

Key~~S-E-C-R-E-T~~

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

12 December 1967

SUBJECT: SNIE 57/1-67: SIGNIFICANCE OF CAMBODIA TO THE
VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST WAR EFFORT

CONCLUSIONS

A. The Vietnamese Communists continue to use Cambodia in important ways to support their military effort in South Vietnam. Though the scale of this use has not increased significantly in the last year, the relative importance of Cambodian territory to Communist strategy is now greater. In consequence of growing pressure on their military structure in South Vietnam, the Communists have come to depend more heavily on the use of border areas. This trend will probably make Cambodia of increasing value to Communist military effort in 1968.

B. The Communists use Cambodian territory as a sanctuary to evade allied forces and more permanently as a refuge for rest, training, medical care, acquisition and storage of supplies, and as a convenient and secure route for the infiltration of personnel

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from North Vietnam. These activities are concentrated in four major base areas along the South Vietnamese border.

C. Rice is the most important item of supply obtained by the Communists from Cambodia. This is particularly important for Communist troops operating out in the tri-border and Chu Pong base areas in the rice-deficit highlands.

D. We still have no firm evidence that military supplies or equipment are moved through Sihanoukville to Communist forces in South Vietnam on a sustained or substantial basis. Arms and ammunition for the Communist forces in South Vietnam are supplied primarily overland from North Vietnam through the Laotian corridor. But the Communists continue to smuggle small quantities of arms and other military equipment from Cambodia, some of which probably represents unauthorized diversions from Communist arms imported by the Cambodian Government for its own forces.

E. Over the past year Sihanouk has become more aware of the extent of Vietnamese Communist use of Cambodia and more apprehensive over US intentions. Nevertheless, he has not taken any effective measures to control Communist activity and he is not likely to do so in the coming year. Cambodia lacks the military

- 2 -

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capability to close its border with South Vietnam, and any determined effort to do so would run counter to Sihanouk's basic aims of avoiding direct alignment with the US, and of maintaining cordial relations with the Communists.

- 3 -

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