

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

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JCS REVIEWED 05-Oct-2010: NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

OSD REVIEWED 02-Dec-2011: NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION.

SUBJECT: Briefing of Dr. Kissinger by General Pauly and Colonel Carlson of the Joint Staff May 13, 1972, from 8:42 to 9:00 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS: General Pauly
Colonel Carlson
Dr. Kissinger
General Haig
Captain McKee
Commander Howe

General Pauly: Naval gunfire attacked bridges, POL facilities and ammunition storage areas along the North Vietnamese coast. In tactical air activity we lost two F-4s near the DMZ but we don't know why at this point. There is some BDA on the action yesterday which indicates excellent results. For example, in one area there was heavy smoke and a fire ball up to 3,500 feet. There were so many fires and explosions being produced that that we diverted more air assets to that area. That also had good results at the Bai Thuong area and the Vinh area.

Dr. Kissinger: Have we pretty much knocked out the Haiphong facilities?

General Pauly: Both Hanoi and Haiphong facilities are about 50 percent destroyed.

Dr. Kissinger: We we continuing to go after it?

General Pauly: Yes, we are going back up there. The weather has been a little bad in that area and that is the reason we had to operate more to the South today. Near the DMZ we knocked out some five SAMs.

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Dr. Kissinger:

How many sorties were flown?

General Pauly:

Approximately 80. I say that because some were pulled up north where they had found lucrative POL targets.

Today in the north they are hitting the railroad yard and bridges at Thanh Hoa as well as SAM sites but we have very little BDA from the strikes today.

In the mining operation there were 128 more MK-36 destructors laid last night. There is a report from a Soviet cargo ship that seeding took place and nine large explosions occurred in the Haiphong area. There was no damage to the ship. Our experts theorize that some may have exploded by hitting the harbor bottom when they were laid and came in contact with metallic junk. The current ship count indicates there are 31 foreign merchant ships in North Vietnam with 28 in Haiphong. The captain of a Soviet ship at Cam Pha was told to assign three small parties to remain with the ship while the remainder of the ship's crew would be transported to Haiphong. A Soviet task force is presently anchored southeast of the Paracel Islands and includes a missile frigate, a missile destroyer, a conventional destroyer J-class cruiser-missile and a naval oiler.

Looking at B-52 activity, a large number of the B-52 sorties were concentrated in MR-2. However, about 18 of them had to be diverted to MR-3 because of the An Loc situation. They have also started directing all 75 strike sorties to MR-1 in support of the amphibious operation. The breakdown of B-52 sorties was as follows: 30 in MR-1, 27 in MR-2, 18 in MR-3, there was a total of 1,260 air sorties overall including 689 U.S. tac air strikes. Of these 163 were in MR-1, 47 in MR-2, 228 in MR-3 and 8 in MR-4. VNAF flew a total of 228.

In MR-1 the three battalions move of Marines north of the Hue defense line has begun. Two battalions were helicopter lifted to the north and a third moved on the ground beyond the defense line.

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Dr. Kissinger: Are they about 2 kilometers beyond the defense line?

General Pauly: The two battalions that were helicopter lifted moved about 8 kilometers ahead and the other battalion moved about 1&1/2 kilometers on the ground. They did not use the helicopter carrier but went directly overland. One landing zone was cold but the other was hot requiring diversion to another site. Already three tanks have been destroyed in this action. The battalions will move to the southeast back toward their own lines. The activity southwest of Hue was about the same with small actions around FSBs Nancy, King and Birmingham. Friendly probes resulted in 83 KIA. In naval gunfire three cruisers were in action off of MR-1 supporting the Marine operation. In MR-2 the major highlight was the ARC LIGHT strikes.

Dr. Kissinger: Do they think they are ready to attack in MR-2?

General Pauly: The situation is much the same as we have seen.

Dr. Kissinger: Won't it be raining soon?

General Pauly: Yes. Every day that goes by the enemy is more restricted.

In An Loc the defenders are still holding out and cut the enemy's salient into their north defense line down about one-half the size it was earlier. B-52s reportedly destroyed an ammunition dump and two tanks. That makes a total of 4 or 5 tanks destroyed in the last 24 hours.

Dr. Kissinger: Is any other ARVN outfit doing anything?

General Pauly: There is no movement to the north. However, the 15th regiment of the 9th ARVN Division did arrive at Lai Khe. They will be working with the 21st Division.

Dr. Kissinger: Well that takes care of them then.

The attacks around An Loc seem to be coming in a pattern of 3 or 4 days and then slacking off.

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General Pauly: Yes, that is correct.

General Halc: I have some good news. They have knocked down the Ho Chi Minh railroad bridge for the first time in the war (this bridge is located at Thanh Hoa area.)

The notes used by the briefers are attached at Tab A.

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