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4/17

DETENTE AND INDOCHINA

Q. If detente has any meaning at all, why isn't the President using his supposedly closer relations with the Soviet Union and the Peoples' Republic of China to help and end the fighting in Indochina?

A. The principal purpose of detente has been, and remains to lessen the danger of nuclear conflict and to reduce the tensions among the superpowers, tensions that carried the potential seeds of world war. Detente has achieved that objective. It has also developed a more constructive relationship with the Soviet Union.

It has not been a condition of detente that either we, the Soviet Union or the Peoples' Republic of China would end our support of our allies. (We continue to support NATO and Israel, for example.)

~~In Indochina, we unilaterally reduced support for our allies, while the allies of North Vietnam maintained the level of their support. That was neither envisaged under detente nor proposed by any Administration. By ceasing our support unilaterally, we have not enhanced the incentives for the Soviets and the Chinese to end their support or to pressure North Vietnam to cease military activities.~~

May 3, 1975

INDO CHINA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- Q. What effect do you think the recent situation in Indochina will have on the Middle East situation and particularly on Israel's willingness to make an agreement if it believes that the US cannot follow through on its commitments to its allies?
- A. The Indochina situation will not affect our continuing pursuit of peace in the Middle East -- which is in the long term interest of the United States and the countries of the area. It would be a mistake for any nation -- on either side in the Middle East -- to draw conclusions from Indochina for the Middle East, where the conditions and issues are quite different.

No nation should imagine it can pressure us. No nation should assume we will tolerate a stalemate. The U.S. is determined to maintain its constructive role and efforts to promote a peace settlement.

Moreover, on this issue there is no question in my mind -- and there should be no question in anyone else's mind, -- that the American people and the Congress fully support this role for the U.S. in the Middle East. Our resolve will not be weakened and our commitments can be relied upon.

May 5, 1975

INDOCHINA BLOOD-BATH

Q. There are mixed reports, based on intercepts, of what is happening in Communist controlled Cambodia and Vietnam. Are the reports of a blood-bath real or just propaganda? Also, on what scale are reprisals against former government military officials and members of the business and academic communities being conducted?

A. With the tight censorship imposed by the Communists, we really don't know, nor can we verify the veracity of reports we are receiving; but we have seen some reports of executions and repressive measures in the areas the Communists now

control. ~~In Cambodia, especially,~~ where newsmen and others who have recent^{ly} been deported to Thailand are maintaining a

news embargo upon themselves -- we would have nothing further to say about these reports at this time.

I will add that the world community will be watching closely the actions of those who now control Cambodia and Vietnam in the name of "Liberation."

*Camb: Incomplete reports
enough evidence of
executions + repressive
measures to know that massive
program of executions +
reprisals is underway.
GON? - less conclusive reports.*

Ads.

Savage
May 7, 1975

U.S. EQUIPMENT SAVED FROM INDOCHINA

Q: A lot of Cambodian and Vietnamese aircraft and naval vessels, originally obtained from the United States, were taken to several Asian countries by fleeing South Vietnamese and Cambodians. Who owns this equipment now? What can be done with it? Did the Thai not want to keep the equipment in Thailand in order to return it to Vietnam?

A: Under the provisions of U.S. statutes, all such equipment ~~reverts~~ to the United States when the purposes for which it was ~~furnished~~ are no longer applicable. However, ^{what the final} ~~it would make~~ ^{disposition will be, we don't know.} ~~sense for this equipment to be reallocated within the context~~ of the overall U.S. security assistance program to countries where a need exists. ~~We are now discussing with the Thai Government turning over some of this equipment to them in order to assist them in meeting their security requirements.~~

NEW U. S. DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES IN INDOCHINA

Q: Wouldn't your request for supplemental assistance for Indochina stand a better chance of passing if it were coupled with some diplomatic initiatives to bring an end to the fighting?

A: There should be no question that we favor a political settlement for both Cambodia and South Vietnam. We believe that a framework for a political accommodation already exists. All that is necessary is that the parties sit down and talk. These issues must be settled among the Cambodians and Vietnamese themselves.

-- President Lon Nol in Cambodia has said he is willing.

-- President Thieu and his government have offered to completely implement the Paris Agreement and on ten separate occasions called for the Communists to return to the negotiating table.

-- We have publicly and privately urged that these offers be accepted and talks begun immediately. We have ignored no diplomatic opportunity to facilitate the beginning of such meetings.

-- Unfortunately, we see nothing which indicates the other side is interested in stopping their attacks and turning to a political solution.

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INDOCHINA BLOODBATH?

Q: There are mixed reports of what is happening in Communist controlled Cambodia and Vietnam. Are the reports of a blood-bath real or just propaganda?

A: With the tight censorship imposed by the Communists, we have only incomplete reports. But we have seen enough evidence of executions and repressive measures from Cambodia to know that a massive program of executions and reprisals is underway. In South Vietnam we have less conclusive reports. What has happened is that two brave nations, Cambodia and South Vietnam, have lost their fight to determine their own futures and to live in freedom. The world community will be watching closely the actions of those who now control those countries in the name of "liberation."

INDOCHINA

Statement:

And, it is also revealed now that we seek to establish friendly relations with Hanoi. To make it more palatable, we are told this might help us learn the fate of the men still listed as Missing in Action.

The Facts:

The Congress has urged the Administration to make a positive gesture toward Hanoi in an effort to obtain further information relating to our Missing in Action, and the return of the bodies of dead servicemen still held by Hanoi. The Administration, in response, has offered to discuss with Hanoi the significant outstanding issues between us. Our policy toward Hanoi was clearly set forth by the President last December in Hawaii and does not include to "seek to establish friendly relations with Hanoi." Such an assertion is totally false.

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