

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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JCS REVIEWED 28-Sep-2010: NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

REFER TO OSD

DOS REVIEWED 09 MAR 2011 NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION

SUBJECT: Briefing of Dr. Kissinger by General Pauly and Colonel Carlson of the Joint Staff May 12, 1972, from 8:05 to 8:35 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS: General Pauly
Colonel Carlson
Dr. Kissinger
General Haig
Captain McKee
Commander Howe

OSD REVIEWED 02-Dec-2011: NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION

Dr. Kissinger: What is the situation around An Loc. I have been hearing some reports on television that An Loc has fallen. Are you sure it hasn't fallen?

General Pauly: The last reports we had were that everything is stable and the enemy has been thrown back. We will call MACV and check out the situation.

Dr. Kissinger: The television is saying there were some 10,000 rounds of artillery shelling fired at An Loc.

General Pauly: That is probably correct. We have reports of some 7,000 rounds.

Dr. Kissinger: Why can't we knock out this artillery? Can't we find these artillery units that have been hitting us?

General Pauly: The B-52s have been going in with good effect.

Dr. Kissinger: If they were doing a good job, we wouldn't be faced with continual artillery barrages.

General Pauly: I believe the situation is stable.

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Dr. Kissinger: OK, but usually the television is right and MACV turns out to be wrong.

General Paul: 360 rounds of naval gunfire were expended by ships off northern North Vietnam. Three destroyers struck a naval facility and four coastal defense sites in the Thanh Hoa area. There were also strikes against storage sites and transshipment points.

Dr. Kissinger: How many tactical air strikes were there in the Freedom Train area?

General Paul: Overall in North Vietnam there were 199 sorties.

Dr. Kissinger: How many north and south 20degrees north latitude?

General Paul: There were some 100 to the north and roughly 90 or so that were not in the Hanoi/Haiphong area.

We have a wrapup on the operation yesterday (May 11). Twelve F-4s struck Bac Mai airfield and knocked out a number of buildings and re-enforced hangers. There were additional hits on the Hanoi railroad bridge and it is believed that one more span has been damaged. The Coa Nung railroad bridge was destroyed. In the Vinh area there were 20 to 30 railroad cars destroyed and the tracks were damaged in a number of places. The Phuc Yen petroleum storage area had six large secondary explosions. During the action there were 20 MIGs sited and some 70 SAMs fired. We lost one F-105 and a F-4. Last night some 100 attack sorties hit railroad bridges, railroad yards and petroleum areas. One strike knocked down a wooden and steel railroad bridge and subsequent strikes later were diverted to another bridge and destroyed it.

The Nan Dinh petroleum area was struck and there were a large number of fire balls reported. The Haiphong petroleum area also was hit but no BDA was reported.

There were 1,126 sorties overall yesterday with 661 U.S. tactical air strikes. Of these 109 were in MR-1, 66 in

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MR-2, 281 in MR-3 and 6 in MR-4. Additionally, of course, there were 199 in North Vietnam. VNAF flew a total of 134. There are 1,150 sorties planned for today.

Now looking at the mining operation, the total number of mines laid to date are 1,198. Additional destructors were planted last night primarily in the Haiphong Harbor area. In addition some were dropped at Quang Khe and Dong Hoi areas.

Dr. Kissinger:

Has there been nothing in or out of the ports?

General Pauly:

No. We estimate that a total of 7 ships left before the mines were activated. Five were USSR ships, one Somali and one UK/Hong Kong. The Soviet TASS group was enroute to the Sea of Japan - turned around and was proceeding to the south. However, it has again turned around and is proceeding north. One Russian destroyer which is in the Philippines area appears to be joining the group. One cruiser and one destroyer left the Sea of Japan area.

You may have seen the piece of COMINT that indicates attacks were planned against U.S. ships in the Tonkin Gulf.

Dr. Kissinger:

Is there any chance that they could be successful?

General Pauly:

They might try to send in some aircraft from two directions that crisscross but they have very little chance of success. Currently we estimate that there are 29 ships remaining in Haiphong Harbor with 11 of these being Soviet and there are three U.S. submarines on the way to the area to set up a barrier.

Turning to B-52 activity, the total effort was concentrated in MR-3. However, due to the reporting cycle our records show 30 strikes in MR-2 and 45 in MR-3. Sorties will continue in MR-2 until they have achieved the full 75. They are hitting around the Kontum area.

In MR-1 there were attacks by fire around Fire Support Bases King and Birmingham. In the Birmingham area 20 enemy bodies were found KBA. There is heavy enemy

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traffic in the Ashau valley.

Dr. Kissinger: Why don't they hit that?

General Pauly: They are.

The Marines exercise north of the Hue defense line has been compromised to some extent according to some intercepts.

Dr. Kissinger: Will they cancel it?

General Pauly: There has not been a go - no-go decision yet.

In naval gunfire support, the cruiser Newport News moved on the gun line off Military Region 1 and destroyed two 130 mm gun sites. In addition it hit two ammunition dumps and there were numerous large secondary explosions reported. In the Ben Het area of Military Region 2 they have now counted 304 enemy dead in the perimeter area. In addition 94 weapons were taken including 29 crew served weapons. There were light friendly losses. One helicopter was shot down but there was no significant activity around Kontum except the B-52 saturation raids which have begun there.

Around An Loc there were some 7,000 rounds of artillery fired. In repulsing ground attacks 14 tanks were destroyed including five in the northern perimeter area. In the action 211 enemy were KIA and 246 weapons ceased. Fifty-one ARVN soldiers were killed, 140 were wounded and another 136 are missing. One tank thrust did break into the perimeter before it was thrown back but everything is holding now.

Dr. Kissinger: Where are the newsmen getting their reports?

General Pauly: Perhaps they are confused with reports that some 80 percent of the town of An Loc has been destroyed.

Dr. Kissinger: Of course no one is trying to relieve them. The 21st, 18th, and 25th Divisions are within an 18 miles area of An Loc but no one is moving to help them.

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General Pauly: It is true there is no movement.

Dr. Kissinger: Can someone explain to me what they are trying to do?
To an amateur this looks insane. }

General Pauly: Well there are 10,000 friendly forces in An Loc. The judgment may be that these defenders can hold out by themselves. If we can believe the reports we are getting, the enemy must be taking a very heavy loss.

Colonel Carlson: Sir, there would be no sense in going into the town. The best thing to do would be to orient on the forces on the flanks.

Dr. Kissinger: That is what I mean.

General Pauly: I am not sure what is tying down the division there.

In MR-4 RF/PF forces initiated about 7 actions. They are patrolling aggressively and some 51 enemy soldiers were killed.

That is all we have for today.

Attached at Tab A are the notes used by the briefers.

Following the meeting, General Pauly reported that the situation had stabilized in An Loc as of 8:10 p.m. Saigon time. However, at 8:40 p.m. there had been a new night attack and several companies of enemy troops had gotten into the perimeter.

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