

SECTION ONE OF TWO

WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM

~~TOP SECRET~~ SENSITIVE 031115Z MAR 71 VIA CAS CHANNELS

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

FROM: AMBASSADOR BUNKER, SAIGON 0340

TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY HENRY A. KISSINGER

REF: A. WHS-1007
B. WHS-1008

MORI/CDF C05076667 Pages 1-5

State Dept. review completed.

SUBJECT: PRESS REPORTING ON LAM SON 719

FOLLOWING IS A FREE TRANSLATION OF MEMORANDUM DRAWN FROM A TALK GIVEN BY PRESIDENT THIEU TO GVN SENIOR INFORMATION OFFICERS.

1) - THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE IS TO "MISE AU POINT" THE PROBLEM OF WAR NEWS, ESPECIALLY THAT CONCERNING THE BATTLEFIELD IN LAOS, IN WHICH THE PRINCIPAL INVOLVEMENT IS BY THE RVNAF. THIS IS THE BATTLEFIELD WHERE THE SUCCESS OF WHAT IS CALLED "THE VIETNAMIZATION PROGRAM" WILL BE DETERMINED (WE CALL IT THE SECURITY RESTORATION PROGRAM, LEADING TO SELF-RELIANCE, SELF-MANAGEMENT AND SELF-IMPROVEMENT). THIS PROGRAM IS BASED ON DAILY PROGRESS IN ORDER TO ADVANCE TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY.

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2) - THE CAMBODIAN VICTORY WAS HAILED AS (ONLY) A HALF-WAY SUCCESS FOR US BECAUSE OF THE PARTICIPATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY AND BECAUSE IT WAS NOT 100 PERCENT OUR JOB. NOW, EVERYONE IS LOOKING CLOSELY AT THE LAO BATTLEFIELD BECAUSE (ACTIVITY THERE) WAS INITIATED BY US. THEY WILL BE EVALUATING US, LOOKING TO SEE WHETHER OR NOT WE HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO COMPLETELY CONTROL THE BATTLEFIELD. THEY CONSIST OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, THE PACIFISTS IN THE U.S. AND THE NOISY AND PERFIDIOUS COMMUNISTS. THUS, THE LAO BATTLEFIELD IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE CAMBODIAN BATTLEFIELD, OR EVEN THE INTERNAL BATTLEFIELD, AND WE MUST MAKE GREATER EFFORTS IN ALL AREAS. WE MUST MAKE GREATER EFFORTS PARTICULARLY IN THE AREA OF WAR NEWS. THE PROBLEM OF "AUTO-CRITIQUE" MUST BE CORRECTED.

3) - FACTS CONCERNING ABOUT 30 OR 40 U.S. WAR CORRESPONDENTS NOW AT KHE SANH. THE U.S. ARMY DOES NOT ALLOW THEM TO VISIT THE BATTLEFIELD. NOR DO WE ALLOW THEM TO GO. WHILE THEY NEED TO FIND NEWS TO SELL PAPERS, THEY DON'T HAVE NEWS BUT MUST STAY BEHIND MANY DAYS. SOME OF THEM DO NOT HAVE FOOD AND GRAB THE RATIONS OF OUR COMBATANTS. THESE CORRESPONDENTS ARE "REPRESENTATIVES" OF BOTH THE "HAWKS" AND THE "DOVES" IN THE U.S.

BECAUSE THEY ARE UNABLE TO GO ANYWHERE, THEY ARE READY TO PRINT ANYTHING THEY HEAR. THEY PLACE THEIR HOPES IN THE SPOKESMEN OF THE BATTLEFIELD HEADQUARTERS, BUT THESE SPOKESMEN ARE TOO WEAK. FOR THAT REASON, THEY PICK UP NEWS FROM ANYONE AND SOMETIMES FROM U.S. HELICOPTER PILOTS. WHEN THESE PILOTS SEE THAT WE HAVE SUFFERED 10 DEAD, THEY SAY THAT THERE WERE MANY DEAD; WHEN THEY RECEIVE ENEMY GROUND FIRE, THEY CALL IT INTENSE. THOSE ARE THE LOCAL PROBLEMS.

AT CERTAIN, WHO IS HANDLED BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE, THE JGS, THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, AND THE PREMIER'S OFFICE. FOR THAT REASON, THERE HAVE BEEN DISCREPANCIES, ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO NUMBERS, WITH SOME SAYING 600, OTHERS 800, AND STILL OTHERS 2,000. THAT FACT PROVES THAT THERE IS NO UNITY WITH REGARD TO NUMBERS. EACH AGENCY GIVES OUR DIFFERENT FIGURES.

THE GREATEST PROBLEM IS THAT INFORMATION DISSEMINATES OLD NEWS. WE DO NOT YET HAVE (PROPER) INFORMATION TECHNIQUES. WE MUST FIRMLY GRASP THIS TECHNIQUE IN ORDER TO AVOID TRYING TO TURN DEFEAT INTO VICTORY. IF WE DO NOT MASTER THIS TECHNIQUE, WE MAY FIND OURSELVES IN DIFFICULTIES WITH THE PRESS ATTACKING US, RUNNING THE HEADLINE "WITHOUT THE U.S. VIETNAMESE MILITARY STRATEGY WOULD FAIL". THE PRESS DOES NOT CLEARLY UNDERSTAND THAT FIGHTING IN LAOS IS LIKE FIGHTING NORTH VIETNAM ITSELF, NORTH VIETNAMESE MAIN FORCE INFANTRY. THAT'S NOT TO MENTION WEATHER, THE FACT THAT THE ENEMY HAS 4 OR 5 DIVISIONS NEARBY AND MORE TANKS AND ARTILLERY THAN AT DIENBIENPHU.

5) PRIOR TO THIS, IN 1970, WE FOUGHT THE ENEMY IN CAMBODIA IN APRIL AND MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO ATTACK MR3 OR MR4 IN MAY, JUNE, OR JULY, AS HE HAD PLANNED. AND WE WERE VICTORIOUS. THE NEW LAOS BATTLEFIELD IS THE DECISIVE BATTLEFIELD OF THE WAR (BATILLE DECISIVE D'UNE GUERRE). THIS IS A WAR CARRIED BEYOND OUR TERRITORY IN ORDER TO FIGHT THE ENEMY OUTSIDE THE HOUSE AND MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO ENTER THE HOUSE. SO WE MUST "SE DONNER" ON THE LAO BATTLEFIELD.

6) - DEFINITIVE "COMMENTAIRE" ON THE WAR COME ONLY FROM:

- THE PRESIDENT
- THE PRIME MINISTER
- THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE
- THE JOINT GENERAL STAFF

IF THE QUESTION IS ASKED: WHY DO WE CARRY THE WAR TO LAOS? SUCH QUESTIONS CAN BE ANSWERED ONLY BY RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS FAMILIAR WITH THE PRESIDENT'S POLICY.

7) - THE PROBLEM OF DAILY WAR NEWS IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GENERAL POLITICA WARFARE DIRECTORATE. BUT THE GPWD MUST TELEPHONE MILITARY REGION 1. THIS PROVIDES UNITY. GENERAL LAM CALLS ME EVERY DAY TO INFORM OF THE WAR NEWS BECAUSE I VERY MUCH WANT TO KNOW THAT NEWS. WITH REGARD TO ENEMY CASUALTIES AND OUR OWN, BOTH YESTERDAY'S AND TODAY'S ARE TO BE COMBINED. IN ANNOUNCING PRIMARY NEWS, FOR EXAMPLE: THE ENEMY SUFFERED HEAVY CASUALTIES. IF WE HAVE CASUALTIES, THEN SAY: WE SUFFERED CASUALTIES BUT THE ENEMY'S CASUALTIES WERE 5 TO 7 TIMES GREATER. WE MUST "CAREFULLY PREPARE" THE NUMBERS. DO NOT ANSWER THAT OUR CASUALTIES ARE NOT YET COMPLETELY KNOWN. IT IS POSSIBLE TO MAKE SUCH COMPARISONS AS ONE FRIENDLY CASUALTY FOR EVERY 10 ENEMY CASUALTIES ON A MINIMUM BASIS. FIND PROOF OF THAT RATIO ONE OR TWO DAYS LATER. REMEMBER THAT NO BATTLEFIELD PRODUCES EXACT BODY COUNTS. ONLY THE GPWD DISSEMINATES OFFICIAL FIGURES.

8) - THE TECHNIQUE OF PROVIDING WAR NEWS NECESSITATES AFFIRMING EVERYTHING WE HAVE SAID TO BE THE TRUTH. WE HAVE A GREATER CAPABILITY TO EXPLAIN CLEARLY THAN DOES THE PRESS. GPWD IS RESPONSIBLE (FOR DISSEMINATING NEWS) TO BOTH THE FOREIGN AND TIC PRESS AND MUST THEREFORE DISSEMINATE ACCURATE FIGURES. THE TECHNIQUE OF DISSEMINATING WAR NEWS.

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

FINAL SECTION OF TWO

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE 031115Z MAR 71 VIA CAS CHANNEL

FROM: AMBASSADOR BUNKER, SAIGON 0340

TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY HENRY A. KISSINGER

WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM

71 MAR 3 AM 11:18

THE ARMY RADIO SHOWED THAT IT KNEW HOW TO DISSEMINATE MILITARY NEWS DURING OPERATIONS

THE CAMBODIAN BATTLEFIELD: "TO DATE THE ENEMY HAS SUFFERED 19,000 CASUALTIES," (FOR INSTANCE).

IT IS NECESSARY TO KNOW EXACTLY WHERE THE ERRORS ARE IN ORDER TO CORRECT THEM IMMEDIATELY.

WE NOW HAVE A FREE PRESS. BUT WE MUST KNOW WHO ARE OUR FRIENDS, OUR ENEMIES AND THE "NEUTRE." REMEMBER THAT REPORTERS LIKE TO "CONFUSE" SPOKESMEN WHO GIVE OUT IMAGINARY NUMBERS IN ORDER TO EMBARRASS THEM. PERHAPS TODAY WE GIVE OUT IMPRECISE NUMBERS, BUT TOMORROW WE WILL GIVE OUT PRECISE NUMBERS BECAUSE WE WILL KNOW MORE, PERHAPS GREATER OR THE SAME.

9) - THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND THE JOINT GENERAL STAFF MUST "CLEAR" WAR NEWS WITH GENERAL LAM. WE NEED TO HAVE SOME OF OUR PEOPLE OUTSIDE IN ORDER TO ASSIST HEADQUARTERS SPOKESMEN BECAUSE MILITARY REGION I DOES NOT HAVE FOREIGN-LANGUAGE QUALIFIED PERSONNEL AND THUS CANNOT "HANDLE" WAR NEWS. WHEN PEOPLE ARE "ACCREDITED" TO THE BATTLEFIELD HEADQUARTERS, WE NEED NOT FEAR THAT THEY WILL ATTACK US; ON THE CONTRARY, WE MUST SPEAK FORCEFULLY TO RECTIFY THE ERRORS CAUSED BY MISTAKES IN THE PRESS. WE SHOULD NOT BE WEAK-WILLED. WE MUST "ELUDE" THEM.

10) - THE PROBLEM OF WAR NEWS ABROAD. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY SHOULD PROVIDE TIMELY AND ADEQUATE REPORTS TO AMBASSADOR LAM AND AMBASSADOR BUI DIEM ON THE BATTLEFIELD SITUATION IN LAOS AND CAMBODIA. PRIORITY IS RESERVED FOR THESE TWO PLACES. OTHER PLACES ARE LESS (IMPORTANT).

BUT IT IS NECESSARY TO SPEAK WITH A SINGLE VOICE, "PARLER LE LANGAGE UNIQUE." DON'T BE LIKE THE AMBASSADOR AND THE MILITARY ATTACHE IN BRITAIN.

IT IS NECESSARY TO FOLLOW THE "VERSION OFFICIELLES". "COMMENTAIRE POLITIQUE" SHOULD NOT BE MADE. DO NOT CONTRADICT WHAT HAS BEEN SAID. REPEAT YOURSELF. WHEN EVERYONE IS SAYING THE SAME THING THEN THE TRUTH HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED. YOU SHOULD NOT SPEAK AS A MILITARY SPOKESMEN RECENTLY DID ON 22 FEBRUARY: "THE 39TH RANGER BATTALION HAS SUFFERED HEAVY CASUALTIES AND CAN NO LONGER FIGHT." IT IS NECESSARY TO SAY THAT THE 39TH RANGER BATTALION HAS KILLED 600 ENEMY SOLDIERS AND "DESORGANISE" 2 REGIMENTS OF THE ENEMY'S 312TH DIVISION. WHICH PARTICIPATED IN THE BATTLE

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ERRONEOUSLY STATED, THAT "ARMOR HAS NO TERRAIN". IT
IS NECESSARY TO BE CLEVER: IF WE CANNOT FIGHT HERE, WE FIGHT
SOMEPLACE ELSE; IF WE CANNOT STRIKE DIRECTLY, THEN STRIKE
DIAGONALLY.

IT IS NECESSARY TO STRAIGHTEN OUT THE ABOVE WORDS.

11) - VN PRESS SHOULD NOT SEND CORRESPONDENTS TO QUANG TRI
BECAUSE THESE CORRESPONDENTS KNOW NOTHING AND WRITE ERRONEOUSLY.
FROM NOW ON, VN PRESS WILL NOT HAVE CORRESPONDENTS ON THE
BATTLEFIELD AND WILL ONLY USE THE GPWD "VERSION" WHICH REFLECTS
GOVERNMENT-ISSUED NEWS AND OFFICIAL FIGURES.

12) - NOR CAN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION SAY ANYTHING OTHER
THAN WHAT THE PRESIDENT HAS SAID REGARDING NUMBERS. ONCE THE
RADIO STATIONS HAVE SAID SOMETHING, THEY MUST CONTINUE TO SAY
THE SAME THING. THE SAME APPLIES TO THE PRESIDENT, THE PREMIER,
DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS. WE MUST FOLLOW THE OFFICIAL FIGURES
AND THE "COMMENTAIRE" OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION.

13) - WITH REGARD TO WAR NEWS, GPWD MUST CLEARLY DIFFERENTIATE
BETWEEN THESE BATTLEFIELDS:

- THE INTERNAL BATTLEFIELD
- THE CAMBODIAN BATTLEFIELD
- THE LAO BATTLEFIELD

EACH DAY SUM UP THE PAST 24 HOURS AND UNIFY OFFICIAL FIGURES.
IT IS NECESSARY TO SPEAK CONTINUOUSLY. IF WE REST OR REFUSE TO
SPEAK, THEN THEY WILL ENGAGE IN "SPECULATION." IT TAKES TIME TO
CLEAR UP "SPECULATION". IMMEDIATE CORRECTION MUST BE MADE OF
GROUNDLESS AND UNRELIABLE NEWS ISSUED BY NEWS AGENCIES. WE MUST
BE CONFIDENT THAT OUR NEWS IS ACCURATE.

THERE SHOULD BE NO FEELING OF DEFEAT WHILE THE PEOPLE ARE
ENTHUSIASTICALLY WELCOMING THE VICTORIES ON THE LAO BATTLE-
FIELD. THIS IS A GREAT STRATEGY TO SHORTEN THE WAR.

14) - THE TELEVISION STATION FILMED MANY REPORTS FROM THE BATTLE-
FIELD IN CAMBODIA, BUT WE'VE SEEN NOTHING FROM LAOS. WE NEED
TO DISSEMINATE MANY PICTURES. WE NEED TO DISSEMINATE MANY BASIC
"BACKGROUND" DOCUMENTS ON THE MILITARY SITUATION, BUT DON'T
"DEVOILER" MILITARY SECRETS. FOR EXAMPLE, DON'T ANSWER QUESTIONS
LIKE: WHERE WILL YOU FIGHT NEXT? HOW MUCH LONGER? SAY THAT YOU
DON'T KNOW. YOU MUST FOLLOW OFFICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS: IT IS A
SPECIAL OPERATION ALONG THE VIET-NAM-LAOS BORDER, LIMITED IN AREA
AND DURATION, AND IS AIMED AT CUTTING THE HO CHI MINH TRAIL AND
THE ENEMY'S OIL PIPELINES. THAT OBJECTIVE HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED
AND THE ENEMY DOES NOT HAVE THE CAPACITY TO ATTACK CENTRAL
VIET-NAM. HE IS CONFUSED AND AFRAID BECAUSE HE WILL BE RUNNING
OUT OF FOOD FOLLOWING A PERIOD OF "SELF-CONSUMING."

SUGGESTIONS FROM THE PREMIER:

WE NEED TO "CANALISE" AND "ENBRIGADE" THE CORRESPONDENTS
ON THE LAO BATTLEFIELD. ORGANIZE OFFICERS TO GUIDE 4 OR 5
REPORTERS TO INSPECT OUR VICTORIES.

SUGGESTIONS FROM THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE:

THE GENERAL POLITICAL WARFARE DIRECTORATE NEEDS WAR NEWS
BY 5 O'CLOCK FOR THE 6 O'CLOCK AND 10 O'CLOCK BROADCASTS OF VTVN,
AND FOR EXPLOITATION AND COMMENT BY RADIO SAIGON AND ARMY RADIO.

SUGGESTIONS FROM THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS:

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EACH DAY SUM UP THE PAST 24 HOURS AND UNIFY OFFICIAL FIGURES. IT IS NECESSARY TO SPEAK CONTINUOUSLY. IF WE REST OR REFUSE TO SPEAK, THEN THEY WILL ENGAGE IN "SPECULATION." IT TAKES TIME TO CLEAR UP "SPECULATION". IMMEDIATE CORRECTION MUST BE MADE OF GROUNDLESS AND UNRELIABLE NEWS ISSUED BY NEWS AGENCIES. WE MUST BE CONFIDENT THAT OUR NEWS IS ACCURATE.

THERE SHOULD BE NO FEELING OF DEFEAT WHILE THE PEOPLE ARE ENTHUSIASTICALLY WELCOMING THE VICTORIES ON THE LAO BATTLEFIELD. THIS IS A GREAT STRATEGY TO SHORTEN THE WAR.

14) - THE TELEVISION STATION FILMED MANY REPORTS FROM THE BATTLEFIELD IN CAMBODIA, BUT WE'VE SEEN NOTHING FROM LAOS. WE NEED TO DISSEMINATE MANY PICTURES. WE NEED TO DISSEMINATE MANY BASIC "BACKGROUND" DOCUMENTS ON THE MILITARY SITUATION, BUT DON'T "DEVOILER" MILITARY SECRETS. FOR EXAMPLE, DON'T ANSWER QUESTIONS LIKE: WHERE WILL YOU FIGHT NEXT? HOW MUCH LONGER? SAY THAT YOU DON'T KNOW. YOU MUST FOLLOW OFFICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS: IT IS A SPECIAL OPERATION ALONG THE VIET-NAM-LAOS BORDER, LIMITED IN AREA AND DURATION, AND IS AIMED AT CUTTING THE HO CHI MINH TRAIL AND THE ENEMY'S OIL PIPELINES. THAT OBJECTIVE HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED AND THE ENEMY DOES NOT HAVE THE CAPACITY TO ATTACK CENTRAL VIET-NAM. HE IS CONFUSED AND AFRAID BECAUSE HE WILL BE RUNNING OUT OF FOOD FOLLOWING A PERIOD OF "SELF-CONSUMING."

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WE NEED TO "CANALISE" AND "ENBRIGADE" THE CORRESPONDENTS ON THE LAO BATTLEFIELD. ORGANIZE OFFICERS TO GUIDE 4 OR 5 REPORTERS TO INSPECT OUR VICTORIES.

SUGGESTIONS FROM THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE:

THE GENERAL POLITICAL WARFARE DIRECTORATE NEEDS WAR NEWS BY 5 O'CLOCK FOR THE 6 O'CLOCK AND 10 O'CLOCK BROADCASTS OF VTVN, AND FOR EXPLOITATION AND COMMENT BY RADIO SAIGON AND ARMY RADIO.

SUGGESTIONS FROM THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS:

IN ADDITION TO OFFICIAL FIGURES, WE NEED REPORTS FROM WELL-KNOWN REPORTERS BECAUSE THE REPORTS OF THESE REPORTERS ARE MORE ACCEPTABLE ABROAD THAN OFFICIALLY RELEASED FIGURES.

SUGGESTIONS FROM THE MOI AND GPWD:

REQUEST THE MRIE DIRECTED TO PROVIDE COMPLETE AND ACCURATE INFORMATION ON THE LAO BATTLEFIELD TO CENTRAL OPERATIONS FOR EXPLOITATION BY GPWD. IN THEORY IT IS THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE, BUT IN ACTUALITY, IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GPWD TO PROVIDE WAR NEWS BECAUSE THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE HAS APPOINTED GPWD AS ITS OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN. GPWD WILL SEND SOMEONE TO MRI TO CARRY OUT THE DIRECTIVES OF THE PRESIDENT.

WHEN DISPATCHING MESSAGES TO THE PRESIDENT ON THE TWR IN LAOS, MRI IS DIRECTED TO FORWARD THESE TO THE DEFENSE MINISTRY IN ORDER TO OBTAIN UNITY OF THE NEWS.

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE