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FM THE WHITE HOUSE
TO HENRY A. KISSINGER
PEM

No Objection to Declassification in Part 2012/12/28 : LOC-HAK-546-2-5-8

NSA, OSD, DOS
reviews completed

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C147 TOP SECRET
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ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

APRIL 20, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

MORI/CDF
C03358590

FROM: SITUATION ROOM

SUBJECT: EVENING NOTES

VIETNAM SITUATION: MODERATE COMBAT ACTIVITY CONTINUED THROUGHOUT MOST OF SOUTH VIETNAM WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE AN LOC AREA IN MILITARY REGION III WHERE A MAJOR BATTLE IS IN PROGRESS.

IN MILITARY REGION I, THE COMMUNISTS ARE MAINTAINING PRESSURE AGAINST FSB BASTOGNE WEST OF HUE.

IN MILITARY REGION II, THE SITUATION REMAINS SERIOUS IN NORTHEASTERN BINH DINH PROVINCE, WHERE AN ARVN INFANTRY BATTALION AND THE HOAI AN DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS WERE OVERRUN EARLIER. IN OTHER ACTIVITY, THE EFFECTS OF THE INTERDICTION OF ROUTE 19 BY THE ENEMY BETWEEN QUI NHON AND AN KHE IS BEGINNING TO BE FELT BY THE CIVILIAN ECONOMY IN PLEIKU. CIVILIAN DIESEL FUEL SUPPLIES HAVE BEEN ENHAUSTED AND THE CITY IS WITHOUT ELECTRICAL POWER.

IN MILITARY REGION III, AN LOC CONTINUES TO BE THE TARGET OF A MAJOR EFFORT BY THE ENEMY. DETAILS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION ARE NOT AVAILABLE. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE ENEMY HAS BEGUN TO PRESSURE THE DISTRICT TOWN OF DAN THIENG (26 MILES SOUTHWEST OF AN LOC) AND ATTACKS ON LAI VIE (25 MILES SOUTH OF AN LOC) MAY BEGIN IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

IN MILITARY REGION IV, AN OVERALL INCREASE IN COMBAT ACTIVITY IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE LARGE NUMBER (77) OF FRIENDLY INITIATED CONTACTS OVER THE PAST 24 HOURS. ACCORDING TO A LATE REPORT, ALL GOVERNMENT UNITS IN THE DELTA HAVE BEEN PUT ON ALERT IN ANTICIPATION OF A REGION-WIDE ENEMY OFFENSIVE TONIGHT.

IN CAMBODIA, CAMBODIAN ARMY (FANK) SOURCES REPORT THAT SINCE APRIL 17 ENEMY FORCES HAVE ATTACKED FRIENDLY POSITIONS ALONG ROUTE 1 FROM THE RVN EXORDER TO THE MEKONG RIVER. IN ADDITION, ATTACKS ON PREY VENG AND ROUTE 15 SOUTH OF PREY

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VENG HAVE BEEN REPORTED. ACCORDING TO MOST RECENT REPORTS, THE ENEMY CONTROLS KOMPONG TRABEK, PRASAT, KANDAL AND PORTIONS OF CHI PHU. IN ADDITION, ENEMY FORCES ARE REPORTED TO BE JUST EAST OF SVAY RIENG AND MOVING TOWARD THE CITY.

THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARE NOW USING THE NEW AIRFIELD AT KHE PHAT, 33 MILES NORTHWEST OF DONG HOI. ACCORDING TO INTERCEPTED COMMUNICATIONS, THE TWO MIG-17S THAT ATTACKED THE U.S. SHIPS OFF THE COAST OF DONG HOI ON APRIL 19 CAME FROM KHE PHAT, AND THE MIG THAT WAS NOT SHOT DOWN RETURNED THERE. THE 6,000-FOOT RUNWAY AND CAVE STORAGE FACILITIES WERE CONSTRUCTED IN ABOUT THREE MONTHS.

BECAUSE THE AIRFIELD IS LOCATED IN MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN, U.S. RADAR HAS DIFFICULTY DETECTING NORTH VIETNAMESE OPERATIONS AT THE BASE. THIS FACT, ALONG WITH A VERY LOW-ALTITUDE APPROACH, ENABLED THE MIGS TO GET WITHIN A FEW MILES OF THE U.S. SHIPS BEFORE THEY WERE SPOTTED ON RADAR.

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U.S.-SOVIET MARITIME NEGOTIATIONS: EMBASSY MOSCOW REPORTS THAT IT NOW APPEARS THAT THE DRAFT AGREEMENT RELATING TO U.S.-SOVIET MARITIME NEGOTIATIONS HAS REACHED THE STAGE WHERE WE MAY BE ABLE TO INITIAL IT FRIDAY EVENING. THE MAJOR OUTSTANDING ISSUES CONCERN CARGO SHARING, BUT HOPEFULLY THESE WILL BE IRONED OUT TODAY.

PRC COVERAGE OF SCOTT-MANSFIELD VISIT: ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS FROM PEKING, THE CHINESE MEDIA IS DEVOTING SCANT COVERAGE TO THE CURRENT VISIT OF SENATORS SCOTT AND MANSFIELD. THE PARTY NEWSPAPER PEOPLES DAILY CARRIED ONLY A BRIEF NOTICE ON AN INSIDE PAGE TODAY ON A DINNER GIVEN FOR THE SENATORS BY THE CHINESE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES. A SECOND ITEM, ALSO ON AN INSIDE PAGE, REFERRED BRIEFLY TO PRESIDENT NIXON'S MEETING WITH THE TOURING CHINESE PING PONG TEAM.

THE EVENING STAR

AP CORRESPONDENT GEORGE ESPER REPORTS FROM SAIGON THAT HEAVY FIGHTING HAS ONCE AGAIN FLARED UP AT AN LOC. NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS REPORTEDLY RENEWED THEIR ATTACKS FROM THE NORTH AND SOUTH-EAST. ONE BATTLE, TWO AND A HALF MILES SOUTHEAST OF THE CITY FOUND ARVN AND NVA TROOPS IN "CLOSE COMBAT," AND CASUALTIES ON BOTH SIDES WERE BELIEVED TO BE HEAVY.

HENRY BRADSHAW OBSERVES THAT THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE CONFIDENCE DEVELOPED AFTER THE INITIAL NVA OFFENSIVE THRUSTS WERE HALTED HAS BEGUN TO DISSIPATE AS THE SECOND PHASE OF COMMUNIST ATTACKS EXTENDS TO NEW AREAS OF THE RVN. HOWEVER, PESSIMISM IS FAR FROM DEFEATISM! IT IS, INSTEAD, A RECOGNITION OF THE LONG, GRIM FIGHT AHEAD.

HOUSE DEMOCRATS VOTED TENTATIVELY TODAY (135-66) TO CONDEMN THE U.S. HANOI-WAIPHONG BOMBING AS "A DANGEROUS ESCALATION OF OUR ROLE IN THE INDOCHINA WAR" AND TOOK THEIR STRONGEST ACTION YET TO SET A DEADLINE FOR A U.S. PULLOUT.

JACK ANDERSON TOLD U.S. NEWSPAPER EDITORS YESTERDAY THAT GOVERNMENT CENSORSHIP AND SHOULD BE IGNORED, EVEN AT THE RISK OF LEGAL PROSECUTION.

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THE STAR SURMISES THAT THE IDEA OF BLOCKADING HAIPHONG WILL BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED -- AND FIRMLY RESISTED -- BY A PRUDENT ADMINISTRATION. IT IS A RISK THAT DOES NOT APPEAR JUSTIFIED BY THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND THE CURRENT COURSE OF THE WAR, REASONS THE STAR.

CROSBY NOYEN BELIEVES THAT THE BOMBINGS OF HANOI AND HAIPHONG HOLD A MESSAGE FOR BOTH HANOI AND MOSCOW. THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARE NOW ON NOTICE THAT THEY CAN PURSUE THEIR EFFORT TO CONQUER SOUTH VIETNAM ONLY AT THE RISK OF DESTRUCTION OF THEIR MAJOR CITIES. THE SOVIETS ARE BEING TOLD, IN EFFECT, THAT THE U.S. IS NOT SO COMMITTED TO A POLICY OF ACCOMMODATION WITH THE USSR THAT IT WILL FAIL TO RESPOND TO THE KIND OF CHALLENGE WHICH THE ENEMY OFFENSIVE IN SOUTH VIETNAM REPRESENTS.

MILTON VIORST OBSERVES THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS VIOLATED THE "RULES" OF THE VIETNAM WAR. HE HAS ORDERED THE "STRATEGIC" BOMBING OF THE NORTH. PREVIOUSLY THE WAR HAD BEEN STRICTLY "TACTICAL", AND THE NORTH VIETNAMESE HAVE NEVER ENGAGED IN ANYTHING BUT TACTICAL OPERATIONS -- HE HAS CONSISTENTLY SHUNNED STRATEGIC WARFARE. VIORST FINDS IT PARTICULARLY DISTURBING THAT THE PRESIDENT IS WILLING TO GAMBLE HIS REAL FOREIGN POLICY ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE LOST CAUSE OF THIEU -- "IT IS TRAGIC TO SEE THAT HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS AS PEACEMAKER COULD VERY WELL GO UP IN SMOKE IN HAIPHONG HARBOR"

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