

Message Text

SECRET

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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8714

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 17096

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CB

SUBJ: LON NON'S PLANS

STATE 281504

1. EVER SINCE LON NON'S RETURN TO PHNOM PENH LAST SEPTEMBER, I HAVE RECEIVED PERIODICALLY HAND-WRINGING TELEGRAMS FROM WASHINGTON INQUIRING WHAT I PLAN TO DO TO KEEP "LITTLE BROTHER" UNDER CONTROL. THIS PROBLEM COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED IF THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR LOOKING AFTER LON NON IN THE STATES HAD DONE THEIR JOB EFFECTIVELY AND HAD BEEN WILLING TO ACT AS TOUGH WITH HIM WHEN THEY WERE FACE TO FACE WITH HIM AS THEY ARE NOW IN OFFERING ADVICE ON HOW TO DEAL WITH LON NON BACK IN CAMBODIA.

2. CONTRARY TO SOME NEWSPAPER REPORTS, I AM NOT THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF CAMBODIA. AS A RESULT OF OUR GENEROUS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS TO THE GKR, I HAVE CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE HERE, BUT I MUST DECIDE WHEN AND HOW TO USE IT AND WHEN TO REFRAIN FROM EXERCISING IT. SINCE LON NON CAME BACK TO CAMBODIA, I HAVE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING HIM FROM ASSUMING AN OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT FUNCTION. THIS APPROACH MADE SENSE TO ME, SINCE I COULD ARGUE THE ADVERSE IMPACT LON NON'S PARTICIPATION IN THE GKR WOULD HAVE ON THE REPUBLIC'S INTERNATIONAL IMAGE. MY CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER ALONG THESE LINES CLEARLY HAVE

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HAD THE DESIRED RESULT. I EVEN CONVEYED SAME THOUGHT

TO LON NON DIRECTLY THE ONE TIME I MET WITH HIM SINCE HIS RETURN TO PHNOM PENH. I SHOULD ADD THAT LON NON HAS BEEN REMARKABLY QUIET SINCE I PUT A STOP TO HIS FRANTIC MANEUVERING SHORTLY AFTER HIS RETURN FROM ABROAD. HOWEVER, I FEEL IT INAPPROPRIATE FOR ME TO INTERVENE BLATANTLY IN THE SELECTION OF THE NEXT SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE SOCIO-REPUBLICAN PARTY. LON NON NEEDS SOMETHING TO KEEP HIM BUSY, AND HE IS NOW FOCUSED ON CAPTURING THE LEADERSHIP OF HIS PARTY. SINCE I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT POLITICAL PARTIES FOUNDED DURING THE REPUBLIC DAYS WILL REALLY PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN CAMBODIA'S FUTURE, I DO NOT THINK HE HAS GAINED MUCH BY DIRECTING HIS ENERGIES IN THAT DIRECTION.

3. I SHARE DEPARTMENT'S "MISGIVINGS" (REFTEL) ABOUT LON NON'S ACTIVITIES HERE, BUT DO NOT BELIEVE THAT HAND-WRINGING IS A VERY USEFUL EXERCISE. SINCE DEPT APPEARS TO BE WILLING TO HELP ME COPE WITH LON NON I WONDER WHAT PRECISE AND REALISTIC OFFER I CAN MAKE TO "LITTLE BROTHER" WHICH WILL GET HIM OUT OF THE COUNTRY AGAIN.

DEAN

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