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JANUARY 30, 1971

TEXT: TRANSCRIPT OF ROGERS JANUARY 29 PRESS CONFERENCE

WASHINGTON -- FOLLOWING IS THE TRANSCRIPT OF THE
PRESS CONFERENCE HELD JANUARY 29 BY SECRETARY OF STATE
WILLIAM P. ROGERS:

(BEGIN TEXT)

SECRETARY ROGERS: LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I THOUGHT IF IT
WAS AGREEABLE TO YOU THAT WE MIGHT START AT LEAST WITH THE
SAME FORMAT THAT WE HAD AT THE LAST PRESS CONFERENCE AND SEE HOW
IT WORKS. I THOUGHT IT WORKED REASONABLY WELL. I HOPE YOU DID. THERE
WERE SOME COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE FACT THAT I SEEMED TO CALL ON THE
SAME PEOPLE SEVERAL TIMES. I WILL TRY TO AVOID THAT TODAY AND
SEE IF I CAN BE A LITTLE FAIRER.

FIRST QUESTION?

Q. MR. SECRETARY, TO WHAT LIMITS IS THE UNITED STATES PREPARED
TO GO IN FIGHTING FOR THE DEFENSE OF CAMBODIA?

A. THE UNITED STATES IS NOT FIGHTING FOR THE DEFENSE OF
CAMBODIA. THE UNITED STATES IS FIGHTING TO PROTECT THE AMERICAN
FORCES IN SOUTH VIET-NAM. NOW, IN THAT CONNECTION, WE ARE
PREPARED TO USE AIR POWER TO THE FULLEST POSSIBLE EXTENT
NECESSARY TO PROTECT AMERICAN LIVES. AND THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE OF
THE UNITED STATES AS FAR AS CAMBODIA IS CONCERNED IS TO PREVENT THE
ENEMY FROM RE-ESTABLISHING ITS BASE AREAS IN CAMBODIA WHICH IT
CAN USE AGAINST AMERICAN FORCES.

NOW, ONE OF THE REASONS THERE IS SOME CONFUSION ABOUT
THIS IS OBVIOUSLY BECAUSE WE HAVE THAT OBJECTIVE AND CAMBODIA

HAS AN OBJECTIVE WHICH IS SIMILAR. WE HAVE A COMMON ENEMY, COMMON OBJECTIVES. THEN WHEN WE PERFORM A MILITARY ACTION SUCH AS THE ROUTE 4 ACTION, WE BENEFIT BOTH CAMBODIA AND THE UNITED STATES. BUT OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO PREVENT THE ENEMY FROM RE-ESTABLISHING THE SANCTUARIES IN CAMBODIA WHICH THEY USED FOR SO LONG AGAINST AMERICAN FORCES.

Q. MR. SECRETARY, DOES THIS IN EFFECT, THOUGH, EXTEND U.S. AIR POWER, AND CERTAINLY ON OCCASION, AS IT HAS IN THE PAST, U.S. CLOSE SUPPORT THROUGHOUT CAMBODIA?

A. THE PRESIDENT HAS SAID REPEATEDLY THAT HE WILL USE AIR POWER AS HE THINKS NECESSARY TO PROTECT AMERICAN FORCES. NOW, THE PRINCIPAL USE OF THAT AIR POWER WILL BE NEAR THE SANCTUARY AREAS, BUT THERE IS NO LIMIT ON IT, AND WE DON'T SEE ANY REASON WHY THERE SHOULD BE ANY LIMIT ON THE USE OF THAT AIR POWER. HE INTENDS TO USE THE AIR POWER AS HE SEES FIT AGAINST ENEMY FORCES, AGAINST ENEMY SUPPLIES, AGAINST ENEMY COMMUNICATIONS, AND TO PREVENT THE ENEMY FROM RE-ESTABLISHING THOSE BASE AREAS.

NOW, WE DON'T HAVE TO WAIT IN THAT CONNECTION. WE DON'T HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL THE BASE AREAS HAVE BEEN REESTABLISHED. WE WANT TO TAKE THE ACTION WHICH IS NECESSARY TO PREVENT THAT FROM HAPPENING.

Q. MR. SECRETARY, DO YOU KNOW WHAT SENATOR STENNIS WAS TALKING ABOUT WHEN HE SAID THAT WE MAY HAVE TO DO MORE IN CAMBODIA THAN WE ARE DOING NOW?

A. NO, I AM NOT SURE, MR. LISAGOR, WHAT HE HAD IN MIND. AS I SAID YESTERDAY IN THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, THE ADMINISTRATION HAS NO PRESENT INTENTION OF ASKING FOR ANY ADDITIONAL LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY. WE THINK THE AUTHORITY THAT WE HAVE IS SUFFICIENT FOR THE PURPOSES THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS IN MIND. I THINK WE SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT BETWEEN NOW AND MAY 1, THERE IS A VERY CRITICAL PERIOD ABOUT TO ENSUE, BECAUSE BY MAY 1, WE WILL HAVE WITHDRAWN ABOUT 50,000 MORE TROOPS AND WE WILL HAVE OUR TROOPS LARGELY OUT OF THE COMBAT ROLE, AND THE ENEMY OBVIOUSLY BECAUSE IT IS A DRY SEASON WILL ATTEMPT TO BUILD UP ITS BASE AREAS SO THAT IT CAN ATTACK US AT THAT POINT. SO, WE ARE GOING TO TAKE WHATEVER ACTION IS NECESSARY CONSISTENT WITH THE LEGAL RESTRICTIONS TO PREVENT THAT FROM

HAPPENING.

Q. MR. SECRETARY, ONE OF THE BASE AREAS IS IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF LAOS. IS ANY ACTION CONTEMPLATED AGAINST THAT BASE AREA IN VIEW OF THE INCREASE, REPORTED INCREASE, IN STRENGTH AND MATERIEL COMING DOWN?

A. WELL, AS YOU KNOW, MR. KALB, WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY SAID THAT WE WOULD NOT SAY WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO IN A MILITARY WAY, AND I WOULD NOT TRANSGRESS THAT RULE AT THIS TIME. OBVIOUSLY THAT CONCERNS US. THERE ARE LARGE SUPPLIES BEING BUILT UP IN THAT AREA, IN THE PANHANDLE AREA OF LAOS. WE HAVE BEEN USING AIR POWER TO ATTACK THOSE SUPPLIES AND THE TRUCKS COMING DOWN THE HO CHI MINH TRAIL. WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO THAT. WHETHER WE WILL TAKE OTHER ACTION OR NOT, WE WILL HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE. I AM CERTAINLY NOT IN A POSITION TO ANNOUNCE ANY SUCH ACTION, BUT WE DON'T FORECLOSE ANY POSSIBILITY. WE HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT AIR POWER WILL BE USED TO PROTECT AMERICAN LIVES, AND WE HAVE SOME DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING WHY THERE SHOULD BE ANY OBJECTION TO THAT.

Q. MR. SECRETARY, DO YOU FORESEE THE POSSIBILITY THAT CONTINUED COMMUNIST PRESSURE IN CAMBODIA COULD SLOW DOWN THE VIETNAMIZATION PROGRAM OR THE PRESIDENT'S WITHDRAWAL SCHEDULE?

A. NO, I DO NOT. THE PRESIDENT IS COMMITTED TO THE VIETNAMIZATION PROGRAM. HE HAS ANNOUNCED THE WITHDRAWALS THAT WILL TAKE PLACE BETWEEN NOW AND MAY 1. WE INTEND TO CONTINUE WITH THOSE WITHDRAWALS. EVERY INSTANCE THE PRESIDENT HAS MADE PROMISES, WE HAVE KEPT THOSE PROMISES. AND THAT IS ONE OF THE PROMISES THAT HE HAS MADE. IN THE CAMBODIAN INCURSION, HE PROMISED THAT WE WOULD BE OUT OF THERE BY JULY 1, AND OUR TROOPS WERE OUT OF THERE. HE PROMISED THAT WE WOULD NOT REINTRODUCE GROUND COMBAT TROOPS IN CAMBODIA OR ADVISORS TO COMBAT UNITS, AND WE HAVE KEPT THAT PROMISE. WE ARE NOT GOING TO INTRODUCE GROUND COMBAT TROOPS OR ADVISORS INTO CAMBODIA.

NOW, BEYOND MAY 1, WE HAVE NOT MADE ANY ANNOUNCEMENT. THE PRESIDENT HAS INDICATED HE WILL MAKE A FURTHER ANNOUNCEMENT IN APRIL.

Q. MR. SECRETARY, MANY MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE WORRY ABOUT AIR POWER BECAUSE THEY SAY THAT HISTORY IN INDOCHINA IS THAT AIR POWER ALONE HAS NEVER DONE THE JOB. CAN YOU GIVE US ASSURANCE THAT IF AIR POWER ALONE IN CAMBODIA FAILS TO ACCOMPLISH THE OBJECTIVE THAT YOU HAVE SET OUT, THAT YOU WILL NOT SEEK THE USE OF GROUND TROOPS IN CAMBODIA?

A. WELL, WE HAVE TRIED ON EVERY OCCASION TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT WE WILL NOT USE GROUND COMBAT TROOPS IN CAMBODIA. AND I THINK THAT THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE DOES LIVE WITH MEMORIES OF THE PAST, NATURALLY, AND I DISCUSSED THAT WITH THEM YESTERDAY. AND THEY ARE INCLINED TO SAY, "WELL, WE'VE HEARD OTHER REPRESENTATIONS TO THAT EFFECT AND THEREFORE WE DON'T THINK YOU ARE GOING TO BE ABLE TO CARRY OUT THE REPRESENTATIONS YOU ARE MAKING." THE ANSWER, OF COURSE, IS QUITE CLEAR, AND THAT IS: OUR POLICY IS SURELY DIFFERENT. PRESIDENT NIXON'S POLICY IS TO WITHDRAW TROOPS FROM INDOCHINA, SOUTH VIET-NAM, PARTICULARLY, IN AN ORDERLY WAY, AS SOON AS WE CAN, CONSISTENT WITH THE POLICY OF THIS ADMINISTRATION, CONSISTENT WITH THE SACRIFICES THAT THIS NATION HAS MADE OVER THE YEARS, IN A WAY THAT WILL NOT BE A TOTAL REPUDIATION OF ALL OUR NATION HAS STOOD FOR.

NOW, WE ARE GOING TO CONTINUE THAT POLICY. WE COULDN'T CHANGE THAT UNDER ANY CONDITIONS. THE IMPERATIVES ARE SUCH THAT WE HAVE TO CONTINUE THAT PROGRAM, AND WE ARE GOING TO CONTINUE IT.

NOW IN THE LAST TWO YEARS WE HAVE BUILT UP, OR HELPED TO BUILD UP, THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE FORCES SO THAT THEY NUMBER A MILLION MEN NOW. THEY ARE WELL EQUIPPED AND THEY ARE WORKING TOGETHER WITH CAMBODIANS AND OTHER ASIANS, AND WE THINK THAT THEY CAN HANDLE THE MILITARY REQUIREMENT TO DEFEND THEIR OWN COUNTRIES.

WE HAVE NO DOUBT THAT WE CAN LIVE UP TO THESE REPRESENTATIONS, AND IF THE SITUATION HAPPENED TO BE AS IT WAS FIVE YEARS AGO, IT WOULD BE QUITE DIFFERENT.

ALL OUR PLANNING IS BASED ON THE WITHDRAWAL OF OUR TROOPS FROM SOUTH VIET-NAM. THE PRESIDENT HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE IS GOING TO DO THAT AND HE HAS DONE IT.

OUR BUDGETARY PLANNING IS ALL BASED ON THAT.

THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIET-NAM KNOWS ABOUT IT AND IS PERFECTLY WILLING TO PROCEED WITH THE PROGRAM.

NOW IN THAT PROCESS, WHILE WE ARE WITHDRAWING TROOPS FROM SOUTH VIET-NAM, OBVIOUSLY THERE IS A RISK AND THE PRESIDENT, AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, HAS AN OBLIGATION TO BE SURE THAT THE AMERICAN FORCES THAT ARE LEFT, ARE NOT PUT IN JEOPARDY. SO HE IS GOING TO USE THE POWER THAT IS AT HIS DISPOSAL, CONSISTENT WITH THE LEGISLATIVE RESTRICTION IN A WAY TO GIVE THE ULTIMATE PROTECTION TO OUR FORCES.

NOW WHY SHOULDN'T HE?

NOW THAT USE OF AIR POWER IS NOT GOING TO CAUSE US TO GET BCGGED DOWN IN A LAND WAR IN CAMBODIA OR LAOS. BUT WE ARE GOING TO CONTINUE TO USE THAT AIR POWER BECAUSE IT PROTECTS AMERICAN LIVES. IT'S THE LEAST COSTLY WAY TO PROTECT OUR MEN -- AND WHY WE SHOULD HAVE ANY RESTRICTION ON THE USE OF THAT AIR POWER TO PROTECT AMERICAN LIVES, I DON'T KNOW.

I ASKED THE SENATORS YESTERDAY IF THEY HAD ANY SUGGESTIONS ABOUT THAT -- DID THEY WANT US TO USE FIXED WING AIRCRAFT AND NOT HELICOPTERS? DID THEY WANT US TO USE A CERTAIN KIND OF ARMAMENT AND NOT OTHER KINDS OF ARMAMENT?

WHY SHOULDN'T WE USE AIR POWER TO PREVENT THE ENEMY FROM REESTABLISHING HIS BASES AND TO PROTECT AMERICANS?

ONE SENATOR SAID, SOMETHING ABOUT THAT -- BECAUSE WE HAD AGREED TO WITHDRAW OUR FORCES, THAT WE WERE ACTING AS IF THERE WAS AN ON-GOING WAR.

OF COURSE THERE'S AN ON-GOING WAR.

OUR MEN ARE ENGAGED IN COMBAT, WHY SHOULDN'T WE USE AIR POWER?

Q. MR. SECRETARY, IS THAT FULL USE OF AIR POWER CONSISTENT WITH LEGISLATIVE RESTRICTIONS APPLIED TO NORTH VIET-NAM AS WELL?

A. YES, IT APPLIES TO NORTH VIET-NAM.

WE HAVE -- WE DISCUSSED AT MY LAST PRESS CONFERENCE AN UNDERSTANDING WHICH WE INTENDED TO CONTINUE TO OBSERVE -- BUT THERE ARE NO LEGISLATIVE RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF AIR POWER.

Q. MR. SECRETARY, WHEN YOU ARE --

A. DID I CALL ON YOU BEFORE?

A. NOT YET, BUT YOU HAVE NOW.

I AM CURIOUS ABOUT THE EXTENT OF YOUR DEFINITION OF ACTIONS THAT ARE NECESSARY TO PROTECT THE LIVES OF AMERICAN TROOPS. WOULD

WE CONSIDER IT A DANGER TO OUR AMERICAN TROOPS IN VIET-NAM IF CAMBODIA WERE TO FALL TO THE COMMUNISTS? AND DO WE THUS DEFINE IT AS NECESSARY TO USE OUR FULL AIR POWER AND SEA POWER TO PREVENT CAMBODIA FROM FALLING TO THE COMMUNISTS?

A. NO, THAT'S NOT OUR OBJECTIVE. BUT OBVIOUSLY THERE IS A GREAT SIMILARITY -- SO IT GETS TO BE A MATTER OF SEMANTICS.

OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO PREVENT THE ENEMY FROM RE-ESTABLISHING SANCTUARIES, AS I HAVE SAID.

OBVIOUSLY, WE WOULD CONSIDER IT AN ADVERSE DEVELOPMENT IF CAMBODIA FELL TO THE COMMUNISTS. THERE'S NO SECRET ABOUT THAT. THAT'S WHY THE CONGRESS ENACTED THE SUPPLEMENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO PROVIDE MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO CAMBODIA. SO WE HOPE CAMBODIA SURVIVES.

BUT OUR OBJECTIVE IS NOT THE SURVIVAL OF THE GOVERNMENT IN CAMBODIA. IN FACT, THE LEGISLATION PROVIDES THAT IT IS NOT A COMMITMENT TO THE GOVERNMENT OF CAMBODIA -- BUT BECAUSE WE HAVE THE SAME INTERESTS THAT THEY DO, IN NOT PERMITTING THE ENEMY TO ESTABLISH THESE BASE AREAS -- THEN IT'S VERY CLOSE TO SAY -- ASK YOURSELF: IS THIS PRINCIPALLY FOR THE BENEFIT OF CAMBODIA OR PRINCIPALLY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE UNITED STATES?

I DON'T REALLY SEE WHAT DIFFERENCE IT MAKES. WE ARE GOING TO USE AIR POWER TO PREVENT THE ENEMY FROM DOING THE THINGS THAT WOULD PUT OUR MEN IN JEOPARDY AND MOST OF THEIR ACTIVITY AT THE MOMENT IS IN CAMBODIA AND SOUTHERN LAOS -- SO OUR AIR POWER IS GOING TO BE USED TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT NECESSARY, THAT THE PRESIDENT FEELS NECESSARY, FOR THE SAFETY OF AMERICANS.

Q. MR. SECRETARY, I'M NOT SURE I UNDERSTAND YOUR ANSWER TO MARVIN'S QUESTION ABOUT THE BASE AREAS IN LAOS. YOU USED THE PHRASE THAT YOU DON'T FORECLOSE ANY POSSIBILITY.

ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT WE ARE HOLDING OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF THE USE OF GROUND COMBAT TROOPS?

A. NO, NO, NOT AT ALL.

I WAS POINTING OUT THAT WE WERE NOT LIMITING THE USE OF AIR POWER TO ANYWHERE IN INDOCHINA -- WHETHER IT'S SOUTH VIET-NAM, NORTH VIET-NAM, CAMBODIA OR LAOS.

NO, WE WOULD NOT USE GROUND COMBAT TROOPS IN LAOS ANY MORE THAN WE WOULD IN CAMBODIA. IN FACT, THERE ARE LEGISLATIVE RESTRICTIONS

ON THAT, TOO.

BUT WHAT I AM SAYING IS THAT AT A TIME WHEN WE ARE CARRYING OUT A PROGRAM TO GET OUR FORCES OUT OF THIS WAR, AND WE ARE DOING IT SUCCESSFULLY, THEN WHAT IS WRONG WITH USING OUR AIR POWER TO PROTECT THEM?

Q. MR. SECRETARY, I THINK SOME OF THE CONFUSION MAY ARISE FROM THE STATEMENT THAT SECRETARY LAIRD MADE ON THE HILL THE OTHER DAY IN WHICH HE KEYED FUTURE U.S. OBJECTIVES IN CAMBODIA TO "THWARTING COMMUNIST AGGRESSION AND HELPING FRIENDS AND ALLIES."

WAS HE SIGNALING A WIDENING OF U.S. COMMITMENT TO THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IN CAMBODIA?

A. NO, I DON'T THINK SO. I THINK IT'S -- THERE AGAIN, EXPLAINING WHAT I EXPLAINED A MOMENT AGO, THAT BECAUSE ACTIONS THAT WE HAVE TAKEN IN CAMBODIA BENEFIT NOT ONLY THE UNITED STATES BUT ALSO CAMBODIA -- YOU CAN STATE IT EITHER WAY.

WE HAVE NO INTENTION OF -- WELL, PUT IT THIS WAY: WORDS LIKE "WIDENING" I THINK, TEND TO BE CONFUSING. THE LOCALE OF THE WAR HAS CHANGED SOME. PRINCIPAL FIGHTING IS BEING DONE NOW IN CAMBODIA AND SOUTHERN LAOS. SO TO THAT EXTENT, IF YOU USE "WIDENING" IN THE SENSE THAT THE LOCALE HAS CHANGED, THAT'S THE PROPER USE OF THE WORD.

IF YOU USE IT IN THE SENSE OF ENLARGMENT, IT'S NOT SO.

LET ME JUST CITE A COUPLE OF STATISTICS BECAUSE WE TEND TO LOSE SIGHT OF THE DEVELOPMENTS IN OUR DAY-TO-DAY DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE WAR. IN FACT, SOMETIMES WE DON'T EVEN WANT -- WE DON'T LIKE TO HAVE THE FACTS OBSCURE THE RHETORIC.

THE FACTS ARE THAT THE COST OF THE WAR -- PUT IT IN MONETARY COSTS -- THE INCREMENTAL COSTS HAVE GONE DOWN ABOUT 50 PERCENT SINCE 1968. FROM ABOUT 29 BILLION DOLLARS TO ROUGHLY 15 BILLION DOLLARS.

OUR CASUALTIES HAVE BEEN GREATLY REDUCED, AS YOU KNOW. THEY ARE STILL TOO HIGH, BUT THEY ARE REDUCED BY 70 TO 75 PERCENT. AS PRESIDENT NIXON PROMISED AT THE TIME OF THE CAMBODIAN INCURSION -- AND THERE WAS A GOOD DEAL OF SKEPTICISM ABOUT IT -- HE PROMISED THAT THOSE INCURSIONS WOULD RESULT IN DECREASED CASUALTIES.

OUR CASUALTIES SINCE THE CAMBODIAN INCURSION -- COMPARE THE THREE MONTHS AFTER TO THE THREE MONTHS BEFORE -- ARE DOWN 60 PERCENT.

NOW THE NUMBER OF SORTIES FLOWN IN 1968 -- I HEAR A LOT OF DISCUSSION ABOUT "ENLARGEMENT OF THE AIR WAR" -- THE NUMBER OF SORTIES ARE DOWN OVER 60 PERCENT COMPARED TO 1968.

THE LEVEL OF COMBAT ACTIVITY IS GREATLY REDUCED. IN SOUTH VIET-NAM THE COUNTRY IS RELATIVELY SECURE -- ABOUT 95 PERCENT OF THE LAND AREA.

SO BY ANY CRITERION, THE WAR HAS GREATLY DE-ESCALATED AND WE, THE UNITED STATES, ARE GOING TO BE OUT OF THE PRIMARY COMBAT ROLE BY MAY 1ST -- AND WILL HAVE TURNED IT OVER TO THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE -- AND IT'S WORKING QUITE WELL.

NOW WHILE THIS IS HAPPENING, THE PRESIDENT IS DETERMINED TO USE HIS AIR POWER, THE AIR POWER OF THIS NATION, TO GIVE MAXIMUM PROTECTION TO OUR MEN -- AND WE DON'T THINK IT'S GOING TO RESULT IN A FAILURE OF THE PROGRAM, WE THINK IT'S GOING TO RESULT IN THE SUCCESS OF THE PROGRAM -- AND WHEN WE TALK ABOUT LEGISLATIVE INTENT ABOUT THE USE OF AIR POWER -- THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS THAT THE LEGISLATIVE INTENT IS QUITE CLEAR.

IN THE ORIGINAL COOPER-CHURCH AMENDMENT THERE WAS A PROVISION PROHIBITING THE USE OF AIR POWER IN SUPPORT OF CAMBODIAN FORCES. THAT WAS DELETED IN CONFERENCE. WHAT DOES THAT INDICATE?

THAT INDICATES THE CONGRESSIONAL INTENT WAS THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO SUCH RESTRICTION.

Q. MR. SECRETARY, THE LEGISLATIVE INTENT OF THE COOPER-CHURCH AMENDMENT, AT LEAST IF ONE READS THE DEBATE WHICH PRECEDED ITS PASSING -- MR. CHURCH SEEMS TO LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN QUITE CLEARLY TO REINVASION OF THE SANCTUARY AREAS WITH AMERICAN GROUND COMBAT FORCES.

DO YOU SEE THIS AS A PART OF THE MANDATE OF THE COOPER-CHURCH AMENDMENT?

A. NO, I DO NOT. WE DO NOT INTEND TO USE GROUND COMBAT TROOPS. I DON'T BELIEVE THAT WAS INTENDED. I THINK IT WAS INTENDED PROBABLY, READING THE DEBATE, THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD NOT BE FORECLOSED IN THE EVENT OF A DIRE EMERGENCY, BUT WE DON'T

PARTICIPATE ANY SUCH EMERGENCY.

Q. MR. SECRETARY, GOING BEYOND CAMBODIA, DOES THE NIXON DOCTRINE ENVISION THE USE OF AMERICAN AIR AND SEA POWER FOR THE DEFENSE OF COUNTRIES TO WHICH WE HAVE NO FORMAL COMMITMENTS?

A. NO, IT DOES NOT. THE NIXON DOCTRINE SAYS -- WELL, IT SAYS MANY THINGS, BUT ONE OF THE THINGS IT SAYS IS THAT WE WOULD HOPE THAT ASIAN NATIONS WOULD WORK TOGETHER TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN STRENGTH AND PROVIDE FOR GROUND FORCES TO PROTECT THEIR OWN NATIONS.

NOW, WE DO HAVE TREATY COMMITMENTS WITH MANY OF THE NATIONS IN THAT AREA OF THE WORLD, BUT ALL OF THOSE TREATY COMMITMENTS REQUIRE THAT THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES COME INTO PLAY. SO WE COULD NOT USE AIR AND SEA POWER IN THOSE INSTANCES WITHOUT CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL. INsofar AS -- THAT EXCLUDES, OF COURSE, INDOCHINA, BUT IT WOULD NOT APPLY TO ANY OTHER NATION, UNLESS OUR NATIONAL SECURITY WAS INVOLVED, IN WHICH EVENT WE STILL WOULD ~~HAVE TO~~ COMPLY WITH THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES.

Q. ARE THERE ANY -- IN CAMBODIA, IS THERE ANY POSSIBILITY THAT THE CONFUSION ARISES BECAUSE THERE ARE U.S. PERSONNEL THAT CONFER WITH THE CAMBODIAN FORCES IN ORDER TO COORDINATE THE AIR ATTACKS ON THE CAMBODIAN SANCTUARIES?

A. YES, I THINK SO. I THINK THAT THE GRAY AREAS ARE WHAT CAUSE THE PROBLEM, AND I THINK THAT WE HAVE VERY CAREFULLY DRAWN A LINE. AND I BELIEVE THAT, WITH MINOR EXCEPTIONS, IT SHOULDN'T BE DIFFICULT TO OBSERVE THE DIVISION.

THE DIVISION, STATED FAIRLY SIMPLY, IS THIS: THAT WE WILL NOT PROVIDE GROUND COMBAT FORCES. AND I THINK THAT'S THE TERM THAT'S FAIRLY CLEAR -- THAT WE WON'T SEND MEN INTO CAMBODIA TO FIGHT ON THE GROUND. SECONDLY, WE WILL NOT HAVE ADVISERS FOR CAMBODIAN UNITS.

NOW, ADVISERS, I BELIEVE -- AND I TOLD THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE THIS YESTERDAY -- I BELIEVE "ADVISERS" MEANS THAT WE WILL NOT SEND AMERICANS WITH A COMBAT UNIT IN A COMBAT ENVIRONMENT TO GIVE THEM ADVICE ABOUT HOW TO CONDUCT THE COMBAT.

NOW, WE DO HAVE, BECAUSE WE HAVE TO MAKE MILITARY DELIVERIES UNDER THE SUPPLEMENTAL AID PROGRAM -- WE WILL HAVE TO HAVE MILITARY EQUIPMENT DELIVERED BY AIR. BUT THEY WILL BE ESSENTIALLY AUDITORY

THEY WILL KEEP TRACK OF THE MATERIAL, MAKE THE DELIVERIES, KEEP TRACK OF THE INVENTORIES, ET CETERA. NOW, THE LAW REQUIRES THAT.

NOW, IT'S CONCEIVABLE THAT THERE COULD BE SOME ARGUMENT ABOUT DEFINITION, BUT I DON'T THINK IT'S MUCH OF A PROBLEM. THE FACT IS THAT, YOU KNOW, IF WE'RE GOING TO SEND TROOPS IN TO FIGHT IN CAMBODIA -- EITHER TO FIGHT OR TO HELP THE OTHER -- HELP CAMBODIANS WHILE THEY'RE FIGHTING -- WE CAN'T DO THAT. WE'RE NOT GOING TO DO THAT. THAT'S THE DIVIDING LINE.

ON OTHER THINGS, SUCH AS THE USE OF AIR POWER, PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION FOR LOGISTICS -- OR EVEN FOR MEN -- WE PROPOSE TO DO THAT, BECAUSE THAT IN A SENSE WILL MAKE THE LIVES OF OUR MEN SAFER. IT WILL HELP US WITH OUR PROGRAM, AND THAT'S WHAT THE PRESIDENT HAS IN MIND.

Q. MAY I GO TO ANOTHER PART OF THE WORLD NOW?

A. YES.

Q. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE UNITED STATES BEING CAST IN THE ROLE OF A DEFENDANT, ON THE CHARGES OF ECUADOR THAT WE'RE GUILTY OF ECONOMIC AGGRESSION, BEFORE THE FOREIGN MINISTERS TOMORROW? AND, SECONDLY, WHAT DECISIONS HAVE YOU REACHED ABOUT WHAT TO DO ABOUT ECONOMIC AID TO ECUADOR? THEIR FIGURE OF BOATS NOW, I THINK, IS 14.

A. WELL, NATURALLY, WE DON'T LIKE TO HAVE ANY CHARGES MADE AGAINST US AT ALL, BUT I THINK WE HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THAT FROM TIME TO TIME WE WILL HAVE NATIONS MAKE CHARGES AGAINST US -- EVEN OUR FRIENDS. NOW, THERE IS A SPIRIT OF NATIONALISM IN THE WORLD, AND NATIONS THAT HAVE THIS DEVELOPING SPIRIT NATURALLY PROTECT THEIR OWN INTERESTS AND WE HAVE TO PROTECT OURS. AND THE FACT THAT WE HAVE THIS CONTROVERSY IS -- ALTHOUGH I WISH IT WERE NOT THE CASE, I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD BE TOO UPSET BY IT.

WE'LL ATTEND A MEETING TOMORROW. WE HOPE THAT WE CAN WORK OUT SOME ADJUSTMENT THAT WILL BE SATISFACTORY TO ALL CONCERNED. THEY -- ECUADOR AND THE OTHER NATIONS IN THAT PART OF THE WORLD -- HAVE AN UNDERSTANDABLE INTEREST IN THE FISH, BECAUSE IT'S A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF THEIR ECONOMY.

THE PRESIDENT WILL BE IN THE WHITE HOUSE AND IN THE MIDDLE

THE 200-MILE TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION WHICH THEY CLAIM, IT COULD BE A VERY SERIOUS MATTER FOR THE UNITED STATES IN MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD. SO WE ARE GOING TO SEE IF WE CAN WORK OUT SOME MODUS VIVENDI WHICH WILL EVENTUALLY LEAD TO A RESOLUTION OF THIS CONTROVERSY. WE ARE GOING TO SUGGEST THAT THE MATTER BE REFERRED TO THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE, AND WE ARE GOING TO PROPOSE A CONFERENCE IN THE UNITED NATIONS DEALING WITH THE LAW OF THE SEA TO SEE IF WE CAN WORK THESE THINGS OUT BY AGREEMENT. BUT IT'S QUITE CLEAR THAT IF THE NATIONS IN THE WORLD ASSERTED A TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION OF 200 MILES, IT WOULD CREATE HAVOC.

Q. MR. SECRETARY, COULD WE CHANGE THE SUBJECT TO THE MIDDLE EAST, PLEASE?

A. YES.

Q. COULD YOU TELL US WHAT YOUR ASSESSMENT OF THE PRESENT SITUATION IS AS IT REGARDS THE END OF THE CEASE-FIRE IN FEBRUARY, AND COULD YOU GIVE US THE BASIS FOR YOUR ASSESSMENT?

A. YES. WE'RE ENCOURAGED BY THE DEVELOPMENTS IN RECENT WEEKS. WE ARE CONVINCED THAT THE PARTIES MAY BE ON THE VERGE OF ACTUALLY ENTERING INTO SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS. BY AND LARGE, THE EXCHANGE OF THE DOCUMENTS HAS BEEN NON-POLEMICAL AND THERE IS, I THINK, A GROWING AWARENESS OF THE SERIOUS NEED TO RESOLVE THIS CONFLICT BY NEGOTIATIONS. SECONDLY, WE THINK THAT THE CONTROVERSY HAS GOTTEN TO THE POINT NOW WHERE A MERE EXCHANGE OF PAPERS IS NOT THE BEST WAY TO PROCEED; AND WE THINK THAT NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD NOW TAKE PART ON A MORE ACTIVE BASIS, POSSIBLY OVER AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME, WITH ORAL EXCHANGES IN PRIVATE SESSIONS.

WE ARE VERY MUCH ENCOURAGED BY THE VERY CONSTRUCTIVE ATTITUDE OF AMBASSADOR JARRING. HE'S BEEN WORKING DILIGENTLY, EFFECTIVELY, WITH THE PARTIES, AND BY THE ACTION OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL. WE WOULD HOPE THAT THEIR ACTIONS WILL RESULT IN AN EXTENSION OF THE CEASE-FIRE, BECAUSE WE THINK IT'S TIME NOW FOR THE PARTIES TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS WITHOUT ANY OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE, WITHOUT ANY THREAT OF DEADLINES, IN A QUIET ATMOSPHERE. SO WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY WHAT'S HAPPENED.

WE DO HOPE THAT THE PROCESS WILL CONTINUE. WE ARE WORKING QUIETLY BEHIND THE SCENES. WE THINK THIS IS THE TIME FOR QUIET

DIPLOMACY AND MILITARY RESTRAINT.

Q MR. SECRETARY, I'D LIKE TO GO BACK TO --

A EXCUSE ME. I'LL COME RIGHT TO YOU. I TOLD THIS YOUNG LADY I'D --

Q COULD YOU TELL US, WITH THIS DISPUTE WITH ECUADOR, WHY THE UNITED STATES SHIPPING VESSELS DON'T GET A PERMIT WITH A PRODUCT, TO FISH INSIDE THE 200 MILES?

A WELL, THE REASON FOR THAT IS IF WE AS A GOVERNMENT ACKNOWLEDGED THE RIGHT OF ANOTHER NATION TO ASSERT ITS TERRITORIAL SOVEREIGNTY 200 MILES OUT INTO THE OCEAN, WE'D BE ACCEPTING THAT AS A PERMISSIBLE INTERNATIONAL LAW. WE DO NOT. WE REJECT THAT. WE DON'T THINK THAT ANY NATION HAS THAT AUTHORITY, AND THAT'S THE REASON WE DON'T DO IT.

WE'D LIKE TO WORK OUT, AS I SAY, SOME MODUS VIVENDI TO RESOLVE THIS DISPUTE.

CHALMERS -- SORRY.

Q MR. SECRETARY, I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU ABOUT CHINA. DOES THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TODAY CONSIDER THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA IS THE GOVERNMENT OF THE MAINLAND?

A WELL, WE HAVE -- AS YOU KNOW, WE RECOGNIZE THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA. WE ARE NOW REVIEWING OUR WHOLE POLICY AS FAR AS THE UNITED NATIONS REPRESENTATION QUESTION IS CONCERNED; AND I WOULD NOT WANT TO ANSWER THE QUESTION IN THAT FORM AT THIS TIME.

Q WELL, THE REASON I ASK YOU THE QUESTION IS: YOU WERE ASKED THIS QUESTION ONCE BEFORE, AND YOU ALSO DECLINED TO ANSWER IT; AND I HAD TO DRAW THE INFERENCE THEN THAT THIS ADMINISTRATION IS THE FIRST ONE, SINCE THE COMMUNISTS TOOK OVER THE MAINLAND, THAT HAS NOT MADE THAT CLAIM ON BEHALF OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA. IS THAT A FAIR INFERENCE?

A WELL, I WOULD NEVER QUESTION ANY INFERENCE THAT YOU DREW.
(LAUGHTER.)

Q MR. SECRETARY, IF WE COULD RETURN TO THE QUESTION THAT MARVIN KALB RAISED AT THE OUTSET, WHAT WOULD BE THIS GOVERNMENT'S VIEW OF ANY CROSS-BORDER STRIKES BY SOUTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS INTO SOUTHERN LAOS TO CUT OFF THE HO-CHI-MINH TRAIL? AND IS ANY SUCH ACTIVITY ANTICIPATED IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

A WELL, AS I SAID, I WOULDN'T WANT TO ANSWER A HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION.

LET ME SAY THE ANSWER TO THE FIRST PART OF YOUR QUESTION IS: IT WOULD DEPEND ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES; IT WOULD DEPEND ON WHAT THE PURPOSES WERE AND ALL THE OTHER THINGS THAT WOULD BE INVOLVED.

Q YOU WOULD NOT RULE IT OUT?

A WE DO NOT RULE OUT THE USE OF AIR POWER TO SUPPORT ASIANS IN ANY EFFORT THAT THEY MAKE TO FIGHT A COMMON ENEMY. THERE IS ONE ENEMY IN VIET-NAM -- I MEAN ONE ENEMY IN INDO-CHINA. THAT'S NORTH VIET-NAM, AND IT IS INVADING LAOS, AND CAMBODIA, AND SOUTH VIET-NAM, AND THE ASIANS ARE FIGHTING THAT COMMON ENEMY, AND WE ARE GOING TO PROVIDE WHATEVER AIR POWER IS NECESSARY TO PROTECT OUR MEN WHILE WE ARE WITHDRAWING FROM SOUTH VIET-NAM.

Q MR. SECRETARY, WITH REFERENCE TO YOUR COMMENT ABOUT YOUR HOPE THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST MAY TAKE A MORE ACTIVE BASIS WITH ORAL EXCHANGES, ARE YOU ENVISIONING DIRECT FACE-TO-FACE TALKS BETWEEN ISRAELIS AND THEIR ARAB NEIGHBORS IN NEW YORK, OR SOMEWHERE ELSE?

A NO, I AM NOT TALKING ABOUT FACE-TO-FACE; I AM TALKING ABOUT THE TALKS UNDER AMBASSADOR JARRING'S AUSPICES, BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO HAVE FACE-TO-FACE NEGOTIATIONS TO BE MORE ACTIVE IN YOUR DISCUSSIONS. I THINK THE DISCUSSIONS UP TO THIS POINT CONSISTED LARGELY OF EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON PAPER. AND ALTHOUGH THAT IS HELPFUL TO PROVIDE DETERMINED AREAS OF AGREEMENT, IT IS NOT VERY USEFUL WHEN IT COMES TO RESOLVING THE TOUGH QUESTIONS THAT REMAIN.

NOW THE FACT IS THAT THE EXCHANGE OF DOCUMENTS THAT HAVE OCCURRED RECENTLY UNDER AMBASSADOR JARRING'S AUSPICES HAVE PROVIDED AREAS OF AGREEMENT. AND WE WOULD HOPE THAT THE PARTIES WOULD USE THOSE AREAS OF AGREEMENT AS A FOUNDATION UPON WHICH TO DISCUSS THE AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT THAT REMAIN. AND WE THINK THAT THE WAY TO DISCUSS THOSE AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT IS TO DO IT ACTIVELY AND NOT BE TIED DOWN TO EXCHANGING VIEWS ON PAPER.

Q. MR. SECRETARY, MAY I FOLLOW THAT UP?

A. NO. JUST A SECOND.

Q. MR. SECRETARY, MAY I CHANGE THE SUBJECT AGAIN?

A. YES.

Q. THERE WERE 13 TALKS ON BERLIN SINCE LAST MARCH WITH THE RESULT OF VIRTUALLY NOTHING. CAN YOU TELL US WHAT THE CHANCES ARE TO REACH AGREEMENT?

A. NO, I DON'T BELIEVE I CAN ADD MUCH TO WHAT IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE. AS YOU CAN SEE, THERE HAS NOT BEEN MUCH PROGRESS AND I WAS INTERESTED TO SEE THAT CHANCELLOR BRANDT REAFFIRMED HIS POSITION, WHICH HE HAS STATED SEVERAL TIMES IN THE PAST, THAT THERE COULD BE NO RATIFICATION OF THE TREATY BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC UNTIL THERE WAS A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF BERLIN. RECENT HARASSMENTS CERTAINLY ARE NOT CONDUCTIVE TO A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION. WE WOULD HOPE THAT THOSE HARASSMENTS WILL STOP.

MARILYN.

Q. THANK YOU.

WHEN YOU SPEAK OF MORE ACTIVE TALKS ON THE MIDDLE EAST, WOULD YOU SEE RETURNING TO A RHODES - TYPE FORMULA? AND, IF SO, WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF A RHODES TYPE NEGOTIATION?

A. NO, WE WOULD NOT SEE A RETURN TO THE RHODES TYPE FORMULA. WE WOULD EXPECT THAT THE PRESENT JARRING-TYPE FORMULA WOULD CONTINUE IN EXISTENCE. THAT IS THE ESSENTIAL PART OF OUR INITIATIVE. IT HAS WORKED QUITE SUCCESSFULLY SO FAR, AND WE HOPE IT WILL CONTINUE TO. YOU HAVE TO KEEP IN MIND THAT WE PROPOSE THAT THE PARTIES STOP FIGHTING AND START TALKING.

NOW THEY HAVE DONE BOTH OF THOSE THINGS, AND OUR INITIATIVE PROVIDES HOW THE PROCEDURES CAN BE WORKED OUT. WE ARE GIVING AMBASSADOR JARRING THE AUTHORITY TO WORK OUT THE PROCEDURES -- TIMES AND PLACES, AND SO FORTH, CONSISTENT WITH WHAT HE THINKS WILL FURTHER THE NEGOTIATIONS. WE WOULD HOPE THAT THAT PROCESS CONTINUES.

Q. COULD YOU BE MORE SPECIFIC, SIR, ABOUT THE AREAS OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE ARABS AND THE ISRAELIS?

A. NO, I DON'T WANT TO GO INTO ALL OF THEM, BUT I CAN GIVE YOU A COUPLE OF EXAMPLES: A YEAR AGO, ISRAEL RESISTED THE USE OF THE WORD "WITHDRAWAL." AND THE ARABS SAID, "WHY DOESN'T ISRAEL USE THE WORD 'WITHDRAWAL'?" THEY CONCLUDED FROM THAT ISRAEL HAD NO INTENTION OF

WITHDRAWING AT ALL FROM ANY TERRITORY. SO THAT WAS A PRINCIPAL HURDLE.

ISRAEL SAID, "THE EGYPTIANS HAVE NO INTEREST IN THE WILLINGNESS TO RECOGNIZE US AS A SOVEREIGN NATION BECAUSE THEY WILL NEVER SAY THAT THEY RECOGNIZE ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST." THEY SAID, "EGYPT WILL USE THE WORDS 'ALL THE STATES IN THE AREA HAVE A RIGHT TO EXIST BUT NOT ISRAEL.'"

WELL, AS A RESULT OF THE INITIATIVE THAT WE HAVE TAKEN, ISRAEL USED THE WORD "WITHDRAWAL" TO SECURE AND RECOGNIZED BOUNDARIES AS PROVIDED IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION. EGYPT, ON THE OTHER HAND, INDICATED A WILLINGNESS TO RECOGNIZE THE SOVEREIGN RIGHT OF ISRAEL TO EXIST AS A NATION.

THEN, THERE ARE OTHER AREAS OF AGREEMENT. I WON'T GO INTO ALL OF THEM. THOSE ARE TWO THAT ARE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE. BUT THERE ARE OTHER AREAS WHERE THERE IS SUBSTANTIAL AGREEMENT.

Q. MR. SECRETARY --

A. (INDICATING ANOTHER CORRESPONDENT) LET ME GET SOMEONE THERE.

Q. MR. SECRETARY, HAS THE UNITED STATES RECENTLY TAKEN ANY INITIATIVES OR ANY NEW INITIATIVES TOWARDS COMMUNIST CHINA IN THE MATTER OF RELAXING TRADE AND TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS? AND WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS OF RESUMING THE TALKS IN WARSAW?

A. WELL, THE ONLY INITIATIVE WE TOOK -- AND IT IS NOT A MAJOR INITIATIVE -- AS I ANNOUNCED THE OTHER DAY: THAT WE WERE PREPARED TO HAVE EXCHANGES OF SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION WITH COMMUNIST CHINA; AND THERE IS SOME OF THAT GOING ON, ALTHOUGH IT IS MINIMAL. WE WOULD HOPE THAT THAT MIGHT BE INCREASED.

WE HAVE NO PRESENT PLANS FOR ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES IN THAT DIRECTION, BUT WE ARE NOT EXCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY.

AS FAR AS THE TALKS IN WARSAW ARE CONCERNED, WE ARE NOT SURE WHAT THE PROSPECTS ARE. WE HOPE THAT THEY WILL BE RESUMED SOON.

Q. MR. SECRETARY, THE TRAFFIC HARASSMENT IN BERLIN IS GOING ON NOW FOR THE THIRD STRAIGHT DAY. WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO DO ABOUT IT BEYOND THOSE OVERT PROTESTS IN BERLIN?

A. WELL, WE WILL DO MANY THINGS DIPLOMATICALLY. SOME OF THEM ARE UNDER WAY ALREADY. WE WOULD HOPE THAT THEY WOULD CEASE

Q

MR. SECRETARY, TO RETURN TO DISARMAMENT:

SHORTLY BEFORE THE SALT TALKS BEGAN, THE ADMINISTRATION SAID AN ABM ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT WAS NEEDED TO DEFEND AGAINST POSSIBLE CHINESE ATTACK, TO PROTECT THE MINUTEMEN, AND TO GUARD AGAINST ACCIDENTAL ATTACK.

EARLIER THIS WEEK, THE PENTAGON INDICATED THAT THERE MIGHT BE A SLOWDOWN IN THE ABM PROGRAM, AND THAT SALT WOULD BE GIVEN MORE CONSIDERATION.

COULD YOU SAY, SIR, WHETHER IT WILL BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE UNITED STATES TO HAVE AN AGREEMENT WITH THE SOVIET UNION ON ABMS ALONE AROUND WASHINGTON AND MOSCOW? AND, IF SO, WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE RATIONALE, THE REASONS FOR NEEDING TO DEFEND AGAINST CHINA FOR THE MINUTEMEN, AND AGAINST ACCIDENTAL ATTACK?

A YES. THE POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE SALT TALKS HAS BEEN, FROM THE BEGINNING, THAT WE FAVORED AGREEMENT INCLUDING BOTH OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE MISSILES. WE ALSO HAVE MADE AN ATTEMPT TO -- IN FACT, WE HAVE WE HAVE NOT DISCUSSED THE NEGOTIATIONS THEMSELVES.

AS FAR AS THE DECISIONS ABOUT THE BUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS OF ABM, THOSE DECISIONS HAVE NOT BEEN FINALIZED.

Q MR. SECRETARY, TO TAKE ANOTHER CRACK AT SOMETHING, IF I MIGHT: FOR MANY YEARS, THE UNITED STATES HAS BEEN BOMBING THE TRAILS IN LAOS, THE HO-CHI-MINH TRAILS; AND THE ENEMY STILL MANAGES TO SEND MEN AND SUPPLIES DOWN THESE TRAILS. DO YOU FEEL THAT THE SITUATION HAS BUILT UP TO THE POINT IN SOUTHERN LAOS WHERE MORE DRASTIC ACTION IS NECESSARY?

A THE ATTACKS ON THE TRAILS HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT SUCCESSFUL OVER THE YEARS. BUT, AS OUR TROOPS ARE REDUCED, THE DANGERS OF COURSE INCREASE; AND WE WOULD HOPE THAT WE CAN MAINTAIN THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF PRESSURE ON THE ENEMY TO PREVENT HIM FROM BUILDING UP LARGE CACHES OF SUPPLIES IN CAMBODIA TO ATTACK OUR FORCES.

SO THE DECISION ABOUT WHAT WE DO ABOUT THE SUPPLY LINES AND THE VERY ACTIVE EFFORTS OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE IN THE PARACHUTE AREA OF SOUTHERN LAOS IS A MATTER THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS TO DECIDE.

THAT DECISION WILL, OF COURSE, HAVE TO BE MADE. IN ALL OF THESE CASES THE DECISIONS ABOUT WHAT WE DO ABOUT THE SANCTUARY AREAS, ABOUT THE BASE AREAS, ARE DECISIONS THE PRESIDENT HAS TO MAKE. HE HAS THE AUTHORITY TO MAKE THEM, AND HE HAS TO MAKE THEM DEPENDING ON HOW HE RELATES THOSE ACTIVITIES TO THE SAFETY OF AMERICA.

Q. MR. SECRETARY, DO YOU THINK IT IS POSSIBLE TO HAVE A SOVIET-AMERICAN AGREEMENT CURBING OR IN ANY WAY LIMITING MULTIPLE WARHEADS ON MISSILES WITHOUT HAVING ON-SITE INSPECTION?

A. I DON'T WANT TO GO INTO THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS ITSELF. WE THINK IT IS POSSIBLE, IF THE SOVIET UNION WANTS A SALT AGREEMENT, THAT WE CAN ACHIEVE AN AGREEMENT. IT IS QUITE CLEAR THAT THE EFFORTS TO DO THIS ARE VERY COMPLEX. THEY ARE VERY DIFFICULT BOTH FOR THE RUSSIANS AND FOR US.

WE ARE QUITE SATISFIED THAT THE RECENT TALKS WERE SOMEWHAT UNPRODUCTIVE BECAUSE WE THINK POSSIBLY THE SOVIET UNION IS WAITING FOR THE PARTY CONGRESS. WE DON'T KNOW. BUT I THINK THIS: I THINK ANY AGREEMENT IS POSSIBLE IF BOTH THE SOVIET UNION AND THE UNITED STATES WANT IT. WHETHER IT IS A PRACTICAL MATTER THAT CAN BE WORKED OUT OR NOT, WE DON'T KNOW YET.

Q. THANK YOU, MR. SECRETARY.

(END TEXT)

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