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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Briefing of Dr. Kissinger by General Pauley
and Colonel Carlson of the Joint Staff
April 15, 1972, from

PARTICIPANTS: General Pauley
Colonel Carlson
Dr. Kissinger
Colonel Kennedy
Commander Howe

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General Pauley: The weather has been good with only scattered clouds. Naval gunfire continues in the North with logistics targets taken under fire and harassing fire against enemy forces. A deception plan was carried out at 0500 local time in which the Oklahoma City and 3 destroyers went up to the Haiphong area and back down.

Dr. Kissinger: Was there any enemy reaction?

General Pauley: They were tracked closely by radar but that was all.

Turning to tactical air activity. There were some 100 sorties against North Vietnam. 52 naval aircraft were scheduled to strike north of 17° 30' north latitude and 88 7th Air Force sorties were scheduled to strike south of that latitude. We have some BDA on strikes for the past 2 days. There were 7 SAMs destroyed, 26 secondary explosions and 53 sustained fires. In one case a SAM site to the west of the Dong Hoi was hit and the SAMs were fired ballistically exploding nearby in Dong Hoi. One aircraft was downed by a SAM Southwest of Dong Hoi and a parachute has been sighted.

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The 325th NVA Division is now located some 50 miles south of Vinh. It is estimated that it would take 2 to 3 days for this division to move by vehicle down to the DMZ.

Turning to B-52 activity there were 63 planned sorties and 62 were flown. The 20 sorties in MR 1 were in support of General Lam's effort to move to the West. In MR 2 the B-52s hit the Rocket Ridge area and in the MR 3 the strikes were concentrated on An Loc.

Dr. Kissinger: How did we ever get into the position we are in at An Loc. What is so sacred about An Loc?

General Pauley: Apparently the enemy is trying to grab a provisional capital.

Dr. Kissinger: What are the other ARVN divisions in the area doing?

General Pauley: The 25th is over near Tay Ninh and the 18th is over to the East.

Dr. Kissinger: Why can't the ARVN commit more forces to the An Loc?

General Pauley: The 21st Division is now 12 miles to the south of An Loc and as you know the airborne brigade is now in An Loc.

Dr. Kissinger: The whole brigade?

General Pauley: Yes and there are 4,000 troops 12 miles to the South.

Dr. Kissinger: What is the situation there in An Loc?

General Pauley: The ARVN is still holding, although there has been fighting during the last 2 daylight periods.

Dr. Kissinger: Why can't our Air Force destroy them during daylight hours?

General Pauley: The casualty rates are high. They are causing heavy casualties. The casualties to the enemy have been

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so heavy that they first committed the 5th and then the 9th Divisions, now they are having to move in the 7th Division. This is an indication that they are taking heavy casualties but they still seem to be hanging in. One of the POWs captured said that if An Loc did not fall in the next day the enemy would pull back and fire on it with artillery, because there have been heavy casualties so far.

Dr. Kissinger: Is the enemy going to be able to take An Loc?

General Pauley: I don't believe so. Everybody seems quite optimistic.

The airborne is there and the 21st is at Quin Long and could be helo lifted if necessary.

Dr. Kissinger: Is the 5th ARVN Division fighting?

General Pauley: They lost one regiment early in the battle but the others are fighting well.

Turning to tactical air there were 400 strikes throughout South Vietnam by U.S. forces and 162 by VNAF. There were a total of more than 800 including support aircraft. 825 tac air sorties are planned for tomorrow and 60 ARC LIGHT.

Turning to MR 1 General Lam has kicked off his effort to take the high ground to the west in Quang Tri Province. This will put him in a better defensive position. He feels he can take this area while the enemy is still trying to build up its forces. It was kicked off yesterday with 14 battalions. Thus far 35 enemy have been KIA with only 1 ARVN. There is no line of progress yet. It appears that the thrust is moving slowly and methodically. At another point in MR 1 an ARVN infantry battalion was attacked by an enemy force. In repulsing the attack 74 enemy sorties were killed and 12 weapons captured.

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In the area of Fire Support Base Bastogne, Birmingham, and King there was a heavy mortar recoilless rifle attack. However, following this indirect fire attack an ARVN infantry battalion launched out and attacked the enemy forces killing 83 and capturing considerable material.

Dr. Kissinger: Looking at the whole situation it appears that the enemy is losing about 1000 a day.

General Panley: Yes the casualties are just up to 10,000. With our air strikes the enemy casualties are probably much greater than that.

In MR 2 a heavy attack fire and ground attack forced withdrawal from Fire Support Base Charlie yesterday. This had been contested for about 5 days (it is located along Rocket Ridge in Kontum Province). There was also some activity in Binh Dinh Province. Unfortunately, Route 19 is closed again. There were 2 battalions in the An Khe Pass area. One U.S. helicopter crew member has been killed there. There are also 4 bridges out on Highway 1.

In An Loc there are 6500 friendly forces in the area with another 1600 to the West. Enemy forces are estimated to be around 8 to 10,000. There was also a rocket attack against Tan Son Nhut Airbase. In Mr 4 there was fire fighting in the Plainne of James. There appears to be almost daily activity there.

Attached at Tab A are the briefing notes.

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