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APR 27 1970  
WHS 0033

VIA BACK CHANNEL - CAS

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FOR AMBASSADOR BUNKER

MORI/CDF C05108831 Pages 1-3

FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER

Greatly regret necessity for inconvenience this message must entail for you and General Abrams. However, President has instructed that I obtain, on a most urgent basis, your combined views on the proposed operation in base area 352/353. (I recognize that it will be necessary for you to contact General Abrams immediately at this inconvenient hour in order to have a response here in Washington by the close of business today Washington time.)

Please furnish your combined answers to the following questions. General Abrams will, of course, be best able to respond to those of a purely military nature.

1. With respect to overall desirability, do you and General Abrams recommend implementation of the combined US/ARVN attack in base area 352/353 on its merits in relation to:

- a. Other base areas?
- b. Other comparable military efforts which could be made elsewhere in South Vietnam?

In other words, the President is anxious to learn whether or not you both favor an attack on COSVN headquarters as a first choice

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among the base areas available or, whether you favor any attack by U.S. forces on Cambodian sanctuaries in light of the effect such an attack would have on your overall security posture in South Vietnam.

2. With respect to timing, would you prefer to withhold implementation of the operation until the ARVN operation in the Parrots Beak has been completed or to launch it now given all of circumstances, including difficulties imposed by simultaneous operations, impending rainy season, the overall military and psychological impact achieved by near simultaneous operations?

3. What are your respective views on what this operation can be expected to accomplish militarily and politically?

4. In light of General Abrams' message of March 30th and in light of the operation against the Parrots Beak, would General Abrams prefer, if he had the choice, to conduct the operation against base area 704 rather than base area 352/353?

5. What is your best estimate of friendly casualties to be expected from operation in base area 352/353 based on current intelligence?

You should know question has been raised here whether General Abrams really wants to conduct this operation on its merits or whether he favors it only because he assumes it represents the President's

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wishes. The President, therefore, wants yours and General Abrams' unvarnished views on the foregoing questions and will be heavily guided by them. Please show this message to General Abrams.

Best regards.

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