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CLASSIFIED MESSAGE

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DATE : 20 MAR 61

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ROUTING

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TO : DIRECTOR

FROM : VIENTIANE

ACTION : C/FE 5

INFO : DCI, D/DCI, DDP, COP, ADDP/A, C/CA, C/CI, C/FI 2, C/SR 3, S/C 2

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ROUTINE

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 Appeals Panel, E.O. 13526, sec. 5.3(b)(3)
 ISCAP Appeal No. 2014-030, document 4
 Declassification Date: July 8, 2024

RYBAT

FOR PLYBON AND DAINOLD FROM ERKELENS:

FOLLOWING PAPER, SUBMITTED AMBASSADOR BROWN TODAY, EMBODIES MY THOUGHTS THIS JUNCTURE. FOR YOUR INFO, AMBASSADOR SEEMED FAVORABLY IMPRESSED AND WILL PROBABLY USE CONSIDERABLE PORTIONS. CH/PEO'S ONLY DISAGREEMENT, AFTER HASTY READING, IS WITH PARA 6 A EFFORT DIVIDE USE B226'S INTO TWO PHASES. PAPER WOULD APPEAR FIT SARIT VIEW. (EXPRESSED BANGKOK TS EMBTEL 1634 TO DEPT) THAT COORDINATED AND FAIRLY LONG-RANGE PROGRAM IS ONLY WAY REBUILD FAL EFFECTIVELY. PREFER MO REFERENCE THIS PAPER IN DEPT COMMUNICATIONS. QUOTE

1. TO ASSUME THAT EITHER DIRECT (I.E. WITH RUSSIANS) OR INTERNATIONAL

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NEGOTIATIONS WILL PRODUCE ANY COMMUNIST WITHDRAWAL FROM PRESENT POLITICAL OR MILITARY POSITIONS IN LAOS SEEMS TO ME QUITE UNREALISTIC. THEREFORE, WE SHOULD NOT NEGOTIATE AT THIS POINT UNLESS WE ARE PREPARED ACCEPT ARRANGEMENTS WHICH AT BEST WILL ONLY PARTIALLY GUARANTEE A DIVIDED LAOS AND, AT WORST, WILL CERTAINLY FACILITATE COMMUNIST TAKEOVER. WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE AT THIS JUNCTURE WILL PROBABLY HAVE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL DISADVANTAGES: STEPPED-UP ENEMY PRESSURE AND POSSIBLE FURTHER DETERIORATION MILITARY SITUATION; SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTION U.S. PRESTIGE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA; AND IN GENERAL WEAKENING OF FREE WORLD CONFIDENCE IN OUR STRENGTH. TAKE POSITIONS INDEPENDENT OF RUSSIAN OR CHICOM DESIRES. BENEFITS OF NEGOTIATIONS AT PRESENT TIME ARE TEMPORARY AVOIDANCE ANY RISK OF WAR, WHETHER LIMITED OR GENERAL, AND TEMPORARY PLAUDITS OF OUR ALLIES FOR REASONS THAT HAVE LITTLE TO DO WITH MERITS OF SITUATION IN LAOS, AND LIKEWISE PRAISE OF SUCH NEUTRALS AS INDIA.

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2. I DO NOT VENTURE HERE TO ASSESS EFFECT OF U.S. WILLINGNESS NEGOTIATE ON OUR OVER-ALL RELATIONSHIPS WITH RUSSIA AND CHINA, BUT FIND IT HARD BELIEVE THAT "SWEET REASONABLENESS" NOW WILL MAKE EITHER THE RUSSIANS OR THE CHINESE ANY EASIER TO DEAL WITH LATER. IN FACT, MY JUDGEMENT IS THAT IT WILL HAVE OPPOSITE EFFECT.

3. ACCORDINGLY, IF NEGOTIATIONS EXPECTED TO SERVE ANY OTHER PURPOSE THAN FACE-SAVING DEVICE TO COVER OR GLOSS OVER RESULT IN ANY IMPROVEMENT IN OUR POSITION IN LAOS, OR IN OUR GENERAL STANDING AS LEADERS OF FREE WORLD AGAINST RUSSIAN BLOC, NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD ONLY COMMENCE AT A TIME WHEN PRESENT RATIOA OF MILITARY POWER BETWEEN THE ENEMY AND OURSELVES IS EITHER REVERSED OR IS IN PROCESS OF BEING REVERSED. INDICDENTIALLY, ONLY BY SUCH REVERSAL CAN WE HOPE EFFECT ANY SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN PRESENT POSITION OF THE NEUTRALS, INCLUDING IN THE INSTANCE OUR ALLIES, ON THE SUBJECT

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OF LAOS.

4. WHILE I AM ARGUING IMMEDIATELY ABOVE FOR NECESSITY OF SOME MILITARY ACTION TO RESTORE SITUATION SUFFICIENTLY TO PERMIT USEFUL NEGOTIATIONS, I ALSO RECOGNIZE THAT U.S. DOES NOT WISH CAUSE TOTAL WAR BY ITS ACTIONS IN LAOS. IF THIS PREMISE IS ACCEPTED, THEN AT MAXIMUM WE ARE TALKING ABOUT SOME FORM OF LIMITED WAR WHEN WE TALK ABOUT RE-DRESSING THE SITUATION. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT AT VERY MINIMUM WHAT WE NEED MILITARILY IS WHATEVER ACTION WILL PREVENT ANY FURTHER ENEMY BREAKTHROUGH AT PRESENT AND FOR IMMEDIATE FUTURE, THUS PRESERVING FAL, AND WILL LATER FACILITATE SLOW BUT STEADY ROLL BACK OF ENEMY FORCES. I AM TALKING ABOUT A DELIBERATE SELECTION OF WEAPONS OR METHODS WHICH, WHILE NOT INVITING ENEMY TO RETALIATE IN NUCLEAR FASHION, WILL GIVE US REASONABLE CHANCE OF ACHIEVING THE ABOVE LIMITED WAR OBJECTIVES, AND THE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE OF NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT ON LAOS THAT

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WILL NOT BE INTERPRETED AS EVIDENCE OF U.S. WEAKNESS OR U.S. BETRAYAL OF LAOS.

5. BEFORE PROCEEDING TO LISTING OF POSSIBLE WEAPONS AND METHODS, WOULD LIKE COMMENT ON WHAT APPEAR BE THE TWO GREATEST DANGERS IN TRYING FIGHT A LIMITED WAR SUCCESSFULLY. FIRST IS IN OURSELVES, I.E., WILL U.S. MILITARY LEADERSHIP AND WILL THE U.S. PEOPLE ACCEPT THE LONG, SLOW, BLOODY, GRINDING AND COSTLY TYPE OF LIMITED WAR WHICH LAOS TERRAIN AND THIS ENEMY WILL REQUIRE IF THEY ARE TO BE ROLLED BACK AT ALL. SECOND WEAKNESS IS IN THE LAO, BOTH POLITICAL AND MILITARY LEADERSHIP. I KNOW OF NO WAY GUARANTEE THAT THE LAO WILL STAND UP TO OR UNDER THIS TEST, JUST AS I KNOW NO WAY TO INSURE THAT OUR OWN PEOPLE WILL NOT WEAKEN. I SUSPECT, HOWEVER, THAT IF LAO DO STAND UP TO THE TEST IT WILL BE BECAUSE OF U.S., THAI AND GVN ASSURANCES OF SUPPORT, TO INCLUDE COMMITMENT OF TROOPS AND AIRCRAFT TO DEFENSE OF LAOS; AN ACCELERATED PROGRAM OF

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U.S. ECONOMIC AND MILITARY AID TO STRENGTHEN THE GOVERNMENT,
INCLUDING ITS TIES WITH ITS NEIGHBORS; THE SLOW ^{EME} ~~A~~ERGENCE OF
RESOLUTE MILITARY AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP UNDER US AND THAI TUTELAGE
AND UNDER-THE GRUELLING PRESSURES OF LIMITED WAR; GREAT U.S.

PATIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING IN DEALING WITH LAO LEADERSHIP AT ALL
ECHELONS; AND MOST IMPORTANT, DAILY EVIDENCE OF U.S. DETERMINATION
AND CONFIDENCE IN RIGHTNESS, WISDOM AND SUCCESS LAO CAUSE. IN
SHORT, OUR OWN DECISIONS AND CONDUCT OF THE WAR ARE THE CRUCIAL FACTOR
EVEN MORE CRUCIAL THAN LAO TEMPERAMENT, LAO MILITARY SHORTCOMINGS, ETC.

6. SOME SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS FOR MILITARY ACTIONS WHICH WOULD
SEEM FIT WITHIN "LIMITED WAR" CONCEPT BUT NOT RUN RISK
OR PRECIPITATING NUCLEAR OR TOTAL WAR FOLLOW:

A. INITIAL USE B 26'S AGAINST FRONT LINE ENEMY POSITIONS;

AGAINST CONVOYS MOVING FROM

DRV BORDER TO PDJ; AND PROVISION OF AIR "CAP" OVER PDJ. LATER

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USE, IF ENEMY FIGHTERS INTERVENE, AGAINST ENEMY AIRCRAFT OR AGAINST PDJ INSTALLATIONSS, AND LOCATIONS, ETC.

B. EMPLOYMENT OF HELICOPTERS FOR RAPID MOVEMENT FRIENDLY TROOPS, HUNTER-KILLER TEAMS, GUERRILLAS, ARTILLERY AND MORTAR TEAMS THROUGHOUT ENEMY REAR OR AGAINST PL BANDS OPERATING IN FRIENDLY REAR AREAS.

*D. PROVISION OF LTAG AND PARU TEAMS TO WORK WITH BV'S, CV'S, ADO'S, ADC'S FOR PURPOSE OF DEVELOPING HUNTER-KILLER TEAMS WITHIN SUCH UNITS AND EFFECT GENERAL IMPROVEMENT IN OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS THESE UNITS FOR INTERNAL SECURITY MISSIONS IN FRIENDLY REAR AREAS.

E. USE OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE AND RTA UNITS, AT INVITATION OF LAO GOVERNMENT AND WITH SEATO APPROVAL, IN SOUTH LAOS TO COUNTER VM AND PL THERE. THIS TO BE DONE IN CONJUNCTION FAL FORCES.

F. RAPID INCREASE ROAD, TRAIL, AND AIRFIELD BUILDING PROGRAM, INCLUDING BEACONS, FOR ALL WEATHER USE THROUGHOUT RLG-CONTROLLED LAOS.

G. CONTINUE EXPAND MEO GW UNITS IN XIENG KHOUANG AND

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SAM NEUA, AND START SIMILAR PROGRAMS WITH BLACK THAIS AND KHA MU IN PHONG SALLY, ETC.

H. ENDEAVOR PERSUADE THESE GUERILLA UNITS TO STEP UP TROUBLE AMONG FELLOW TRIBES IN DRV - TROUBLE TO INCLUDE SABOTAGE OF ARMY TRANSPORT AND COMMO FACILITIES TO WHICH THEY HAVE ACCESS.

I. PEO TO DEVELOP, AS TRAINING DEVICE, AGRESSOR-TYPE UNIT ~~PORTION GARBLED - BEING SYCD~~ WUAHING FAL TO SIMULATE PL ENEMY.

J. MORE ARMOR AND FIRE POWER FOR FAL.

K. TRAINING OF LAO AIR FORCE IN UNITED STATES. KNOCK OFF FRENCH PROGRAM COMPLETELY.

L. DEVELOP ADDITIONAL FAL AIRBORNE UNITS.

M. REINFORCE FAL ENGINEERS WITH RTA, SVN AND/OR FILIPINO ARMY UNITS AND EQUIP FOR SUCH PRUPOSES AS ROAD BUILDING, BRIDGE BUILDING, ETC. THIS IS SEATO AFFAIR.

N. WEED OUT UNFIT OFFICERS AND PUNISH SAME SO THAT SOME SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY BEGINS DEVELOP IN OFFICER AND NCO CORPS.

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O. WITH COMBINATION B 26'S, COMMANDOS OR HUNTER-KILLERS, GUERRILLAS AND MINIMUM OF TROOPS, ATTEMPT HOLD PRESENT FRONT THROUGH RAINY SEASON, IN MEANTIME COMMENCING PROGRAM REGROUPING AND RETRAINING, OLD AND NEW FAL UNITS, INCLUDING HEAVY USE THAI TRAINING FACILITIES.

P. MOVEMENT OF U.S. TROOPS TO THAILAND AND SOUTH VIETNAM, LIKEWISE MOVEMENT OF USAF UNITS TO THAILAND AND US NAVAL UNITS OFF HAIPHONG AND HANOI. THIS SHOULD BE A SEATO AFFAIR.

Q. MAKE NO SECRET OF ABOVE ITEM, NOR OF DEPLOYMENT OF THAI AND SVN ARMY UNITS TO SOUTH LAOS.

R. COMMENCE IMMEDIATE IMPROVEMENT QUALITY OF THAI AND SVN AIR FORCE INCLUDING TYPE OF AIRCRAFT MADE AVAILABLE TO THEM.

S. INTENSIFY PSYWAR AND INTELL TRAINING OF FAL AND OPERATIONS THESE TYPES AGAINST ENEMY AT FRONT AND IN FRIENDLY REAR.

T. U.S ACCEPTANCE FACT THAT FAL ^{will} GOING WANT MORE UNITS AS WELL AS BETTER TRAINED UNITS, AND THAT U.S. MUST LIVE

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WITH AND HELP BOTH REQUIREMENTS.

U. RESUMPTION POLICE PROGRAM INCLUDING RAPID DEVELOP-
MENT OF RURAL SECURITY FORCES FOR PURPOSE NOTED IN VETN EMBTEL

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END OF MESSAGE

CS COMMENT: *NO PARA 6 SUB-PARAGRAPH C INDICATED.

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