MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Senator John J. Sparkman (D-Alabama)
Senator Clifford P. Case (R-New Jersey)
Senator Hubert Humphrey (D-Minnesota)
John O. Marsh, Counselor to the President
Max Friedersdorf, Asst. to the Pres., Leg. Affairs
Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: Thursday, March 6, 1975
10:00 a.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office

SUBJECT: Aid to Cambodia

[General Scowcroft arrived late]

President: I am afraid we don't have time and a different strategy must be tried. I understand you are thinking along the same line. Cliff called me....

Humphrey: We have been in close touch. We will have open hearings. I personally think Lon Nol is a dead duck. I have great sympathy for the Cambodian people. I think the only hope is for you or the Secretary to make a public effort for a ceasefire. These private efforts are not enough. I have talked to Habib and Larry. We know about them, but the Congress doesn't and the people don't.

Sparkman: Habib left me the same paper he made public. It looks like they are now trying to blame the Congress. I never heard of anything in '73. Did you, Cliff?

Case: No.

Humphrey: Let's not hash over the past. I think all we can do is find a way to let it down easily and make it not look like a cop out. We have to make a public appeal for a ceasefire. We have to tell Lon Nol...
he must step aside. We must form a new government to negotiate with Sihanouk and the other side. We would have to give enough aid not to have them collapse. But we don't have the votes. All we can do is waive the ceilings for a while.

Sparkman: I disagree that we can ask Lon Nol to step down. I favor your proposal. I talked to Mahon the other day. I think an appeal for a ceasefire is okay.

Humphrey: But the Ambassador must tell Lon Nol he must be willing to step aside.

Sparkman: We can't be in the position of running that government.

Case: I think there must be a public push by the President or the Secretary. I don't think we can publicly push out Lon Nol. I think we must put out a summary of what we have done about Sihanouk -- so that this is not a deathbed repentance. I agree the best we can get is lifting the ceiling. I think some words about Communist atrocities would be useful -- those stories of putting heads on pikes. The press doesn't cover this sort of thing -- only American imperialism.

President: Even Bella was shaken by the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge. Millie Fenwick said she had always opposed aid but you should hear her fear that hundreds of thousands will be massacred. The record shows our efforts -- it doesn't matter who is at fault. Bella said, "why not just give humanitarian aid?" I said "You can't sort it out this way. You also have to send military and other aid." I agree we need massive humanitarian aid if we can get the votes.

Humphrey: I agree.

Sparkman: Hatfield has a proposal for getting it in there under Title II.

President: Yes, but you have to give the people ammunition so that the thing won't collapse. Brent, what is going on?

[Scowcroft described the current situation.]

Humphrey: We've got to change the scenery. We don't have the votes. Get Long Boret in.

Sparkman: I don't think it can be done openly. I hate the Hatfield idea.
Humphrey: I think we have to remove Lon Nol, form a government of national coalition, and publicly call for a ceasefire.

Sparkman: I agree, but it can't be done publicly.

Case: If the President can say Lon Nol is not a barrier, that would help.

President: I am having a press conference. We will sort out what to say. Let's give lots of humanitarian aid. But we have to give arms to keep them from collapse while negotiations are going on.

Case: But I think we need to put out we have been making the effort over the past.

President: That we can do.

Sparkman: Shouldn't we have the full committee today? I think we can get it through the committee following the President's statement.

[There was further discussion about dumping Lon Nol]

Sparkman: Why not? According to the reports, the President is willing to step aside and form a coalition.

Humphrey: Put it on the Khmer Rouge -- they have said they had to get rid of Lon Nol to negotiate. The government has said they would change if that is necessary to negotiate.

President: We have to give them ammunition to hold the perimeter.

Sparkman: I agree with Humphrey, but it has to be handled this way:

-- Lay out the negotiating record;

-- Work out a program to bring an effort to lift the ceiling on economic aid and military assistance.

-- Move to an open offensive -- call for a ceasefire, call for a negotiation.
(Said in dots)
P.S. I spread on short hands twice in a day, starting
must be true, I understand your attitude and
time line. We talked never

4. We see no use to talk. We must have your

5. He said it was a would be made in it.

6. I have a good reputation for...
If it were your home to envision how, you would put your new venture, and public call for

5 I agree but not be done fully.
6 If we can stop from doing, then that

1 I now know very much of how contrast what
2 The help price of bacon and that
3 we have to give away to buy them from whiskey
4 with regret or you can.

C But that's too much to put and well have been
5 making the effort and the part
6 That we can do.

5 Should we have well trouble. It is only
6 exempt of them a before. Following a few
7 sentences

(Discussion about changing how well)

6 Except

5 According to experts, there is money to step
6 each plus in a

5 Part because they have said they
7 need to get out of it to negotiate. They
8 have then said they would change
9 if that is necessary to negotiate.
P. If we have to give away arms to improve
considerable

S. Deep sea off oil, but have to be handled in

any cost no negotiation
work costs encourage effort to lift
choke on more cost

➔ Army to open operations - cease fire, call for report

Command W/ have assaulted off members of Senate who
are willing to work in for humanitarian

➔ will assist.