

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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JCS REVIEWED 29-Nov-2010: NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Briefing of Dr. Kissinger by Colonel Carlson of the Joint Staff

DATE: June 3, 1972

PARTICIPANTS: Dr. Kissinger
Richard T. Kennedy
Jonathan T. Howe
Colonel Carlson

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Colonel Carlson began the briefing by showing Dr. Kissinger the satellite weather picture and pointing out that a tropical storm which had hit the coast around Danang was causing heavy rains and bad weather in MR's 1 and 2 and south of nineteen degrees north latitude in North Vietnam. He reported that the weather was clearing up but that it had seriously affected the tactical air activity for that day.

Dr. Kissinger: Were we able to put a greater effort farther north then?

Col. Carlson: They did go north but activity was limited due to bad weather in the Gulf.

In naval gunfire activity a destroyer fired at North Vietnamese water craft that are servicing a ship off the coast. Two of the water craft were sunk and in one case there was a large secondary explosion. Another craft was damaged and three beached.

Dr. Kissinger: What is the nationality of the ship?

Col. Carlson: Chinese Communist. Naval gunfire also hit a POL storage area.

Dr. Kissinger: At a briefing given to the FIAB they were told that we have only gotten 6% of the POL of North Vietnam thus far by a DIA briefer.

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Col. Carlson: I believe that is incorrect, but I will check into it.

A ship off the coast has begun propaganda broadcasts into North Vietnam and we have indications that they are being received. In air activity one airfield was hit with a number of runway cuts and three railway and highway bridges were struck. The weather was marginal around Haiphong.

Dr. Kissinger: The weather hasn't been good for a week. We just have the wrong airplane. Since April, I don't remember one full good week of weather over the North.

Col. Carlson: One MIG was hit yesterday. Today there were 7 SAM's fired and 2 MIG's airborne. One U.S. aircraft was hit by a SAM but made it back to its base.

179 mines were laid in the vicinity of the island where ChiCom ships are offloading supplies.

Dr. Kissinger: I have read that the Chinese may be assembling a fleet of coastal ships to move supplies.

Col. Carlson: Yes, we have seen that indicating they have assembled a group of junks.

Dr. Kissinger: Are we mining against that?

Col Carlson: I believe so.

Cdr. Howe: I believe they have a plan for shutting off the approaches with mines but are waiting to see if the Chinese start to make this effort before putting the mines in.

Col. Carlson: Yes, I believe that is the case.

In B-52 activity all 78 of the scheduled missions were flown with 33 in MR-1, 15 in MR-2, 15 in MR-3, 12 in Laos, and 3 in Cambodia.

Dr. Kissinger: When are we going to reach the high sortie rate based on the increased number of B-52's?

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Col. Carlson: There has been a typhoon scare and weather has delayed shipping out the B-52's. I will find out when we expect the new sortie rates to be in effect.

In tactical air activity there are only 419 U.S. tactical air strikes, with 36 in MR-1, 96 in MR-2, 43 in MR-3, and 43 in MR-4, and 201 over North Vietnam. VNAF was able to fly only 57, which is the lowest number I recall since the enemy offensive began.

In MR-1 there is a relative lull, with some attacks by fire in the Nancy area.

Dr. Kissinger: Has the whole airborne division arrived yet?

Col. Carlson: No, one regiment is still in An Loc.

Dr. Kissinger: Have two or one regiments arrived in the Hue area?

Col Carlson: Two are there and they have been thrown into the defense line in the northwest area. In the RF engagement near the coast previously reported it is now determined that nearly 300 of the enemy were killed.

Dr. Kissinger: How many North Vietnamese have been killed overall thus far?

Col Carlson: 41,738.

Dr. Kissinger: Then that means that they must have had around 100,000 casualties. But they only had that many troops to start with.

Col. Carlson: There has been heavy personnel infiltration and they have fed in large numbers periodically.

Col. Kennedy: Only yesterday we saw a report of 5 or 6,000 more moving into the area.

Dr. Kissinger: Isn't it raining now? Shouldn't that impede their progress?

Col. Carlson: They are walking. They are exposed to disease and many hazards, and it takes a tremendous amount of time. The rain certainly complicates the problem.

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Here is a blown-up map of the situation around Kontum. The enemy is now only in the north and southwest areas. The airfield has almost been completely recovered but it is still not operational. In actions yesterday there were 127 enemy KIA with 12 ARVN KIA and 65 wounded.

Dr. Kissinger: How many ARVN have been KIA in the offensive thus far?

Col. Carlson: Around 6,000 KIA, with 20,000 wounded.

Kontum Base remains closed and activity increased again on the coast in the vicinity of Landing Zone Crystal. The POL and ammo dumps there were blown up yesterday.

In MR-3 there were a few shells fired around the An Loc area and I hesitate to report that the 21st Division is still not in An Loc.

Dr. Kissinger: Are they trying?

Col. Carlson: Well, they are certainly not moving very fast. I believe they are trying but it's not an all-out effort.

Dr. Kissinger: What is the explanation for not moving to An Loc?

Col. Carlson: They are just not moving that hard. They have to move down a road with a 30-inch front and it is fairly easy for the enemy to block them. The rubber plantations around that area have thick undergrowth and the enemy can easily conceal himself for ambushes.

Col. Kennedy: Yes, they lost 23 APC's the other day trying to move down that road.

Dr. Kissinger: But why do they have to move on the road?

Col. Carlson: In MR-4 near Svey Rieng, forces found 156 of the enemy killed earlier from the air. There were minor contacts on the border near the coast. The rest of the activity was minor.

Dr. Kissinger: I am going to Florida on Sunday night. Could I have a briefing tomorrow morning around 9:00?

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