

~~SECRET~~

May 9, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: DWIGHT CHAPIN

FROM: AL HAIG |5|

SUBJECT: Request for Reconnaissance Photography

Orders have been disseminated to the effect that ships leaving Haiphong Harbor will be photographed as soon as possible. A tight surveillance of Soviet ships moving toward Haiphong is also in effect. We have word this morning that these ships have been halted north of the 20th Parallel.

With respect to close-in photography of Soviet vessels on the high seas, and especially the use of magnesium flares for photography missions of this kind on the high seas after dark, I believe that in the current state of affairs it could be considered extremely provocative and unnecessarily so. As you know, we are not trying to make this a test of manhood between the Soviets and ourselves until the Soviet decisions are made on a host of related issues, such as the Summit and their overall general demeanor toward the U.S. actions already underway.

The judgment with respect to this issue also affects exploitation of evidence of Soviet backing down in the face of the U.S. action. It should not be exploited at the present time. The best course of action for the President is to get the photography within the foregoing parameters. That is being done. A decision as to whether to exploit it can only be made after a careful analysis of Soviet reactions to the military action we have already taken.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

~~SECRET~~

JCS review completed.

AMH:mlh:typed 5/9/72

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 9, 1972

11:00 a.m.

MEMORANDUM FOR:

GENERAL HAIG

FROM:

DWIGHT L. CHAPIN

The President has ordered that we get reconnaissance pictures and film of the ships leaving Haiphong Harbor, footage of the ships turning around prior to reaching the harbor and pictures of ships with tanks, equipment and supplies on deck.

We are to start taking these pictures at dawn which is four hours from now, and should consider the use of magnesium night flare pictures. If there is any problem with this, Bob wants to be notified immediately.

Special arrangements should be made to get the pictures and film to me at the White House at the earliest possible time.