

MORI/CDF C05076649 Pages 1-2

~~TOP SECRET SENSITIVE~~

71 MAR 12 AM 10:02
RECEIVED
NSA
WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM
1971 MAR

~~TOP SECRET SENSITIVE~~ 121120Z MAR 71 VIA CAS CHANNELS

FROM: AMBASSADOR BUNKER, SAIGON 0495

TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, EYES ONLY DR. HENRY A. KISSINGER

REFS: A. WHS 1013

B. SAIGON 458

1. GENERAL ABRAMS AND I HAVE HAD A LONG AND WHAT WHAT WE BOTH FEEL HAS BEEN A VERY SATISFACTORY TALK WITH THIEU TODAY. GENERAL ABRAMS WILL BE REPORTING ON OUR DISCUSSION AND THE CONCLUSIONS WE REACHED THROUGH HIS CHANNELS.

2. WE DISCUSSED THE PROBLEMS WHICH WE FELT WOULD BE RAISED IN FOLLOWING THE PLAN OUTLINED IN MY 458 TO YOU. THESE INCLUDED THE LOSS OF MOMENTUM IF RVNAF WERE TO BE WITHDRAWN FROM LAOS FOR A REST PERIOD, TO BE FOLLOWED LATER BY A MOVE INTO BASE 611 AND THE ASHAU AREAS, AND THE POLITICAL AND PUBLIC RELATIONS PROBLEMS WHICH SUCH A PROCEDURE WOULD RAISE, I.E., WHETHER IT MIGHT NOT APPEAR THAT RVNAF FORCES HAD BEEN FORCED TO WITHDRAW DESPITE THE HEAVY CASUALTIES INFLICTED ON THE ENEMY; HOW SUCH A MOVE WOULD BE INTERPRETED BY THE SOUTH VIETNAM, AMERICAN, AND INTERNATIONAL PRESS; THE EFFECT THIS WOULD HAVE ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM; THE FACT THAT A RETURN TO LAOS AFTER WITHDRAWAL MIGHT BE CONSIDERED A NEW VENTURE AND GIVE CRITICS OF THE PRESENT OPERATION SOMETHING NEW TO HANG ON TO.

3. THIEU REPLIED THAT HE ALSO HAD BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT THESE MATTERS. HE WONDERED ALSO WHETHER, HAVING SAID ON FEBRUARY 8 THAT THE OPERATION WOULD BE LIMITED IN TIME AND SPACE, RVNAF COULD RETURN TO LAOS HAVING ONCE BEEN WITHDRAWN.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

State Dept. review completed.

4. GENERAL ABRAMS THEN GAVE HIS ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION, AND THIEU RESPONDED BY EXPLORING WHAT THE ENEMY MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO AFTER THE END OF THE DRY SEASON IN LAOS THIS YEAR AND WHAT HIS TACTICS MIGHT BE IN THE FOLLOWING YEAR.

5. THIEU THEN SUMMED UP HIS VIEWS FOR LAM SON 719, AS WELL AS FOR THE FUTURE, WHICH I AM GIVING ONLY IN ROUGH OUTLINE, SINCE GENERAL ABRAMS' MESSAGE WILL COVER IT IN DETAIL:

- A) RVNAF TROOPS WILL NOT BE WITHDRAWN FROM LAOS, BUT UNITS WILL BE ROTATED AND TEMPORARILY WITHDRAWN FOR REST WHEN NEEDED. THE AIRBORNE DIVISION WILL BE WITHDRAWN FIRST. IT WILL RETURN TO ACTION AFTER REST AND REFITTING.
- B) THE 51ST REGIMENT OF THE 1ST DIVISION AND A MARINE BRIGADE, WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN ENGAGED, WILL BE USED FOR ROTATION WITH THE TROOPS TO BE WITHDRAWN.
- C) THE ROUTE 914 AREA WILL CONTINUE TO BE EXPLOITED BY THE 1ST ARVN AND MARINE DIVISIONS, PROBABLY UNTIL ABOUT THE FIRST OF APRIL.
- D) RVNAF FORCES WOULD THEN MOVE SOUTH TO BASE 611 AND THE ASHAU AREA, AND WOULD EXPLOIT THESE AREAS AS LONG AS NECESSARY.

6. GENERAL ABRAMS AND I BOTH FEEL THAT THIS REPRESENTS A SATISFACTORY PLAN FOR LAM SON 719. THIEU SHARES OUR PERSPECTIVE OF THE OPERATION AND THE PUBLIC IMAGE IT MUST HAVE. AS OUTLINED MORE SPECIFICALLY IN GENERAL ABRAMS' MESSAGE I BELIEVE THE PLAN MEETS THE POINTS RAISED IN YOUR WHS 1013.

7. BEST REGARDS.

OLCR600#1)8 5

GMBMPOG

8&; 63EJMG

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE