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PRUNING KNIFE STATUS REPORT NO. 1

JCS 11422/DTG 152332Z SEP 69

1. THE PRUNING KNIFE GROUP NOW NUMBERS EIGHT AND IS ENROUTE TO GLARK FROM HICKAM. GENERAL ELWOOD WHO HEADS THE PAC DELEGATION AND I HAD VERY USEFUL DISCUSSIONS WITH ADMIRAL MCCAIN THIS MORNING. WE HAVE GENERAL AGREEMENT ON METHOD OF OPERATION AT THIS POINT. I THINK OUR APPROACH IS SOUND, IT REMAINS TENTATIVE HOWEVER SUBJECT TO DEVELOPMENT OF SAIGON INPUTS.

2. WE ANTICIPATE THAT THE PLANNING GROUP WILL DEVELOP A SOUND MILITARY CONCEPT OF ACTION NEEDED TO ACHIEVE US OBJECTIVES IN SEA BY FORCE OF ARMS. WE WILL THEN FIT VARIOUS ACTION INTO THIS CONCEPT INCLUDING AS MANY OF THOSE OUTLINED IN REF AS PRACTICABLE. OUR RATIONALE IS THIS:

A. SIGNALS TO HANOI HAVE NOT BEEN EFFECTIVE IN THE PAST BECAUSE THEY WERE RECOGNIZED AS TRANSITORY ACTIONS THAT COULD BE ENDURED AND NOT AS INTEGRAL PARTS OF A CREDIBLE MILITARY CONCEPT DESIGNED TO REALIZE US OBJECTIVES BY FORCE OF ARMS.

B. SIGNALS WHICH CAN BE IDENTIFIED AS PARTS OF A CREDIBLE CONCEPT WILL HAVE A LOGIC, HITHERTO LACKING, AND HENCE AN IMPROVED CHANCE FOR CONVINCING THE NVN THAT HE CANNOT PROFITABLY CONTINUE TO OPERATE AGAINST SVN. WHEN THE ENEMY EVALUATES THE TOTAL SIGNAL HE RECEIVES, MILITARILY, POLITICALLY, AND DOMESTICALLY, AS INDICATIVE OF FIRM RESOLVE AN EFFECTIVE SIGNAL WILL HAVE REACHED HANOI. THE PAUSES TO PERMIT REACTION TO SIGNALS SHOULD BE INTRODUCED IN A MANNER LEAST DAMAGING TO SHOCK AND MOMENTUM OF EFFORT. AS A PRACTICAL MATTER PAUSES WILL PROBABLY BE INDUCED

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PERFORCE BY WEATHER.

3. WITH AN AGREED CONCEPT AT HAND WE WILL THEN, SIMULTANEOUSLY, USING THE PRUNING KNIFE GROUP AND MACV/7TH AF/7TH FLEET ASSISTANCE, DEVELOP PLANS IN A MODULAR FASHION TO FLESH OUT THE CONCEPT. PLANS ALREADY IN EXISTENCE OR PARTS THEREOF WILL BE A BASIS FOR THIS.

4. MODULAR PLANS DEVELOPED IN SUPPORT OF THE CONCEPT WILL BE REVIEWED, COORDINATED, AND VALIDATED BY THE PRUNING KNIFE GROUP AND FORWARDED TO YOU WITH MACV AND CINCPAC BEING FURNISHED COPIES FOR COMMENT/APPROVAL.

5. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THIS APPROACH MAY NOT BE ACCEPTABLE AT CERTAIN LEVELS BUT SUGGEST THAT A COMPLETELY SOUND AND AGREED MILITARY PROPOSAL SHOULD BE STATED CLEARLY AND SUPPORTED AS THE BASIC JCS PROPOSAL. WE WILL ALSO, AS A SEPARATE EFFORT, PREPARE A LIST OF SIGNALING ACTIONS MORE CLOSELY FOLLOWING LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF REF. THESE ACTIONS WILL BE CHOSEN ON THE BASIS OF FEASIBILITY AND DAMAGE TO THE ENEMY AND WILL OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE.

GM MODULES DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT THE CONCEPT WILL REQUIRE CAREFUL TESTING FOR FEASIBILITY. THE VALIDITY OF THE CONCEPT WILL NOT BE ESTABLISHED UNTIL THIS HAS BEEN DONE. WE ARE ACUTELY AWARE OF DIFFICULTIES IMPOSED BY WEATHER DURING THE NE MONSOON, THE UNKNOWN EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR ECM AGAINST THE MODIFIED FAN SONG, THE EFFECT OF THE LONG NVN STANDDOWN, ON AIRCREW EXPERIENCE, AND THE GENERAL HARDENING OF AAA AND AIRCRAFT HANGARING. WE ALSO NOTE A NEED FOR COORDINATION OF THIS EFFORT WITH PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE

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INITIATIVES, THIRD COUNTRY REACTION ASSESSMENT WORLDWIDE, AND  
DOMESTIC REACTION. THESE LATTER THREE ISSUES WE, OBVIOUSLY, WILL  
NOT ADDRESS.

VERY RESPECTFULLY AND BEST REGARDS.

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National Security Archive,  
Suite 701, Gelman Library, The George Washington University,  
2130 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20037,  
Phone: 202/994-7000, Fax: 202/994-7005, [nsarchiv@gwu.edu](mailto:nsarchiv@gwu.edu)