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MEMORANDUM

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INFORMATION

April 3, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER
SUBJECT: The Situation in South Vietnam

USAF, Army, Navy, NSS, NSA, reviews completed.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

Military Region 1

South Vietnamese units continue to face heavy pressure as the enemy pushes ahead with his offensive. Camp Carroll surrendered late Sunday afternoon and intercepted North Vietnamese messages reveal that about 1,000 prisoners were taken at that base. ARVN continues to hold Route 9 between Cam Lo and Dong Ha, however and later press reports claim that ARVN is counter-attacking in the Cam Lo -Dong Ha-Quang Tri triangle.

Since the enemy offensive began, ARVN has lost 14 bases and Quang Tri City now stands as the center of South Vietnamese defenses in the northernmost province. The South Vietnamese are estimated to have lost about half of the major artillery pieces they had in Quang Tri Province.

An estimated 8-10 NVA infantry regiments and elements of three artillery regiments, two tank battalions and engineer, antiaircraft and other support units are now involved in the enemy offensive. Intercepted enemy communications indicate that both the 304th and 308th NVA Divisions are now engaged on the battlefield. In addition, North Vietnamese engineers have erected a bridge over the Ben Hai River in the DMZ and self-propelled artillery has been sighted crossing it.

-- An estimated 50 NVA tanks with infantry support were sighted this morning 2 miles northwest of Dong Ha and additional tanks were reported some 9 miles north of Quang Tri city.

-- Communist anti-aircraft fire in Quang Tri Province is heavy and six allied aircraft were destroyed on 2 April. One U.S. pilot was captured by the North Vietnamese according to an intercepted NVA message.

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Air Operations Since March 31:

-- Thirty-two B-52 sorties have been flown in the vicinity of Khe Sanh with an additional 51 scheduled for the same area before noon today.

-- The USS Kitty Hawk has deployed to Yankee Station for commencement of strike operations today.

-- There have been 5 protective reaction strikes against SAM sites in the southern part of North Vietnam since the enemy offensive. No significant bomb damage has been reported.

Naval Gunfire Support Ships:

The USS Waddell a guided missile destroyer, twice yesterday received counter battery fire from enemy positions near the DMZ while moving into position for a fire support mission. The Waddell countered with 51 rounds while evading, saturating the area with fire. No damage was incurred by the Waddell.

Military Region II

Thus far, the enemy has not launched a similar offensive to that in Military Region I. On 2 April, ARVN fought a 25-hour battle with an NVA force 18 miles northwest of Kontum town and the town itself was hit by five rockets.

Military Regions III and IV

Enemy initiated activity remains at a low level with no unusual attacks reported.

Allied Deployments

In order to bolster ARVN's northern defenses, a South Vietnamese Marine brigade will be moved to Military Region I from Saigon beginning today. In addition, a U. S. Army Air Cavalry Troop has been moved from Military Region 3 to Military Region I.

-- Three U. S. attack carriers are in position and providing tactical air support to ground forces and a fourth, the USS Constellation, has departed Yokosuka and is estimated to arrive off the Vietnam coast at approximately mid-day on 7 April.

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South Vietnamese Foreign Ministry Statement:

In a statement released today, the Republic of Vietnam appealed to the peoples and governments of the world to condemn the aggression by the North Vietnamese Government and to demand their immediate withdrawal. The statement made the following points:

-- The South Vietnamese Government strongly condemned the armed aggression against the Republic of South Vietnam.

-- The enemy has sent three divisions, the 304th, the 308th and 324B, supported by three Regiments of Artillery and anti-aircraft gun, one Regiment of tanks and several surface to air missiles.

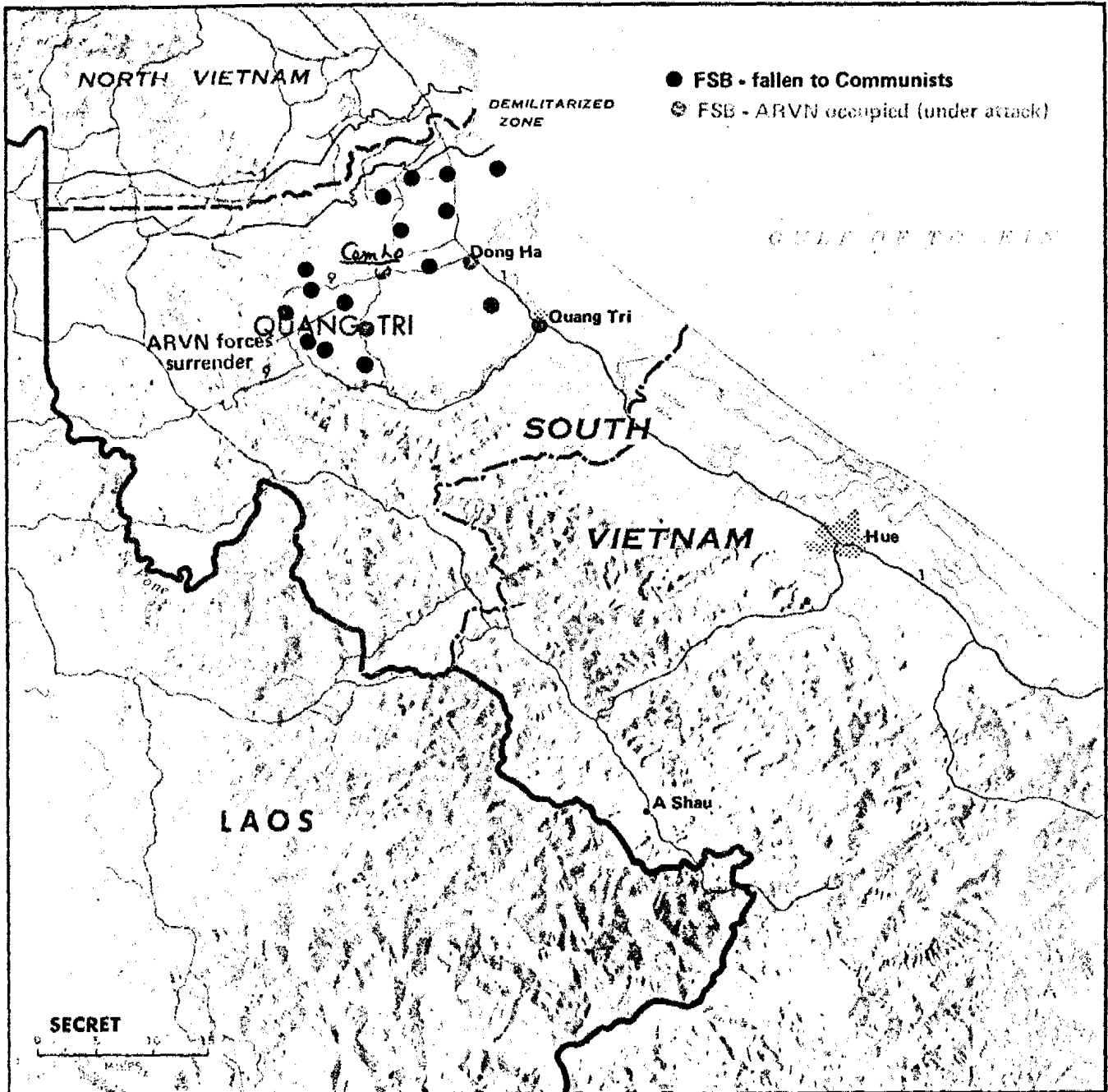
-- To date North Vietnam had only referred to National Liberation Front (Viet Cong) troops involved in the war, but now their forces blatantly opened up an attack.

-- Should North Vietnam continue the aggression they must accept the entire responsibility for all the consequences.

-- Despite the many times they have suffered heavy losses, the North Vietnamese over the past three years have maintained their adherence to the use of force for a military victory. They do not want a peace solution through negotiation.

According to press reports, President Thieu and Premier Khiem left for Da Nang yesterday morning to confer with military commanders in Military Region I.

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