

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN...

NAVY, DOS, NSA, OSD, DIA, USAF,
Army reviews completed.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 23, 1972

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ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER *Henry for*
SUBJECT: Situation in Vietnam

Communist forces continue to put heavy pressure against friendly forces in northern Military Region 1. Yesterday, elements of the 9th Regiment, 304th NVA Division and the 203rd NVA Tank Regiment launched a tank-infantry attack in the area southwest of Fire Support Base Nancy. ARVN forces repulsed the attack, destroying 18 tanks and killing 61 enemy soldiers.

Elsewhere, ARVN positions in the Airborne area of operation were hit by enemy artillery fire. The enemy broke contact, but remains southeast of the My Chanh River.

All 93 B-52 strikes that were flown on June 23 hit enemy staging areas near Hue.

There are indications that the June 22-29 period is the first phase of activity in enemy attack plans in the Hue area.

Combat activity in Military Region 2 remains at a low level.

In Military Region 3 the level of combat activity also continues to be low. At An Loc, the insertion of two battalions of the ARVN 43rd Regiment was completed yesterday. An additional two battalions are scheduled to arrive today.

In Military Region 4, only scattered contacts are reported.

A total of 725 TacAir sorties were flown in Vietnam last night, 323 of which hit targets in North Vietnam. No B-52 sorties were flown over North Vietnam. All 93 sorties hit targets in the Hue area of Military Region 1.

Military Region 1

The enemy continues his heavy artillery and occasional ground probes against the My Chanh defense line. The heaviest fighting is reported against ARVN Airborne troops west of Route 1.

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-- Ninety-three B-52 strikes were flown against targets near Hue.

-- Substantial rocket and artillery fire is being directed against Camp Evans, but thus far the enemy has been unable to penetrate to any degree the airborne or marine defenses. However, during one artillery attack the ammunition dump containing some 300 rounds of 175mm artillery ammunition were destroyed.

-- Communication intelligence state that the "immediate mission" of the attacking forces is to "prepare" to "liberate Thua Thien Province and Hue." Several messages suggest that the offensive will be in two phases -- the first running from June 22 to June 29. At least two regiments of the NVA 304th Division have been committed to the new offensive.

-- An intercepted June 18 message from a North Vietnamese anti-aircraft battalion near Dong Ha stated that since June 1, 53 men in the battalion had deserted and 41 others had been hospitalized. The normal strength of these battalions is usually about 220 men.

-- Cumulative results from yesterday's fighting near Fire Support Base Nancy now stand at 61 enemy soldiers killed and 18 tanks destroyed. Friendly casualties were light. ARVN lost two light tanks and one was damaged. Personnel casualties were light.

Military Region 2

Combat activity remains at a low level.

-- South Vietnamese Rangers hold the high ground overlooking the Kontum Pass, but are encountering stiff resistance from enemy troops that remain dug-in along one side of the Pass as well as south along Route 14. The new by-pass is open but traffic is subject to sporadic harassment.

-- Fighting in the Phu My area has increased somewhat as elements of the 3rd NVA Division are apparently attempting to expand their area of control southward.

-- Friendly patrols operating outside of Kontum City have found the bodies of 195 enemy soldiers presumably killed by B-52 strikes.

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Military Region 3

An Loc remains quiet and fresh ARVN reinforcements continue to be airlifted into the city. However, elements of the 7th NVA Division continue to block Route 13.

-- The Headquarters, ARVN 43rd Regiment along with two battalions were inserted into An Loc yesterday. Two more battalions will be air lifted in today and elements of the 15th Regiment are being taken out. That regiment will be returned to the delta for duty.

-- The government's key support base for the relief effort at Tan Khai was shelled on June 21 with about a hundred 105mm rounds.

Military Region 4

In the Mekong Delta, no major new fighting has been reported in Kien Tuong and Dinh Tuong Provinces along the Cambodian border.

Laos

Government forces in south Laos are gradually regaining control over the Khong Sedone area despite some determined enemy resistance. Friendly forces occupied the main part of Khong Sedone on June 18 and other units pushed the enemy from hilltop positions west of the town on June 21. Farther south friendly forces are also making some progress in their efforts to clear enemy forces from the western edge of the Bolovens Plateau.

Cambodia

No significant developments were reported.

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US Air and Naval Operations

The following air strikes were flown on June 23:

	<u>MR-1</u>	<u>MR-2</u>	<u>MR-3</u>	<u>MR-4</u>	<u>NVN</u>	<u>Total</u>
TacAir US	203	77	84	38	323	725
TacAir VNAF	47	42	51	45	0	185
B-52	93	0	0	0	0	93

All 93 B-52 strikes were against targets in the Hue area of Military Region I.

Updated bomb damage assessment from air strikes over North Vietnam on June 21; one span was dropped on a bridge at Huu Trung, north of Hanoi. In addition armed reconnaissance missions accounted for four bridges, 13 trucks, two trailers, 18 waterborne logistic craft, one SAM missile, two SAM transporters, two radar vans, and eight structures damaged or destroyed. Also, 53 secondary fires and explosions were observed.

In South Vietnam on June 21 air strikes were responsible for damaging or destroying 13 trucks, surface to air missile equipment, seven guns, seven armored vehicles and 13 structures, with 22 enemy killed. Nine waterborne logistic craft were damaged or destroyed in Cambodia.

Scheduled air strikes over North Vietnam last night included the Lang Bun railroad bridges, the Lang Thip railroad bridge, and the Lang Kay railroad bridge and by-pass all north of Hanoi. Also scheduled in the Hanoi area were the Co Trai railroad/highway bridge and the Phu Ly thermal power plant.

In the Haiphong area the Mong Duong transshipment point and the Hon Gia POL storage site and highway ferry were scheduled to be hit. No bomb damage assessment is as yet available from these targets.

Strikes against the Van Dang railroad siding and the highway bridge, also near Haiphong, were diverted to the Thanh Hoa POL site. At Thanh Hoa City south of Hanoi, extensive damage is reported to the POL storage site. In addition, 30 railroad cars, five buildings, two bridges, three stacks of supplies, and an 85mm AAA site were destroyed and ten railroad cars and four buildings were damaged.

Two MIG-21 aircraft were engaged with negative results in the Thanh Hoa area.

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In naval gunfire operations, units continue strikes, surveillance and harassment and interdiction missions along the coast of North Vietnam. Since April, 55,970 rounds of ammunition have been expended against targets along the coast of North Vietnam. US ships supporting South Vietnamese forces in the south have expended 189,547 rounds.

Six ships in two units continued firing on targets in North Vietnam. Three destroyers conducted harassment and interdiction missions in the vicinity of Hon La Island while keeping a Chinese merchant ship under surveillance. In the strikes, the task unit shelled a barracks and warehouse area and three coastal defense sites 34 miles south of Thanh Hoa, a supply storage area seven miles north of Ha Tinh, and a cave storage area and two coastal defense sites 32 miles south of Thanh Hoa. Strike damage results were not observed.

Soviet Naval Activity

The last of the Soviet surface combatants has departed the South China Sea. The three ships -- a cruiser and two destroyers -- transited the Luzon Strait yesterday, presumably heading toward Vladivostok. During the height of its five-week deployment at the Macclesfield Bank anchorage, the flotilla had consisted of a cruiser, and five destroyers. Of the four Soviet E-class submarines that are believed to have also operated in the South China Sea during this period, one may still be there.

Merchant Shipping

The number of foreign ships in North Vietnamese ports remains at 31. No additional diversions have been noted and there has been no evidence of any attempt to transit the minefields since their activations. There has been no evidence of minesweeping operations in North Vietnamese waters.

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Political/Diplomatic

New POW List Released

An American lawyer and personal friend of the Kennedy family turned over to Ambassador Watson in Paris a list of 24 American Prisoners of War in North Vietnam who have been taken since November 1, 1970. Those on the list were actually captured between December 1971 and the end of May 1972.

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The lawyer had been asked by Senator Kennedy to pick up the list from the North Vietnamese Paris delegation. The North Vietnamese reportedly plan to announce to the press that the list has been turned over. Defense has notified the next of kin of the 24 POW's, and we expect to release their names on June 23.

GVN Official Comments on Ceasefire

The Press and Information Director of the GVN Foreign Ministry told our Embassy in Saigon that his government could agree to discuss a ceasefire prior to the withdrawal of all NVA forces but would not accept a ceasefire which leaves the enemy in permanent control of territories it now occupies. The official was seeking to correct earlier news reports of a statement that the GVN would not accept a ceasefire in which each party would remain in occupation of areas it now controls.

North Vietnamese Ambassador Unhappy with Events

The North Vietnamese Ambassador in Colombo reportedly is unhappy over recent developments in Vietnam such as the mild Russian and Chinese reactions to the mining and the travels of President Podgorny and Dr. Kissinger. According to the Yugoslav Ambassador, who told our Embassy, the official interprets these actions as a letting down of North Vietnam by its allies. Hanoi's Ambassador also reportedly asserted that the current offensive was a deliberate effort to torpedo the Moscow summit.

Civilian Unrest Reported in Hanoi

The French Charge in Hanoi reportedly cabled Paris that there has been civilian unrest in Hanoi, including a demonstration by factory workers who refused to work because they deemed it too dangerous. According to the French Military Advisor to his country's NATO delegation, the Charge also reported that the supply situation in Hanoi is becoming difficult and that Soviet and Chinese supplies are piling up at the Sino-Vietnamese border.

President Podgorny Reportedly Urged Ceasefire to Hanoi

The Canadian ICC representative in Hanoi has reported that local Eastern European diplomats believe that Podgorny, during his recent Hanoi visit, urged that North Vietnam accept a ceasefire and negotiate from there. The same sources stated that Podgorny reportedly told the North Vietnamese that your re-election is now certain, which the North Vietnamese are said to have acknowledged. He assured Hanoi that Soviet aid would continue, but allegedly asked the North Vietnamese to press the Chinese to offer more assistance on transshipment of Soviet supplies. The North Vietnamese, however, are said to have refused. While Eastern European diplomats in Hanoi are not always very reliable sources of information, it is interesting to note the lines they



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