

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

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

DATE: September 16, 1972

PARTICIPANTS: Dr. Kissinger
General Haig
Commander Howe
Colonel Carlson

The following are excerpts from the September 16, 1972 briefing.

Dr. Kissinger: Have we or have we not taken the Citadel?

Colonel Carlson: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: Then why do you say the Marines are still engaged
with the enemy?

Colonel Carlson: The enemy is bugging out of the city. Some 420 of
them have been killed. There is an enemy buildup
to the West but the attack has not materialized.

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Dr. Kissinger: (With regard to the Southern MR-1 buildup.) What
are they doing about it? I always get these great
reports.

Colonel Carlson: There has been a shift of boundary responsibility
and some shift of units down to that area. This is
the first contact in that area. Over the last month
there were a couple of contacts.

Colonel Carlson: (Referring to MR-3 situation.) Two ARVN were
killed.

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Dr. Kissinger: For General Minh, if two people are killed, it means he won't fight any more.

Colonel Carlson: He doesn't seem to be doing anything.

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Colonel Carlson: Lon Nol has named General Fernandez as the new Chief of Staff of the Cambodian General Staff replacing Major General Pok Sam Am. He is known as a dynamic leader and has been fighting in the South.

General Haig: His ambitions may be of the coup type.

Dr. Kissinger: That doesn't bother me.

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Dr. Kissinger: What is happening in Dinh Tuong?

Colonel Carlson: The ARVN has the initiative.

Dr. Kissinger: Why is the unit not being pushed back?

Colonel Carlson: The unit really has no place to go.

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Dr. Kissinger: Where are my darlings of the 21st Division?

Colonel Carlson: (Points to map of Southern MR-4 and shows various locations of 21st Division.)

Dr. Kissinger: I notice there have not been many contacts around there.

Colonel Carlson: No, there haven't been.

Dr. Kissinger: That must be indicative of their good intelligence. They know the enemy isn't there and that's why they are there.

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Dr. Kissinger: (With reference to B-52 strikes against North Vietnam.) Why did they go up to Vinh?

Colonel Carlson: They are staying South of the route package one line. For anything above the line, they must have Washington's permission.

Dr. Kissinger: Just as I suspected.

General Haig: This is not a tactical problem. They just don't want to repeat the problems we had earlier. They want to maintain better control.

Dr. Kissinger: What problems?

General Haig: Earlier during the bombing.

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Dr. Kissinger: How many sorties were North of 20°?

Colonel Carlson: For September 15 there were 187 sorties in route packages 4, 5 and 6 B. There were 225 attack sorties South of 20°.

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Dr. Kissinger: (With reference to sorties against Southern route packages.) What are they hitting?

General Haig: This is one of the first days that there have been more sorties South of 20°.

Colonel Carlson: They are hitting bridges and installations.

Dr. Kissinger: Ok.

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Colonel Carlson: There were some 500 bags (25 tons) of rice floating from Chinese ships which were sunk by naval gunfire and tactical air.

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Dr. Kissinger: What did they do, count them?

Colonel Carlson: Since you have been gone, the lighters have disappeared and they have taken to floating in supplies. Some 250 tons of rice have been destroyed thusfar.

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(With reference to leaflets being dropped over North Vietnam.)

Dr. Kissinger: What are they doing now; dropping pictures of me and General Haig in the situation room?

Colonel Carlson: I don't know. We don't have a report. (Smiling)

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Colonel Carlson: The North Vietnamese are increasing the SAM envelope in the Red River Valley area and along the Northeast and Northwest logistics corridors, as well as in the buffer zone.

Dr. Kissinger: They could have gotten them from the Chinese.

Colonel Carlson: Yes.

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