

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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February 13, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

INTELLIGENCE ITEMS

-- Vietnamese Developments Yesterday: The Vietnam experts around town are almost unanimous now in their view that the Communists hope to throw a major military effort at the allies sometime in the next two weeks. Signs of it now abound in all types of intelligence from the war zone.

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This week's field reports [redacted] for example, list innumerable accounts of preparations for military and paramilitary action soon by enemy cadre. These range from the stockpiling of supplies and the movement of military units into jump off positions, to planning for an upsurge in political agitation in an attempt to create the impression of a popular rebellion against the government.

The focus for the offensive still seems to be in the III Corps area in the provinces west of Saigon, and perhaps in the capital itself. There is a lot of evidence of planning in all other areas of the country, however, and the Communists are capable of setting off a widespread and relatively sustained rounds of shellings and light ground probes just about anywhere in South Vietnam.

Action outside III Corps might follow largely the pattern of yesterday's attack on the provincial town of Cheo Reo in the central highlands. Here, the Communists hit a major military installation on the town's outskirts with a heavy mortar and rocket attack and followed with a guerrilla raid which caused a good deal of damage along with a substantial number of civilian casualties among South Vietnamese present at the base.

It is possible that the intensive allied preemptive action, which has dealt the Communists some severe losses as they try to maneuver their units into attack positions, will more or less pull the teeth of the enemy offensive. There is a wide range of opinion among the experts on this score; the only consensus seems to be that the enemy is not strong enough to cause the damage that he managed to inflict last year at Tet.

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By KAP NARA, Date 4-15-03

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French Foreign Minister Debre stated in a speech yesterday that it was not surprising the Paris talks should move slowly. Asked what France could do to get the talks moving he said he did not think it was up to France, unless the parties asked her to depart from the role she fixed for herself. "A certain secrecy, however, is sometimes needed for things to go well," he added. (Tab A)

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-- Aircraft down in Cambodia: A U. S. Army aircraft (U-1 Otter) was shot down early Wednesday morning in Cambodia. The location is just over the border, 14 miles south-southeast of Tay Ninh, in the Parrots Beak area. (Map at Tab B). Preliminary reports indicate that the crew members were captured. The aircraft has been destroyed by U. S. tactical aircraft.

The aircraft was carrying four crew members when it crashed. Aircraft of this type is used for in-country radio direction finding. It is not known presently in Washington whether he had strayed over the border or was directed there. The area of the crash, however, is heavily infested by North Vietnamese on both sides of the border and it is possible the aircraft was hit on one side and crashed on the other.

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A message has been sent to the Australian Embassy in Phnom Penh for delivery to the Cambodian Government (RKG). As has been past practice, the message briefly states the location of the downed aircraft and informs the RKG that an investigation of the incident is now in progress. We have stated that, in the meantime, the U. S. Government would appreciate receiving any information available to the RKG on the incident and on the fate of the crew.

We have not yet heard from the Cambodians concerning the incident, but expect that there will be a sharp reaction. We may be able to form some estimate as to whether the RKG is interested in pursuing improved relations with the U. S., from the level and tone of the protest and from the manner in which the RKG treats the four Americans who were probably captured by the Cambodians.

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-- Berlin: The East German Foreign Minister publicly stated yesterday that his government plans new measures to prevent the holding of the Bundesversammlung. (Tab D)

-- West Germany: A Foreign Ministry official told Embassy Bonn that State Secretary Duckwitz informed the Soviets the West Germans could no longer back down on holding the Bundesversammlung in Berlin now that the East Germans have announced travel restrictions. The same source reported that Bundestag President Von Hassel will inform the Bundestag that he is sending the invitations to convene the Bundesversammlung in Berlin. (Tab E)

-- Moves to Recognize Communist China, and UN Implications: The Chinese Communists apparently have not yet responded to the Canadian demarche in Stockholm. Italy is deferring any initiative at contact, probably to see how the Canadians fare. Uncertainty remains as to what the Belgians will do, though they seem to have told others that they will refuse a Chinese Communist demand to break relations with the GRC. The Belgians have told us that their Government may have to make some sort of statement in answer to Parliamentary questions. The GRC expects a statement about February 21 and fears that it may force the GRC to break relations. Our Ambassador in Brussels believes, on the other hand, that the Belgians are seriously concerned about the status of the GRC, and urges the latter to keep calm and avoid an impulsive reaction.

-- Interrogation of Chinese Defector: Reports are becoming available of the preliminary interviewing of the Chinese diplomat who sought asylum in Holland. So far, there are no surprises. Liao (the defector) does not expect a significant new Chinese demarche at Warsaw on February 20, but he is not privy to inside information. He believes that the Chinese Communists are sincerely convinced of the reality of U. S. - USSR collusion against China.

On the internal side, the Cultural Revolution Group has gained steadily in power, but derives its real authority from Mao, whose own power vis-a-vis resistance within the elite has grown steadily. The Ninth Party Congress is expected to convene this year to set the stamp on a Maoist-dominated new Party, but Liao can only guess when. The Central Bureaucracy will send only three members, presumably to make room for more worker and peasant delegates. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been in such turmoil that even personal mail is not being regularly forwarded to Embassies.

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--Four-Power Talks: Ambassador Yost has reported the results of his first talks at the UN on the French proposal for a four-power meeting on the Near East.

The British want a precise prior agreement on what will come out of the four-power talks. They hope to avoid a discussion of the substance of a Near East settlement, but they think we should submit some proposal to offset the Soviet peace plan. Yost proposes a four-power statement which would urge the parties to cooperate more fully with Jarring and to avoid actions which would inhibit peacemaking. (Tab F)

U Thant suggests a four-power statement asking the parties to accept the UN resolution "with a view to its implementation." Comment: this could be difficult for the Israelis to accept because, in the special vocabulary that has developed during the Jarring Mission, "implement" implies a pro-Egyptian solution without negotiations. (Tab G)

Jarring wants an early four-power meeting because he feels that if nothing happens soon he will lose momentum. He questions whether Yost's limited consensus statement will be enough and would like the four powers to agree on the meaning of the UN resolution and the way in which it is to be implemented. (Tab H)

Dean () --Views of North Vietnamese in Paris: North Vietnamese delegates to the Paris talks are reported to be uneasy about the effects on the talks by the change in administration. Although they have no doubt whatsoever that you really wish to reach a peaceful settlement, they believe there is now less domestic pressure than under President Johnson. They believe, therefore, that the US government is now working under far less pressure of time and is less desperate for a speedy settlement.

The North Vietnamese also find it difficult to adjust to the personality and methods of Lodge. Although they considered Harriman a tough negotiator they were used to his style but have not yet accustomed themselves to that of Lodge. (Tab I)

--Secretary of State Roger's Evening Report is at Tab J.

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-- Lima: A delegation from Peru has departed on a two week trip to Communist China for the purpose of purchasing rice to bolster Peru's rice supply which has been hard hit by drought. This marks the first time rice sales have been conducted directly with the Chinese on government to government basis. (Tab K)

-- West Germany/USSR: An experienced Soviet journalist in Bonn stated that he thought the USSR will not make a big issue over the meeting of the Federal Assembly. The journalist said the USSR will register a formal protest and will permit the East Germans to take some measures in the form of increased toll on the Autobahn. The journalist was convinced that the USSR would not now be seeking a confrontation with the Nixon administration. (Tab L)

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
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INFORMATION
 August 22, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT: Morning Briefing Items

-- Vietnam Military Developments: Communist units continued tactical activity in widely scattered areas of South Vietnam yesterday, including a 10-round rocket attack against the Danang Air Base, killing one US and wounding 43. Damage to facilities at the base was minimal. Duc Pho, a coastal town in Quang Ngai Province, was also hit by enemy mortars, killing 10 civilians and wounding 162.

-- Paris Talks: Yesterday's Plenary Session revealed nothing new with the other side repeating their standard line including the charge of indiscriminate escalation on our part. In his rebuttal, North Vietnamese spokesman Ha Van Lau did not refuse to consider the specific suggestion we made for humanitarian treatment of American prisoners.

-- Vietnam Political Developments: According to press reports, Prime Minister Tran Van Huong resigned today, "after a five-week impasse over efforts to reshuffle the South Vietnamese Cabinet."

Possibly related to Huong's resignation is a report received by the State Department from Ambassador Bui Diem that he has received two urgent messages from President Thieu's office asking that Nguyen Huu Hanh, former Governor of the National Bank and currently alternate director of the IMF, return to South Vietnam from his Atlantic City vacation for "important consultations." Diem believes that Hanh's return is involved with the Cabinet reshuffle.

-- Mosque Fire Could Increase Tension: The burning of a Mosque in Jerusalem has increased tension in the Middle East. The Mosque itself is not one of Islam's holiest places, but it is in the same complex as the Dome of the Rock, the site of Mohammed's ascension to heaven.

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Although the fire was probably accidental, rumors are circulating that it was set deliberately as part of a plan to drive the Arabs out of Palestine, and Cairo radio has linked the fire to the "barbarism of Israeli Nazism." At Tab A is a message to you from Habib Bourguiba, President of Tunisia, concerning the incident.

-- Story of Husak/Svoboda Meeting with Brezhnev:

[redacted] Husak and Svoboda met with Brezhnev in Crimea in early August at Czech request over the opposition of the Soviet Embassy in Prague. Czech leaders feared excessive Soviet military reaction to August 21 demonstrations, and convinced Brezhnev that Czech forces could handle their own situation. The Soviets agreed to scale down planned movements of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia, increase their numbers as inconspicuously as possible, and route maneuvers around Czechoslovakia -- in exchange for completion of Czech "consolidation and normalization" by January 1, 1970. The Embassy finds the story plausible if unverifiable. Reportedly when Czech leaders told the Soviets that excessive violence in Czechoslovakia might have repercussions in Poland, Hungary, and Romania, Brezhnev commented: "we'll wipe Romania off the map when it suits us."

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Relations: -- Romanian Consular Convention and Trade

[redacted] final negotiations on US-Romanian Consular Convention could start "about a week" after the arrival of Ambassador Meeker. Macovescu also reiterated earlier the Romanian suggestion that both sides exchange drafts before the start of negotiations. According to Macovescu, when Ambassador Bogdan returns to Washington he will carry with him two lists: one covering Romanian products that might be sold in US if lower tariffs prevailed, and another showing plant and equipment Romania hopes to buy during their next five-year plan.

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-- Indicators Concerning Chinese and Soviet Behavior: Peking has paid its back dues to the International Red Cross -- another indication of its interest in moving toward more normal diplomatic relations with the non-Communist world. Its action entitles it to participate in the forthcoming Red Cross Conference at Istanbul, but Peking has yet to answer the invitation. (Peking long ago attended such conferences, but walked out in 1957 because the Republic of China was also invited, and Peking has not since participated.)

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Meanwhile, leaders of the Australian Communist Party have concluded. [redacted] that the Soviets intend to launch a large-scale military operation against the Chinese. The Australians reportedly were much upset at such an eventuality. The Australians probably have no inside information as to Soviet thinking, but it is interesting that Soviet behavior has generated such alarm among Communists who have long been close students of Moscow's intentions.

A Soviet second secretary this week asked a State Department officer point-blank how US would react if the USSR took out Chinese nuclear facilities.

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