

# Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

## (George Bush Library)

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25. Memcon	Memorandum of conversation between President George Bush and Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia [SENT FOR AGENCY REFERRAL] (7 pp.)	2/26/89	(b)(1)	S

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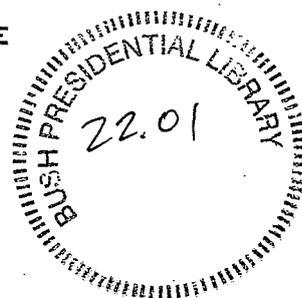
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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia (S)

PARTICIPANTS: U.S.  
The President  
James A. Baker III, Secretary of State  
Winston Lord, American Ambassador to China  
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs  
Marlin Fitzwater, Assistant to the President  
for Press Relations  
Gaston Sigur, Assistant Secretary of State  
for East Asian and Pacific Affairs  
Karl Jackson, Senior Director for Asian  
Affairs, National Security Council  
William Stanton, Embassy Notetaker

Cambodia  
Prince Norodom Sihanouk

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: February 26, 1989, 2:30-3:00 p.m.  
Diaoyutai State Guest House, Villa #18,  
Beijing, China

SUMMARY: In an extremely cordial half-hour meeting with Prince Sihanouk on February 26, President Bush reiterated strong and steadfast support for a Sihanouk-led government in Cambodia. The President expressed the hope that neither Thailand nor any other country would reconcile with the Phnom Penh regime. Commenting that there was an ache in his heart for Cambodia, the President expressed appreciation for the opportunity to hear Prince Sihanouk's views directly.

Prince Sihanouk blamed the lack of success at JIM-II on the refusal of Vietnam and the Hun Sen regime to abide by its promise to withdraw by the end of September 1989. The Prince said it was necessary to dismantle the PRK government and the DK to ensure free elections, and to establish an international peacekeeping force in order to ensure the withdrawal of the Vietnamese and to guarantee that the Khmer Rouge would not retake power. Sihanouk observed that of all the ASEAN countries, only Singapore had the courage to defend Sihanouk's proposals at JIM-II.

In response to the President's questions, Sihanouk said 80% of the Cambodian people would vote for him in free elections. This

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was why Hun Sen is opposed to free elections.

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Sihanouk argued that the Cambodian people wanted a liberal democracy. (S)

Sihanouk said that while Pol Pot remained Commander-in-Chief of the Khmer Rouge, he suffered from malaria and was in bad health.

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The Prince claimed that 100,000 Vietnamese forces remained in Cambodia and that many Vietnamese were disguised as Cambodians. (S)

Sihanouk observed that while the Thai government was divided, he did not think Prime Minister Chatchai would dare to change Thai policy toward Cambodia. Fortunately, he observed, Sitthi Savetsila was still Thai Foreign Minister and Sitthi had assured him that Thai policy would not change. Sihanouk said he therefore believed that, for the time being, the situation along the Thai-Cambodian border would not change. End summary. (S)

REMARKS UPON THE PRINCE'S ARRIVAL

Prince Sihanouk: I am very honored, Your Excellency. It is so nice of Your Excellency to see me. (U)

President Bush: Well, I am very happy to see you again. Shall we have a picture taken? You are looking very well. (U)

Prince Sihanouk: Very well, Your Excellency, thank you. (U)

ON THE WAY TO THE MEETING ROOM

Prince Sihanouk: It is a great honor to present Your Excellency with these flowers. (U)

President Bush: Thanks so much. These flowers are beautiful. Barbara will love this. We will want to save the card. (U)

IN THE MEETING ROOM WITH PRESS PRESENT

President Bush: Do you still have your house near Tiananmen? (U)

Prince Sihanouk: It is being renovated so I am staying here for the time being. I am staying in Villa #15. (U)

President Bush: I've had very good talks with Chinese leaders. You certainly have their strong support. We share the same view on the importance of a Sihanouk-led government in Cambodia. (In response to a reporter's question): We strongly support a

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Sihanouk-led government.

AFTER THE PRESS DEPARTED:

Prince Sihanouk: As you know, JIM-II was not successful. Vietnam refused to abide by its promise to withdraw its troops from Cambodia by the end of September 1989, and wanted a prior agreement among all four of the Cambodian factions, including Hun Sen's faction and the three parties of the Cambodian resistance. We tried hard to reach such an agreement with Hun Sen but there are two points which divide us. First is the question of the dismantling of Democratic Kampuchea and the illegal People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) in order to pave the way for the Cambodian people to achieve self-determination. The Cambodian people would not have free elections in Cambodia unless the elections take place outside the framework of the illegal PRK.

The government was set up in January 1979, by Vietnam when it invaded Cambodia and created this so-called People's Republic of Kampuchea and imposed such a Communist regime on the Cambodian people. Second, Mr. President, people throughout the world continue to say that we must prevent Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge from returning to power in Cambodia. The Khmer Rouge, under pressure from China, has accepted an international control commission and an international peacekeeping force sent by the United Nations. Hun Sen opposes this. China and the Khmer Rouge leaders only ask to let the Khmer Rouge be a member of a quadripartite system under my leadership and without playing a dominant role. But Hun Sen and Vietnam reject this and continue to reject proposals which consist of having an international peacekeeping force in Cambodia and free elections and international supervision. They want to maintain the so-called People's Republic of Kampuchea and the so-called government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea under the leadership of Hun Sen. They propose, alongside the People's Republic of Kampuchea, to set up what they call a national reconciliation council to be presided over by Norodom Sihanouk. But I cannot accept this because it would not be able to organize truly free elections if the PRK government remains in power (at the time of the election).

President Bush: I know. Let me ask you a question. If there were totally free elections in Cambodia, would you win big?

Prince Sihanouk: I am sure that in elections by the people about 80% would remain faithful to Sihanouk.

President Bush: Eighty percent?

Prince Sihanouk: Your Excellency, I am not proud of myself, but

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it is the truth. This is the reason Hun Sen refuses to allow free elections. If they were so sure to win, the people in Phnom Penh would accept free elections. But they don't want free elections. (S)

President Bush: But your support is that strong? That is very good. (S)

Prince Sihanouk: Even TIME and NEWSWEEK, in an article by Ron Moreau, wrote that my people still have nostalgia for the Sihanouk reign, the Golden Age of Cambodia. So, Mr. President, without praising myself, I assure you about 80% of the people would vote in favor of me and my party. Hun Sen is liked by a small part of the Cambodian nation because those people believe that he saved them from the yoke of the Khmer Rouge. (b)(1) (S) (C)

(b)(1)

In the annual report, they mention serious violations by the Vietnamese army in Cambodia and by the government in Phnom Penh. Therefore, they can't be liked by the whole nation of Cambodia. The Cambodian people are proud and very patriotic and they want a free and independent Cambodia, not a satellite of Vietnam or of other foreign countries. They want a liberal democracy with a liberal economic system. We are small, but we want to follow the U.S. example. We want to be a liberal democracy. We must achieve this. (S)

President Bush: Where is Pol Pot now? Is he with his troops or is he in hiding? (S)

Prince Sihanouk: Yes, he is hiding. Pol Pot is in bad shape. He has malaria and is weak. He is not in good health. He remains, in fact, Commander-in-Chief of the Khmer Rouge party and army. But officially the chief is Khieu Samphan. (b)(1) (S) (C) 2546

President Bush:

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Prince Sihanouk:

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President Bush: It was certainly a very brutal period in your history. (C)

Prince Sihanouk: A very dark period. (C)

President Bush: Are the Vietnamese today in Cambodia doing a lot of fighting or sitting in armed camps? (S)

Prince Sihanouk: They are fighting. The Thai press mentioned recently that there are continuing battles between the Vietnamese and the resistance forces. My army has made tremendous progress. When you say resistance forces, it is not only the Khmer Rouge, but also Sihanouk's forces. Son Sann's forces are the weakest, but the resistance continues to fight Vietnam. (S)

Practically speaking, the forces of Heng Samrin and Hun Sen are not fighting us but we still face Vietnam. (b)(1)

(b)(1) there are still 100,000 Vietnamese troops in Cambodia. Vietnam made a proposal regarding a so-called withdrawal from Cambodia. The Vietnamese said that 50,000 troops had been withdrawn, this was not true. About 15,000 were withdrawn. Without the protection of 100,000 troops, the regime of Hun Sen would collapse, crumble. The army of Hun Sen is not strong. There are big numbers of so-called volunteers. When the people are genuinely Khmer, they don't fight because they don't like Vietnam. They want an independent Cambodia. The fact is that Vietnam decided a few years ago to put more and more Vietnamese disguised as Cambodians in the so-called Cambodian army of Hun Sen. (S)

President Bush: We heard the Chinese tell us today that the Vietnamese are changing their uniforms. Don't the people know this is happening? (S)

Prince Sihanouk: Yes, they do. But for Westerners, it is difficult to know the difference between a Cambodian and a Vietnamese face. (S)

President Bush: Well, we certainly wish you luck. We respect your efforts and the cause you represent. You are a symbol of unity for Cambodia. I hope that neither Thailand nor anyone else goes off on their own and tries to reconcile with the puppet regime in Phnom Penh. (S)

Prince Sihanouk: That would be bad. I cannot criticize Prime Minister Chatchai Chunhavan for deciding to receive Hun Sen so

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warmly in Bangkok. I don't criticize him, but he must take into account that we do not need a national reconciliation council in the framework of the so-called People's Republic of Kampuchea but a quadripartite government set up outside of this framework. Whether this government is capitalist or communist, whether it is socialist or capitalist, this is up to the Cambodian people to decide. We must not force the Cambodian people to do things under the illegal system of the PRK. That is why we need an international peacekeeping force and an international control commission. Not just for the realization of the future Vietnamese withdrawal but also to prevent the Khmer Rouge from trying to take power. The Khmer Rouge say they will not try, but if the international community refuses to trust them, then we need an international peacekeeping force.

In JIM-II, we could not surrender to Vietnam. The reason it was not a success is that Vietnam and Hun Sen want us to surrender to unacceptable conditions. Thailand, Indonesia, even Malaysia, Brunei, and the Philippines did not help us, did not defend our just cause and our resistance. Only Singapore had the courage to say Sihanouk is right and Vietnam is wrong. Only Singapore defended our just cause. Mr. President, I think Thailand and the other ASEAN countries should maintain their stand in favor of the resistance, just as the U.S., Japan, China, and Singapore continue to make clear their stand. We need free elections and international supervision. I think these two points are essential. They are vital. We will not give them up. (S)

President Bush: This meeting has been a great help to us in hearing directly from you your views. We are heading off now to see Zhao Ziyang, but I want you to know we will be steadfast in our support for this arrangement. We made this point to the Thai. We must stick together. What is your next step? Will there be a JIM-III? (S)

Prince Sihanouk: They say that after four months, following the Deng-Gorbachev summit, ASEAN would like to organize another meeting. (S)

President Bush: Will you go? (U)

Prince Sihanouk: Mr. President, I will examine the situation. (U)

President Bush: I understand. You can't make a commitment ahead of time. (U)

Prince Sihanouk: Yes. (U)

Secretary Baker: Do you know whether the Thai will close off the border? (S)

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Prince Sihanouk: Between Foreign Minister Sitthi and Prime Minister Chatchai, there is not a common view. I saw Sitthi here and next month Chatchai will visit on the 15th of March. He will meet Deng and the other leaders and on the 16th I will give a banquet in his honor. I think Chatchai himself will not dare to change the present Thai policy which was established under Prime Minister Prem. It is fortunate for us that Sitthi Savetsila is still Foreign Minister. He told me the other day that Thailand will not change its policy and they will continue to help the resistance with Chinese aid. For the time being, I think we can trust Thailand. (S)

President Bush: It's a great help to hear from you directly your views. Believe me when I say there is an ache in my heart for your country. You are the hope of your people. (S)

Prince Sihanouk: I am immensely encouraged by your noble words and generous support. (U)

ON THE WAY OUT THE DOOR

President Bush: Will you be going back to the Cambodian border any time soon? (S)

Prince Sihanouk: Yes, I will go back to the frontier in April, Mr. President. I will also visit Thailand and Indonesia. (S)

President Bush: Are you worried about your security? (S)

Prince Sihanouk: The army of Thailand will take care of me. Of course, I cannot go to Phnom Penh. They only would want me to be attached to their government. (S)

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