

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

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

**DATE:** July 21, 1972

**PARTICIPANTS:** Dr. Kissinger  
Colonel Carlson  
Colonel Wooley  
Commander Howe  
Admiral McKee

The following are excerpts from the July 21, 1972 briefing:

Dr. Kissinger: When you brief Secretary Laird, I notice that you always mention the air action last. Have you done a psychiatric profile on each one of us?

Colonel Carlson: No, he wanted us to do it that way for the purpose of Congressional briefings.

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Dr. Kissinger: Are we going after the POL line (from China to Hanoi)?

Colonel Carlson: We have often targeted the pumping stations.

Dr. Kissinger: But are they going after the lines themselves?

Colonel Carlson: It is difficult to pinpoint the lines but they are hitting all the facilities they can.

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Dr. Kissinger: When you get smoke, does that mean you are hitting anything?

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Colonel Carlson:

Yes, depending upon the weather. The pilots often report that the targets were obscured by smoke. The real confirmation comes from reconnaissance photography.

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Colonel Carlson:

Some of the aircraft were diverted due to weather.

Dr. Kissinger:

It is a good thing this is the dry season. We should analyze how often F-4s can fly. I would bet it is only about half the time. In March I was told that the flying weather would be great this summer and yet now we are still having problems. I want to do something about this. We are not designing the right kind of aircraft. The only air war we can fight is in the desert. Could you get me the number of days you couldn't hit targets in the North and how many diverts there have been since May 8?

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Colonel Carlson:

The targets within ten miles of Hanoi must be approved from a validated list. Each time they want to fly within the ten mile limit, they must have approval from the JCS.

Dr. Kissinger:

Weren't these restrictions taken off?

Commander Howe:

Yes. The circles were removed.

Dr. Kissinger:

Is approval given automatically? If not, we are going back to the Johnson model. During the current series of negotiations I want them to go inside. (To Howe - remind me to call Admiral Moorer.)

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Colonel Carlson:

There were 52 ARC Light strikes in MR-1.

Dr. Kissinger:

How many countrywide?

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Colonel Carlson: Ninety-nine.

Dr. Kissinger: How can you get odd numbers?

Colonel Carlson: They fly in cells of three but sometimes there is an abort and only two fly.

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Colonel Carlson: There was a heavy contact along Route 1.

Dr. Kissinger: Did they cut the route?

Colonel Carlson: No. These reports that the Route has been cut are way out of context. There have been some battles back and forth.

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Dr. Kissinger: On Television they said ARVN had taken Dong Ha.

Colonel Carlson: We have no report on that.

Dr. Kissinger: I don't give a damn if they take Dong Ha.

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Colonel Carlson: QL 13 is open for the first time between Lai Khe and An Loc.

Dr. Kissinger: But can you drive from Saigon to Lai Khe?

Where is the damn 9th Division, I mean the 21st Division?

Colonel Carlson: One regiment has been sent back to MR-4 and the other two are being sent down.

Dr. Kissinger: Are our trucks moving on Route 13? Why can't these leakers in Saigon but that out? Those ones who gloat on how badly we are doing don't even put out our achievements. If in fact the Route is open we ought to put this out in Saigon and also at the Pentagon.