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MEMORANDUM

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

INFORMATION

April 20, 1972
THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN.

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/
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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER *HAK*
SUBJECT: The Situation in Vietnam

An Loc again today has come under heavy enemy attack. One ARVN Airborne Battalion operating southeast of the town was overrun and tanks have joined the Communist attack on An Loc once again. The weather is good and tactical air strikes are being directed on the enemy forces.

Combat activity in Military Region 1 was moderate. Enemy attacks on Fire Support Base Bastogne and Fire Support Base Center were repulsed with heavy enemy casualties.

In Military Region 2 the focus of enemy activity remains in the coastal provinces rather than in the highlands. ARVN was forced to evacuate a district headquarters in Binh Dinh Province yesterday after a three-day battle. In the delta, enemy attacks decreased and ARVN initiated actions were on the rise yesterday with some 177 enemy reported killed.

On 19 April, U.S. Naval gunfire support units and tactical air struck numerous targets in North Vietnam. FREEDOM TRAIN naval gunfire hit a communications station and a petroleum storage area in the Thanh Hoa area and U.S. Navy aircraft struck targets along Route 1 some 20-25 miles south of Vinh as well as targets near La Khe, which is 60 miles northwest of Dong Hoi.

Military Region 1

South Vietnamese ground forces continue to carry the fight to the North Vietnamese west of Quang Tri City.

-- ARVN soldiers killed 113 Communist soldiers yesterday in a ground action near FSB Bastogne, after suffering a mortar barrage of over 400 rounds. ARVN casualties were 14 wounded.

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-- The enemy has again employed 130mm artillery against Quang Tri City, and for the first time Fire Support Bases Pedro and Bastogne experienced tear gas attacks.

-- Local Viet Cong forces continue to apply pressure against government relocation and pacification projects in eastern Quang Ngai Province.

-- Route 1 is interdicted by enemy forces several miles south of Quang Ngai City.

-- Heavy fighting is reported in Tam Ky District near the provincial capital of Quang Tin Province, and in the western Hiep Duc District.

Military Region 2

Enemy main force units continue to put pressure on government fire support bases in Binh Dinh Province and local Viet Cong units remain active in several of the southern provinces.

-- On April 19, ARVN forces were forced to abandon the Hoai An District Headquarters while suffering over 150 casualties.

-- Also on April 19, ARVN forces killed 123 enemy soldiers in an attack on the Dak Pek Ranger Camp northwest of Dak To. Friendly casualties were light.

-- In Ninh Thuan Province, local enemy forces destroyed two bridges, and several minor incidents were reported in Phu Yen and Binh Thuan Provinces.

-- An Khe pass remains closed despite ROK attempts to open it. The ROK's are committing three more companies to this operation and now have a total of 12 companies in action in that area.

Military Region 3

On April 19, ARVN made progress in clearing the northern portion of An Loc and the road from Chon Thanh to Lai Khe was opened.

-- Today, however, the Communists launched attacks from all sides against An Loc. Enemy tanks are again reported in the northern portion of An Loc and the 6th ARVN Airborne Battalion was overrun southeast of the town. At noon Saigon time on April 20 a total of six enemy tanks had been destroyed in this latest battle.

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-- The weather is good in the An Loc area and tactical air strikes are being directed against enemy forces.

-- Enemy forces have also mounted a ground attack against the Dau Tieng ARVN base in western Binh Duong Province. An estimated enemy company is reported inside the defense perimeter. TACAIR has been called in to support the ARVN platoon which is holding on in the compound.

Military Region 4

Enemy initiated incidents in the delta decreased yesterday while ARVN initiated actions rose. In some 77 ARVN initiated actions, 177 enemy were killed, 70 detained and 66 weapons were taken.

U.S. Naval and Air Action

An update of yesterday's North Vietnamese air and naval strikes against units of Freedom Train 71.1.2 indicates that one enemy MIG-17 was shot down and two patrol boats sunk. The damaged destroyer HIGBEE arrived at Da Nang last night.

-- Freedom Train units continue to hit targets in the Vinh area as well as Dong Hoi Airfield, where five large secondary explosions were reported. Other units struck a communication station and a petroleum storage area in the Than Hoa area. Enemy fire was received but no ships were hit.

-- South of the DMZ other naval units continue to hit enemy staging areas around the Cua Viet River in Quang Tri Province.

-- In tactical air strikes by 77 U.S. Navy aircraft during the 24 hour period ending at 11:00 a.m. yesterday, Route 1 targets south of Vinh and near La Khe were struck. Numerous buildings and bridges, railway cars and sidings, were either damaged or destroyed. Fires were also reported from the strike area. At Tab A is a summary of tactical air flown on April 19.

-- A total of 86 sorties are scheduled in the Freedom Train area south of 19 degrees in North Vietnam, during a 24 hour period ending at 5:00 p.m. today.

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-- A total of 63 B-52 sorties were flown throughout the Republic of Vietnam striking base camps, staging areas, troop concentrations, weapons positions, artillery units and logistic targets in MRs 1, 2, and ²25X1

-- U.S. aircrews flew 30 interdiction sorties. Thirty-three storage areas, 18 structures and four guns were destroyed or damaged, and four secondary fires were reported.

-- There are indications that the weekend bombings of Haiphong briefly affected shipping. A Soviet ship that had been due to arrive in port yesterday changed its course and was still about a half day's sailing time from the port yesterday. The vessel is one of nine advised previously to avoid Haiphong for the time being. Communications intelligence also indicates that a Somali flag ship under Chinese charter has been instructed to cancel a scheduled voyage to Haiphong. Today, cargo operations in the port have apparently resumed.

-- In addition, shipping associated communications in Haiphong have ^{25X1} apparently been disrupted by the bombings. These facilities play an important role in controlling traffic in and out of the port. A sensitive intercept from an unofficial monitoring service indicates that port operations had been brought to a standstill by the bombings "because everyone is busy cleaning up." The port was reportedly "paralyzed" and vessels were not being unloaded causing a backup in the Haiphong "roadstead."

Cambodia

Cambodian troops are moving to drive the Communists from Route 1 which is cut in several places.

Laos

Ambassador Godley believes recent B-52 strikes in the Long Tieng area have broken the back of the enemy's offensive there. The ARC LIGHT strikes, plus the rains, appear to have forced the North Vietnamese to begin to withdraw from forward positions near Long Tieng.

Political/Diplomatic

South Vietnamese Public Remains Calm in Face of Attacks

Our Embassy in Saigon reports that the South Vietnamese population remains calm and confident. With the first phase of the major invasions

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in Quang Tri and Binh Long blunted by the ARVN, a mood of relief and cautious optimism has appeared, although the certainty that more attacks are on the way qualifies this feeling.

South Vietnamese Reaction to Bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong

The U.S. air strikes on Haiphong and Hanoi have been front-paged in most Saigon newspapers and GVN radio and TV have given wide coverage to the bombing raids. The Northern refugees in the South seem to be most vocal in their support of the raids while most other Vietnamese view the raids as an indication of U.S. support for the GVN.

Political Situation in Coastal Region, MR-2

While complaining that the GVN was not doing enough through its information service to combat enemy propaganda, the Vietnamese people in several provinces of MR-2, who were interviewed between April 13 and 15, expressed confidence in ARVN's ability, with U.S. air support, to withstand the offensive.

Soviet Press Stresses Need for Negotiations on Vietnam

In a departure from earlier TASS and Soviet Government practice, the Soviet Press, according to our Embassy in Moscow, has been giving regular coverage to DRV statements concerning necessity for negotiated settlement to the Vietnam problem.

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BT

T O P S E C R E T SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR ADM MCCREY AND ADM MCGAIN, INFO
GEN HOLLOWAY, ADM CLAREY, GEN CLAY, GEN ROSSON AND LTGEN JONES FROM
GEN ABRAMS. DELIVER UPON RECEIPT.

SUBJECT: SUPPLEMENTAL COMMANDER'S PERSONAL APPRAISAL (U)

1. (TS) AIR SORTIES.

A. EXCEPT FOR BROKEN CONDITIONS IN THE MOUNTAINS AND ISOLATED
AFTERNOON THUNDERSHOWER ACTIVITY, FAVORABLE FLYING WEATHER PERMITTED
VISUAL TACAIR DELIVERY.

B. SORTIES FLOWN 191300H - 201300H APR 72

	A	B	C	D	ES	F
	MR-1	MR-2	MR-3	MR-4	NVM	TOTAL
(1) TACAIR US	116	66	200	49	45	476
(2) TACAIR VNAF	36	35	43	52	0	221
(3) GUNSHIP	0	3	12	1	0	16
(4) ARC LIGHT	24	24	21	0	0	69
(5) FAC	28	12	33	11	0	84
(6) EB-66	2	0	0	0	0	2
(7) F-105	2	0	0	0	6	8
(8) TOTALS	258	140	314	113	51	876

NOTE: USN DATA INCOMPLETE.

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C. SORTIES PLANNED, 200670H - 213500H APR 72

	A	B	C	D	E	F	
	MR-1	MR-2	MR-3	MR-4	AVN	TOTAL	
(9) MS	195	52	231	77	152	738	
(10) VMAF	52	34	43	43	0	132	
(11) TOTALS	253	116	274	120	152	920	
(12) B-52 ONLY	33	15	24	0	0	69	

5. INFORMATION PRELIMINARY.

2. (S) AIR BDA REPORTED DURING 191700H - 201800H APR 72.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	
	MR-1	MR-2	MR-3	MR-4	AVN	TOTAL	
(13) TANKS DESTROYED OR DAMAGED	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
(14) TRUCKS DESTROYED OR DAMAGED	6	0	0	0	0	0	6
(15) GUNS DESTROYED OR DAMAGED	19	7	7	1	0	0	34
(16) SECONDARY EXPLO.	63	15	13	4	0	0	95
(17) SECONDARY FIRES	21	2	19	2	0	0	44
(18) FORTIFIED FIGHTING POSITIONS	20	0	108	12	0	0	140
(19) TUNNELS CLOSED	0	20	9	48	0	0	77
(20) TROOPS KILLED BY-AIR	154	5	1	0	0	0	170
(21) TROOPS WOUNDED BY AIR	0	40	193	11	0	0	244
(22) BUNKERS	14	6	37	21	0	0	77
(23) BOATS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BRIDGES	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
(25) ARMORED VEHICLES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

-58539, -) 28- 8, :) 7838 1 AMMO STORAGE AREA AND 2 OTHER STORAGE AREAS DESTROYED IN MR-1.

3. (S) FIVE DESTROYERS FIRED 2357 ROUNDS OF NGFS IN MR 1. TARGETS INCLUDED AN ACTIVE ARTILLERY SITE, SUSPECTED ARTILLERY SITES, INFILTRATION ROUTES AND TROOP CONCENTRATIONS NEAR THE GUA VIET RIVER AND NORTH TO THE DMZ. ONE DESTROYER FIRED 144 ROUNDS OF NGFS IN MR 4 IN SUPPORT OF THE 9TH ARVN DIVISION. TARGETS WERE MILITARY STRUCTURES AND WATERBORNE LOGISTIC CRAFT (WELC). NO SHIPS REPORTED RECEIVING SHORE FIRE.

4. (S) ENEMY LOSSES - MATERIAL REPORTED DURING 191800H - 201300H APR 72 (DAILY/CUMULATIVE SINCE 30 MAR 72):

	A	B	C	D	E	F	
	MR-1	MR-2	MR-3	MR-4	AVN	TOTAL	

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TANKS	4/48	5/8	3/55	7/8	&	12/203
ARTY PIECES	9/3	2/8	2/4	2/8	&	7/7
TRUCKS	39/29	2/9	44/70	3/12	&	79/111
IND. WPNS	266/1175	77/559	45/259	50/523	&	440/2526
C/S WPNS	102/495	41/197	16/75	16/103	&	175/371

& INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE.

5. (S) CONTINUING DIFFICULTIES HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCED IN OBTAINING TIMELY INFORMATION FOR USM OPERATION IN NVN FREEDOM TRAIN AREA. DELAYS IN EXCESS OF 3 HOURS IN RECEIVING USM/OPREP-4 INFORMATION (FLASH) HAVE BEEN ENCOUNTERED. IN VIEW OF THE IMPORTANCE OF TIMELY INFORMATION, IT IS SUGGESTED THAT USM OPERATIONAL DATA FOR NVN BE SUBMITTED BY CTF 77 DIRECTLY TO ACTION ADDRESSEES AND THAT COMUSMACV AND 7AF BE INCLUDED AS INFORMATION ADDRESSEES.

GP-1

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ANNOTES

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