

NSA review completed

WASHINGTON SPECIAL ACTIONS GROUP MEETING

OSD review completed

JCS Review Completed

November 14, 1972

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

Time and Place: 10:04 a.m. - 11:26 a.m., White House Situation Room

Subject: Vietnam Planning

MORI/CDF per C03233247

Participants:

Chairman	Henry A. Kissinger	CIA	Richard Helms George Carver William Newton
State	U. Alexis Johnson William Sullivan	NSC	M/Gen. Alexander Haig Richard Kennedy John Holdridge James T. Hackett
Defense	Kenneth Rush G. Warren Nutter R/Adm. Daniel J. Murphy		
JCS	L/Gen. George Seignious		

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

It was agreed that:

- Overflights of Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam for the collection of both photographic and signal intelligence are approved. Overflights of North Vietnam for any purpose will be prohibited by the agreement and may not be undertaken without Presidential approval.
- DOD will prepare a paper showing the total estimated number of U. S. Government and contract employees that will be required in Vietnam after the ceasefire.
- CIA will investigate the feasibility of transferring the intelligence processing activities now in Vietnam to Thailand.
- We should continue using sensors in Vietnam to the extent practicable, but they cannot be placed in North Vietnam after the agreement.
- The Navy should move slowly in removing the mines and should be careful not to remove all of them until all of our prisoners have been released.

CLASSIFIED BY Wm. Kissinger
EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
EXEMPTION CATEGORY 5B(2) & (3)

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Attached to IS cover memo, HK-E392a, 13 Nov. 1972

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Mr. Kissinger: Dick [Helms], do you want to bring us up to date?

Mr. Helms read a situation report (copy attached).

Mr. Kissinger: When did Le Duc Tho leave for Moscow?

Mr. Helms: Yesterday.

Mr. Johnson: According to press reports, his plane was forced down at Irkutsk, Siberia.

Mr. Kissinger: He was forced down?

Mr. Helms: No, that's a normal stop on that flight.

Mr. Johnson: I thought he was forced down by bad weather.

Mr. Kissinger: (smiling) Now they have blown our new meeting place.

Mr. Helms: The appearance of Hoang Van Hoan in Peking is very significant. He is an important member of the North Vietnamese Politburo.

Mr. Kissinger: I don't believe I remember him.

Mr. Helms: He is Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly.

Mr. Kissinger: Oh, yes, I know who you mean. Is there anything the Joint Chiefs wish to report?

Gen. Seignious: I can discuss conceptually the command and control arrangements we are planning, if you wish.

Mr. Kissinger: What about the current situation?

Gen. Seignious: The air campaign is going very well. We made some good strikes yesterday and those programmed for today look good, too.

Mr. Kissinger: Are you dividing them between North and South?

Gen. Seignious: Yes, sir. There were about 400 in the South yesterday and about the same number in the North.

Adm. Murphy: There has been a big concentration of strikes in MR-1, though.

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Gen. Seignious: That's right.

Mr. Kissinger: What are the NVA forces doing? Are they going into the South or coming out?

Mr. Helms: There's not much movement right now.

Mr. Kissinger: Are they breaking up into smaller units?

Mr. Carver: Not much. There is no sign of any pullback yet. There is some armor moving south, but it hasn't yet crossed into South Vietnam. The situation is fairly static.

Mr. Kissinger: Has a new infiltration push started?

Mr. Carver: Yes, some increase is apparent. What is more significant is that draft calls in the North were up in September and way up in October.

Mr. Kissinger: So what do you conclude?

Mr. Carver: I would say they are throwing an anchor to windward in case they have to fight further.

Mr. Kissinger: Do you think they are planning to fight further?

Mr. Carver: I think they want to be prepared to grab as much as they can in the post-ceasefire period and to be ready to fight again if they have to, but this must be viewed in the context of the total situation. It may not be in their interest to break the ceasefire, if they are interested in the economic program.

Mr. Sullivan: Isn't it still pretty muddy on the trail?

Mr. Helms: Yes, and all those wounded on the trail are going to impede any big step-up in infiltration.

Mr. Carver: But they do appear to be getting ready for a push in infiltration. Of course, it may just be their counterpart to Project Enhance.

Mr. Kissinger: Alex [Johnson], do you have anything?

Mr. Johnson: We are having exchanges on several subjects with Saigon and we want to discuss the intelligence and military planning further with CIA and Defense. There is one conceptual difference that has arisen between us [State] and Embassy Saigon. Saigon wants to keep the CORDS

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organization in existence, while we prefer to move to a more typical organization, under which the consulates would be the area headquarters within the country. They would be the focal points of all activities in the regional areas, with all AID personnel reporting to the regional consulates.

Mr. Kissinger: Who do people report to under CORDS?

Mr. Johnson: To Saigon. They report directly to the Ambassador and Deputy Ambassador. The Ambassador may feel this gives him greater control, but I feel strongly that we will be better off with a decentralized organization, with the centralization of activities in each region in the consulate.

Mr. Kissinger: Why?

Mr. Johnson: I think it works better if you put one man in each area in charge of everything in that region and give him full responsibility for his area.

Mr. Kissinger: Doesn't everyone report to the Ambassador?

Mr. Johnson: Yes, but this would put greater responsibility on the man in the field, who knows what the problems are in his area. There is no disagreement on this with any other agency, it is just an internal disagreement over which would be the better organizational setup. I am convinced it would be more effective to have everyone in the field report to the local consulate.

Mr. Sullivan: We envision the consuls replacing the DEPCORDS. The South Vietnamese structure will still be the same in the provinces and this would fit in with their setup.

Mr. Kissinger: Then you would send higher ranking men than usual to head the consulates?

Mr. Johnson: Oh, sure.

Mr. Sullivan: We are considering just reassigning the DEPCORDS in MR-3 as the regional consul, and perhaps do the same thing elsewhere.

Mr. Kissinger: When can you get me a paper on this that I can send to the President for a decision?

Adm. Murphy: This is not at issue with us.

Mr. Rush: We [Defense] agree with State on this better than they agree with themselves.

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Mr. Johnson: This is strictly an internal issue within State. I don't think this has to go to the President. What may have to go to the President for a decision is the question of the size and shape of the total U. S. structure in South Vietnam. How big should it be?

Mr. Kissinger: I can tell you that the President wants a structure large enough to maintain the Government of Vietnam and if there is to be a political decision on its future, to help win that decision. The structure we have should be able to react quickly and effectively if there are violations of the agreement. I don't mean minor jockeying for position, we expect that, but if there is a major violation, we will react -- I am convinced that the President will order us to react. He has made it clear that he does not intend this to be a bugout, and you have to make your plans accordingly.

Mr. Sullivan: Yes, sir, we are doing that.

Adm. Murphy: We have about 1,000 DOD personnel in South Vietnam now and will have to increase that by several thousand when the military are pulled out.

Mr. Kissinger: I hope you are not going to increase the total U. S. presence in Vietnam. What do all these people do?

Adm. Murphy: A lot of them are involved in training the South Vietnamese, and others are performing maintenance. We are handling the complete maintenance of the South Vietnamese Air Force; they don't have people qualified to do it.

Mr. Johnson: We expect there will be six to seven thousand all together. Of these, three thousand would be U. S. Government employees and another three to four thousand under contract.

Mr. Kissinger: I don't think this has sunk in on old Le Duc Tho yet. We'd better take another look at this. Can I have a paper with some figures right away?

Adm. Murphy: We'd like a little time to scrub down these figures a bit.

Mr. Kissinger: They don't have to be precise, just get me some figures right away.

Adm. Murphy: O. K.

Mr. Johnson: There's a question about the disposition of the ROK equipment in South Vietnam. Shall we turn it over to ARVN?

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Adm. Murphy: That's the only way you can handle it.

Mr. Sullivan: It should be transferred prior to X plus 60.

Mr. Johnson: But shouldn't it be prior to X day?

Mr. Kissinger: Yes, not after we sign the agreement.

Mr. Johnson: Then the ROKs will be without any guns.

Mr. Kissinger: No, they will be using loaned equipment, loaned to them by the South Vietnamese. Do we have any bases left to dismantle?

Adm. Murphy: We have nothing. The Defense Department has already turned everything over to South Vietnam or the State Department.

Mr. Kissinger: But there is a clause in the agreement that obliges us to dismantle all our bases.

Mr. Rush: We have no bases.

Mr. Kissinger: How do you think they are going to react to that?

Mr. Carver: It just shows that we are getting smart like them.

Mr. Sullivan: What about the clause requiring the removal of equipment?

Adm. Murphy: We have no equipment. It's all South Vietnamese.

Mr. Sullivan: Have we painted yellow and red flags on those airplanes?

Gen. Seignious: Not yet.

Mr. Kissinger: Le Duc Tho told me we cheated on every agreement we ever signed and I was outraged. Now how am I going to explain this? The next thing I'll learn is that our people will be taking out Vietnamese citizenship. Can we get together a list of what we are taking out and what we are leaving behind? Are we taking anything out?

Adm. Murphy: We are taking out a lot. We are taking out 283,000 tons of equipment.

Mr. Kissinger: What kind of equipment?

Adm. Murphy: All kinds, aircraft, everything.

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Mr. Kissinger: Have we papers that show that all the rest has been legally transferred?

Adm. Murphy: Yes, sir.

Mr. Sullivan: Don't forget that all of this will be supervised by the ICCS.

Mr. Kissinger: They will check what has been taken out?

Mr. Sullivan: Yes, they will. I'd like to get Vietnamese flags painted on all the stuff we've given them.

Mr. Kissinger: Can we do that?

Gen. Haig: That could lead to problems. The first time a GI is shot down flying a Vietnamese helicopter the North Vietnamese will scream that American pilots are flying their equipment.

Mr. Kissinger: (to Adm. Murphy) Can you get away with turning equipment over to the State Department? What have you given them?

Adm. Murphy: Oh, a lot of things. I have a list here.

Mr. Johnson: (reviewing list) Tan Son Nhut Air Base! My God, do we own that? And you've given us the POW compound, too.

Mr. Kissinger: Can you get away with giving that to the State Department? I want a list of everything you have transferred, withdrawn or dumped.

Mr. Johnson: We have some old FSOs we'd like to dump.

Adm. Murphy: We can lease back any of the things we have turned over to them that we have to use.

Mr. Kissinger: Alex [Johnson], look over that list and let us know by tomorrow what problems you think we may have. I would like to construct something in the first section of the agreement so that all of this is clear. We want to provide what is necessary to South Vietnam, but let's be careful about the terms of the agreement.

Mr. Johnson: I agree. The ICCS, including our friends the Canadians, will be looking into these things.

Mr. Kissinger: Dick [Helms], do you want to discuss the intelligence planning?

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Mr. Helms: I sent you a paper in response to your earlier request, outlining an intelligence plan for operations after the ceasefire, then Dick Kennedy called to suggest that with regard to overhead intelligence we were not living in the real world and he asked us to look again at the question of intelligence collection. In response to that request, we have written a paper describing what airborne intelligence collection is and why we need airborne platforms. This paper is not an argument in favor of such methods, but rather an explanation of them. Very few people outside the experts in the intelligence community know what these methods produce and why they are so essential. This paper explains some of that and is intended merely to make you more cognizant of the value of and need for airborne platforms for the collection of intelligence. It is a very sensitive paper and I wish you would be extremely careful with it. (Paper distributed to principals only).

Mr. Kissinger: (reading paper) Let me give you a statement of our position on this matter. We are clearly, legally prohibited by the agreement from overflying North Vietnam. We can overfly South Vietnam, but this is not explicitly stated in the agreement and we don't want to raise it or propose a statement in the agreement saying that we can do it, as DOD has suggested. If we raise this point and they reject it, we will then be in trouble. As it is now, we have sufficient basis to overfly South Vietnam without a statement saying so.

Mr. Johnson: With the concurrence of the South Vietnamese Government.

Mr. Kissinger: Yes. The agreement prohibits hostile acts or acts of force, I think it says acts of force, in South Vietnam, so this should pose no problem for overflights.

Mr. Sullivan: It says acts of force.

Mr. Kissinger: With regard to Cambodia and Laos, we go back to the 1954 and 1962 Geneva Agreements.

Mr. Johnson: Where do we stand on this question under the 1962 Agreement?

Mr. Sullivan: We construed it then (1962) to mean that military acts were prohibited. Tactical recon flights were knocked off but U-2 flights were continued. (to Mr. Helms) Isn't that right? You did continue U-2 flights, didn't you?

Mr. Helms: I think so. We can check to verify that.

Mr. Sullivan: I believe tactical flights over Laos are out of the question.

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Mr. Helms: If we could fly U-2's it would be a big help

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25X1

Mr. Johnson: What's the difference with the U-2? It's like any other plane, isn't it?

Mr. Holdridge: It flies at 70,000 feet.

Mr. Sullivan: Of course, the Chinese can detect it.

Mr. Helms: Oh, yes, they will know we're flying them.

Mr. Carver:

25X1

Mr. Helms:

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Mr. Carver:

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Mr. Kissinger:

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Mr. Carver:

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Mr. Helms:

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Mr. Carver:

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Mr. Kissinger: I don't see how we can overfly North Vietnam in view of the agreement. What is your concrete suggestion?

Mr. Helms: It is helpful to be able to overfly Laos and Cambodia.

25X1

Mr. Kissinger: I see no problem with that. If you have evidence that major movement is taking place, I am sure that we can get the President's approval for SR-71 flights.

Mr. Johnson: Who could complain about this kind of violation of the agreement?

Mr. Sullivan: Anyone. Any member of the Geneva agreements could complain, including the Soviets, Chinese, etc.

Mr. Johnson: Who would they complain to, the co-chairmen?

Mr. Sullivan: That's right, and then they would complain to us.

Mr. Helms: I don't think this is such a big problem.

Mr. Sullivan: [redacted]

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Mr. Carver: [redacted]

25X1

Mr. Helms: [redacted]

25X1

Mr. Sullivan: [redacted]

25X1

Mr. Helms: [redacted]

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Mr. Kissinger: Can you get me a paper on this by the weekend?

Mr. Sullivan: I'll have the lawyers go over the agreements and see precisely what we can do.

Mr. Kissinger: I want to push this to the absolute limit.

Mr. Carver: In what way?

Mr. Kissinger: I want to do as much as we can within the terms of the agreements.

Mr. Johnson: [redacted]

25X1

Mr. Carver: [redacted]

25X1

Mr. Helms: The important point here is the first six months of the agreement. If they don't violate it then, we will probably be in pretty good shape. But we should monitor what they are doing during those first six months.

Mr. Sullivan: [redacted]

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Mr. Carver: [REDACTED]

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Mr. Helms: [REDACTED]

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Mr. Kissinger: [REDACTED]

25X1

Mr. Carver: [REDACTED]

25X1

Mr. Kissinger: There is no problem overflying Laos, only North Vietnam.

Mr. Carver: I'd like to overfly the North with SR-71s if we have evidence of violations of the agreement, with drones as a standby alternative.

Mr. Kissinger: [REDACTED]

25X1

Mr. Carver: [REDACTED]

25X1

Mr. Kissinger: [REDACTED]

25X1

Mr. Helms: I agree. I'm not as pessimistic about this as George (Carver). I think the North Vietnamese may well want to abide by the agreement, but if we get significant [REDACTED] evidence of a major violation, we can then go to the President for permission to fly SR-71 missions. 25X1

Mr. Kissinger: I'm almost certain we can get approval for a flight at that point.

Mr. Helms: I remember the speed with which we acted in the Tonkin Gulf

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on the basis of [] information, and we are still trying to sort that one out.

25X1

Mr. Kissinger: We want to make the agreement work if we can and don't want to violate it unless we have no choice. Can you give me a plan on this by Friday?

Mr. Helms: I don't want to put any of this in any papers. Let's just keep it as an understanding between ourselves.

Mr. Kissinger: O.K.

Mr. Johnson: Do we have the plans and forces in Vietnam to carry out these intelligence activities?

Mr. Carver: Yes, but with the military leaving we will need a U.S. advisory effort in South Vietnam.

Mr. Sullivan: Can these people all be replaced by civilians?

Mr. Carver: We'll have to have them take off their uniforms.

Mr. Helms: Can't we have any U.S. military advisors to any South Vietnamese units? What about the para-military?

Mr. Sullivan: You can't have any, not even to the police.

Mr. Helms: We'll have to do some sheep-dipping.

Mr. Sullivan: Why do you need so many advisors?

Mr. Carver:

25X1

Mr. Sullivan: But the planes will be flying out of Thailand.

Mr. Carver: Not the South Vietnamese flights.

Mr. Sullivan: Can you move them to Thailand?

Mr. Kissinger: Or call them PX personnel attached to the Embassy?

Mr. Carver: I don't know if we can move it all to Thailand.

25X1

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[Redacted]

25X1

Mr. Kissinger: I want you to understand that we have no problem with your performing this function, it's just a question of what you call the people who do it. If you can do it all out of Thailand it is even better.

Mr. Carver: I'll discuss that possibility [Redacted]

25X1

Gen. Seignious: Do the terms of the agreement refer only to military units?

Mr. Johnson: No, as Bill (Sullivan) indicated, it includes the para-military and even the police.

Mr. Carver: Just to summarize, as I understand it, [Redacted] photographic [Redacted] flights are permitted over Cambodia, Laos and South Vietnam.

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Mr. Kissinger: No problem.

Mr. Sullivan: Are you talking about low level tactical photography?

Mr. Carver: No, I'm referring to U-2s.

Mr. Kissinger: [Redacted]

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Gen. Haig: [Redacted]

25X1

Mr. Carver: [Redacted]

25X1

Gen. Seignious: [Redacted]

25X1

Mr. Kissinger: [Redacted]

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Mr. Carver: [Redacted]

25X1

Mr. Sullivan: [Redacted]

25X1

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Mr. Carver: [redacted] 25X1

Mr. Kissinger: [redacted] 25X1

Mr. Carver: [redacted] 25X1

Mr. Kissinger: [redacted] 25X1

Mr. Carver: [redacted] 25X1

Mr. Helms: [redacted] 25X1

Mr. Kissinger: [redacted] 25X1

Mr. Carver: [redacted] 25X1

Mr. Sullivan: [redacted] 25X1

Mr. Carver: [redacted] 25X1

Mr. Sullivan: [redacted] 25X1

Gen. Seignious: [redacted] 25X1

Mr. Carver: [redacted] 25X1

Mr. Kissinger: [redacted] 25X1

Mr. Sullivan: [redacted] 25X1

Mr. Johnson: [redacted] 25X1

Mr. Sullivan: [redacted] 25X1

Mr. Kissinger: [redacted] 25X1

Mr. Johnson: [redacted] 25X1

Mr. Sullivan: I talked with the Thai this weekend on some of these questions. I don't think we will have any problem.

Mr. Kissinger: Now that State is taking over the military headquarters I detect a different attitude.

Mr. Sullivan: I don't know what we are going to do with MACV Headquarters.

Mr. Kissinger: (to Adm. Murphy) I don't want to try to write into the agreement that we have the right to overfly South Vietnam. It's implicit and let's leave it that way. The wording of the agreement is consistent with that interpretation. Concerning this question of the inspection of North Vietnamese prison camps that was raised the other day, in my judgment it will never happen. Regarding the mines, I want the Navy to go slow on moving those minesweepers.

Mr. Rush: They're on their way to Hawaii now.

Mr. Kissinger: All of them?

Adm. Murphy: Some are already at Hawaii and the rest are enroute.

Mr. Kissinger: I want them to go slowly. The longer we delay the better off we are. I don't want to remove anything from North Vietnam except our POWs.

Mr. Rush: We can go slowly.

Mr. Carver: Incidentally, if you use helicopters to remove mines from the inland waterways, you also have a good device for collecting intelligence.

Gen. Seignious: It should take at least sixty days to remove the mines.

Mr. Kissinger: We are not obliged to do it in sixty days. We said we would do it as soon as possible, but certainly not while our POWs are still there.
