

SECRET/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY

April 6, 1972

SEND VIA CAS BACKCHANNEL

TO: AMBASSADOR BUNKER

FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER

Your Saigon 0056 greatly appreciated. It is most helpful to have periodic personal appraisals of this kind. Agree completely that a repeat of this message in abbreviated form through regular channels would be constructive.

Please do not fail to bring to my attention anything you feel we can do from this end to make your tasks easier.

Warm personal regards.

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S E C R E T 061135Z APR 72 VIA CAS CHANNELS (BUNKER)

FROM: AMBASSADOR BUNKER SAIGON 0056 IMMEDIATE

TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, EYES ONLY FOR HENRY A. KISSINGER

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT THIEU, APRIL 6, 1972.

1. IN LONG MEETING WITH PRESIDENT THIEU TODAY, GENERAL ABRAMS AND I DISCUSSED THE COUNTRY SITUATION; ENEMY DISPOSITIONS AND INTENTIONS; U. S. AIR REINFORCEMENTS AND CAPABILITIES; TARGET AUTHORIZATIONS AND PRESENT EMPLOYMENT OF AIR ASSETS. GENERAL ABRAMS WILL REPORT THROUGH HIS CHANNELS.

2. WE WERE AGREED ON ORDER OF ENEMY PRIORITIES AS:

A) CAPTURE OF QUANG TRI/HUE.

B) CAPTURE OF KONTUM.

C) OCCUPATION OF TAY NINH AND BINH LONG PROVINCES.

D) INTRODUCTION OF SAPPERS INTO SAIGON, FOLLOWED BY

E) CALL FOR CEASE-FIRE AND COALITION GOVERNMENT.

3. PRESIDENT THIEU EXPLAINED PROPOSED DISPOSITION OF RVNAF FORCES, INCLUDING REINFORCEMENTS TO MOUNT COUNTER-ATTACK IN MR 1 AND TO MEET ENEMY THREATS IN B-3 FRONT IN MR 2 AND TO BINH LONG AND TAY NINH PROVINCES IN MR 3.

4. GENERAL ABRAMS ENUMERATED THE ADDITIONAL AIR FORCE SQUADRONS WHICH HAD BEEN SUPPLIED AND WERE TO ARRIVE; THE ADDITIONAL B-52S WITH ACCOMPANYING F-105S; THE FOUR AIRCRAFT CARRIERS, ONE OF WHICH WILL PROBABLY BE USED TO SUPPORT MR 3; THE ADDITIONAL DESTROYERS AND THE CRUISER OKLAHOMA.

5. GENERAL ABRAMS LISTED AIR PRIORITIES AS, FIRST, MR 1 (250 TACAIR SORTIES PER DAY, WEATHER PERMITTING); SECOND, MR 2 (100 TACAIR SORTIES PER DAY; MR 3 (100 TACAIR SORTIES PER DAY). MR 1 HAS BEEN ASSIGNED 42 B-52 SORTIES PER DAY WITH 9 TO MR 2. (AS THE WEATHER HAS BECOME FAVORABLE TODAY, SAM TARGETS HAVE BEEN ATTACKED UP TO THE 18TH PARALLEL.)

6. THIEU SAID THAT GENERAL VIEN HAD PROPOSED MOVING THE 9TH DIVISION FROM MR 4 TO MR 1 AS A BACK-UP DIVISION, RELEASING THE 2ND DIVISION FOR THE COUNTER-ATTACK AGAINST THE ENEMY. GENERAL ABRAMS SUGGESTED IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO MOVE THE 21ST DIVISION FROM MR 4 AS A MORE AGGRESSIVE UNIT WHICH COULD BE EMPLOYED DIRECTLY IN THE COUNTER-ATTACK WITHOUT GOING THROUGH THE PROCESS OF SUBSTITUTION. THIEU AGREED AND WILL TAKE UP THE MATTER WITH GENERAL VIEN TOMORROW. HE FEELS THAT WITH THE 21ST, THE 9 RANGER BATTALIONS WHICH ARE TO BE CONSTITUTED INTO A DIVISION, AND THE THREE MARINE BRIGADES TOGETHER WITH THE THREE REGULAR DIVISIONS IN MR 1, HE WILL HAVE ADEQUATE FORCES. HE THINKS THAT MR 2 WITH THE PRESENT REINFORCEMENT OF THE TWO AIRBORNE BRIGADES WILL BE ABLE TO HANDLE THE SITUATION THERE. ONE AIRBORNE BRIGADE IS TO BE RETAINED IN MR 3. THIEU ALSO SAID THAT HE HAD INSTRUCTED GENERAL VIEN THAT THE REGIONAL FORCES MUST BE REARRANGED WHERE NECESSARY, USED TO FILL ANY GAPS AND TO REPLACE MANPOWER.

7. I MENTIONED THE NEED TO IMPROVE GVN INFORMATION FACILITIES, ESPECIALLY IN MR 1. WIDESPREAD APPREHENSION AND ANXIETY WAS REPORTED AMONG THE PEOPLE WHO WERE LIVING ON RUMORS AND COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE MISINFORMATION. THE GVN RADIO SIGNAL IS REPORTED WEAK IN PARTS OF QUANG TRI. WE FELT THERE WAS AN URGENT NEED FOR IMPROVED GVN INFORMATION AND PSYOPS PROGRAMS. IT WAS ALSO IMPORTANT THAT SAIGON AND MR 1 COORDINATE ON THE SAME WAVE LENGTH.

8. I THINK THE MEETING WAS USEFUL. WE SEEM TO BE AGREED ON ALL ESSENTIAL POINTS. THIEU APPEARS TO BE CALM AND CONFIDENT AND ABRAMS FEELS THAT WITH ANY KIND OF BREAK IN THE WEATHER (WHICH WE SHOULD BE GETTING NOW), THE SITUATION CAN BE HANDLED.

9. DO YOU WISH ME TO REPEAT THIS IN ABBREVIATED FORM THROUGH REGULAR CHANNELS?

10. WARM REGARDS.

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