PRUNING KNIFE STATUS REPORT NO. 1

JCS 11422/DTC 1523322 SEP 69

1. THE PRUNING KNIFE GROUP NOW NUMBERS EIGHT AND IS ENROUTE TO
CLARK 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
ENURED 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
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 FORWARD 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.

UNCLASSIFIED

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

VERY RESPECTFULLY AND BEST REGARDS,

CP-A

UNQUOTE