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21

3 MAY 1969

O 030452Z ZYH ZFF-3

FM GEN WESTMORELAND COMUSMACV SAIGON

TO GEN WHEELER CJCS WASHINGTON

ADM SHARP CINCPAC HAWAII

INFO AMB BUNKER SAIGON

AMB SULLIVAN VIENTIANE LAOS

LTG CUSHMAN CG III MAF DANANG

ZEM

~~TOP SECRET~~ NOFORN LINDIS PRAIRIE FIRE IVY TREE (PAC 5817)

EYES ONLY

SUBJ: PRAIRIE FIRE OPERATIONS (CJCS)

1. (TS) AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT AN OPERATION IN BASE AREA 607 IN CONJUNCTION WITH OPERATION DELAWARE/LAM SON 216 WAS SOUGHT ON THE BASIS THAT A HAYMAKER-SIZE INCURSION INTO THIS AREA WOULD HAVE A STRONG CHANCE OF REMAINING UNDISCOVERED BY THE NEWS MEDIA. TODAY, I CANNOT GIVE THAT ASSURANCE.
2. (TS) NEWSMEN HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO EXPLORE OUR COURSES OF ACTION AND ARE PROBING TO DETERMINE OUR INTENTIONS OF EXPANDING DELAWARE/LAM SON 216. SUFFICIENT INDICATORS EXIST WHICH SHOW THAT WE ARE, AT THIS TIME, UNABLE TO PREVENT REPORTERS FROM DEDUCING OUR LAOTIAN OPERATIONS, AND IT IS NOW OBVIOUS THAT WE WOULD NOT BE IN A POSITION TO DENY CATEGORICALLY THE INVOLVEMENT OF SIZEABLE FORCES IN LAOS IF QUERIED BY THE PRESS. THE MILITARY GAIN RESULTING FROM A SUCCESSFUL FORAY INTO BASE AREA 607 DOES NOT APPEAR SUFFICIENT TO OFFSET THE POTENTIAL POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC EMBARRAS-

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DECLASSIFIED

Authority

TAG 830024

By

NARA, Date 6-1-92

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SMENT WHICH THE DISCLOSURE OF THE OPERATION COULD CAUSE AT THIS TIME.

3. (TS) IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE, I HAVE DECIDED TO CANCEL THE HAY-MAKER-SIZE OPERATION IN BASE AREA 607, AS AN EXTENTION OF OPERATION DELAWARE/LAM SON 216.

4. (TS) WE WILL CONTINUE OUR RECONNAISSANCE OF BASE AREA 607 THROUGH NORMAL PRAIRIE FIRE OPERATIONS. IF RECONNAISSANCE SUGGESTS THAT THERE WILL BE A SUBSTANTIAL MILITARY ADVANTAGE TO THE COMMITMENT OF A BATTALION SIZE FORCE INTO BASE AREA 607, I WILL PROPOSE A SEPARATE PLAN FOR AN OPERATION WHICH WILL BE LAUNCHED FROM A SITE OTHER THAN A SHAU, AND WHICH CAN BE MORE EASILY SCREENED FROM THE PRESS.

GP-1

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