

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION REFER TO OSD

SUBJECT: Briefing of Dr. Kissinger by General Pauly and Colonel Carlson of the Joint Staff
May 11, 1972, from 7:45 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS: General Pauly
Colonel Carlson
Dr. Kissinger
General Haig (arrived late)
Captain McKee (arrived late)
Commander Howe

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General Pauly: In naval gunfire support two cruisers attacked targets on the Do Son Peninsula. These included SAM sites, POL facilities, and coastal defense units. There were also naval gunfire bombardments of railroad and coastal defense sites in the Vinh and areas. There were 17 tactical air sorties flown just north of the DMZ as well as 74 strikes against targets in the Haiphong and Hanoi areas.

Dr. Kissinger: Are they putting all the air effort up in the most northern area?

General Pauly: They have done this for the last two days in order to kick off the initial effort. It was reported that several trucks were destroyed and there were two large secondary explosions in the attacks on LOCs just above the DMZ.

Phase 2 of the seeding of the minefields is in progress with 38 of 48 mining sorties having been flown thus far. As you know, they are delivering Mark 36 destructors to the ports of Cam Pha, Hongai, Thanh Hoa, Vinh and

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Haiphong. Four ships have left the Haiphong area, three of them of USSR registry and one UK/Hong Kong. There is one East German ship which appears to be entering the port.

Dr. Kissinger: I hope we will get it with the mines. Is there any truth to the rumor that they are sweeping the mines?

General Pauly: I am not sure.

Comdr Howe: We looked into this last evening and apparently the mines cannot be swept until they have been activated. They bury themselves in the mud. Therefore it seems unlikely that they could have been swept at this time.

General Pauly: In the air action yesterday, four bridges were reported unusable and the Cam Pha railroad highway bridge was reported destroyed. Two spans were damaged on the Hanoi railroad highway bridge. (General Pauly then showed Dr. Kissinger pictures of the bridges that have been hit as well as the petroleum storage area and railroad target BDA.)

The final count on the dogfight yesterday is that 10 MIGs were shot down and 4 or 5 planes were lost to MIGs and SAMs. The crew of one US aircraft has been recovered. Seventy SAMs were fired and 50 MIGs were reportedly airborne during the attacks. In addition to the previous BDA, one SAM site was knocked out and 12 shipping cannisters were destroyed. By the way, my report yesterday was erroneous when I said that there were no ships in the area at the time the Cam Pha railroad/highway bridge was knocked out. This was a check we did on our own and presumably there was one in the field so that the pilot was aware there was a ship in Cam Pha.

Weather hampered the flight operations in the Hanoi/Haiphong area yesterday pushing back the time that they could begin. They again, however, hit the

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Hanoi railroad bridge and the Hanoi POL works. There was no BDA because of weather. Two Air Force aircraft were shot down during these attacks. Beeper signals have been received from both and it appears that one crew is far away enough from Hanoi to be recovered. There is one report from the Navy that secondary fires were observed coming at one of the POL areas in the Haiphong area.

Turning to tactical air activity, there were a total of 616 US air strikes and 215 VNAF. The total air effort involving all types of aircraft was 1178 sorties. The distribution was as follows: 174 in MR-1; 78 in MR-2; 162 in MR-3, and 6 in MR-4.

Dr. Kissinger: How many VNAF sorties were there in MR-1?

General Pauly: 58.

Now, looking at the B-52 effort, there were 16 in MR-1; 28 in MR-2; 27 in MR-3, and 3 in Laos.

Dr. Kissinger: I thought they were going to put 75 in around An Loc.

General Pauly: They have started that but the reporting period does not cover the 24-hour period involved in those strikes. They do plan to put all of the B-52s for a 24-hour period into MR-3. So far, 32 have been flown.

Dr. Kissinger: But we always seem to make our strikes after the attacks have already begun.

General Pauly: We did not spoil the operation, but we implemented it after the attacks kicked off.

Cmdr. Howe: At the time we got reports last evening that the attacks were beginning, it was confirmed that the B-52 strikes had started at a rate of three an hour. So we may be doing some good.

General Pauly: Tomorrow the total B-52 effort will be placed on Kontum and the following day they will hit MR-1.

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This will be timed for the amphibious assault that is planned with two battalions of South Vietnamese Marines who will sneak behind enemy lines and land across the beach.

Dr. Kissinger: There should be good targets if the enemy is massed up there. Are they hitting anything?

General Pauly: I am sure they are.

The ARVN is moving more aggressively in MR-1.

Dr. Kissinger: What units are holding the northern area?

General Pauly: The Marines. You may know that the anticipated amphibious assault farther to the north has been canceled in view of the other activity planned with the Marines.

Turning to MR-2, the Rangers managed to get the enemy out of their camp at Ben Het and reported 192 KIA on the perimeter of the base, most of whom were KBA. There continues to be heavy pressure in the Polei Kleng area.

At An Loc there were heavy attacks supported by artillery and tanks from three directions. Thus far, 12 tanks have been destroyed and friendly forces are doing well.

Dr. Kissinger: Are they using tanks?

General Pauly: Yes, but we don't have a count of the total number involved.

Dr. Kissinger: I don't know if they will be able to hold out.

General Pauly: No, they think they will. They are holding now OK.

One regiment of the 25th Division is being shifted from MR-4 to the An Loc area in order to relieve the Airborne.

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Dr. Kissinger: But certainly, not in the middle of the battle.

General Pauly: No, I don't believe so. The antiaircraft fire has been very high and we have had two aircraft losses during the battle of An Loc.

There has been no significant activity in MR-4.

Dr. Kissinger: I suppose the 21st Division is doing nothing. Why do we expect the 25th Division to do any better?

(At Tab A is a copy of the notes used by the briefers.)

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