

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KISSINGER

October 16, 1970

FROM: John Holdridge and Richard T. Kennedy *JKH*

SUBJECT: Admiral Moorer's Report on Operation TAIL WIND

Admiral Moorer has sent you a report on Operation TAIL WIND (Tab A). The operation was a reconnaissance in force to collect intelligence information in Southern Laos and took place 11-14 September 1970. It also served as a diversionary action supporting the

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Three exploitation platoons with a total of 16 U.S. and 120 indigenous personnel were inserted into the operational area by helicopter and maintained contact with the enemy for 72 hours. Friendly losses were 3 indigenous killed and 17 U.S. and 33 indigenous wounded (only 5 required hospitalization. Three helos were lost. They relied heavily on close air support. Results were excellent:

- 432 enemy killed and wounded, of which 144 were killed in ground action.
- Substantial quantities of enemy ammunition were destroyed.
- A large volume of documents representing high intelligence value on the enemy transportation group in the area captured.

The operation achieved its objectives and it is representative of one of the most effective means for obtaining enemy intelligence in Southern Laos as well as of diverting NVA troops and service forces from the enemy LOC.

Attachment

JCS review completed.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS
APPLY

ARMY review completed

MORI/CDF per C05147041

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SENSITIVE
THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

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MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Henry A. Kissinger
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs

The Honorable U. Alexis Johnson
Under Secretary of State for
Political Affairs

The Honorable David Packard
Deputy Secretary of Defense

The Honorable Richard Helms
Director, Central Intelligence Agency

1. The attached memorandum provides an evaluation of
Operation TAIL WIND, paramilitary action conducted in
the southern Laotian panhandle, and is circulated to
WSAG principals for information and possible discussion.

T. H. Moor
T. H. MOORER
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

Attachment
a/s

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25X1 1. This memo contains an evaluation of the results of Operation TAIL WIND, which was conducted in the southern Laotian panhandle from 11-14 September 1970. The primary purpose of the mission was to conduct reconnaissance in force to collect intelligence information.

2. Three exploitation platoons consisting of a total of 16 US and 120 indigenous were inserted by helicopter into the Chavane area of southern Laos. Contact with enemy forces was almost continuous during the 72-hour operation, and the force relied heavily on close air support to sustain its momentum and integrity. Enemy casualties were 432 killed and wounded. Approximately 288 of the killed were as a result of air support, while an estimated 144 were killed as a result of ground action. In addition to the enemy killed, the following enemy materiel was destroyed

500	-	140 mm rockets
300	-	82 mm rounds
300	-	B-40 rounds
2,000	-	23 mm rounds
12,500	-	rounds of small arms ammunition

A large volume of documents was captured by the TAIL WIND forces and represents the most significant collateral intelligence found on the 559th Transportation Group since the beginning of the war. This unit directs the enemy logistic and infiltration flow through the Lao Panhandle and is a high priority intelligence collection target. As of 25 September 1970, 400 pages of the 851 pages of captured enemy documents have been classified as Category A--the highest rating for intelligence value. Exploitation of these captured documents also affords 7th Air Force an ideal opportunity to evaluate the validity of reports derived from sensor systems.

3. Friendly losses from this operation were 3 killed (all indigenous), 50 wounded (17 US, 33 indigenous). Of the wounded, only 5 required hospitalization. Three helos were lost--2 CH-53s and 1 UH-1G.

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4. This operation achieved the objectives set forth. It not only collected valuable intelligence information, it also provided [REDACTED]. The operation also bears out the fact that in order to obtain firsthand, detailed information concerning the enemy in the heavily canopied jungle, ground reconnaissance teams are required. While photo reconnaissance and sensor systems provide some information, the coverage is not complete. Reconnaissance in force operations, such as TAIL WIND and other PRAIRIE FIRE operations, directed against specific target areas, represent the most effective means for obtaining specific items of information. Even though the primary purpose of these operations is to collect information for the development of intelligence, the collateral effects are often of equal benefit. The enemy must divert an ever-increasing number of troops and critical assets to a rear area security role, and when these enemy forces react to the friendly forces' intrusion into sensitive areas, the enemy becomes more susceptible to allied tactical air operations. [REDACTED]

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5. Reconnaissance in force operations, directed against specific target areas, which are properly planned, coordinated, and executed, represent one of the most effective means for obtaining enemy intelligence in southern Laos, as well as providing the collateral effect of diverting NVA troops and service forces from enemy LOC.

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