

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~/NODIS/XGDS

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford  
 Vice President Rockefeller  
 Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State  
 and Assistant to the President  
 for National Security Affairs  
 James R. Schlesinger, Secretary of Defense  
 Gen. George Brown, Chairman,  
 Joint Chiefs of Staff  
Bipartisan Congressional Leadership (List attached)

DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, January 28, 1975  
 9:30 - 11:30 a. m.

PLACE: The Cabinet Room  
 The White House

SUBJECT: Supplemental Aid Request for Vietnam  
 and Cambodia

The President: Two years ago, Mike [Mansfield] and I were together in Paris for the signing of the Paris agreements. Those agreements were predicated on certain assumptions, and we are now faced with developments that were not foreseen. Last year, we asked for \$1.4 billion authorization. That was cut in half, and as a result, we can't even supply them with the ammunition they need. The Vietnamese are fighting valiantly, they're not asking for our troops, and they deserve our support.

In Cambodia, the situation is similar. They have, under almost unbelievable conditions, pushed their supply boats up the Mekong. They are in dire straits.

Therefore, I am signing today a supplemental message asking for appropriation of \$300 million in military assistance for South Vietnam and authorization of an additional \$222 million for Cambodia. I think these

~~SECRET~~/NODIS/XGDS

DECLASSIFIED  
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5  
NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines  
By let, NARA, Date 1/20/00

TOP SECRET - XGDS (3)  
CLASSIFIED BY: HENRY A. KISSINGER  
GERALD R. FORD LIBRARY

countries deserve our support. I know it is unpopular and will meet with resistance. But I do not think we should let these countries sink slowly because we are not prepared to give them adequate support. I feel very strongly about this.

Now, I would like General Brown to tell us about the military situation.

General Brown: In Vietnam, there have been Communist advances in the lesser-populated areas of the country. The GVN is saving its regular forces to defend the major areas. Communist infiltration levels are high. They have increased their troops and equipment and ammunition in South Vietnam substantially since the Agreements.

The South Vietnamese are aggressive, but they have given up some isolated territory. They have cut their ammo use on the ground by over 50% and their Air Force operations by 50%. The brown-water Navy is \_\_\_\_\_% laid up, and their blue water operations have been reduced by 20%.

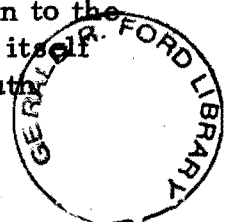
We estimate that hostilities will increase in the central area. If Hanoi sees further signs of weakness we believe it would commit its reserves to take advantage of the new situation.

In Cambodia, the Communist dry season offensive has begun. The outer Phnom Penh defenses have been breached in some places, and the Mekong is partially interdicted. That is all.

The President: Thank you. Henry?

Secretary Kissinger: I would like to stress one thing. The press is talking about new commitments; we are talking about keeping an old commitment. If we are not going to do enough, there is a question of whether we should do anything at all. No case can be made for giving less than adequate aid and aid that Congress has already authorized. Do we want to risk the failure of all that was done, at a sacrifice of 55,000 men and blood and treasure for want of enough money to enable them to defend themselves?

We are not on our way in. That we must recognize. The American role was always envisioned as getting the Vietnamese to defend themselves. The overwhelming objective of the national debate was to disengage our military forces and return our prisoners. There was no objection to the principle of supporting a government that was prepared to defend itself by its own efforts. They are now defending themselves. The South



Vietnamese agreed to go it alone on the basis that we could give them the wherewithal to do it. They have a chance to defend themselves. That chance exists. That chance depends on American assistance. All the material General Brown described was brought in in violation of Article 7.

There is only one problem -- the North Vietnamese attacks. The GVN was resisting these attacks very well before our aid was cut last summer. No new equipment could be sent, and only inadequate ammunition. They, therefore, had to cut back their ammunition expenditure. This in turn led to an increase in casualties, and therefore a deterioration of the military situation.

North Vietnam is claimed to have unlimited willingness to lose men and treasure to take over the South. This cannot be. If they see they can't win, they will negotiate, just as they did with us.

So the question is, are we going to let go to waste all that we have committed thus far, for an unwillingness to provide \$300 million?

There has been a lot of talk about comparative levels of aid going to the two sides. First of all, they are hard to compare because our information is inadequate. Secondly, by the nature of the war, there are different needs on the two sides. The Communist totals do not include transportation, training, parts, and so on, which are a large part of our aid, and the South Vietnamese, as defenders, also have greater needs.

But these are not the issues. The core issue is whether we are giving them enough to resist North Vietnamese aggression.

In Cambodia -- in fact, in both countries -- we are seeking a negotiated settlement. We can't discuss it in this broad a group, but we will to selected Democrats and Republicans, what we are doing to promote this. The Communists will never negotiate if they think they can attain their goals without it. That we must always remember.

The President: Let me add one point. There was much discussion here about asking for more than the \$300 million. They do, indeed, need more. But I decided on a bare-bones request to get just the minimum needed.



I think in Vietnam we have an obligation to fulfill our commitment in the Paris Agreement. In Cambodia, we are trying to get a settlement. I will talk to the leaders on this in more detail.

There is unanimity within the Administration. Jim?

Schlesinger: In Cambodia, we face an immediate shortage of ammo and the fall of Phnom Penh this Spring. Vietnam is not this critical -- there it is a question of a gradual erosion of capability and accompanying morale. This will be difficult to measure.

As Secretary Kissinger said, the aid comparison is hard to make. But the North has put in about \$200 million in equipment. We have put in no equipment -- we couldn't afford to. Let me read the latest COSVN directive.... This is the issue. [He reads from directive.]

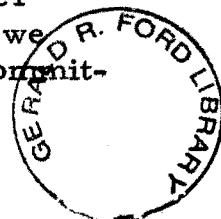
President: Thanks, Jim. Strom?

Thurmond: Mr. President, as you know, I just returned from a visit there. I travelled around the country and I talked with everyone. I am convinced they can make it if we help them. Graham Martin says we don't have to help forever -- maybe it'll be three years. They are finding oil there -- the companies are spending millions.

Vietnam is the breadbasket of Southeast Asia. We would lose an awful lot if we let them go. The rest of Asia is watching what we do in Vietnam. We can spend this now and it is chicken feed compared to what we would have to spend later. The South can whip the North if we give them this aid or if the North didn't get outside help.

In Cambodia -- the Government has 20 percent of the land, but 80 percent of the people. There are three classes of opposition -- the soft- and hard-core Communists and Sihanouk. The Ambassador says we can get a settlement if we can last out the dry season. It is highly to our advantage to us to do so. The people don't understand -- mine don't -- because they don't know. If they knew, they would back it. I'm convinced of that.

President: Strom, let me read a letter I just got from George Meany. [Reads letter.] I know this is controversial, but in good conscience I think this country has an obligation to move ahead on this. I hope we can act together for our best interest and, too, in support of our commitment to South Vietnam.



Stennis: I said last fall that I would support additional aid if there was proof of dire need. I will redeem my promise, but I've got to see proof. You will have a hard time with this, and then there will be a '76 bill -- there is where the fight will be. We need proof.

Also, I would like to know what commitments were made by this government when the Agreement was signed.

Kissinger: First, I have not talked to Senator Thurmond, but what he said about the impact was accurate. It would be profound.

Secondly, in answer to Senator Stennis's question: We do not have a legal commitment to South Vietnam, but we certainly have a moral commitment based on their willingness to go it alone. There was a moral commitment that if the Government of Vietnam permitted us to get out and get our prisoners back, the Congress would provide what was required -- though that was not defined. The general context of the debate in this country at the time we got out was that we are willing to commit money there, but no more lives. This is what the record shows.

President: That's right. I am convinced that if we don't carry out this moral commitment, the odds are highly in favor of a disaster in Vietnam. In Cambodia the situation is more acute, but we have things going on there which could bring an end to the fighting.

Byrd: What diplomatic steps are being taken to get the PRC and Soviet Union to cut back on supplies to North Vietnam?

Kissinger: We are talking to the PRC and the Soviet Union. We would prefer to brief one or two members on each side, because of the sensitivity of this.

Vice President: You have made the point that the principle is not really involved here because it is already authorized by the Congress. I worry because America's role in the world and its word is declining. Latin America has now cancelled a Foreign Ministers' conference because they think we have gone back on our word. Portugal is in trouble. If we don't stand with our friends, the free world is in bad shape.

President: Henry is going to the Middle East in a few weeks on a very difficult and delicate mission. We went through a tough period in '73. In that war we responded generously; I estimate that we spent about



\$700 million a week, if you divide \$2.2 billion by four weeks. I hope Henry can succeed in his effort to avoid a repetition of that. But strength in one part of the world helps us in all other parts. We must have a global policy of standing by our friends. It means a great deal all over the world.

Ullman: What concerns us is their ineptitude and their lack of will to carry on. We see the divisiveness in the streets of Saigon. We are putting money in a place that is doomed to fail.

President: Our best advice is that in a free election there the Government would prevail. There is divisiveness there, but the Government would win an election. As Meany says, the alternative is far worse.

Speaker Albert: Mr. President, I want to cooperate in matters of foreign policy. But I can't help but say I want to reserve judgment on this. But my feeling is it will be almost impossible to get this through the House. I won't say what I will do, but when all your fellows are against you, what can you do?

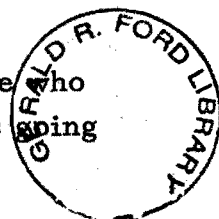
The arguments are that South Vietnam is not tied to the rest of Southeast Asia, that that is just a fraud. Also that our aid is endless. I have heard since longer than I can remember that in 6 months or a year we would be out. But I agree with Secretary Kissinger that it is better to do nothing than too little.

Mansfield: Mr. President, I have always thought Vietnam was a mistake -- that we sacrificed 55,000 killed and 160,000 casualties and from \$125 to \$150 billion -- needlessly. My feeling is I will not vote any money for Vietnam or Cambodia and I can't go along -- despite my admiration for you. The Vice President has said that if we don't stand with our friends we will have to go it alone. But our friends are in this country, not in Southeast Asia or the Middle East. No one can assure the Congress we won't have to continue this far longer than the 2-3 years that Strom says. My position is unchanged.

O'Neill: I think the American people feel that this country has deteriorated over the past 10 years because of Vietnam. Pollsters I spoke to said the Democrats won in November because of Watergate, inflation and Vietnam.

Speaker Albert: A Canadian Parliamentarian just told me that there is a better feeling toward the United States now that Vietnam is over.

Vice President: It was Henry Kissinger sitting at the end of the table who got us out. Never mind how we got in -- we are all in it now. He is going



around the world negotiating. If we lost Portugal and maybe Turkey, we are much worse off. If it looks like we say, "When we get what we want, to hell with them," we cannot negotiate anywhere.

Price: Secretary Kissinger said that the American people would support military aid if we could get our troops out. But the people are still worried about troops going back in. If we could get assurances on that point, I think the people might be willing to fulfill our commitment.

President: Let me assure you there is no thought of sending troops in. Just because we are not talking about military involvement, does not mean this is not a very serious debate. I feel very deeply about the importance of this meeting, and I send up my request with full hope you will consider its importance.

Scott: Mike [Mansfield] has been consistent. But if we are going to cut loose from Vietnam, it should be a conscious decision, and not by accident. The failing of democracy is that we get tired. We can't keep up with the persistence of the Communists. We have to show that we can do it. I support you, Mr. President.

O'Neill: The anti-Vietnam movement is starting up again. They say we are sending experts back in, that the Government of Vietnam has more land than they had before the cease fire, and that the Government of Vietnam is the aggressor.

Kissinger: The Canadians won't change their attitude whether our aid is \$700 million or \$1 billion. We should not turn this into another national debate on Vietnam. The basic facts are -- that we are not going back in. The reason the fighting has gone on is because the North has refused to permit the IC CS to function, it has refused demarcation of areas of control, or any move which would have permitted the fighting to stop. The issue is not who is right or how we got in, but what we do now. This is a marginal amount and it should not reopen the whole war debate.

Michel: You say don't make it a debate on Vietnam. But we have 92 new members, we have a new situation, and they won't take it on faith. Maybe we can think of a way you can meet with them. That is the only way.

O'Neill: These new people are in politics because they have disagreed with the system.

President: Henry met with them and was very impressed.



Kissinger: I didn't talk Vietnam, but I was impressed. I would be happy to get them together with Jim [Schlesinger] and George [Brown] and talk with them to work it out.

Michel: And I would add that we should urge that no one get in a concrete position on this before the arguments are heard.

President: We will do this. I appreciate the seriousness with which you have discussed this. The ramifications are far greater than the \$300 million or the immediate issue. Thank you all.





BIPARTISAN CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP

Tuesday, January 28, 1975

PARTICIPANTS:

Senator Hugh Scott  
Senator Mike Mansfield  
Senator Robert Griffin  
Senator Robert Byrd  
Senator Carl Curtis  
Senator Russell Long  
Senator Strom Thurmond  
Senator John Stennis

Speaker Carl Albert  
Cong. Thomas O'Neill  
Cong. Robert Michel  
Cong. Al Ullman  
Cong. Jack McFall  
Cong. Herman Schneebeli  
Cong. Melvin Price



Place and making practically irrelevant.  
That's all.

P Thank you very much -

K I would like to stress one thing. Press is talking about new contracts and are talking about helping old contracts. If you are not going to do enough, question of whether we should do anything at all. Do not want to risk purchase of an S5 and a treasury for want of money to

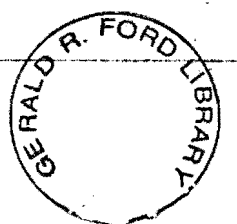
be on our way in. That we must recognize. The US up was always successful as getting others to depend themselves. They are now depending themselves. GON equal to ~~the US~~ ~~to~~ ~~depend~~ ~~on~~ ~~us~~ ~~for~~ ~~it~~ ~~alone~~ ~~on~~ ~~grounds~~ ~~that~~ ~~we~~ ~~would~~ ~~give~~ ~~them~~ ~~the~~ ~~whenever~~ ~~to~~ ~~do~~ ~~it~~. All the material GON have devoted is was brought in in violation of Art 7.

There is only one part - NON attacks. GON was using that attack very well before and was not last summer.

NON is claimed to have unlimited willingness to buy more & less treasure. If they see they can't win they will negotiate, just as they did w/ us.

And we going to waste all we have wanted this far for ~~unintelligence~~ ~~to~~ ~~provide~~ ~~for~~ ~~us~~. There has been a lot of talk about ~~organization~~ ~~of~~ ~~oil~~

- Hard to compare
- Different trends



But these are not issues. The real issue  
is giving them enough to meet VVA expenses.  
In Cambodia - in both - we are seeking a  
negotiated settlement. ~~The~~ Cost issues in  
this broader group - but with the selected  
Demos & Agents - what we are doing.  
The Costs will work negotiate if they think  
they can get their goods w/o it.  
That we must always remember.

Let me add - there was much discussion  
about asking for more than \$200 - for  
they demanded and more I decided on  
a bare bones request to get just a minimum  
needed.

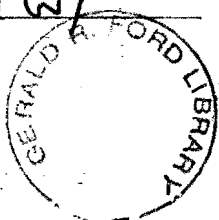
I think in ~~both~~ VVA we have obligation to  
fulfill our contract at Paris. In Cambodia  
we are trying to get a settlement - I will talk  
to leaders in more detail.

There is unanimity w/in - admin firm -  
Schlo In Cambodia, we face immediate shortage  
of ammo & fall of RP this spring. VVA is not  
this critical - it is a gradual erosion  
of <sup>equipment</sup> ~~equipment~~ ~~materials~~ ~~materials~~. This will  
be dif. to reverse.

As R said, cold expansion is hard to make.  
But North has put in about \$200 in equip -  
we have put in no equip - we couldn't  
afford to. Let me read latest COSA  
directive. . . . This is a ~~issue~~

P. Thomas firm.

Thomas. Use P, I just returned from there.  
I traveled around a country, talked w/



all. I convinced they can make it if we help them. Insurance - up we don't have to help for now - maybe 3 yrs. They are finding out there - companies are spending money.

VK is breadbasket, we would lose an awful lot. The rest of asia is watching what we do in VK. We can spend this now & it is cheaper fuel compared to what we would have to spend later.

The Soviets can whip North if we give them this and if N don't get outside help. In Cambodia - East has 20% of land but 80% of people. There are 3 sources of oppression - Soft + hard expropriation + Schanok. Cook says we cannot get a settlement if we can't last out a dry season. It is highly to our advantage to us to do so. The people don't understand - mind set - because they don't know. If they ~~was~~ know, they would back it.

P Stone, let me read a letter I just got from George Kwang.  
(Read)

I know this is controversial but in good exercise I think this country has an obligation to invest abroad. I hope we can act together for our own interest & to ~~for~~ in support of our interest to SON

Stanie I said last fall I would support additional aid if there was proof of dire need. I will withdraw my promise, but I'm just too ~~for~~ a fool. You will have a hard time



by this & then there would be a 76 bill - then  
is where a project will be. We need funding &  
I would like to know what contracts are  
made

K First, I not talked to St. Theresia, but  
what he said about report was accurate.  
It would be prepared.

We do not have a legal contract but we  
certainly have a moral ~~agony~~ contract  
based on their willingness to go to sleep.  
Moral contract that if GRN permitted us  
to put out a certain amount of work, we  
would provide what was required - that  
not beyond - the general context at times  
we get out work and willing to commit  
money, but no more time. This is what  
would show.

P If you don't carry out this moral contract  
it's a highly in part of a disaster in  
- W. In Cuba the situation is more  
acute, but we have things going on there which  
could bring an end.

Byrd What steps are being taken to get PRC  
& USSR out of Cuba on supplies & fuel

K We talking to PRC & USSR. We would prefer  
to keep one or two on each side because  
of sensitivity.

VP You have made a point that foreign not  
involved revenue already authorized  
& necessary because Americans not in  
there



world & its world is declining. HA has  
now reported Camp a conference because  
they think we have gone <sup>down</sup> <sup>down</sup> <sup>down</sup> <sup>down</sup> <sup>down</sup>  
Australia's world is very important today.  
Strategy is in trouble. If we don't stand  
up our friends, a full world is in bad  
shape.

P R going to ME in a few weeks on a  
diff & delicate mission.

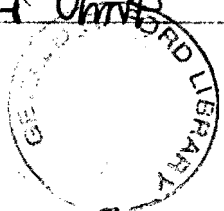
We went thru a tough period in 73. At  
that time we responded generously - I  
estimate we spent about 700 mil / wk.  
I hope R can succeed to avoid a repetition  
of that, but strength in one part helps  
no one in all other parts. As I will have  
global policy of standing by our friends

William What success we is <sup>negotiated</sup> & lack of will  
to carry on. We see a <sup>disorder</sup> in  
streets. One we putting money in a place  
that is doomed to fail.

P One last advice is in a free election  
a Govt would prevail. There is division  
but a Govt would win an election. As  
I mean say, a alternative is far worse.  
I want to say in matter of F.P. But I can't  
help say I want to reserve judgement. But  
my feeling is it will be almost impossible  
to get this thru a House. I don't say what  
I will do but when all your fellows are  
against you, what can you do.

Arguments are that SUN not will to not  
of SEA - that is just a parcel. Also <sup>China</sup>

Speyer



our oil is endless. I have heard since  
hydro that in 6 months a year we would  
be out. But Lopez of K is interested in  
something other than little

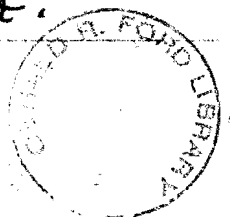
Bransford I have always had UK a mistake - that  
we sacrificed 550,000, 161, and a number  
of 25 & 100 etc - well known. My feeling is  
don't put out any money for UK or Cambodia &  
I can't see go along - despite my admiration  
for you - VP has said if we don't stand up  
our friends we will have to go it alone. But our  
friends are in this country, not in SEA or ME.  
The one compromise - Congress will want to  
to continue this for longer than 2-3 yrs  
that's the way. My position is unchanged.

O'Neill I think a lot of people feel we have deteriorated over  
past 10 yrs because of UK. Politics & spoke to  
said a Demo was in Nov because of Watergate,  
inflation, & VN.

Speaker Conahan parliamentarian just told me that there  
a better feeling toward US now that UK is over.

VP It was K sitting at end of table who got us out,  
then said how we got in - we are all in it.  
He's going around & world negotiating - if we lose  
Persia, & maybe Turkey - we will come off. It  
looks like we are going, when we get what we want,  
to talk w/ them, we cannot negotiate.

Price K said that Am people would support us and  
if we could get our things out. Perhaps still  
wondered about things going back in. If we could  
get assurance on that point, I think a people  
ought to be willing to fulfill our contract.





who is right

just have tried

standing people in  
hall now and now

P hat we assume you chose is not that of a meeting  
time in. Just because we are not talking about  
military involvement does not mean this is not  
a very serious debate. I feel very deeply about  
the importance of this meeting & I send my very  
sincere w/ faith to hope you will consider its  
importance.

Scott United has been consistent. But if we are going  
to cut loose from UN, it should be a conscious  
decision, not by accident. The point of democracy  
is we get tried. We can't keep w/ a  
presumption of a UN. We have to show that  
we can do it. I suggest you Mr P.

O'hall The anti-UN movement is starting again. They  
say we sending 4 parts back in, that G-UN has more kind  
than before cease fire & that G-UN is a cease  
Canadian won't change their attitude whether one and is 50 as a 3, bit  
we should not turn this into a battle with UN.

K The basic facts are - we are not going back in.  
The reason the fighting has gone on is because  
of both refusal ICCS, demarcation of any move  
which would have permitted fighting to stop. The issue is  
not who is right or how we get in, but what needs to be done. This is  
a marginal demand & should not reopen the whole war debate.

Unusual You say don't make it a debate on UN. But we  
have 2 new members, we have a new  
situation & they won't let it on parallel. Maybe we  
can think of a way you can meet w/ them. That  
is a only way.

O'hall These new people are in politics because they  
have disagreed w/ the system

P R met w/ them & was impressed

K I didn't talk UN, but I was impressed. I would  
be happy to get them together w/ Jim & George



+ Talk w/ them to work it out.

Timothy And I would add that we should urge that  
more get in contact on this before  
arguments are heard

P We will do this. I appreciate your views w/  
which you have discussed this. The implications  
are far greater than a few million at issue.  
now

