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20 April 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Transmittal of Letter to Secretary of Defense

The attached letter was prepared under, and is intended to include, consideration of the following ground rules:

1. That you had made a commitment to furnish your ideas to Secretary of Defense.

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2. Appropriate deference should be made to the conclusions of [REDACTED] study, already given to Secretary of Defense.

3. A reference to the possible use of non-nuclear Polaris missiles must be made, however, without your complete and unequivocal commitment to that course of action.

4. That the primary responsibility for running the VN war rests with DOD.

5. Nothing should be included which violates basic fact or feasibility, either in the intelligence or technical information.

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6. Something new and constructive must be included. (In this regard, the systematic, repeatedly evaluated approach represents the major new idea.)

7. There should be included no criticism of DOD either direct or implied, except that unavoidably associated with making what we consider as a good suggestion which has not yet been tried.

8. Complete objectivity must be maintained throughout the letter.

I believe that the attached letter meets and exists within all of the above ground rules. Furthermore, I believe that the letter is provocative, non-trivial, and will contribute toward the solution of a difficult but serious problem. I recommend that you sign the attached letter.

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Chief, Systems Analysis Staff
DD/S&T

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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

The Honorable Robert S. McNamara
Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
Washington, D. C.

Dear Bob:

As an outgrowth of our meeting on 5 March 1966 and because of my real concern about the capability for supplies being delivered to the Viet Cong, I have had my staff take a look at the problem. Our concern has been centered around the objective of increasing the difficulty of resupply rather than seeking complete stoppage. Intelligence information tells us that material reaching a VC unit from other than SVN sources is collected at one of several depots in South China, is transshipped to Hanoi by two main rail routes (or by sea), is transported by road or rail down NVN to a series of routes from southern NVN into Laos, down the Laotian panhandle and thence through a series of routes into distribution points within SVN, from where internal distribution takes place. If the source is USSR, the economic material is introduced by sea to Hanoi and military equipment by rail through China, and then follows the rest of the route south. On the surface, this is a very complex logistical supply line. However, the total amount, currently estimated at a few tons per day, which travels all the way into SVN is small, both in absolute magnitude and as compared to the road capacity. Additionally, the characteristics of the material -- small arms, ammunition, medical supplies, etc. -- facilitate packaging adaptable to small or large trucks or to human carriage. Since the total amount taken into SVN is small compared to what enters NVN by rail or ship from China or USSR, very large reductions, by attack, of depots in North Vietnam would appear necessary to affect the throughput into SVN. Furthermore, attacks on the relatively extensive

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road system of NVN would need to be very severe to impact the small number of trucks per day moving south for SVN. There are, however, several relative choke points in and near the Laotian traverse where attacks might be examined. Obviously, the distribution points within SVN, when and if located, become very high value targets since they represent a large logistical investment. It must be remembered, however, that the material imports represent only a relatively small fraction of the needs of the VC, the rest of which is derived locally.

With respect to the choke points, there appears currently to be three main ones. The Mu Gia pass is one of these three. The recent attack by B-52's on this pass must be considered as a large first step toward impacting the logistical structure. Continuing these attacks appears useful if they are augmented by a comprehensive reconnaissance effort designed to evaluate the impact on a day-to-day basis. With this rapid feedback system, newer and perhaps more effective weapons can be given a calibratable test. Though similar efforts during WW-II and Korea were not, in general, completely successful, it is just possible that with the newer weapons, large increments in increased difficulties might result. Taking maximum advantage of the geography, one might use the tripwire anti-personnel mine, the Dragontooth, penetrating cratering bombs for road disruption, etc. Among the more novel newer weapons might be [REDACTED] transponders planted along a road which under all weather conditions locate and mark operating trucks for offset homing weapons. There are several others. For example, if and when defenses are injected, these might be stifled or destroyed by a non-nuclear modified Polaris which, I am told, could be configured to provide accurate all-weather destruction areas of appreciable size. We have performed an in-house study which indicates that there is reason for some optimism, if not now, at least in the next year or two. In any event, the

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concept of an experimental, iterative approach appears useful, primarily in that increased problems are presented to the logistical system. The manpower and effort to maintain the road and rail system can be drastically increased by heavier attacks, perhaps to the point where increases in the thrust occur, but much more likely to the point where appreciable expansion of traffic might not be considered worthwhile by the North Vietnamese.

A complete sophisticated study on the problem of attacking optimally the logistical system is beyond our capability or responsibilities, but we would be glad to assist you in whatever way is desired.

Sincerely,

W. F. Rabera
Director

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SAS/DD/S&T: [REDACTED] :ccj (19 April)

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