

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 20, 1972

DOS, ARMY and JCS reviews completed.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN... *[Handwritten signature]*

MEMORANDUM FOR:

THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

HENRY A. KISSINGER *[Handwritten signature]*

SUBJECT:

Situation in Vietnam

Military activity throughout the Republic of Vietnam ranged from moderate in Military Regions 1 and 4 to low in Regions 2 and 3.

In Military Region 1, the South Vietnamese Marine offensive operation has terminated. Although some Marine units remain north of the My Chanh River, it is expected they will withdraw to the south upon breaking contact with the enemy. Enemy armor made its first appearance since June 10. Seven enemy tanks were destroyed.

In Military Region 2, ground combat activity remained at a low level. ARVN units are conducting clearing operations out to a distance of 10 kilometers from Kontum City. Late reports indicate that an ARVN armored convoy successfully transited the the Kontum Pass.

In Military Region 3, combat activity was at a low level throughout the region except for An Loc and Route 13 south of An Loc where friendly initiated actions increased.

In Military Region 4, activity was at a moderate level and was centered in Kien Tuong Province. ARVN units are conducting mobile ground operations in the Cai Lay area of Dinh Tuong Province.

A total of 597 tactical air sorties were flown in Vietnam by U.S. aircraft on June 20, 239 of which hit targets in North Vietnam. In addition, 6 ARC LIGHT sorties were flown over North Vietnam.

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Military Region 1

South Vietnamese Marines terminated their offensive operation across the My Chanh River yesterday. In a five hour fight nine miles east of Quang Tri City 127 enemy were killed while Marine losses were 5 killed and 23 wounded. Forty-seven enemy weapons were captured.

-- Two of the four Marine battalions have withdrawn to positions south of the My Chanh. However, the two remaining battalions are reported to be in contact with enemy units and have thus far destroyed five tanks and damaged another. This marked the first appearance of NVA armor since June 10.

-- Enemy shelling attacks increased somewhat in the southwestern portion of the Marine area of operation but caused only light casualties.

-- Southwest of Hue other attacks by fire occurred near Fire Support Bases Bastogne, King, Arsenal and Anzio. In several contacts near Fire Support Base Bastogne, 70 enemy were killed while ARVN losses were 7 wounded.

-- Agent reports indicate that the enemy may emplace 130mm guns along Route 548. This would significantly increase the threat to friendly forces defending the western approaches to Hue.

Military Region 2

Ground combat activity remained at a low level through the region.

-- No significant activity was reported in the Kontum City; however, friendly operations northwest of the city are beginning to meet with increased enemy resistance.

-- Government forces south of the city continue to meet stiff resistance in their attempt to reopen Kontum Pass. However, a late report reveals that an ARVN armored convoy successfully transited the Kontum Pass today. Details are not yet available.

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-- In coastal Binh Dinh Province, the enemy continues to disrupt friendly operations along Route 1. Also in Binh Dinh Province, 47 enemy bodies were discovered in the area of Phu My District town.

-- The gradual southerly deployment of the 2nd NVA Regiment and the corresponding increase in enemy presence to the south suggest enemy intentions to expand the battlefield into Phu Cat District, probably in an attempt to disperse friendly forces in Binh Dinh Province.

Military Region 3

An Loc reported only light shelling attacks and sporadic small unit contacts.

-- To the south along Route 13, sporadic ground clashes continue as friendly units attempt to gain the initiative. Results of contacts with enemy units along Route 13 were 23 ARVN killed and 33 wounded while enemy losses were 59 killed. The senior U.S. advisor to the 32nd ARVN Regiment was also killed in action.

-- The planned extraction of the airborne brigade from the An Loc area was delayed as all three airborne battalions made contact, killing 21 enemy while losing nine killed and 33 wounded.

-- Activity elsewhere in the region was generally light.

Military Region 4

Enemy activity decreased somewhat to a moderate level, consisting primarily of harassment and light shelling attacks.

-- Particularly noteworthy is the decrease in enemy activity in the northern Kien Tuong Province/Elephant's Foot area. Heavy enemy casualties and the apparent failure to achieve initial objectives have probably caused the lull in the area. However, it is believed that enemy attacks will be renewed in the near future.

-- ARVN units are conducting mobile ground operations in the Cai Lay area of Dinh Tuong Province.

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U.S. Air and Naval Activity:

The following air strikes were flown on June 19:

	<u>MR 1</u>	<u>MR 2</u>	<u>MR 3</u>	<u>MR 4</u>	<u>NVN</u>	<u>Total</u>
TACAIR US	171	63	80	44	239	597
TACAIR VNAF	36	33	64	63	0	196
ARC LIGHT*	41	26	9	6	6	100

*There were 12 ARC LIGHT sorties flown against targets in Laos.

-- Eighty-seven USAF strike sorties were scheduled against targets in North Vietnam today. The majority of these were flown as armed reconnaissance missions in the southern part of the country. Results of a planned strike on the Lang Lau railroad bridge are not yet available. Weather forced the cancellation of a strike against the Thai Nguyen supply depot.

-- Sixty-eight USA aircraft were scheduled to strike railroad sidings, highway bridges, railroad bridges and the Nam Dinh thermal power plant. Another 44 strike aircraft were to carry out armed reconnaissance missions in the southern and central sectors of North Vietnam.

-- Yesterday bomb damage from air strikes over South Vietnam included 4 boats, 32 structures, one armored vehicle, one storage area, 204 fortified positions two tanks, 10 guns, 43 secondary explosions and seven secondary fires.

Linebacker Operations

Other bomb damage assessment of June 19 Linebacker operations includes the Xon Mit highway bridge near Dong Hoi (two roadcuts) and three bridges at Ninh Xa, 55 nautical miles south of Hanoi (destroyed). Also, armed reconnaissance in route packages 1-4 resulted in 37 SAMs, 10 SAM canisters, one locomotive, four bridges, five trucks, eight gunboats and two buildings destroyed. Damaged were eight SAMs, 10 SAM canisters, one SAM transporter, one bridge, two gunboats, eight buildings, and three railroad cars.

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Coastal Mining Operations

Aircraft from the USS Midway supplemented the coastal minefield near Vinh with a total of 197 MK-36 destructors. The total number of mines/destructors in the Vinh area is now 903. Aircraft from the USS Kitty Hawk placed 66 additional MK-36 destructors in the minefield near Hon La Island, bringing the total in that area to 659. The total number of mines/destructors planted in NVN harbors and coastal waterways is now 4,155.

U.S. Naval Gunfire

Six ships in two surface striking units fired on targets in North Vietnam. A three-destroyer unit maintained surveillance of the Chinese merchantman anchored at Hon La Island, interdicted waterborne logistics craft, and fired harassment and interdiction missions against transshipment points, landing beaches, and army barracks in the vicinity of the island. In four strikes, a one-cruiser, two-destroyer unit fired on the Dong Hoi Airfield, a SAM support facility west of that city, a highway maintenance facility and a military storage area to the southeast, and a truck park just north of the DMZ. The units received no hostile fire and did not observe the strike results.

Soviet Naval Ships

-- Two Soviet destroyers and a cruiser remain in the Paracel Islands-Macclesfield Bank area. A submarine detected entering the Sea of Japan over the weekend is probably one of the two units that had been in the South China Sea. Two E-class units continue east of Taiwan and the Luzon Strait and the fourth E-class submarine is believed still to be in the northeastern part of the South China Sea.

Foreign Shipping in North Vietnam

-- The number of foreign ships in North Vietnamese ports and anchorages remains at 31. No additional diversions have been noted, and there has been no evidence of any attempt to transit the minefields since their activation.

Laos

Friendly forces participating in the four battalion operation to recapture the southern provincial capital of Khong Sedone are reported to be engaged in house-to-house fighting in the town. A late report indicates that two irregular battalions were in Khong Sedone and had cleared the enemy from the main part of the town.

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Political/Diplomatic

Statement on Podgorny Visit Reflects Probable Hanoi-Soviet Friction

The press statement on the June 15-18 Podgorny visit to Hanoi (broadcast by Radios Hanoi and Moscow on June 19) indicated that there were probably serious differences between the Soviet delegation and their North Vietnamese hosts. The statement reported that "the talks passed in an atmosphere of frankness, friendship and comradeship." "Frankness" is about as far as Communist parlance goes in indicating disagreement between two "fraternal" parties, and its use in characterizing the atmosphere of a high level Soviet-North Vietnamese exchange is highly unusual, if not unprecedented.

The statement indicated that the Hanoi talks focussed on USSR-DRV relations and on U.S. actions against North Vietnam. The absence of economic and military experts further indicated that specific technical problems of Soviet assistance were not discussed. Only Le Duan, Truong Chinh, Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh and Xuan Thuy were specifically mentioned as having met with the Soviets. This suggests that the talks focussed on the basic differences which have resulted from U.S.-Soviet summitry at a time when Hanoi was suffering from U.S. air and naval power. The mention of Xuan Thuy probably shows that the Paris Talks were discussed; however, the statement did not go beyond routine support for Hanoi's standing negotiating proposals.

Interestingly, Podgorny's expressed wishes for "further successes" in Vietnam applied only to "repulsing" U.S. "armed aggression" and to "the construction of Socialism" (in the North) and not to the offensive in the South. Here the statement only noted "with satisfaction" the "serious defeats" inflicted on South Vietnamese and U.S. troops.

Since Hanoi no doubt expected the visit to produce disagreements, it probably preferred no public mention of the visit. Despite worldwide knowledge of Podgorny's trip (largely thanks to the Soviets), neither Moscow nor Hanoi publicly mentioned it until June 19, the day after Podgorny had informally given his impressions of the trip to reporters in Calcutta (where he reportedly said: "the Soviet Union will do everything possible for a deescalation of the Vietnam war" and predicted that the Paris Talks will "soon" be resumed.)

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Hanoi Editorial Snipes at the Soviet Union

A June 18 editorial in North Vietnam's Army Daily implicitly criticized Soviet policies and indicated by its timing some dissatisfaction with the results of recent talks between Hanoi's leaders and Soviet President Podgorny. Seeming to attack the Russians for compromising with the United States during the Moscow summit, the editorial warned against U.S. efforts to "counter the world revolutionary movement and re-stated charges that we are attempting to divide the socialist camp with "perfidious tricks" (i.e. summit conferences). Re-calling the language of a similar article which immediately preceded your visit to Moscow, the paper cautioned against "placing national interest over the general interests of the world revolution."

Liberation Radio Notes VC Shortcomings

An article broadcast four times by Liberation Radio on June 15 and 16 indicates that a popular uprising remains a prime Communist goal but criticized cadre for failing to "thoroughly realize the significance, requirements and content of the concerted uprising." The broadcast noted that "it is necessary to resolutely oppose rightist thoughts, the tendency to fall back on the defensive,...wait and see attitude..." and it urged the elimination of "carrying out tasks in a furtive indecisive and unaccomplished manner, failure to vigorously attack and tightly besiege the enemy and failure to thoroughly solve problems." This article is but the latest public reflection of Hanoi's discontent with the frequently poor performance of the Viet Cong infrastructure in supporting the current offensive.

GVN Plans to Oust Indian ICC from Saigon

On June 16 President Thieu's Private Secretary stated that the GVN will no longer accept Indian representation on the International Control Commission and will not renew the visas of the Indian representatives in Saigon which are scheduled to expire in September. The official said that the GVN would welcome any truly non-aligned country as a replacement for the Indians.

Continued Recession in South Vietnam

Embassy Saigon reported that there are some signs that the recession may have bottomed out and that prices have remained steady in recent weeks' however, so far there are no indications that the South Vietnamese economy is making a strong recovery from a severe business recession produced by the NVA offensive.

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Captured GVN Officials Executed

Refugees who escaped from enemy-occupied areas in the central coastal province of Binh Dinh reported numerous cases of enemy executions of local GVN officials. The executions often were preceded by summary trials and torture. Most victims were government policemen, hamlet and village administrators and local GVN cadre.

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