

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Briefing of Dr. Kissinger by Colonel Carlson  
of the Joint Staff

DATE: July 29, 1972

PARTICIPANTS: Dr. Kissinger  
General Haig  
Commander Howe  
Colonel Carlson  
Lt. Col. Wooley

JCS REVIEWED 29-Nov-2010: DECLASSIFIED FOR RELEASE IN FULL

The following are excerpts from the July 29, 1972 briefing.

Colonel Carlson: Enemy gunners shelled friendly forces in the vicinity of Fire Support Base Bastogne.

Dr. Kissinger: Then it has not been retaken.

Colonel Carlson: No, it has not been retaken yet.

\* \* \* \*

Dr. Kissinger: Didn't they move a division over there from the Kontum area (referring to Binh Dinh area)

Colonel Carlson: We did move some elements into the area south of DaNang.

Dr. Kissinger: I mean enemy elements.

Col. Carlson: Yes, you are correct. One unit of the NVA 2nd Division shifted over from Kontum.

\* \* \* \*

Dr. Kissinger: Is the road into AnLoc open?

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

-2-

Colonel Carlson: Well they are still working on it; there is no traffic moving.

Dr. Kissinger: That's a pretty good definition of being closed.

Colonel Carlson: They are still removing mines and repairing the road.

Dr. Kissinger: But theoretically there are no enemy units interdicting the road.

General Haig: We have had reports of Jeep traffic but there have been no convoys because of the mines.

\* \* \* \*

Dr. Kissinger: What is the total number of enemy killed thus far?

Colonel Carlson: (Pauses while looking it up)

Commander Howe: I believe I saw an estimate of around 72,000.

Colonel Carlson: Here it is. There have been 70,802 killed.

Dr. Kissinger: And that means at least the same number have been wounded. It's hard to believe the total is that high. What do you think the actual number of dead is?

Colonel Carlson: When you consider the amount of Tac Air and B-52's it seems reasonable.

Dr. Kissinger: But they only started with 150,000 and you are saying they have had at least 140,000 casualties.

Colonel Carlson: That's true, but they have brought down a large number of replacements as well as two more divisions.

\* \* \* \*

Dr. Kissinger: What is the maximum number of B-52's that can be flown if we need to? Can you surge these?

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 3 -

Colonel Carlson:

Yes. We can obtain a higher number with the assets available but not for a sustained period.

Dr. Kissinger:

Of course.

\* \* \* \*

Dr. Kissinger:

Why is the number of tactical air strikes against the North so low?

Colonel Carlson:

There was bad weather in the lower portion. The effort in the Panhandle was seriously restricted by weather.

Dr. Kissinger:

But why not divert the Panhandle planes to the area further north?

Colonel Carlson:

I'll check and find out.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE