

SECRET

OPERATIONS COORDINATING BOARD

February 10, 1960

SPECIAL REPORT ON SOUTHEAST ASIA (NSC 5809)

(Approved by the President, April 2, 1958)

(Period Covered: From August 12, 1959, through February 10, 1960)

ADEQUACY OF U. S. POLICY IN MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA (NSC 5809)

1. The validity and implementation of U. S. Policy on Southeast Asia has been appraised and evaluated in the light of operating experience. It is recommended that the National Security Council review those parts of the policy which pertain to Cambodia and Laos. The basis for this recommendation is as follows:

Cambodia (Paragraphs 39 through 42)

2. The major difficulty is encountered in the present wording and context of paragraph 39. Owing to the evolution of political conditions in Cambodia over the past 18 months, this paragraph appears misleading in that it does not provide guidance for dealing with Prince Sihanouk and the political strength he represents, but rather implies that we should encourage non-communist elements whether or not they are opposed to Sihanouk. The latter has emerged with added power and prestige from the abortive coup plots and subsequent subversive activities mounted against him in 1959 by ostensibly anti-communist elements. In the process many of these elements were eliminated and the revelation of their real or fancied association with the United States and other free world countries undermined Cambodian confidence in U. S. motives and became an obstacle to the pursuit of our objectives. Moreover, Sihanouk has given further evidence of political astuteness in the domestic arena, has displayed increased alertness to communist subversion, and has shown no inclination to tolerate any challenge to his pre-eminence. Policy guidance, therefore, should be directed conspicuously and specifically at the problem of dealing with Sihanouk, by all odds the major single factor in Cambodia and the principal target of U. S. policy.

3. The other courses of action for Cambodia (paragraphs 40 through 42) remain valid, but fail to take into account the particular forms in which certain general problems are encountered in Cambodia. In revising the NSC paper, consideration should be given to the following additional points:

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