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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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INFORMATION

October 9, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: John H. Holdridge

SUBJECT: CIA South Laos Interdiction Report

John
I'd like to know the impact on the fleet of supply. Please get minimal

Attached is CIA South Laos Interdiction Report No. 5 (Tab A), covering the period up to October 7. The main points are as follows:

- Operation Guantlet achieved its intended results, especially in the Bolovens area where PS-26 was recaptured. (This puts friendly forces on high ground over the Se Kong River and in a position to harass traffic on it.)
- A very high price was paid for this success. For example, the six battalions participating in the PS-26 attack suffered 71 killed 379 wounded.
- The aftermath of these losses has produced poor morale and combat effectiveness. Desertion rates are high with one entire unit abandoning its weapons and deserting en masse.
- "Prior to initiating phase two of the interdiction program most of the irregular units in South Laos should receive a respite for recuperation and retraining."
- The enemy has reacted strongly to Guantlet. Harassment has been constant since the capture of PS-26. In the Se Kong Valley the enemy overran positions held by irregular forces. The enemy reacted similarly both north and south of Chavane along Route 96.
- In addition to positions overrun by the enemy all but a few active teams have had to be withdrawn from the Se Kong Valley.

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-- Despite strong enemy reaction river-watch and ambush teams continue operations.

Comment: In terms of positions taken and locations reached by interdiction teams, Operation Guantlet is considered to have achieved its intended results by CIA, which is responsible for carrying it out.

CIA frankly describes the high price which has been paid in men to achieve these results and offers no views as to what extent Operation Guantlet has resulted in a reduction in the flow of men and supplies through Laos into South Vietnam and Cambodia. Though CIA does not say so, at the very least it could be claimed that Operation Guantlet has resulted in the North Vietnamese having to devote greater resources than heretofore to protect this flow. Most of the infiltration groups now moving southward through the system appear destined for South Laos.

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