

JCS REVIEWED 14-Jul-2010: NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION

REFER TO OSD

THE WHITE HOUSE

~~TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE~~

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Briefing of Dr. Kissinger by Lt. Colonel John Wooley  
of the Joint Staff  
April 3, 1972, from 9:16 a.m. to 9:40 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS: JCS Briefer  
Dr. Kissinger  
General Haig  
Commander Howe

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VIETNAM

Briefer: The situation in MR1 remains critical. 15 places have  
been evacuated including Cam Lo which fell yesterday.  
Self-propelled artillery was sighted crossing a bridge  
over the Ben Hai River.

Kissinger: Why wasn't it attacked?

Briefer: I believe it was. I will find out. The exact location of the  
Bridge is not known. There are tanks at two locations  
and an unknown number were sighted here (just south of  
Qua Viet, south of the Qua Viet River (and engaged with  
naval gunfire). At another point (several miles south of  
the DMZ and 10 miles from the coast) an estimated 50  
enemy tanks were sighted.

Kissinger: If these tanks were sighted, why weren't they attacked?

Briefer: I'll have to find out. A recent report indicates sighting of  
additional armor along the River.

Kissinger: Any time you report a sighting, tell me whether or not it  
was engaged, and if not, why not.

Briefer: Fire-support Base Anne was also reported under attack.  
(This is in the ARVN First Division area about 7 miles  
south-southeast of Quang Tri.)

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Kissinger: Are the South Vietnamese fighting?

Briefer: Yes, reports are sketchy just as they were in the Lan Son operation but I believe they are fighting. They are making an orderly withdrawal under difficult conditions. This is a difficult military evolution.

Kissinger: Can we find out what the estimate of MACV is?

Briefer: US Air Cavalry under the command of the US 1st Regional Assistance Command is being deployed from MR3. Forward elements closed Phu Bai yesterday.

Kissinger: You will let us know what they are going to do with them.

Briefer: Yes sir, the 369th Vietnamese Marine Brigade is also going into Phu Bai with one-third of the Brigade having arrived there today. Thus far there are 56 ARVN reported wounded and 71 Kai. The enemy has lost 753 men. There is one US Kai.

Kissinger: That's impossible. You know that. How many men have been captured?

Briefer: I am embarrassed to say that only 3 have been reported captured. We are making efforts to get more details. There have been 136 Sorties in the air.

Kissinger: Why haven't the new authorities been used?

Briefer: I've checked. There are no reports yet. However, there have been 7 protective reactions.

Kissinger: How far would 25 miles north take them?

TO HAIG: Better let them take Dong Hoi too.  
Get this done with General Pursely.  
('Before the end of the week', HAK  
added facetiously.)

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Briefer: As of 11:00 a.m. EST yesterday, 41 B-52 sorties were flown in the vicinity of Khe Sanh. 34 more sorties will be flown before 11:00 a.m., EST today. Thus far, 17 have been flown.

Kissinger: Why aren't these sorties closer to the DMZ?

Briefer: I believe they will tend to shift as the situation stabilizes.

Kissinger: Has there been anything near Kon Tum?

Briefer: I will cover that later.

Kissinger: All right, how about TAC Air?

Briefer: There have been 106 sorties (probably meant 136) in the last 24 hours. The aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk is back on station and there is adequate air available.

Kissinger: What is the weather?

Briefer: The Briefer then gave a detailed description of the unfavorable weather conditions using the briefing memo attached at Tab A.

Kissinger: Can we fly in that?

Briefer: Yes, we can sky spot and use LORAN. The Air Force Briefer confirmed that it was possible to fly with a ceiling of 2500 feet.

Kissinger: Is the forecast for clear weather?

Briefer: No, it will not be any better than now. There have been 55 SAM firings since March 30. 48 came from the DMZ and 7 from Laos. An OV 10 aircraft was down in Laos and we have no reports on its status at this time. This brings the overall total air loss since the beginning of the offensive to 7.

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Kissinger: What is an O V 10?

Briefer: It is an FAC aircraft.

Kissinger: What do you think personally?

Briefer: I think the situation is better than expected. A withdrawal of troops is difficult at best. They are at the river line now in Dong Ha and Quang Tri. There is no sense defending ground out there (pointing to fire-support bases) and not back here (pointing to towns along coast). They are following their plan to use general reserves. In his latest report, General Abrams states that the situation seems to be stabilizing somewhat. If the North Vietnamese bring their armor across the river and move at high speed down the coast, it could be a problem. The Third ARVN Division is not as good as the First.

General Haig: Are there 8 to 10 enemy regiments in the area?

Briefer: There are that many infantry regiments. And in addition, 3 artillery regiments and 2 to 3 tank regiments.

Kissinger: How are they fighting?

Be sure to get me a report on that.

If the situation is stabilizing, that wouldn't be so bad.

Briefer: Their present defense line defends the major population centers. In my view, if it doesn't break, we could look for a brightening picture.

Kissinger: Can they fly?

Air Force Brief- It is difficult with a 2500 foot ceiling. They need 4 to 5,000  
er feet for F-4s. But it can be done at 2500 feet.

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Kissinger: What do the AIs need?

Briefer: Only 1000 feet. This is also true of the A-37s.

Kissinger: Are we using B-52s anywhere else?

Briefer: All B-52s have been diverted to MR1.

Kissinger: I am under the impression that there have been additional B-52s sent to Guam.

General Haig: Yes. The new B-52s are in addition to those sent earlier.

Briefer: That is correct. We sent a number three weeks ago. We are now flying 51 B-52 sorties a day.

Kissinger: That amounts to a rate of about 1500 a month.

Briefer: In addition, we have moved 36 additional F4s into South-east Asia.

There was one significant contact in the B-3 front at fire support base Delta. ARVN and US and VNAF Tactical Air responded and friendly forces claimed more than 500 enemy soldiers killed. ARVN reinforcements are moving into the area.

Kissinger: Where would the enemy casualties in MR1 come from?

Is the ARVN really fighting?

Briefer: Yes, just as in Lam Son 719. They are retreating and fighting at the same time. This of course makes it easier for the enemy.

Kissinger: During these briefings we can't afford to kid around. I go directly from here to the President. I must know if a major retreat is underway.

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Briefer: I have no indication that this is the case. In fact, just the opposite.

Kissinger: I must know what is coming.

Briefer: General Abrams reports that President Thieu has reconstituted the General Reserve with 9 Ranger Battalions from MRs 3 and 4. These battalions will be employed in MR 1 and 2 as required. The Ninth Infantry Division has been designated as reserve for MR 3 and 4.

A late phone report from MACV indicates that the Second and 56th ARVN Regiments of the Third ARVN Division have been declared combat ineffective.

Kissinger: But this means there is only one regiment left. Are they fighting?

Briefer: Yes, they are fighting but not necessarily winning. This illuminates it.

Kissinger: That means the Third Division is finished. That means only one regiment is left.

Briefer: The Marines are reinforcing, two brigades are there now, and one is coming.

Kissinger: My concern is what these developments mean now.

#### LAOS

Kissinger: What's happened to Vang Pao?

Air Force Briefer: Vang Pao's task forces have made no significant contact with the NVA and reports indicated that the enemy has not been diverted nor have significant supplies been found. There has been no significant contact, the enemy has failed to react and the enemy supply lines have not been disrupted.

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The situation on the Skyline Ridge has not changed significantly. Friendly irregular forces occupy 5 of 9 pads on the Skyline Ridge overlooking Long Tieng. There are reports of tank activity just north of the Charlie Echo Pad. It is quiet in the Long Tieng Valley. North Vietnamese forces did not shell the Valley or the Skyline Ridge. There was one minor contact with enemy ground forces at Charlie Bravo Pad. No Arclight sorties were flown. The current weather visibility is 3 to 6 miles.

Attachment

Tab A - Briefing memo

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

REVISED


SITUATION ROOM OPERATIONS BRIEFING

SECDEF &amp; CJCS

MON, 3 APR

GOOD MORNING SIR:

THE SITUATION IN MILITARY REGION 1 REMAINS CRITICAL. THE NUMBER OF FRIENDLY POSITIONS EVACUATED INCREASED TO 15 WHEN CAM LO WAS LOST YESTERDAY. THE STATUS OF FIRE SUPPORT BASE PEDRO IS STILL UNCERTAIN. LATEST REPORTS INDICATE THESE OTHER DEVELOPMENTS.

*7/11/83*   
IN THE VICINITY OF ~~POINT-1~~, ENEMY SELF-PROPELLED ARTILLERY WAS SIGHTED CROSSING A RECENTLY CONSTRUCTED BRIDGE OVER THE BEN HAI RIVER. THE EXACT LOCATION OF THE BRIDGE WAS NOT REPORTED.

*62-01  
7-24  
7-30*  
*10/10/83* 1  
AT ~~POINT-2~~, AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF ENEMY TANKS WERE SIGHTED JUST SOUTH OF THE QUA VIET RIVER. NAVAL GUNFIRE IS ENGAGING THE TANKS WITH UNKNOWN RESULTS. (030110 EST).

*Here*  
AT ~~POINT-3~~, AN ESTIMATED 50 ENEMY TANKS WITH INFANTRY SUPPORT WERE SIGHTED. THERE WAS NO INDICATION THAT THIS ENEMY FORCE WAS IN CONTACT WITH FRIENDLY ELEMENTS. (030100 EST).

AT POINT ~~4~~, A VIETNAMESE MARINE BATTALION WAS IN CONTACT WITH AN ENEMY FORCE. NO FURTHER DETAILS ARE AVAILABLE.

*Armor Reported along RT 9*

AT POINT 5, FIRE SUPPORT BASE ANNE WAS UNDER ATTACK.  
AGAIN, DETAILS ARE NOT AVAILABLE. THIS IS THE FIRST REPORT  
OF ATTACKS ON THIS BASE. POSSIBLE 151 DIV UNITS

IN OTHER DEVELOPMENTS, FORWARD ELEMENTS OF THE US ARMY AIR CAVALRY TROOP, REDEPLOYED FROM MILITARY REGION 3, CLOSED PHU BAI YESTERDAY MORNING. THE REMAINDER OF THE TROOP IS LOCATED AT DA NANG. THE TROOP HAS BEEN PLACED UNDER THE OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF THE U.S. FIRST REGION ASSISTANCE COMMAND, BUT ITS EXACT UTILIZATION IS NOT KNOWN AT THIS TIME.

AIRLIFT OF THE 369TH VIETNAMESE MARINE BRIGADE, CONSISTING OF THREE BATTALIONS, COMMENCED TODAY WITH ONE THIRD OF THE LIFT TO PHU BAI COMPLETED AT 0430 EASTERN TIME THIS MORNING. THE REMAINDER OF THE LIFT IS EXPECTED TO TAKE TWO TO THREE DAYS.

THE THE LATEST OPREP-4 CASUALTY REPORTS INDICATE THAT AS OF  
011100 EST, FRIENDLY CASUALTIES INCLUDE 9-KIA AND 28-WIA.  
U.S. CASUALTIES ARE 1-KIA AND 11-MIA.  
ENEMY CASUALTIES ARE:

299-KIA AND 5 DETAINED.

THE CUMULATIVE TOTALS FOR ENEMY, FRIENDLY AND U.S. CASUALTIES SINCE 30 MARCH ARE SHOWN ON THIS STATUS BOARD.

FLOWN DURING THE PAST 24 HOURS (011101-021100).

AS OF 1100 EST YESTERDAY MORNING, ARC LIGHT OPERATIONS IN THE BATTLE AREA INCLUDED 41 SORTIES FLOWN IN THE VICINITY OF KHE SANH AGAINST ENEMY STAGING AREAS, AAA POSITIONS, AND TROOP CONCENTRATIONS. 33 MORE SORTIES ARE SCHEDULED INTO THE AREA PRIOR TO 1100 EST THIS MORNING [17) FLOWN THUS FAR]

PROTECTIVE REACTION STRIKES: TO THIS HOUR, A TOTAL OF SEVEN PROTECTIVE REACTION STRIKES WERE CONDUCTED AGAINST SAM RADAR SIGNALS EMITTING FROM THE AREA SOUTH-SOUTHWEST OF DONG HOI. RESULTS OF ~~SIX~~ STRIKES WERE INCONCLUSIVE; HOWEVER, A PROBABLE KILL WAS INDICATED ON ONE STRIKE. THERE WAS NO DAMAGE TO THE TEN USAF AND ONE USN AIRCRAFT INVOLVED IN THE ATTACKS.

A TOTAL OF 55 SAM FIRINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED SINCE 0100 EST 30 MARCH WHEN THIS ACTION STARTED. 48 WERE FROM THE DMZ AREA AND SEVEN WERE IN LAOS.

A FRAGMENTARY REPORT RECEIVED THIS MORNING (030306 EST) INDICATES THAT A USAF OV-10 AIRCRAFT WAS SHOT DOWN IN LAOS. DETAILED INFORMATION CONCERNING THE INCIDENT HAVE NOT YET BEEN RECEIVED. (73 loss since beginning of offensive)  
(5-in DMZ)

- Kitty Hawk on Station

COASTAL AREA: CLOUDS 4/8-6/8 COVERAGE WITH BASES OF 2,500 FEET, AND TOPS OF 8,000 FEET. A MIDDLE LAYER OF CLOUDS WITH 3/8 COVERAGE BEGINNING AT 10,000 FEET WITH TOPS AT 12,000 FEET. VISIBILITY IS 7 MILES WITH OCCASIONALLY 5 MILES IN DRIZZLE.

IN THE MOUNTAINS: CLOUDS ARE 7/8 COVERAGE, WITH BASES OF 4,000 FEET AND TOPS OF 8,000 FEET. VISIBILITY IS 7 MILES OCCASIONALLY TO 4 MILES IN DRIZZLE.

(PMJ):

	<sup>B</sup>	<sup>T</sup>
3/8	4,000	8,000
3/8	10,000	12,000

VISIBILITY - 3 - 6 MILES

THIN  
 GAGED

SIGNIFICANT ACTIONS REPORTED IN MILITARY REGION 2.

AT POINT 1, AN ARVN INFANTRY BATTALION, SUPPORTED BY ARVN ARTILLERY AND VNAF TAC AIR, ENGAGED AN ENEMY FORCE. FIFTY ENEMY SOLDIERS WERE KILLED, ONE PERSON DETAINED AND ONE WEAPON SEIZED. FRIENDLY CASUALTIES WERE 14 ARVN SOLDIERS MISSING, SIX WOUNDED, AND 15 WEAPONS LOST.

Arrow

AT POINT 2, EARLY ON 3 APRIL, FIRE SUPPORT BASE DELTAOM RECEIVED AN ATTACK BY FIRE FOLLOWED BY A GROUND ATTACK. SUPPORTED BY ARVN ARTILLEPY, US AND VNAF TACTICAL AIR, AND US HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS, THE FRIENDLY UNIT REPORTEDLY KILLED MORE THAN 500 ENEMY SOLDIERS. FRIENDLY LOSSES ARE UNKNOWN. AN ARVN AIRBORNE BATTALION IS MOVING TO REINFORCE THE AIRBORNE BATTALION IN

NO SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITY REPORTED IN  
MILITARY REGION 3 AND 4, NOR IN CAMBODIA.

GEN ABRAMS REPORTS THAT PRESIDENT THIEU HAS  
RECONSTITUTED THE JGS RESERVE WITH NINE RANGER BATTALIONS  
FROM MR's 3 AND 4. THESE BATTALIONS WILL BE EMPLOYED IN  
MR 1 AND MR 2 AS REQUIRED. THE 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION HAS  
BEEN DESIGNATED AS RESEVE FOR EMPLOYMENT IN MR 3 AND MR 4.

A LATE TELEPHONIC REPORT FROM MACV INDICATES THAT THE  
J.G.S. HAS DECLARED THE 2D AND 56TH ARVN REGIMENTS OF THE 3D  
ARVN DIVISION, AS COMBAT INEFFECTIVE.

**SECRET**

## LAOS SITUATION REPORT - 3 APRIL 72

MILITARY ACTIVITY WAS RELATIVELY LIGHT IN LAOS DURING THE LAST 24 HOURS, AND THE AREA OF PRIMARY INTEREST CONTINUES TO BE THE PLAINE DES JARRES REGION OF NORTHERN LAOS.

THE SITUATION ON SKYLINE RIDGE HAS NOT CHANGED SIGNIFICANTLY ~~FROM THAT WHICH WAS BRIEFED YESTERDAY~~ <sup>DURING THE LAST TWO DAYS.</sup> AS OF 1800 HOURS ON 2 APRIL, FRIENDLY IRREGULAR FORCES OCCUPIED 5 OF THE 9 PADS ON THE RIDGE. THE NVA <sup>control</sup> ~~CHARLIE~~ CHARLIE PAD ON THE WESTERN SECTOR OF THE RIDGE AND ~~CHARLIE~~ ALPHA PAD IN THE CENTER SECTOR. TWO OTHER PADS, ~~CHARLIE~~ ECHO AND ~~CHARLIE~~ WHISKEY WERE BEING CONTESTED WITH NEITHER SIDE CAPABLE OF GAINING CONTROL FOR ANY EXTENDED PERIOD.

DURING THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF 2 APRIL, TWO FORWARD AIR GUIDES REPORTED THAT THEY HEARD TANK ACTIVITY JUST NORTH OF ~~CHARLIE~~ ECHO PAD BUT THIS REPORT WAS NOT CONFIRMED BY FORWARD AIR CONTROLLERS OR OTHER RELIABLE GROUND SOURCES IN THE AREA.

PRELIMINARY RADIO CONTACT WITH LONG TIENG INDICATED THAT THE VALLEY WAS QUIET ON THE NIGHT OF 2 TO 3 APRIL. NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES DID NOT SHELL THE VALLEY OR SKYLINE RIDGE NORTH OF LONG TIENG. ~~CHARLIE BRAVO PAD TO THE EAST~~ <sup>HAVE</sup> DID ONE MINOR CONTACT WITH ENEMY GROUND FORCES.

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TURNING TO THE AREA EAST AND NORTH OF THE PLAINE, . . . . .  
VANG PAO'S TASK FORCES REPORTED NO SIGNIFICANT CONTACT  
WITH THE NVA, AND THE LATEST REPORT FROM THE FIELD INDICATES  
THESE FORCES WERE UNSUCCESSFUL IN HAMPERING ENEMY SUPPLY LINES  
AND DIVERTING NVA UNITS FROM THE LONG TIENG SECTOR.

THERE WERE NO ARCLIGHT SORTIES FLOWN DURING THE PERIOD  
1 <sup>to</sup> ~~thru~~ 2 APRIL, AND NONE ARE PRESENTLY SCHEDULED FOR 2 thru 3  
APRIL.


THE WEATHER FORECAST FOR THE PLAINE DES JARRES AREA  
IS 3/8ths cloud cover WITH BASES AT 4000 ft, TOPS AT 8000 ft,  
AND ANOTHER LAYER WITH 3/8ths cover from 10 to 12,000 ft.  
VISIBILITY WILL BE 3-6 MILES IN HAZE.

TURNING TO THE SOUTHERN AREA OF LAOS, A MULTI-BATTALION  
OPERATION WAS LAUNCHED EAST OF PAKSE ON 1 APRIL WITH A MISSION  
TO SECURE THE ~~ROUTE~~ JUNCTION AT ROUTES 23 and 231 AND TO  
REGAIN OTHER LOC'S IN THE AREA. THIS FORCE HAS NOT REPORTED  
ANY SIGNIFICANT CONTACT AS YET.

SECRET

*File*

Questions asked by Dr. Kissinger during JCS Briefing - April 3, 1972 - A.M.

1. Are the ARVN forces actually fighting or are they only retreating?  
Can we find out what MACV's estimate is?
2. Why wasn't the bridge which the enemy erected over the Ben Hoi River in the DMZ and the self-propelled artillery which was ~~cited~~ <sup>sighted</sup> crossing the bridge attacked?
3. If 50 enemy tanks with infantry ~~enemy~~ <sup>sighted</sup> support were ~~cited~~ <sup>sighted</sup>, why were they not attacked.
4. What is being done with the U.S. Army Air Cavalry troops that have been moved from MR 3 to MR 1?
5. How many enemy have been captured? (The report of only three cannot be correct)
6. Why have the new authorities not been used?
-  7. How far would 25 miles north extend? To General Haig, we had better let them include Dong Hoi as well.
8. Why are ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> our B-52 sorties <sup>not</sup> nearer to the action along the DMZ?
9. Can we fly in the present weather conditions?
10. What is the forecast for the next few days?
11. Isn't it true that ~~two~~ <sup>the</sup> ARVN regiments of the Third Division are "ineffective" which means that there is only one left?