent land. Village officials are studying the land reform program. Eighty percent of the people own the land they live on (homes). Land rents for 30% of the rice yield.

The owners of the rice land generally live in the village. The owner acquired the land a long time ago—some inherited it, others purchased it. Taxes imposed by the VC were levied on the landlords and not the tenant farmer. The VC collected the taxes in the field at the end of the harvest. The village chief predicted that the community will organize and fight future VC attackers. There have been no VC attacks within the last year. The village chief was 32 years of age. He considered the land reform program to be his number one problem. The repair and rehabilitation of roads was considered to be the number one need of the village. The population of the village is steadily increasing. Most young people of the village (100 per year) join the ARVN or security forces. They enlist at 16 or 17 years of age. One-hundred percent of the people support the local government; 95% of the people support the central government. The village chief had just completed a national training course for village chiefs. The next elections will be held in three years.

The village chief sends his best regards to Congress and would be happy to have them visit his town. In response to a question, he stated, “Many people would be killed if the VC returned, particularly the young men and supporters of the government.”

The village priest, Joachim Nguyen Van Nghi, said that the situation was very good in the village. The people have few complaints now, but there was considerable harassment during the Tet Offensive. There are 3,000 Catholics in his parish. His parishioners are local people. There are no immigrants from North Vietnam. He has no contact with Catholics in North Vietnam. The Catholics fear repercussions if the VC reoccupy this area. The Catholic Church operates a school for 400 students. Four Catholic sisters from Saigon and three teachers from the local area provide the teaching staff for the school. There is no orphanage in his parish. His parishioners live two to three kilometers from the church.

At 2000 hours we were briefed by Maj. Gen. McCowan at the Delta Military Assistance Command. The following people were present at the briefing: Gen. McCowan, Mr. John Paul Vann, director of the IV CTZ area CORDS program; Mr. Wilson, deputy director of CORDS; Colonel Cavender, chief of staff, and Colonel Escola, head of the Phoenix program. The IV CTZ area has a population of six million people. The area is considered self-sufficient and capable of better production. The high rate of incidents during May was considered as a reaction to our entry into Cambodia. Enemy main forces continue to avoid us. There have been no contacts with major enemy
units. There are 78,000 ARVN troops in the IV CTZ area. The pacification system consists of 16 province teams, 96 district teams and 160 mobile advisory teams. Only three percent of the population is controlled by the VC. Eighty percent of the forces in the Delta are territorial forces. April and May were the high points in incidents. There were 1,304 incidents, higher than in Tet of 1968. But the damage done was much less. Comparative figures were given for 1969 and 1970 in three areas; in 1969 there were 52,099 KIA, 4,421 POW and 19,303 ho Chi chans; in 1970, to 23 June, there were 20,194 KIA, 1,195 POW and 8,206 ho Chi chans. Total estimated enemy forces in IV CTZ is 42,230. Eighty percent of the fighting force in IV CTZ is comprised of RF and PF forces. Questions concerning the land reform and pacification were directed to Mr. John Vann. He said that pacification in the Delta would be completed about a year from now with 95% of the people living under Government security. With regard to land reform, he stated that there was some organized resistance in the Delta to the land reform program, but that the largest amount of land reform in Vietnam is in the IV CTZ area. (He made a statement that 25 to 30% of rental paid by tenants, which figure was given to us earlier in the day by the village chief at An Hoa, was wrong, and that the rent usually borders on 50%. The legal limit is 25%, but he said that most things here are illegal.) After the briefing, plans were laid for the following day. It was decided that the entire group would travel by auto from Can Tho to Chau Doc. Accompanying the group would be Mr. Vann and one of his assistants, Mr. Lacey. Stops would be made along the way to see a province chief and some agricultural development.

24 June:

The following morning the group attended Gen. McCowan’s regular staff briefing and then proceeded to Mr. Vann’s office for a briefing by Mr. Vann on the CORDS program in IV CTZ. We left Mr. Vann’s office at 0915 in two autos to drive to Chau Doc. The first stop was made at Quang Phong Phu. There we were given a short briefing by Bill Bock, who is one of the 96 district advisors in IV CTZ. Mr. Bock outlined the security and safety of his district and said that things were basically very good in his area. He pointed out that in the elections most candidates who were elected were incumbents, and that the district chief had an influence on the election of the candidates. On the average, there were 13 candidates for 10 offices. Elections are primarily popularity contests. Very seldom are candidates criticized. The average voter only voted for about 50% of the office holders.

We left and proceeded by auto up to An Giang Province and stopped at the village of That Nhot. Here we were briefed by the district chief of That Nhot District, Colonel Tan. He said that all hamlets in his district were classified as “A” hamlets (under the HES evaluation). All hamlets and villages in his district have elected officials. This is one of the few localities in the country where the people have contributed more money for community projects than the government. The contributions of the people for these projects were usually supplemented by funds from the government. This district will resettle 2,500 refugees from Cambodia. We left That Nhot and proceeded on to Chau Doc. We stopped briefly at Thoi Thuan Village and there
we observed a privately owned hog-breeding facility. The breed of hogs to start this facility was imported from the States. We then proceeded to a small, diversified farm owned by Mr. Hoanh, of approximately four hectares. From this farm Mr. Hoanh had realized an income of approximately 4,500 U.S. dollars. On his farm he grew grain sorghum, papayas, mangos, fish and rice.

We proceeded then to Chau Doc, where we had lunch with Mr. John W. Swango, who is the senior U.S. advisor for the Chau Doc Province. After lunch we proceeded by helicopter to the Ha Tien field support base, arriving at 1430. We were briefed by Lt. Col. Brown on his operations in Cambodia. The ARVN group with which they are working first went into Cambodia on the 20th of April. They found no NVA, but they did get some enemy ammo and supplies. There was no U.S. support for this action. On 29 April there was ARVN action in the "Crow's Nest" area. U.S. aircraft did provide support for this action, but no U.S. ground troops participated. On the second of May his unit went into the Parrot's Beak area of Cambodia. They went in with ten infantry battalions and other fire and support groups. On three different incursions into Cambodia they missed the 88th NVA Regiment, which they had been hoping to engage. However, the NVA regiment would not engage in action. In response to a question, Col. Brown replied that there was no doubt of animosity between Cambodians and Vietnamese but there was no alternative; the Cambodians needed the ARVN to drive the VC and NVA out, but they don't feel that the ARVN is there to stay. In the larger district towns in this district of Cambodia the people had left and it was uncertain how long they had been gone. However, in the Parrot's Beak area, in and around Svay Rieng, the civilians had stayed. Colonel Cavendar, who was accompanying the group, said that the Cambodians were "tickled to death" to see us. He said that he was confident that, based on past performance, the ARVN could continue to do what needs to be done in Cambodia after 30 June. The Cambodians, on the other hand, need some time and materials to build up their forces.

It is uncertain how long this will take. Colonel Cavendar also said that the VC and NVA can "pop up" anywhere and anytime in Cambodia because of the excellent road network. Both Colonel Cavendar and Lt. Col. Brown were confident that the Cambodians were happy to see Americans. They feel the Cambodians want the Americans to stay. Colonel Cavendar outlined his ideas on the transportation of material under Sihanouk and said that the ships would unload at Sihanoukville and consign the goods to Cambodians, who then transported them to sanctuaries. He said it is essential, to his thinking, that the Lon Nol Government must survive, and, if it does, war in the Delta will be over in 12 to 13 months. He said that all Cambodian towns were in very good condition, having electric power, good roads and rail system, but that this was because there had been no war in Cambodia for the last 20 years as there had been in Vietnam. We departed Ha Tien at 1515 for the field command post of the 14th ARVN Regiment in Cambodia.

The 14th ARVN Regiment was located at the village of Tuk Meas in Cambodia. On the trip up, the group observed the artillery and air bombardment of a mountain occupied by NVA and VC. At this field command post at Tuk Meas, the group talked to some Cambodian
troops. They were questioned as to how the NVA treated the Cambodian people. Through the interpreter, the district chief said that at first the NVA treated them well, but later on, no one believed the NVA troops. In response to a question, the district chief said that, if the NVA returned, the people would try to fight them, but they had few guns and little ammunition, not enough to go around. He said that most people would be loyal to him if they had weapons and ammunition. The district chief said that he wanted the U.S. to stay and felt that it was necessary for the ARVN troops to stay until the VC were driven out and then he wanted the ARVN to leave.

We departed this post at 1615 and proceeded to the ferry landing at Neak Loung, arriving there at 1645. We were met and briefed by Major Miller, USMC, the chief advisor to the ARVN Marines and a battalion of Cambodian soldiers. The U.S. is building a small landing strip at the ferry crossing to support the ARVN Marines after June 30. It was pointed out that the Cambodian battalion numbered 200 men and zero weapons. A gunnery sergeant who speaks Cambodian led the group into the village to speak with some local Cambodians. After a short, non-productive conversation, the group returned to the base. The gunnery sergeant said that, in his relations with the Cambodians, he found that they were very eager to help the U.S. find the VC and NVA. It was the opinion of Col. Cavendar and Maj. Miller that the Cambodians in this area were very helpful and would continue to fight the VC and the NVA if given the equipment.

We departed Neak Loung by helicopter at approximately 1720 and arrived at Tan Son Nhut at 1845. The group had dinner at the Officers Mess at BOQ I and proceeded back to the hotel.
SELECT COMMITTEE TEAM FOUR VIETNAM FIELD TRIP REPORT FOR JUNE 22-24, 1970

Team Four was composed of Congressmen Montgomery, Hamilton and Robison. Staff members were Colonel Marshall and Mr. Clemendot. The team arrived at Can Tho and was taken to the CORDS VIP House, following which the members went to the headquarters for a briefing by Colonel Cavendar. During the middle of the briefing, the group was joined by Major General McCowan, Commanding Officer of IV CTZ, and John Paul Vann, director of CORDS for IV CTZ. The following random comments were gathered during the briefing. Phu Quoc Island, which is territorially part of Kien Gian Province, is the location of a POW camp for VC and NVA. We were told there were approximately 25,000 POWs on the island. One officer made the comment that the prisoners were not required to do any type of constructive work, including the drawing of their own food. IV CTZ, or the Delta, has a population of six million people. The ethnic breakdown is 89 percent Vietnamese, 7 percent Cambodian, and 4 percent minority groups.

A Regional Force (RF) company is composed of approximately 123 men, and a Popular Force (PF) platoon contains approximately 35 men. The U.S. has a three-man advisory team with each 400-450-man ARVN battalion, but the advisors stay in the battalion headquarters and do not go out into the combat area as such.

The IV CTZ area has experienced increased ralliers (VC defector) in the three provinces along the Cambodian border following the military operations in Cambodia. The group was also given the usual statistics on friendly and enemy forces killed or wounded, the number of enemy incidents and the number of friendly contacts.

One officer made the comment that there is not a great deal of mixing between the Vietnamese and Americans. Basically, they each live in their own compounds or areas. American advisors will be out of Cambodia by June 30, whether the ARVN troops come out or not.

In IV CTZ one can drive to 84 of the 96 district capitals and can drive to every province capital without an escort. There has been no significant drop-off in pacification in IV CTZ, but there has been a slowing in progress.

Sixty percent of the casualties to civilians, as well as troops, are caused by booby traps.

According to Mr. Vann, progress has not been as fast because of Cambodia, but the rate of progress should be greater than projected in three to six months because of the Cambodian operations.

As of today, 92 percent of the villages have an elected government and 88 percent of the hamlets. This compares to 60 percent of the villages and 36 percent of the hamlets in January 1969. The average age of the village officials is 45 years. The province chief is from the military and appointed by the President, as is the district chief. Although in most cases the district chief is appointed by the Minister...
of the Interior or the Prime Minister, village or hamlet chiefs are civilians and elected by the people, except in some insecure areas where they are appointed by the Government. Mr. Vann made the statement that, in a free and open election where the NLF and present Government of South Vietnam plus other political parties were allowed to run, the NLF would receive about ten percent of the vote, the present Government about 30 to 35 percent, and the balance of the vote would go to the other political parties or splinter groups. He also stated that, in a showdown election between the present Government and the NLF, the NLF would get ten to twenty percent of the vote at the very most, and the present Government would receive from 80 to 90 percent of the vote.

Males between the ages of 15 and 45 years are required to be members of the Peoples' Self-Defense Force (PSDF). Mr. Vann expressed the opinion that, within the last year, the inflation picture in South Vietnam has changed, and it is now mainly affecting the urban areas (civil service), and the farmers are becoming the most affluent in the nation. One advisor present stated that many farmers in the Delta receive an equivalent of 2,500 U.S. dollars a year for the rice they grow in addition to the produce they raise for their own consumption.

Mr. Vann stated that the idea we, meaning America, would be putting U.S. advisory troops in great danger when the U.S. pulls out its combat forces has not been borne out in IV CTZ, where no great calamity has befallen advisory troops during the past year.

Mr. Vann said that supposedly there are many thousand "silent ralliers" who will "switch off" Communism because they realize it is not necessary to fight for a better way of life because GVN has given it to them under the present policies. In effect, he was saying that the charts kept by military and CORDS do not reflect the true number of defectors from the ranks of the VC.

Mr. Vann stated that there has been significant improvement in selection of province and district chiefs who now receive training for the job and no longer buy their positions.

It was the opinion of General McCowan that America will never be able to withdraw completely, but we will always have advisory and air support troops in South Vietnam.

Colonel Cavendar believes that the Lon Nol Government is going to need propping up by someone in order to survive and, further, that the survival of a pro-West government in Cambodia will have a big bearing on what happens in Vietnam.

Mr. Vann's belief is that America will be the winner no matter what happens in Cambodia. His opinion is based on the thesis that if Lon Nol or a pro-West government survives it will be to our betterment, and if the Communists or North Vietnamese were to take over Cambodia that they would become so deeply involved in maintaining the conquest that they would no longer be able to concentrate on South Vietnam.

On Tuesday morning, the three Congressmen went their different ways, with Mr. Robison driving down to An Xuyen with John Vann, and Lavey Wright. Mr. Hamilton spent the entire day in Kien Hoa Province. Mr. Montgomery travelled to various villages and provinces in the IV CTZ area. The following is an account of Mr. Montgomery's activities.
The first stop was in Ha Tien, South Vietnam, on the Gulf of Thailand. This was the location of the First Battalion, Fourth Infantry Regiment, Ninth Division, ARVN.

Following this, he travelled to three different sites in Cambodia, of which two were Tuk Meas and Phu Turloap. At one of the stops in Cambodia, there was a small cache of enemy arms that had been uncovered by the ARVN troops. The captured weapons consisted of various kinds and makes of rifles and hand grenades. Also, at one of the stops in Cambodia, there was an example of mutual cooperation by ARVN troops, Cambodian troops and U.S. military advisors. A third point to be made about the troops in Cambodia is that the people in one of the villages were not very friendly, which gave one the impression that they had not yet decided on whose side they were.

Following the stops in Cambodia, Mr. Montgomery proceeded to Chau Doc City in Chau Doc District of Chau Doc Province. This was the location of the CORDS Province Headquarters, as well as the headquarters for the military advisors. Mr. John P. Swango, senior advisor of the CORDS program for Chau Doc Province, related some of the remarks made by President Thieu at a joint meeting of district and province chiefs on the previous day. According to Mr. Swango, President Thieu made the strong point that local leaders must become self-sustaining and work harder in their efforts to provide a secure life for the people. Supposedly, President Thieu also made a plea for increased rice production in order to stop importing rice by 1971. In essence, President Thieu supposedly gave his province and district chiefs a dressing down.

Mr. Swango stated that the big problem for the VC in the mountains of the Delta is malaria, which is of a different strain from that found in the North. He estimated the attrition rate from malaria to be 50 percent. In further comments by Mr. Swango, he indicated that he considered it would be a disaster if the Lon Nol Government were to fall, and the morale of the people in his area is excellent.

Mr. Montgomery next proceeded to Tri Ton. This is the location of an artillery base that had received a mortar attack on the previous day in which three people were killed and two wounded. While the American advisors were showing the Congressmen the two pieces of artillery, a South Vietnamese serviceman approached the group and, with a great deal of pride, explained how he operated the equipment and those locations around the bunker that had been hit by mortars in the past.

The last stop in IV CTZ for the day was Tinh Bien. This is the location of a radar installation which picks up the movement of persons either on foot or by bicycle or other means.

In travelling from Tri Ton to Tinh Bien, Mr. Montgomery had the opportunity to observe a helicopter gunship attack on one of the several hills to be found in the Delta.

The three Congressmen of Team Four were finally reunited in the II Field Force Headquarters in Plantation on Tuesday night. There they had a very abbreviated briefing by Lieutenant General Michael Davison before joining him for dinner in the Generals Mess.

On Wednesday morning the three Congressmen decided to remain together for the day's activities. General Davison accompanied the group. Their first stop was Nhon Trach District in Bien Hoa Province.
The actual location was Phu Than Village. The group was met by John Lyles, CORDS Director for the district, and Colonel Bich with the ARVN. The following points were brought out during the briefing by the two men. The rural development cadre and the pacification program have Vietnamese who assist the people with the agricultural and public works projects. Nhon Trach District has the first Vietnamese Rome Plow Program. There are also villages self-development programs in which the people of a village will decide what particular project they wish to undertake. The GVN will then provide up to two-thirds of the cost, with the people providing the other one-third of the necessary funds. American troops take part in civic action programs in the district, such as helping to refurbish public buildings in the village. Overall, the outlook is very favorable in Hnom Trach District. They have a goal of 100 percent security by June 30. Presently, 89 percent of the population lives in a secure area. Colonel Bich feels the ARVN can keep the district secure without U.S. troops once the Rome Plow program is completed and certainly by 1971. At present, the district is short a few PF platoons.

The group next proceeded to Bearcat, which is the location of the Royal Thai Black Panther Division. The Thai troops have been in South Vietnam since 1968 and are completely volunteer. The officers with whom the group talked were Maj. Gen. Sawasdi (Sawat), Special Colonel (Brig. Gen.) Vasin (Wasen), the Chief of Staff, and Special Colonel Jetth, Deputy Commander. Even though General Sawasdi was very uncommunicative, the point was made that the Royal Thai Force had very little contact with the enemy in the last few weeks. The number of men stated at Bearcat is 12,000. The total number of men in the Thai Army is 50,000, and Thailand has a population of 33 million. All the Thais are required to serve two years in the military.

The next stop was An Loc District in Binh Long Province. The CORDS Director with whom the group talked was John Sylvester. The following points were made. The economy of the district is mainly based on rubber, with some rice production. The population is 67,000 people. They have reestablished RF or PF outposts in all the outer hamlets. There were seven enemy regiments operating in the district as late as last September or October. The Ninth Regiment of the Fifth Division of ARVN, which is stationed in the district, is greatly improved. The military activity in Cambodia has been quite helpful to the province. The VC have been active since Cambodia but there has been no NVA activity. Practically all the province is in the “A-B-C” category of a secure province. Sylvester believes that HES has provided a great amount of leverage to get village and district chiefs to carry through with pacification programs. Withdrawal of U.S. troops will make the job more difficult. The present schedule is to have Binh Long Province completely protected by ARVN troops by the end of July. The civilians gave the impression of disliking the VC more and more and wanting them to cease their activities. Village and hamlet elections are working relatively well. Province councils will have some say-so in the allocations of funds to villages and hamlets. The civilian population appears to have a good attitude toward Americans. The rally rate is up since the Cambodian operations, but is not as high as had been hoped for. According to the South Vietnamese Constitution,
provincial chiefs are supposed to be elected and not appointed, although it was not known when this provision would be adhered to.

While in Binh Long the group talked to Colonel Nhut, Province Chief. He believes that with U.S. air and logistical support ARVN will be able to maintain security in the Province. He further believes that the civilian population does realize that the U.S. is withdrawing its troops and he is trying to brace them for this future eventuality.

The group next proceeded to Gondor Fire Support Base in Cambodia where they had an opportunity to view a sample of some of the VC caches found in recent days and talk with U.S. servicemen stationed there. After this they dropped into the middle of the jungle nearby to view an arms cache that had been found the previous day and was still in the underground tunnels.

The group next proceeded to Tri Tam City in Tri Tam District of Binh Duong Province. They met with an American major and Colonel Chau, the district chief. The primary economy of the district is rubber, more specifically, the Michelin Plantation. It was pointed out that the district is operating at only eight percent of possible productivity. On the question as to what would happen to the Michelin Plantation under the land reform program, no direct answer was ever received. Although it was never stated specifically, Tri Tam District appears to be very insecure. They have tried to concentrate the people into those villages and hamlets which are secure in order to increase rubber production. A contradictory fact was the figure that 70 percent of the population was in the “A-B-C” category on the HES scale. The district has suffered from the Cambodian operations on the standpoint of security.

Team Four then proceeded back to Saigon.
A meeting was held at 8:15 a.m., above date, at the Lane Xang Hotel, Vientiane, Laos, between the Congressional team of Congressmen Montgomery, Adair, and Anderson and Staff Director Napier and Mr. Arthur J. Dommen of the Los Angeles Times and author of Conflict in Laos, a study considered authoritative by the U.S. mission there. The following is a paraphrase of the discussion:

Mr. Dommen stated that things in Laos were moving fast in light of developments in Cambodia,

Mr. Adair asked what are the Royal Laotian Government's (RLG) chances of survival.

Mr. Dommen: Pretty good, if you leave out its unpredictable Royal Laotian Army (FAR) generals. As long as the U.S. and USSR continue to back the RLG, I see no chance of change. An army coup now would mean a cutoff of U.S. aid and the FAR has been told this. The Prime Minister (H. R. H. Prince Souvanna Phouma) is responsive to U.S. needs.

Mr. Montgomery: What did you want to talk with us about?

Mr. Dommen: To give you some of my own ideas.

Mr. Montgomery: We're having a working dinner (with U.S. mission members) and will discuss various operations by the U.S. Government (USG). Our opinion thus far of the Laotian people is that they are happy and want to be left alone.

Mr. Dommen: Yes, but their situation next door to Vietnam is the problem.

Mr. Adair: Have you seen any moves toward a free Southeast Asian union?

Mr. Dommen: There have been some moves since the Cambodian crisis.

Mr. Montgomery: You mean the Jakarta Conference?

Mr. Dommen: No formal ones—just bilateral.

Mr. Montgomery: If you had to write our report, what economic and political weak and strong points would you list in Southeast Asia (SEA)?

Mr. Dommen: We have allowed ourselves to become involved in political liabilities in SEA: first South Vietnam and now Cambodia.
The worst a government can be accused of is to be a U.S. puppet. This is not true of the Prime Minister (PM) here, he gives a very positive aspect; don’t overlook this.

The American people ask what is working against them, economically, militarily, etc., but then overlook the political factor. North Vietnam’s (NVN) political war depends upon the villagers. This is very important.

Mr. Adair: Would you link this with the withdrawal of U.S. troops?

Mr. Dommen: Definitely, yes, if it’s done smoothly, without too much shock.

Mr. Adair: What sort of schedule?

Mr. Dommen: Play it by ear, but as fast as possible. However, a fixed schedule is a mistake; it gives the Government of Vietnam (GVN) a lever.

Mr. Adair: Last evening, the PM said that in the U.S. you can’t move an ashtray without telling the world about it.

Mr. Dommen: Yes, it undercuts us and gives us a negative position vis-a-vis NVN.

Mr. Adair: Ambassador Lodge said that he returned from Paris frustrated.

Mr. Dommen: Yes; NVN quoting U.S. Congressmen.

Mr. Adair: Yes.

Mr. Montgomery: What should we pass on? What effect would presidential announcement of troop withdrawals after the fact have?

Mr. Dommen: He can vary the rate with his announcement. The President (Mr. Nixon) phrased it well.

Mr. Montgomery: What do you think of President Thieu?

Mr. Dommen: He’s very capable, although he’ll get brickbats. Those who say get rid of him are being ridiculous. He’s a general who has become a good politician.

Mr. Adair: If we could tie troop withdrawals less to domestic pressures than to GVN capabilities, would that strengthen our hand?

Mr. Dommen: Yes. NVN representatives in Paris gain by U.S. domestic political pressures.

Mr. Adair: I have a feeling out in the “boonies” that U.S. withdrawal improves the local situation and enables (the locals in) setting their own houses in order.

Mr. Dommen: I agree. They have to know that they must run their own affairs with their own resources; as long as they have the U.S. as a prop, they will take advantage.

Mr. Adair: Should we continue U.S. economic aid at the present level?

Mr. Dommen: Yes, to mitigate the shock (of withdrawal). I can’t see the end result (clearly). If South Vietnam must adjust to lower living standards or whether the people will move back into the city from the country or whether the rich will emigrate, etc.—all these things are not clear. Primarily, the (U.S.) Administration must avoid shaking the situation as much as possible.

Mr. Adair: Mr. Montgomery asked you about our report. What do you think would be useful to stress in it, if we all 12 members agree?

Mr. Dommen: Stress the extreme importance Hanoi attaches to U.S. public opinion. In Paris, they (NVN delegation) read the Congressional Record daily and know how to play. They still have enough
control of the military situation to be able to time their operations with public opinion in the U.S. However, they handled the POW situation badly. They didn't see the depth of feeling in America, were playing games, and when they got a feedback, they quit playing games.

Mr. Adair: We are carrying petitions (concerning the POWs to the NVN Embassy). Do you think that this will be helpful?

Mr. Dommen: Yes, all this is useful. They'll be on the defensive. They'll regard you as propaganda agents because they can't understand a spontaneous gesture. It's significant how they backed off their POW position.

Mr. ADAIR: There's a strong feeling at home (about the POWs).

Mr. DOMMEN: They hold to a strongly legalistic position—the war crimes (thesis).

Mr. ADAIR: There was an International Red Cross meeting in Istanbul awhile back. Were NVN representatives there?

Mr. DOMMEN: They're hostile to the International Red Cross, weren't there and attacked the decisions made there.
A meeting was held at 10:45 a.m., above date, at the Lane Xang Hotel, Vientiane, Laos, between the Congressional team of Congressmen Montgomery, Adair and Anderson and Staff Director Napier and three American ladies whose sons or husbands are USAF pilots MIA over Vietnam. The ladies were: Mrs. Harold C. Shively, mother of Capt. James Shively, Mrs. Galileo F. Bossio, wife of Lt. Col. Bossio, and Mrs. Wesley D. Schierman, wife of Maj. Schierman.

The topic was a meeting which the three Congressmen had had at 10 a.m. for 15 minutes with a Third Secretary of the North Vietnamese Embassy in Vientiane, who refused to give them his name.

Congressman Montgomery: It was quite an experience. The man who talked with us got in a shouting match. He was a Third Secretary, not the Charge d'Affaires.

One of the ladies said she had talked with a Third Secretary on Wednesday and the other two talked with still another one.

Congressman Montgomery said the Minister had left the Embassy... and we saw him return as we three left there. Possibly he had left deliberately to avoid seeing us. When we met with the Secretary, he asked what we were doing there. We made a strong plea to him for North Vietnam to allow the sending of an international committee of Red Cross representatives as a third party to North Vietnam to investigate the conditions of our men being held prisoner there. We told him that we had a petition bearing 50,000 signatures from one city in Mr. Adair's district. At the end of the short meeting, he refused to accept the petition.

"He got angry and made the statement that there are no North Vietnamese killing American people in the U.S. We tried to tell him about the good treatment that NVA POWs are receiving in South Vietnam and that Mr. Adair had seen them in the POW camp at Da Nang. The Secretary became emotional, saying that U.S. pilots had killed people in North Vietnam." Chairman Montgomery said, "If your people get out of South Vietnam, we will."

Mr. Adair said that the Secretary reiterated that there were no North Vietnamese killing American people. One of the ladies said that they were told the same thing, that U.S. pilots bombed and killed his people, although perhaps the American Government forced them to do so.

Congressman Montgomery: The Secretary said, "You are in your Parliament; maybe you as Congressmen are responsible." The ladies were told that the North Vietnamese have no POWs and this bogged down in a discussion of terminology, he claiming that they were war criminals instead.

Congressman Montgomery: We made him get up and leave, saying the interview is over. We did not lose our poise and he did. In sum, we
were mainly firm with him and made him break off the interview after about 15 minutes.

Ladies: We had a similar experience in Stockholm over the telephone talking to a Vietnamese spokesman in their mission there. We told him that our trip was sponsored and paid for by popular subscription in Spokane and that our trip typified the deep concern of all the American people on the POW issue. The Stockholm North Vietnam representative said that he had received the Spokane message from the backers of the trip. He said it was a harsh message and it did not represent the American people but the Nixon Government and the three ladies. We said that we do represent the American people.

Congressman Montgomery: He gave back to us our informal message which had been sent over from our Embassy. The ladies said that he had kept their letter and asked if the Secretary had gotten the names of the Congressmen. Congressman Adair said that the Secretary had asked each of their names and which of them was chairman of the group. Congressman Adair then asked the ladies if they were leaving the next day (27 June). They said that they were leaving and going home by way of Bangkok and Tokyo. They had been there (in Vientiane) a month.

Ladies: Did you explain the conditions of your petition?

Congressman Adair: Yes, it gave the totals, etc., and said that there were 50,000 signatures from one city. We could have easily had a thousand times that many.

The ladies said that they were told they could write as much as they wanted to their men folk.

In closing the conference, the members offered their sincere good wishes to the ladies who expressed their gratitude for the efforts outlined.
SELECT COMMITTEE GROUP A’S TRIP REPORT ON LAOS FOR JUNE
25-26, 1970
(Chairman Montgomery, Congressmen Adair and Anderson, Staff
Director Napier)

I. Summary of Trip: The group arrived at Vientiane at 11:45 a.m. and met with U.S. Ambassador G. McMurtrie Godley at the Embassy at 12:30, who briefed it informally on the current situation in Laos. The group immediately flew up-country in an Air American aircraft.

From the air the members viewed the Japanese built runway extension to Vientiane Airport and the construction of the Nam Ngum River Dam being built by USAID. They landed at Vang Vieng, Neutralist Laos Headquarters, toured the USAID hospital there where they saw wounded Laotian Government soldiers. They visited a small dam built by AID and flew on the Muong Kassy where there is a roadside airstrip and AID highway construction crew on Route 13.

Returning to Vientiane, the members again met briefly with Ambassador Godley. They went with him to pay their respects to H.R.H. Prince Souvanna Phouma, Prime Minister, and had a frank and useful half-hour exchange with him. The Premier stressed the threat to his country and the need for U.S. military and economic aid to withstand it. He also pointed to the threat to Thailand posed by the road being built by the Chinese Communists through Northern Laos.

That evening the members attended a working dinner hosted by Counselor Monteagle Stearns, where useful information was garnered from other Embassy staffers.

The next morning the members conferred with Los Angeles Times newsman Arthur J. Dommen, who has a great deal of expertise on Laos, and whose book “Conflict in Laos” was considered by Embassy staffers to be one of the two most authoritative American works on the subject.

Afterwards the members attended the Ambassador’s morning Operations Meeting and received the mission’s daily situation reports—political, economic, public affairs and military.

The members then went to the North Vietnamese Embassy to try to discuss the status of U.S. POWs and MIAs in NVN (see separate report). After that, they conferred with three American ladies whose menfolk are USAF pilots and are MIA or POWs in NVN, and then left Vientiane for Phnom Penh.

II. Members’ Impressions:

The Chairman noted that they saw how U.S. economic aid of $50 million annually to Laos is being used, in addition to $120 million annual military assistance. Relatively few Americans employed by the U.S. Government are in Laos—State, AID, CIA and armed forces—there are about 900 in the mission and about 2,000 in all. There are very few U.S. military in uniform in Laos—about five with
each of the five military regions. CIA is working with Laotians, especially tribal people, in guerrilla activities against the North Vietnamese Army and Pathet Lao (NVA/PL). The Lao people are basically happy, don't want Communism and really want to be left alone. Lao refugees fleeing either from NVA/PL attacks or friendly air strikes almost invariably head south and not north. (U.S. air strikes in northern Laos are controlled personally and carefully by our Ambassador.) The Chairman stressed the importance of the P.M.'s talk—the threat of the Chinese road; noted that the Prince had meant to stress that no U.S. ground combat troops are needed in Laos but that continued U.S. financial aid is indispensable, especially after U.S. ground combat forces withdraw from the Republic of Vietnam (RVN); and the P.M.'s view that it was essential for Laos' future that U.S. support troops remain in Thailand.

The Chairman received the impression that the next year will be very difficult for Laos, and that the NVN/PL may well gain more ground in 1971.

Congressman Adair was most impressed by his conversation with "Pop" Buehl. The latter is convinced that if the tribal people are to survive (others besides Meos are fighting on the Royal Laotian Government—RLG—side), Laos must have substantial U.S. aid, although much less than Western countries would need—a continuation at the present level, or perhaps a bit more, would suffice.

Earl Diffendorfer, head of AID at Pakse, was more skeptical of the efficacy of U.S. aid and pessimistic because of Laotian corruption. (Buehl was more optimistic.) Both men strongly held that the ordinary Laotian sees as his great enemy not Communist China, but NVN, which is present in Laos here and now. The Lao fear the tough North Vietnamese, whereas the Chinese are more remote.

Both Buehl and Diffendorfer, however, agree that there was considerable infiltration into Laos by Chinese. Perhaps the significance of this is for them to settle in local communities and set up an infrastructure.

On the military side, Mr. Adair got conflicting reports on Laotian abilities. Some informants said too many broke and ran, but Mr. Buehl said that if they get weapons they will fight. The question was raised as to whether informants were discussing the Royal Armed Forces (FAR) or the Meos and other guerrillas (one old Asia-hand informant told a staffer that sometimes Royal Laotian Air Force—RLAF—pilots won't fly under weather conditions that USAF pilots will fly, and say that there are bad spirits in the valleys there. The Ambassador had noted earlier that Laotian pilots are good Buddhists and tend to minimize their estimates of enemy KIA—quite opposite from U.S. pilots. He also said the RLAF is now flying AC-47 "spooky" gunships.) The Chairman added that he was told that Laos would have long since fallen without CIA support to the guerrillas.

Congressman Anderson referred to reports of the change in Laotian capabilities now and two years ago. Then, when the NVA/PL took a place they did not lose it. Recently, however, when they overran a location on the Plaine Des Jarres (PDJ), Meo guerrilla leader Major General Vang Pho learned the enemy had just left a screening force and took the place, capturing tanks among other things. It was a great morale boost to the Lao.
Mr. Anderson's overall reactions were mixed and he got no items of firm assurance. At present there is relatively little military activity during the rainy season. One of our Embassy staff said that the RLG could handle the PL if NVN got out. An Australian radio reporter felt that everyone was playing "games" in Laos, for instance, the U.S. bombing a Ho Chi Minh Trail of which NVN denies the existance.

Mr. Anderson noted our Ambassador's statement that the Lao were engaging two crack NVN divisions which would otherwise be fighting in the Republic of Vietnam (RVN). In Laos, on the other hand, the U.S. is not losing any ground combat troops. Mr. Anderson also noted the RLG's contention that if the U.S. gives it the means, it will furnish the troops. The Ambassador contended that the U.S. is "getting a big bang for its bucks" in Laos.

Mr. Anderson talked with Mr. Tony Martin in charge of the AID highway construction program on Route 13 at Muong Kassy (between the two capitals of Vientiane and Luang Prabang) who has not only much roadbuilding experience, but also three years in Thailand and three years in Cambodia. Mr. Martin said of the overall Southeast Asian situation that he felt people at home didn't get the full perspective from news reports. Of his Lao workers, he said that despite their backwardness they do get the job done, albeit more slowly than workers of more advanced nations. He remarked that his crew is sitting there daily without Communist harassment. Although there have been ambushes to the north and south on Route 13, the PL/NVA haven't bothered his equipment.

Americans not connected with the U.S. Government (USG) told Mr. Anderson that they felt that Lao Rightists want to pull Laos into an active cooperative front with South Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia for common defense, and that Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma in trying to maintain an equilibrium was caught between them and the group on the left, which means that at any time the Communist want to take over, they can do so.

Mr. Anderson agreed with the latter view and was interested in the former. He has often speculated whether Southeast Asian Governments can get together on regional cooperation and defense. One other point made to him was that of the closeness with which Americans in the official USG agencies in Laos work together without pulling and tugging, that there are inevitably difficulties but they are resolved satisfactorily. Mr. Anderson closed his views by saying that one of his informants judged that the Lao situation is "tenacious but peaceful, but felt that Americans should keep a boat to cross the Mekong."
Among the nations of Southeast Asia, Thailand is unique in several respects. It has no history of domination by a colonial power (although it was occupied by the Japanese during World War II). Almost 90% of its 34 million people are of Thai stock; a Chinese minority of some 4 million constitutes a source of some concern. Basically there is a strong sense of national identification in most of the country. By any standard of the area, the country has enjoyed enlightened leadership both from its kings and from its popular officials. Under able administration, the predominantly agricultural base of the economy has been progressively diversified to include a large industrial sector. The result has been a growing economy which, in turn, has relieved some of the economic and social tensions that characterize its neighbors. The one notable exception is in the northeast part of the country which, until recently had been neglected. Finally, since the end of World War II, Thailand has pursued a vigorous anti-Communist policy and taken a pro-Western stance, sometimes at considerable risk.

More than any other country in Southeast Asia, Thailand has a strong sense of regional development. It is sold on the idea that the countries of Southeast Asia should assume greater responsibility for their own security. Yet it recognizes the differences between, and the stresses within, its neighbors that make an effective regional organization difficult of immediate achievement. While other powers that once played a major role in the security of the area have progressively reduced their commitments, the U.S. has remained the principal reed upon which Thailand relies. It is this identification with the U.S. that led the Thais to grant the U.S. permission to establish six major air installations plus smaller military facilities during the Vietnamese conflict.

The only treaty that links Thailand and the U.S. in a military framework is SEATO which commits neither nation to a specific course of action other than their respective constitutional processes in case of attack. Its value is more psychological than real. Thailand views the announced U.S. withdrawal with real distress; they interpret it as evidence of U.S. fatigue and disenchantment. Although they are reconciled to the fact that the U.S. will withdraw, the full impact on them will be the way in which we withdraw. It will be necessary for the U.S. to withdraw in a manner that shows we intend to protect those things that brought us into Southeast Asia. Any precipitous withdrawal would, from their viewpoint, be disastrous for them and the surrounding countries. Should the communists be able to take Laos and Cambodia and the U.S. not support Thailand's resistance to such a takeover, then Thailand would have to consider a change in its basic policy toward the U.S. in particular and the non-communist world in general.
It is worth noting that Thailand does not expect any support of U.S. ground forces from the U.S. The Thais have followed closely the changing mood in the U.S., especially as reflected in the debates in the Senate. Concern over the communist threat through Laos has been heightened by recent events in Cambodia. If that country falls, it will have serious consequences for all of Southeast Asia.

While Thailand is prepared to contribute troops to assist the Cambodians in resisting communist aggression, it cannot do that without external assistance. The limited capabilities of the Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) makes it dependent to a high degree upon U.S. airpower. Yet, even in airpower, the Thais are not relying entirely upon the U.S. to improve their own force. They are now purchasing U.S. aircraft. The principal weakness of the RTAF is the insufficiency of trained pilots and ground crews. There is some doubt whether Thai standards for its pilots are unnecessarily high thus reducing the number of potential trainees. Low salaries for trained personnel have resulted in a high attrition rate. In almost all categories of aircraft—fixed wing and helicopters—there is a deficiency in the authorized strength. While the size of the Royal Thai Army is adequate, some question arises as to the combat capabilities of the units. Too many are stationed in and around Bangkok. Although Thailand relies upon the draft for its recruits, most of the draftees return to their villages after completing their two years of service. Few are selected for NCO and officer training. It was encouraging to note that Thailand has sent training teams to Cambodia to assist that country.

While the Thais understand that U.S. military assistance will not include combat forces, they are hopeful that U.S. economic assistance will continue and even be increased. Through fiscal year 1969, U.S. economic bilateral assistance to Thailand amounted to $535 million and that from international organizations was $376 million. These external resources combined with those of Thailand itself have made it possible for Thailand to maintain an average annual growth rate of its GNP by about eight percent. Government expenditures for defense account for 23% of the budget and those for economic and social development are 14% of the budget, both sizable increases over earlier years. At the same time foreign exchange holdings have shown some decrease due, in part, to increased imports to support industrialization and to improve the standard of living. Thailand cannot readily shift more of its budget to defense expenditures without jeopardizing its economic and social program.

If the latter is neglected, it will only aggravate Thailand's most serious internal problem, namely, insurgency in the north and northeast portions of the country. It may be noted that Communist guerrilla activities along the border with Malaysia is being countered through close cooperation with Malaysia.

Thailand is the regional center for many international organizations. This in itself is a tribute to the far-sighted role of regional collaboration that Thailand sees as the strength of the area. One of the most notable, but perhaps least known, is the development of the Mekong River basin. With the assistance of the various international lending agencies, the countries bordering the Mekong have already begun extensive surveys and the construction of two dams. In spite of its political differences with North Vietnam, Thai officials expressed the hope that that country would participate in this joint venture.
SELECT COMMITTEE TRIP REPORT ON CAMBODIA, JUNE 26-27, 1970

(ENTIRE COMMITTEE, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF CONGRESSMAN HAMILTON)

With fewer than seven million inhabitants living in an area about the equivalent of the state of Missouri, Cambodia was brought into the orbit of hostilities in Southeast Asia, primarily by the turn of events within that country. French rule of Cambodia ended in late 1953. From that date until the spring of 1970, the dominant political figure, first as King and then as Prince, had been Sihanouk. Although the country has a popularly elected legislative body, its powers were progressively diminished. Sihanouk, like Sukarno in Indonesia, was an avowed nationalist anxious to maintain the independence of the country. With a mercurial temperament and a naive political mind, he pursued lines of policies that defeated the very objective he sought.

The geography of Cambodia did not permit it to remain unaffected by the conflict in South Vietnam which forms its eastern boundary. The Laotian panhandle borders the northeast portion of Cambodia. As is the case with many newly created countries, short of a natural boundary such as a river, national frontiers are unmarked or ill-marked. In either case, however, the North Vietnamese showed no concern and availed themselves of the terrain and the quiet acquiescence of Prince Sihanouk to establish large sanctuaries from which to carry on the conflict in South Vietnam.

Given the nature of the terrain, it was inevitable that border incidents would occur. In May 1965 Sihanouk broke relations with the United States after a series of such incidents. This may have been a convenient pretext since he had started moving closer to Communist influence in the early 1960's.

Another complicating factor is the historic concern, even distrust, that the Cambodians have of their neighbors, especially Thailand and Vietnam. Over the long history of the country both the Thais and the Vietnamese have coveted Cambodian territory. The present boundaries of Cambodia are approximately those marked by the French more than a century ago that saved the area from further reduction. Although the Khmers (Cambodians) comprise about 85% of the population, there are sizable numbers of Vietnamese and Chinese in the country along with Chams (of Moslem descent) and hill tribes. Both the Vietnamese and Chinese groups have exercised an influence in the economy disproportionate to their numbers.

Both the internal and external policies of Sihanouk created growing uneasiness in the country. In late 1969, as nearly as can be determined, other leaders discussed (with caution) how to cope with the situation. Sihanouk's departure for Europe in January provided the opportunity. Demonstrations started in several Cambodian border areas against the presence of North Vietnamese. These were followed by demonstrations in the capital, Phnom Penh, resulting in the sacking of the

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North Vietnamese and Chinese embassies. If the present Cambodian leaders did not initiate the demonstrations, they certainly did not discourage them. On March 12, Prime Minister Lon Nol and the First Deputy Prime Minister Sirik Matak, issued an ultimatum demanding that North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces leave Cambodia within 72 hours. When these demands were not met, Cambodia requested and received support from the South Vietnamese forces (ARVN). On March 18 Sihanouk was deposed by action of the Cambodian Parliament. Penetration of the eastern provinces continued by the ARVN. On April 30 President Nixon announced that U.S. forces would cooperate with those of South Vietnam to clean out enemy sanctuaries and that U.S. forces would be withdrawn by June 30.

When the Select Committee was in Cambodia, the time set by the President for U.S. withdrawal was approaching. There was understandable interest in the success of the operation and more interest in what happens after that. About a third of the country is the scene of conflict with enemy forces. Elsewhere the enemy occupies a number of key cities and towns. Most of the principal highways are interdicted by antigovernment forces. While some North Vietnamese forces are operating, irregulars in the form of Viet Cong and possibly pro-Sihanouk groups in the countryside are active.

When military operations began, the Cambodian army consisted of about 35,000 men. Its effectiveness was limited by inadequate training and lack of communications, mobile equipment and air support. In order of priority, the needs are arms, ammunition and communications equipment. The U.S. has provided some 30,000 small arms, plus 8,000 to 10,000 captured weapons and urgently needed medical supplies. The Select Committee made clear, as it did elsewhere, that the U.S. would meet the deadline for withdrawal from Cambodia and the progressive reduction of U.S. forces in Southeast Asia. Cambodian leaders, although not happy about the prospect, are reconciled to it. They expressed the hope that the U.S. would continue to supply military hardware. Other countries would supply software and training of Cambodian units would be carried out in South Vietnam. Captured enemy weapons, it is estimated, will give them a capability for at least 6 months. Although the army strength has shot up from 35,000 to 180,000 through mobilization of men and women, it was stated that many of these are government and office workers who do not need arms. Estimated provided the committee were that about 70,000 to 80,000 should be armed.

Unlike the war between North and South Vietnam, the conflict in Cambodia is against a foreign power. Thus the divisive elements that exist in Vietnam are at most minimal, although one cannot exclude the possibility that Sihanouk may be able to rally some Cambodians in the countryside. From the viewpoint of Southeast Asia, it is the first opportunity for them to join together to help a beleaguered country against a common enemy. The elimination of a number of key enemy sanctuaries provides a breathing space for the Cambodians to improve their military capability and, at the same time, for the other nations of the area to devise a common strategy. The loss of the sanctuary sites not only deprives the North Vietnamese of nearby supplies but also slows his advance into Cambodia since the logistic lines are considerably lengthened.
The key to the military situation is Phnom Penh. If it fell, the administrative apparatus—never too firm—would be eliminated and the country fragmented. The South Vietnamese are operating in the eastern part of Cambodia. Thailand, which is extremely sensitive to Communist threats, has made known that, if requested by Cambodia, it would send troops. While individual Cambodians may not relish the prospect of Thai and Vietnamese forces to aid in their defense, they have few alternatives if the situation worsens.

Thus far, at the governmental level, discussions between the Cambodian government and its concerned neighbors have been conducted with considerable sophistication and understanding. This does not mean, however, that individual units of the Thais and Vietnamese may not conduct themselves as allies. While the Cambodians understand that no U.S. troops will assist them, they are hopeful that the U.S. will provide some air support. At this juncture Cambodian leaders compare themselves to Czechoslovakia in the period immediately after World War II.

No less important is the economic situation of the country. Under Sihanouk the defense establishment took about a third of the national budget and large public works programs intended to glorify Sihanouk were undertaken. Presently the military outlay has been increased five-fold. Although the war in the country has been in progress for only a few months, the economy has already been seriously hampered. Few taxes are coming into the treasury and inflation has begun. The heavy dependence of the country on agriculture has probably made it somewhat more resilient than if it depended upon an industrial complex. Except for the presence of pill boxes and numerous soldiers, Phnom Penh appears to be carrying on as usual. Foodstuffs and other essentials are sufficient to sustain the city at least for a few months. Beyond that, much will depend upon whether the produce of the countryside can be made available. Communist strategy appears to envision a disruption, if not control, of the rural areas and the progressive isolation of the capital. The loss of Sihanoukville, Cambodia's principal seaport on the Gulf of Thailand, would deny the country a major supply point and, at the same time, give the Communists a jumping-off point to extend their operations by sea. Thus a war of attrition rather than of confrontation may determine the future of Cambodia.
SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF THE U.S. PRESS, 
JUNE 26, 1970, PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA

(Chairman Montgomery, Congressmen Adair, Anderson, Clancy, 
Hawkins, Mollohan, Robison, Smith and Watson; newsmen Arnaud 
de Borchgrave of Newsweek, Ray Maloney of ABC, Arnold H. Dibble, 
Asia Manager of UPI, Mac Chrysler of U.S. News & World Report, 
Don Shannon of the Los Angeles Times and Dick Hunt of NBC.)

De Borchgrave gave background on the current crisis and fighting 
in Cambodia. He felt strongly that it is essential for the Khmer 
Government to hold Phnom Penh and that the U.S. must aid the 
Cambodians, even to the extent of using B-52s. He suggested that the 
Committee talk with Mr. Jonathan Ladd, our new Counselor for 
Political/Military Affairs in the U.S. Embassy, a retired Colonel and 
former Special Forces Commander in South Vietnam who has taken 
hold in a hurry in Phnom Penh.

He said that we had furnished the National Cambodian Armed 
Forces (FANK) with 15,000 captured Communist AK-47s and 
sufficient ammo for the time being. However, de Borchgrave held that 
the captured weapons are not sufficient, that the FANK is largely 
untrained and that the only thing that has saved them so far is the 
ARVN and USAF/VNAF air strikes.

Mr. Maloney: The FANK also desperately needs transportation. 
Right now, they are using buses and Pepsi Cola trucks which are not 
only unsuited for military operations but it is bad for the internal 
economy to have them withdrawn. He held that had it not been for 
U.S./ARVN victories in the sanctuaries Phnom Penh would have 
fallen by now.

Congressman Robison asked that if the NVA took Cambodia 
would they not be stretched too thin elsewhere.

Mr. de Borchgrave: Let me give you an instance of NVA psywar. 
They are out in the country paying 100 riels per chicken, twice the 
going price. What we have seen could be turned easily into a Cambodian civil war. The NVA bounce back quickly from their defeats 
in the sanctuaries. They have established a new supply route without 
hindrance by air strikes for a month or so. They are not operating in 
small groups. There are 2,000 just 12 kilometers from Phnom Penh.

French intelligence says that the NVA has four to five divisions 
operating against Cambodia. The French think there are more in 
this country now than before the attack on the sanctuaries. If you 
believe U.S., ARVN and FANK claims, there have been 18,000 NVA 
KIA, and, using a four-or-five-to-one ratio for WIA, that would 
amount to a total NVA casualty figure of 80,000. If that were true, 
the war in Cambodia would be about over, but a more realistic figure 
would be about 15,000 total NVA casualties. The NVA is probably 
as strong as it was before. I am giving you the best intelligence 
locally. There has been criticism of ARVN barreling down the roads 
with the NVA lying quietly a short distance off the roads watching 
them go by.

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Mr. Maloney gave a sketch of NVA operations to date.

Mr. de Borchgrave said that the NVA is forcing the FANK to spread its elite forces thin throughout the country. The NVA put in a whole regiment against Kom Pong Tom to take it. There will be some big battles. The FANK put in seven to eight battalions against the NVA at Kom Pong Tom, but ARVN choppers and F4C strikes saved the day there.

ARVN and FANK can work together. You should see Major Lon Nol, the Prime Minister's brother. The FANK does not have a commander-in-chief yet, really. They are planning operations by committee. There is a real fighting spirit among the kids, and the students are very anti-Sihanouk. One of the Congressmen asked if the Cambodians are getting out-of-country training. Mr. de Borchgrave replied that the FANK has arranged with the GVN for 10,000 Cambodian troops to be trained in South Vietnam, but that the Thais are dragging their heels on training Cambodian troops.

Congressman Hawkins: Is U.S. arms aid alone enough?

Mr. de Borchgrave: There are USAF Forward Air Controllers flying with Cambodians in their aircraft. We have seen U.S. air support way outside the sanctuaries, including direct air support in battle. This regime cannot support itself without air support; with it and with ARVN aid, it can hold out.

Congressman Hawkins: Would this (U.S. air support) embarrass the U.S.? Our public has been told that the Cambodian action is (solely) to protect U.S. soldiers in South Vietnam.

Mr. de Borchgrave: It is. Consider what the effect would be of the fall of Phnom Penh. There is an impression and consensus here that the U.S. will do all here short of committing further U.S. ground combat troops. It is nonsense to say that Cambodia is not essential to U.S. interests. Mr. Maloney agreed. Mr. Shannon said that he agreed with the talk thus far generally.

Mr. de Borchgrave: There is a fighting spirit here that was never seen in South Vietnam at the beginning of that war, and, after all, South Vietnam has been at war for 23 years. This is an invasion, not a civil war.

Congressman Robison: Why isn't this picture reaching home?

Mr. de Borchgrave: It has always been an Indochain war, I have always said that.

Congressman Clancy: What should we do if there is a priority?

Congressman Clancy was told that the replacement of Shell trucks with military vehicles should be given priority consideration.

Mr. de Borchgrave: The sanctuary attack was a tactical success, but in the long run we may be in a worse jam than we were before.

Congressman Adair explained Secretary of State Rogers' position in a recent interview.

In response to a question from Congressman Hawkins, Mr. de Borchgrave reiterated that we widened the war, and we can't walk away from it.

Congressman Hawkins: Do you think the U.S. public will accept this?

Mr. Dibble, who has recently arrived in Asia, raised the question of U.S. overall involvement in Southeast Asia.
Mr. de Borchgrave: That is not what it is about. This is the same operation to buy time for Cambodia as Vietnamization is in South Vietnam.

Congressman Hawkins: Is the 30 June withdrawal date credible?

Mr. de Borchgrave: Bernie Kalb has a mythical scenario of President Nixon on television announcing the withdrawal of the last U.S. ground combat troops from Cambodian soil, with the broadcast being interrupted by a spot newscast by Walter Cronkite saying that Phnom Penh has fallen.

One of the Congressmen said that some U.S. military had told them that the fate of Phnom Penh was unimportant.

Mr. de Borchgrave: It is. Consider the international repercussions.

Mr. Chrysler: I have learned not to get emotional about these matters, but here I am upset. When I was up in Tokyo, I thought the sanctuary operation was questionable. After a month here as an observer, I feel the U.S. has lanced a boil. What have we done for Cambodia except spread the Communists all over this country? We are giving them a lousy 7.9 million dollars in aid. We argue over giving them one boat here, whereas we have just turned over 173 to the Vietnamese Navy (VNN). Our conduct is shameful.

He felt the U.S. Government won't give Cambodia what it needs, and he made a passionate plea for old U.S. weapons such as M1s and M2 carbines in storage back in the States.

In response to one remark, Mr. Peter Jacoby, our press attache, said we have not tied ourselves to the Lon Nol Government, but there is no alternative to it.

Chairman Montgomery: What do you recommend we ask Prime Minister Lon Nol?

Mr. de Borchgrave: Ask him Cambodia's specific arms needs and not just a general list of everything.

Congressman Adair: Wouldn't that be open-ended?

Congressman Robison felt this was outside the Committee's mandate, and there was some agreement about this.

Mr. de Borchgrave: It is possible there may be a civil war. You might try to find out how much the Government controls, how much of the Government machinery still exists. There is a joke around here that Ky is Viceroy, and Chief of State Cheng Heng is actually just the mayor of Phnom Penh.

Someone commented that the Battam Bang still feels that is is Cambodian.

Congressman Clancy remarked on what he saw within the Cambodian border the other day, that a boy of 16 bought two hand grenades from an ARVN trooper so that he could fight the NVA invaders.

Mr. de Borchgrave concluded by saying that there is a complete transformation in Asia the last five years as a result of U.S. intervention and that future historians will mark this turning point as a major plus. The conference then broke into individual conversations.
Chairman Montgomery opened the discussion, explaining the reasons for the meeting, and gave Mr. Ladd's background of experience.

Mr. Ladd: My job is to coordinate U.S. military aid in Cambodia at Mr. Nixon's request—on the logistics end. I'm not wildly optimistic, but I'm more encouraged than when I arrived two weeks ago. I had to find out the status of the Cambodian National Armed Forces (FANK).

I found out they're on top of their supply situation. We have one attache in each of their Military Regions and one in their Operations Section. I feel that the FANK is trying and that the Khmers desperately don't want to be defeated by the Communists. They just lack the means. They can receive and issue equipment effectively, but $7.9 million (military aid) doesn't go far—for instance, look what it costs to repair their T28s (trainers converted into fighter-bombers).

Mr. Adair: The $7.9 million doesn't include (capital?) equipment, and there's a small transportation cost.

Mr. Ladd: No, that's correct. But ammo is expensive. (He then gave the numbers of weapons the U.S. have turned over to the FANK from captured NVA stores.) I told Premier Lon Nol to be highly selective in his aid requests—by priority, 1.) arms, 2.) mobility and 3.) communications. We've given the FANK field and air-ground radios.

The Prime Minister (PM) told me they would look first to the U.S. for hardware, and after 30 June to South Vietnam and Thailand for training, etc., and third to other countries for software, such as uniforms. The PM sees now that he can't defend everywhere at once, that he must concentrate on holding the important areas until he can build up, and only then move out.

I believe that they are capable of coping with this. For instance, I gave them a list of captured weapons and told them to come back with their list of needs in priority. So they asked for 82 mm mortars first to train with, and only later for the accompanying ammo, in order to avoid wasting (transportation) tonnage in the interim.

Kom Pong Thom has been under siege for 20 days. The PM wanted to relieve its garrison so he asked the ARVN for helicopters, which at first were denied. So they (the FANK) organized two brigades to send to Kom Pong Thom. Then ARVN changed its mind and airlifted troops in. So the others (the two brigades) were sent on to probe the flanks. Within 48 hours they had been able to put in 750 troops.
I'm encouraged. They have a chance to pull this chestnut out of the fire—with aid, not our troops—but they need materiel by priority. Will there be arms aid for them in the FY 71 budget?

What about the feeling in the U.S. (about aid), aside from sanctuaries and U.S. disenchantment? Remember, I was home, too, until recently. People at home must be able to separate the two issues—that of the cross-border sanctuary operation and that of Cambodian defense against outside aggression. (Mr. Ladd then compared the situation in Cambodia with that in South Vietnam—Sun—in 1962 when the ARVN didn't leave the necessary intelligence information.) If our people at home can differentiate (between the sanctuary operation and Cambodia's own defense against NVA attack), this country may be saved.

Mr. Robison: Did the staff get that down? That's most important.

Col. Napier: Yes, indeed.

Mr. Adair: Will there be an ammo shortage after six months (of using up the captured stocks), as the newsmen told us yesterday?

Mr. Ladd: Yes, for instance, the FANK uses AK-47s (Soviet-designed submachine gun). The PM is asking the Indonesians to make ammo for them since they make it (for their own army). We don't make it. We've given Cambodia close to 30,000 small arms. Before this fighting, they only had 60,000 weapons in their army. I don't know whether we can give them more or not. We're trying to get it.

Mr. Adair: Cambodia did have 40,000 men in its army and now it has 180,000—right?

Mr. Ladd: Yes.

Mr. Adair: The problem is training and equipment.

Mr. Ladd: Many of the 180,000, such as clerks and mobilized government workers, don't need weapons any more than do our people in the Pentagon, so a realistic scaling down would be on the order of 70,000 to 80,000 actually armed.

They don't need sophisticated weapons like M16s. M1s and French rifles are OK. If they can man a 70,000 man army, they'll have twice the number that the NVA has here, who are, of course, experienced, well-armed and dedicated. Can the Cambodians match them? It takes a long time.

But, my feeling is that for the first time, Asians have had to get together with a chance to act together against aggression. If they don't, they have a dim future.

There is opportunity, if they take advantage of it—the whole crescent from Australia through Malaysia, South Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos—but not by their neighbors giving arms to Cambodia and then asking us to reimburse them.

Mr. Montgomery: What are your instructions from President Nixon?

Mr. Ladd: They're not fixed yet.

Mr. Montgomery: You don't know yet what the Administration will do after 30 June on equipment and so on?

Mr. Ladd: I got the message loud and clear that we'll do all within our power (meaning without U.S. troops) to prevent the Communists from taking over Cambodia. This is related to Vietnamization. If Cambodia goes Communist, Vietnamization will be endangered. If the NVA doesn't have supply routes here, it's at a tremendous disad-
vantage. Before it could ship and store at Sihanoukville (now called Kom Pong Som). The NVA here is at a tremendous disadvantage now and Mr. Nixon wants to keep it that way. We're working on a FY 71 MAP (Military Assistance Program), a modest one, but, as you know, the whole MAP now is only $350 million, very modest. We'd have to take something away from someone else if it isn't increased unless a miracle happens and Congress votes special appropriations for Cambodia.

Mr. Smith: What about vehicles?

Mr. Ladd: We're supplying 40 vehicles. Drivers and mechanics are training in South Vietnam. They're getting 2½ ton trucks and the accompanying one-ton trailers.

Mr. Smith: Is there any way to lend-lease them, say from the GVN?

Mr. Ladd: The Thais have lent Cambodia five T28s that are flown by Cambodian pilots.

Mr. Blackburn: The Australians have promised $500,000 (worth of aid), including trucks.

Mr. Ladd: Australia is sending 50 Land Rovers, walkie-talkies, roadbuilding equipment, etc.

Mr. Smith: How long will it take to get the 70,000 trained?

Mr. Ladd: They're training now. The U.S. is paying to send five companies to South Vietnam for 12 weeks training with five more companies going over per week until they're rotating in and out.

Mr. Smith: Then the next few months are important.

Mr. Ladd: They're critical. Each day now that they get gear out to them, they're better off than the day before.

Mr. Smith: If Phnom Penh were to fall—

Mr. Ladd: —Phnom Penh is the key. If it fell, would ARVN send two divisions over to clear it or not? But the other side has problems—he's spread out—at Siem Reap, Kom Pong Thom, etc. He can't hold all these places yet, except Stung Treng up in the far north.

Mr. Smith: What would be the significance if Phnom Penh fell? Would the government move?

Mr. Ladd: There's the psychological effect. It would be disastrous.

Mr. Robison? If Phnom Penh were about to fall, would Thailand send troops?

Mr. Ladd: Yes, The Cambodians have been good to me. They've told me much. Cambodia said Thailand could possible send troops if Cambodia were about to fall. That's "iffy" for the PM, but I think they (the Thais) would. But would they just cross the border, or come this far?

Mr. Robison: I talked with Tennant in Bankok. He'd gotten a fuzzed-up answer, but he seems to think they would.

Mr. Ladd: I think they would.

Mr. Westphal: What about Vietnamese relations with Cambodia?

Mr. Ladd: The press reports that the peasants in NVA-held areas are joining Sihanouk's army are stuff. What choices do people have in an occupied country?

Mr. Westphal: What about South Vietnamese looting?

Mr. Ladd: Yes, they're looting, but Cambodians throw Vietnamese in the river. At the governmental level, they're sophisticated. They don't sit at the table and snarl at each other. They know of their ancient animosities but have put them aside. I've seen them meeting together time and time again. There are animosities,