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FORM OF DOCUMENT	CORRESPONDENTS OR TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
#2 report	summary record of NSC Meeting 529 Secret Exempt per NLJ 83-235	open 7-21-89 NLJ 87-50 2 p	04/29/64 A
#3 report	record of actions secret	open 5-3-85 NLJ 83-234 1 p	04/29/64 A
#5 report	TS #0038258 sanitized 10-2-84 top secret NLJ 83-233- 3 p NLJ 016-001-4-1 SAME SANI. 6/10/02	04/29/64	A

FILE LOCATION

NATIONAL SECURITY FILE, National Security Council File
 NSC Meetings, Vol. 2 Tab 1, 4/29/64, U. S. Policy Toward Laos

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Summary Record of National Security Council Meeting No. 529
April 29, 1964, 5:00 PM -- U.S. Policy Toward Laos

Director McCone introduced Mr. Ray Cline who read a paper on the intelligence now available which indicates greatly increased use of Laos for infiltration of men and materials from North to South Vietnam.

Mr. Cline reported that there had been an expansion of Pathet Lao forces in Laos. In addition, the North Vietnamese appear to be strengthening the Pathet Lao forces. There are no regular Chinese forces in Laos as far as we know. The Pathet Lao alone have only a 50-50 chance of overrunning all other non-Communist forces in Laos. However, if the Pathet Lao forces were joined by pro-Communist forces and Communist forces from Vietnam, they could overrun all Laos quickly without warning. The Communists appear to be moving to clear out rightist forces which are now in Communist controlled areas in Laos.

Mr. Cline read the Watch Committee conclusions (copy attached).

The President was shown numerous aerial photographs which revealed major improvements in road networks, the effect of which is to improve Hanoi's ability to back up forces in Laos or in South Vietnam.

Under Secretary Harriman told the President we are attempting to get the International Control Commission to send inspectors to the Plaine des Jarres in the hope that their presence would halt the fighting which apparently is now going on there. The situation in Laos is not clear but we are making an effort to force Siho, one of the rebel generals, to support continuation of Souvanna's coalition government. Governor Harriman stated a requirement for low-level reconnaissance in Laos and favored sending non-U.S. patrols into Laos to try to find out the size of the military buildup.

The President asked whether Ambassador Lodge favored these proposals. Secretary McNamara said that Lodge did favor the suggestions but actually they would have little effect in South Vietnam. He added that Ambassador Unger opposed the proposals when asked about them some days ago.

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Mr. McCone said the photographic intelligence shown the President was so new that there had been little time to analyze it. He said that neither the Secretary of Defense nor the Joint Chiefs had seen the pictures and asked for more time for the intelligence community to analyze the new information.

Under Secretary Harriman said the situation was urgent and he asked for authority to explore ways of finding out what was actually going on. Mr. Colby acknowledged that the pictures of the staging area in North Vietnam indicated a buildup but we do not know whether the additional forces are headed for South Vietnam or Laos. Secretary McNamara thought that it was essential for us to obtain additional information on the military buildup.

The President asked that the proposals be presented to Ambassador Unger again in the light of current developments so that he could give his best estimate of the political effect in Laos if the reconnaissance actions were taken. Mr. McCone was asked to present the new evidence to his evaluators and return with an intelligence community view. Further discussion of the subject was scheduled for Friday.

Bromley Smith

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20 minutes

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
RECORD OF ACTIONS

NSC
Action

2485. U. S. POLICY TOWARD LAOS

- a. Noted a briefing by the Director of Central Intelligence on the increased use of Laotian territory for the infiltration of men and materials from North Vietnam destined for Laos or South Vietnam.
- b. Discussed specific measures to obtain more hard evidence on North Vietnamese use of the Laos corridor.
- c. Noted the President's request for additional information prior to a decision on further U. S. actions.

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Authority NLS 83-234
By ms, N.F.A., Date 5-3-85

April 29, 1964
529th NSC Meeting
NSC Action 2485

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NSC Control No. 162

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ATTENDANCE LIST FOR THE 529th NSC MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 1964, at 5:00 PM
IN THE CABINET ROOM OF THE WHITE HOUSE

The President of the United States, Presiding

Speaker of the House of Representatives

CIA

John A. McCone, Director
Ray Cline, Deputy Director (Intelligence)
William Colby

DEFENSE

Robert S. McNamara, Secretary
John McNaughton, Assistant Secretary (ISA)

JCS

General Maxwell D. Taylor, USA, Chairman

STATE

Averell Harriman, Under Secretary for Political Affairs
William P. Bundy, Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs
William Sullivan, Special Assistant for Vietnam

USIA

Carl T. Rowan, Director

WHITE HOUSE

McGeorge Bundy, Special Assistant to the President
Major General Chester V. Clifton, Military Aide to the President
Bill Moyers, Assistant to the President
Jack Valenti, Special Assistant to the President
Michael Forrestal, Senior Staff Member, National Security Council
Bromley Smith, Executive Secretary, National Security Council

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Watch

OF THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

REPORT

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AFNINDC, TSC-320-64
Hq., USAF

WATCH REPORT
of the
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

No. 714

29 April 1964

Conclusions

No Communist country intends to initiate direct military action in the immediate future against the United States, its overseas forces or its Allies. [REDACTED]

Laos: The internal situation remains highly unstable. At the same time, Pathet Lao forces have begun to take advantage of the confusion and further Communist military action appears likely. [REDACTED]

Bloc International Developments

The Chinese Communists are unlimbering for a new major anti-Soviet polemic. On 27 April the Chinese Communists reprinted the Suslov report, the CPSU resolution and the 3 April Pravda editorial attacking the Chinese leadership--Peiping's usual preparation for a heavy counterattack. These anti-Chinese documents were introduced by a lengthy and sarcastic editorial note which promised further Chinese refutation of Soviet "lies, sophistry and abuse" and taunted the USSR over its inability to supply either a rebuff or a joint condemnation of China. We have noted that the Rumanian Party Central Committee has demonstrated a remarkable degree of independence in a resolution published in Scinteia on 26 April proposing again a cessation of Sino-Soviet polemics and further efforts at a negotiated solution. [REDACTED]

Soviet Bloc Military Developments

In East Germany, Soviet military activity appears concentrated on preparations for the annual demonstrations and displays held during May in the Letzlinger Heide training area, which may be longer in duration this year than usual. [REDACTED]

A marked drop in training activity by Soviet Bloc military forces is expected over the forthcoming May Day holidays. [REDACTED]

Critical Areas

1. Cuba: A 22 April Izvestiya "Observer" article has reiterated previous Soviet warnings that the USSR will "side with Cuba" if the latter is subject to an external

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29 April 1964

attack, but avoided any commitment to specific Soviet countermeasures in such an event. The article also asserted that Cuba has the "inalienable right" to take the "necessary measures to put an end to the intrusion of foreign warplanes into its airspace." The article may herald a propaganda and diplomatic campaign intended to arouse international alarm over the US overflights. The Soviets and Cubans may hope that agitation of the issue would in itself induce the US to eventually curtail or terminate these flights.

2. Vietnam: The Viet Cong are increasing their pressure against government forces in the Delta area and in the region around Saigon. The pattern of attacks and of sabotage actions against lines of communications suggests a Communist effort to isolate district and provincial centers.

Our cumulative evidence suggests that the Communists are working steadily to improve their capabilities for expanded and sustained military operations. Recently available information indicates expansion in recent months of some facilities associated with infiltration routes through Laos--specifically a staging area in North Vietnam on Route 12 near the Laos border, and another staging area at Ben Thay on Route 9 in southern Laos.

3. Laos: The internal crisis remains unresolved

Communist attacks against FAR and neutralist positions in eastern Xieng Khouang Province have increased sharply since 26 April, although Kong Le's main positions in the Plaine des Jarres area do not seem immediately threatened. Prior to the coup, there had been indications that the Communists were improving their capabilities for attacks in Xieng Khouang Province. A buildup of Communist strength has been under way in the Tha Thom area southeast of Xieng Khouang town for several weeks and Communist attacks in this area are also possible at any time. In addition, the Communists have succeeded in reopening Route 7 from North Vietnam, and heavy convoy movement over this road was reported in early and mid-April.

In south-central Laos, truck convoys have been reported over routes leading toward Tchepone and Muong Phine

Within the past several weeks, there have been a number of unconfirmed reports suggesting an increased Chinese Communist military presence in Laos. Some Chinese Communist military personnel are reported to have arrived in Nam Tha and Phong Saly Provinces during February and March. We now have unconfirmed reports of the presence of Chinese military personnel in Xieng Khouang Province. We are unable, on the basis of present information, to determine the numbers or mission of these personnel.

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April 29, 1964

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Re: NSC Meeting on April 29

The main business of this meeting is to review intelligence information indicating greatly increased use of Laos for infiltration from North to South Vietnam. I think you may want to follow the following order of discussion:

1. Briefing by McCone on this situation.
2. Briefing by State (presumably Bill Bundy) on the political and paramilitary situation in Laos.
3. Consideration of measures to get more hard evidence on North Vietnamese use of the Laos corridor -- State and Defense.

I doubt if you will wish to authorize specific actions today. It may be better to hear the argument and let the meeting continue without you to prepare a coordinated recommendation. I think such a recommendation can be developed by State, Defense and the White House promptly, but it is not in hand now.

McG. B.