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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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INFORMATION

February 19, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR:

MR. KISSINGER

FROM: MORI C05082154

WILLIAM L. STEARMAN

SUBJECT:

Cease-Fire Developments  
(February 19 - 4:00 p.m. EST)

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

The following is a report on current cease-fire developments in South Vietnam and on the present situation in Laos and Cambodia. This report includes information received from State, Defense and CIA as of 4:30 p.m. EST February 19, 1973.

OSD, Army Reviews Completed

NSA review completed

Vietnam

State Dept. review completed

Military Situation

-- South Vietnamese clearing operations in Quang Ngai and Kontum provinces continue to meet stiff enemy resistance.

-- Although field reports are sketchy, the Communists apparently still hold a position just east of the government-held town of Sa Huynh as well as much of the high ground west of the town. The Communists are moving additional fighting units toward the coast, and new Communist attacks to the north of Sa Huynh may be intended to relieve pressure on their remaining positions near the town.

-- South Vietnamese officials in the central provinces have been ordered by President Thieu to reopen Route 14 (the major north-south road in the highlands) or lose their jobs. The abortive effort to move a convoy into Kontum City on February 17 has been followed by new operations to clear vital road passes held by the Communists. At last report the road remained closed.

-- The Communists have moved SA-2 SAM missiles back into northern South Vietnam near Khe Sanh.

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-- There were 33 major and 141 minor cease-fire violations reported during the 24-hour period ending 0700 EST February 19.

Cease-Fire Control

Four Party Joint Military Commission

-- The first official Joint Military Commission investigation of an alleged cease-fire violation was agreed to on February 19. Acting on a Communist request, the delegation chiefs decided to investigate recent fighting in the Sa Huynh area which GVN troops are now recapturing and where the GVN claims its forces were attacked just after the cease-fire went into effect.

-- Both the Joint Commission and the ICCS agreed to investigate the shooting down of a U. S. helicopter on February 16.

-- At a February 19 meeting between the GVN and PRG FPJMC delegations, the PRG finally designated three points of entry: Gio Linh (near the DMZ), Duc Co (in the Central Highlands), and Xa Mat (in Tay Ninh province). (The GVN had earlier designated Danang, Cam Ranh and Saigon.) The PRG is now pressing for agreement on corridors, routes, etc. for movement of military supplies.

POW's

-- The President and two other officials of the American Red Cross are returning to the U. S., following the DRV's refusal to admit them, despite the February 6 invitation for them to visit U. S. military, civilian and foreign prisoners in the DRV. No explanation was given by the DRV.

Political

-- In his latest move to form a broad anti-Communist front, President Thieu has invited a large number of government, political, religious and other leaders at all levels to attend a congress in Saigon on February 22 to "adopt a formula for achieving national unity and . . . to win victory over the Communists in the political struggle."

-- In an ABC "Issues and Answers" TV interview broadcast on February 18, President Thieu appealed for continued U. S. support and said his first concern was to find a political solution with the Viet Cong.

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### Mining Countermeasures

-- During the February 19 meeting, the DRV renewed demands for logistic support equipment, such as tractors and trucks, with which to support inland waterways mine clearing. (The U. S. position remains that this logistic support is within DRV capability. ) The DRV representative implied that if these demands were not met, the next POW release might not go so smoothly.

### Laos

#### Lao Talks

-- On February 19, Pathet Lao leader Prince Souphanouvong sent Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma a message (which we intercepted) proposing:

. An in-place cease-fire and bombing halt to begin on February 20.

. Within thirty days of a cease-fire date, a political accord is to be signed which will also provide for the withdrawal of foreign forces.

-- In a February 19 press interview, Souvanna Phouma indicated his unwillingness to accept such an intermediate phase and insisted on a formal agreement providing for the withdrawal of all North Vietnamese and other foreign troops.

-- Souvanna is no doubt reluctant to commit himself to a 30-day period for reaching a political settlement until agreement can be reached on basic political questions still at issue.

#### Military

-- In the central panhandle a stand-off has developed at Muong Phalane.

-- Friendly irregulars on the central Bolovens Plateau are still in firm control of Paksong despite increased enemy shelling.

### Cambodia

-- Military activity remained concentrated in the Mekong River corridor southeast of Phnom Penh with only minor engagements in the rest of the country.