

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

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29 DEC 1969

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Central Intelligence Agency

MEMORANDUM FOR : Mr. Jonathan Moore
Deputy Assistant Secretary for East
Asian and Pacific Affairs
Department of State

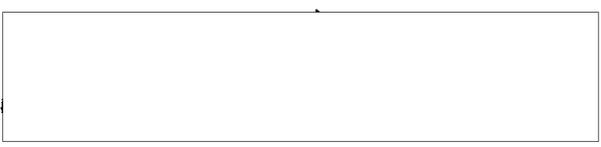
LAOS

SUBJECT : Current Defense Plan for the Plaine
des Jarres in Operation About Face

1. The attached memorandum summarizes a recently devised Royal Lao Army defense plan for the Plaine des Jarres to meet the anticipated dry season offensive of the North Vietnamese. The commander of Military Region II, General Vang Pao, formulated the plan which employs the concept of mobile defense in depth and is designed to prevent any decisive Royal Lao Government military defeat in north Laos. The American Ambassador has approved this plan.

2. The defense plan has been prepared in anticipation of heavier attacks in Military Region II by North Vietnamese Army and Pathet Lao forces. All-source reporting indicates enemy forces will increase their offensive activities in north Laos during the 1969-1970 dry season.

FOR THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR PLANS:



Attachments

cc: Mr. John Holdridge
National Security Council

Mr. Dennis Doolin
Deputy Assistant Secretary
(East Asian and Pacific Affairs)
OSD/ISA

STATE DEPARTMENT SYSTEMATIC REVIEW
Retain class'n Change/classify to _____
Declassify with concurrence of SD
EO 12958, 25X
FPC/HDR by SD Date: 10/26/81

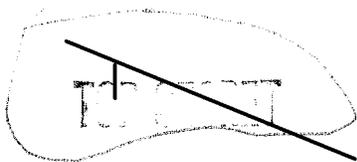
Withdrawal No. 253341

PL 27405

APPROVED FOR RELEASE DATE:
03-16-2009

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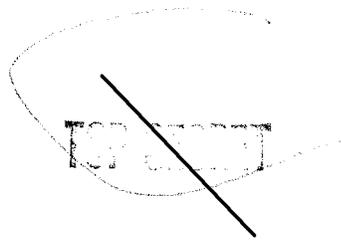
24 December 1969

SUBJECT : Current Defense Plan for the Plaine des Jarres
in Operation About Face

1. A comprehensive defense plan for the Plaine des Jarres (PDJ), specifically oriented toward the current Operation About Face sector of Xieng Khouang Province, has been formulated by Royal Lao Army (FAR) Military Region (MR) II commander General Vang Pao. The defense plan has been approved by the Ambassador. The plan in concept is one of mobile defense. It provides for five successive defense lines (see attachment), each of which consists of a series of strategically located terrain features. These critical terrain features will be held as strong points and a mobile reserve composed of infantry, armor and artillery, in coordination with tactical air, will be employed to regain any of the strong points lost due to enemy action.

2. On 18 December, Souvanna Phouma was briefed on the defense plan. The briefing was attended by Ambassador Godley, the U.S. Army Attache representative, FAR Commander-in-Chief, General Ouan Rathikoun, Souvanna's eldest son, a Royal Lao Air Force major who serves as a military aide to his father and CAS. It was noted that the enemy is currently preparing to launch a major counterattack that Vang Pao's current troop disposition could not possibly hold against a major enemy thrust. Vang Pao is also faced with the danger of having many of his troops killed, wounded or captured unless a comprehensive defense plan is implemented which provides for secondary lines of defense and a mobile reserve force to be thrown into the battle when needed.

3. There is no guarantee that Vang Pao will be able to hold the PDJ against a determined enemy offensive. This plan may delay a major enemy offensive, by making the enemy pay as high a price as possible



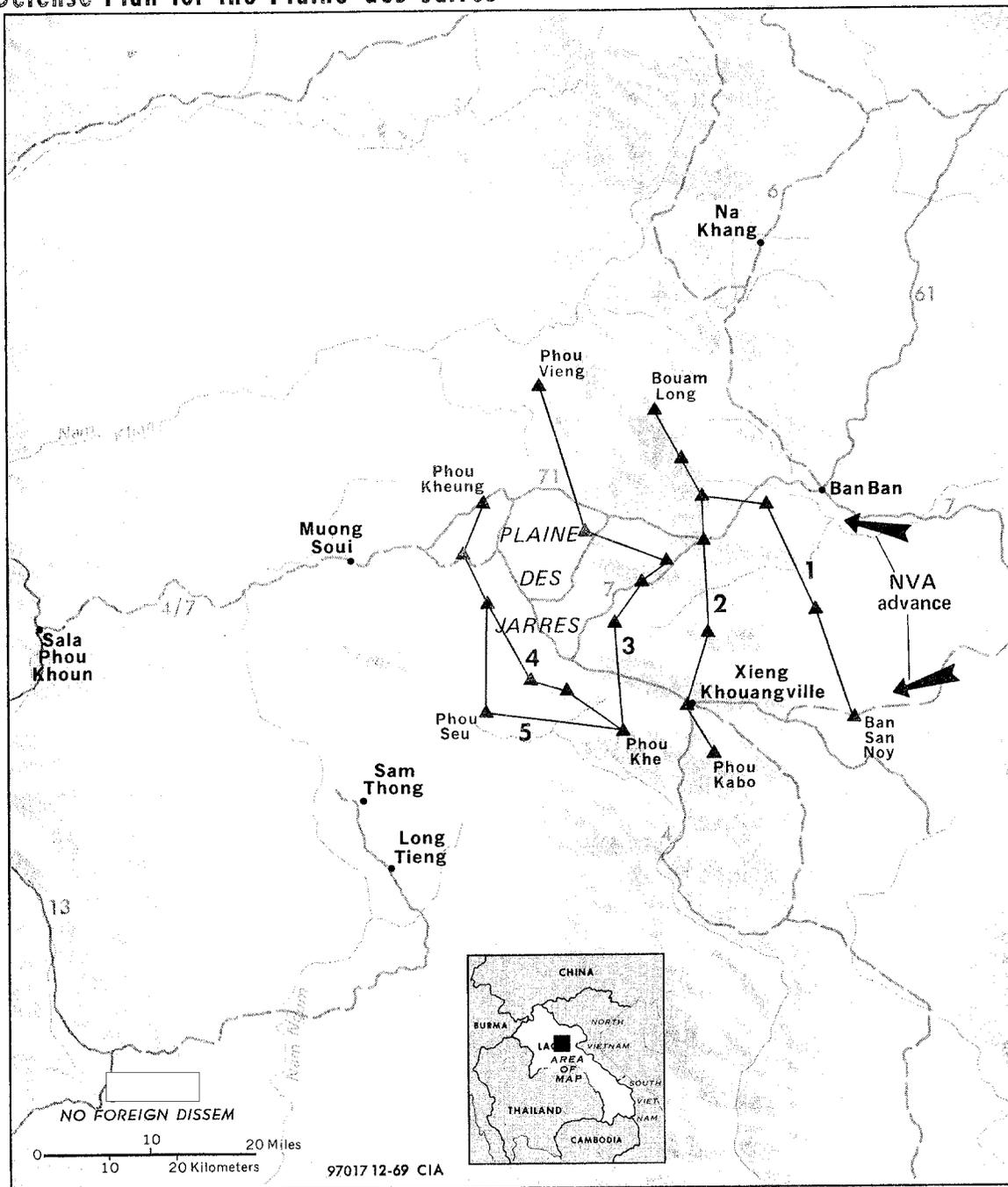
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in terms of men and materiel. The plan also offers an orderly withdrawal to fixed positions should the enemy break through.

4. The three mobile reserve battalions envisioned in the defense plan will have to be derived from other FAR military regions, as friendly forces now engaged in MR II have no effective reserve force of their own. At the 18 December briefing, Souvanna instructed General Ouan to select a total of three battalions from the remaining military regions to be transferred to the MR II area as soon as possible. Vientiane Station is closely monitoring progress on this matter which it feels to be of critical importance.

Attachment

Defense Plan for the Plaine des Jarres



PL 27-488

GOVERNMENT DEFENSE LINES

1. Bouam Long (UG 2585) to Phou San (UG 2876) to Phou Kheo (UG 3171) to Phou Nok Kok (UG 4170) to San Tiau (UG 4955) to Ban San Noy (UG 5438).
2. Bouam Long to Phou San to Phou Kheo to Nong Pet (UG 3163) to Thali Noi (UG 3452) to Xieng Khouangville to Phou Kabo (UG 3333).
3. Phou Vieng (UG 0790) to Phou Pheung (UG 1466) to Phou Houay (UG 2661) to Phou Houat (UG 2159) to Phou He (UG 1953) to Phou Khe (UG 1936).
4. Phou Kheung (TG 9970) to Phou Kout (TG 9563) to Phou Keng (TG 9955) to Hill 1324 (UG 0544) to Phou Teung (UG 1041) to Phou Khe.
5. Phou Kheung to Phou Kout to Phou Keng to Phou Seu (TG 9938) to Phou Khe.

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