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Tuesday, July 18, 1967
10:40 a.m.

Mr. President:

Herewith, extracted from
the big red book, is General
Mommyer's briefing, with key
passages marked.

Pres file

It helped convince a number
of those in Secretary McNamara's
party that we are making headway
in the bombing of transport in the
northern part of North Viet Nam.

W. W. Rostow

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WW Rostow:slh

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)

White House Guidelines, Feb 24, 1983

By 48, NARA, Date 7-18-91

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8 July 1967

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SUBJECT: Operations in Route Package VIA

Mr. Secretary, I have briefed you on in-country operations and the interdiction effort in Route Package I and Laos. (Slide 1.) I would now like to turn to a discussion of our operations in Route Package VI and the effects we think those operations are having on the ability of the North Vietnamese to sustain his deployed forces.

Since your last visit our effectiveness on the North-East Railroad had increased by a factor of four. In view of this substantial improvement, I think it is necessary to cover the changes in tactics and weapons which have permitted this increased effectiveness to be realized.

Although we have not increased the total number of strike aircraft available for the war in North Vietnam, we have attained a more significant increase in air crews. (Slide 2.) It was not until about February of this year that we really reached the full potential of our forces. This fact, in my judgment, is very important in trying to come to grips with how we are doing now as compared to a year ago. Today, we are in a vastly improved posture to sustain the offensive without let up. For the first time, I feel we now have the enemy in such a condition that the initiative has turned in our favor. I will try to bring out why I have arrived at such an assessment.

Here is a picture of the CBU-24. (Slide 3.) It is a lethal weapon for FLAK suppression. This time last year production was relatively limited. As a consequence, we were using general purpose (GP) bombs for suppression. Under some circumstances they are excellent, but they don't give the coverage. The enemy defenses were rapidly building at this time last year, so we were really confronted with a very difficult problem of how best to handle the FLAK.

Here is a 37MM AAA Site. (Slide 4.) Notice the extensive protection against the CBU-24.

(Slide 5.) With the increased quantities of CBU-24, we are able to use the lead flight to saturate the area as a means of holding the fire down. If the enemy defenses are not very dense, we use only two aircraft for FLAK suppression while the remainder of the flight bombs the target. We can now trade-off FLAK suppression for bombing aircraft according to the target condition. As a matter of fact, some of the targets in the Northeast Railway system have been pounded so thoroughly we are able to go in with no large amounts of AAA thrown against us. We know this is a transitory condition and we have to keep after the defenses to hold them in check.

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NEJ 94-351

By isg, NARA, Date 3-7-95

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Without question the most dramatic change in our capability has been the QRC-160 Pod. This Pod has revolutionized our tactics and has had a tremendous effect on the enemy defense system. This chart shows the formation we fly and the protection it gives. (Slide 6.) The strike aircraft are spaced 1500' apart horizontally and 500' vertically. With this formation the enemy is compelled to resort to barrage firing. Since there is such a degradation in tracking and azimuth he must forego individual tracking.

Before the introduction of this Pod, here is the tactic we had to use to avoid the SAM. (Slide 7.) By flying at these lower altitudes, we were exposed to a much greater degree to anti-aircraft fire. Here is the altitude span which gave the AAA better kill potential. You will note this type of tactic placed a very heavy demand on the pilot who had a minimum of time to acquire the target, pop up and roll into his dive bombing run. When one is going 540 to 580 knots this isn't much time. Since we had to fly at lower altitudes, much of the time weather prevented us from getting to the target.

With the Pod, here are the tactics we are able to employ. (Slide 8.) The fighters now are above the AW and 37MM AAA. The SAM is still a threat but not nearly as severe, and the pilot is in the real pay off position to acquire the target. This tactic has contributed more to the improved bombing than any other single factor.

The Pod has provided us with another operational advantage we didn't formerly enjoy. As you can see by this chart, weather is the dominant factor in our ability to sustain the air offensive. Even during the "so-called" good weather months, there are periods when parts of the target area are covered with clouds. Formerly, I couldn't operate with less than 10,000 feet and five miles visibility since the pilots had to see the SAM's in order to evade them. With the Pod I can come in over an undercast and take a chance the weather will break at the last minute in the target area. This has increased my strike potential tremendously and accounts for part of the explanation of why we have been able to mount a much higher rate of effort than last year.

The effect of the CEU-24's, the QRC-160 Pods and the new tactics is reflected in the attrition rates. (Slide 9.) You will note a year ago in August our attrition was about 18.1 aircraft per 1,000 sorties for Route Packages V and VIA. Since we have been using the Pods and CEU'S there has been a significant reduction in our loss rate. The current loss rate in Route Packages V and VIA is at a new low as shown on the right of the chart. What this means to me -- is more effectiveness per sortie and a greater weight of effort against the enemy as compared to last year. It also means we have more latitude in employment.

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There is another major change since your last visit. This time last year the MIG threat was building very rapidly. The numbers were not changing but the proficiency and aggressiveness of the pilots was increasing. On this chart is a plot of the reactions we were getting by month. (Slide 10.) The numbers in the circles along the top of the columns are MIG shoot-downs. As would be expected, the reactions were light during the months of January, February and March because of the relatively low number of penetrations we were making because of weather. Note, however, the rapid increase and then the sharp decline. We have not encountered MIGS since 11 June. Our losses have drastically dropped off since that date.

When we received authorization to hit the airfields, this forced the enemy to put up more of a fight or be destroyed on the ground since he couldn't be sure we wouldn't attack all of his fields. This circumstance plus the additional targets authorized such as railroad repair yards, power plants and supply installations brought about the opportunity for the air-to-air battles. This chart shows the results of those engagements. The authority to hit airfields is what created the situation favorable for air engagements. The best means of destroying an Air Force is still to catch it on the ground. For all practical purposes his Air Force was destroyed.

The NVN Air Force is being restored as you know. This chart shows the current order of battle. (Slide 11.) As surely as it comes up and engages, we shall destroy it again. You might ask, "won't the Soviets or Chinese increase the size of the force?" In my judgment, the North Vietnamese are about at the limit of their capability. To support a larger Air Force, it would have to be manned from outside resources.

By these air-to-air engagements, we have gained a significant advantage these past weeks. Our fighters have had to jettison very few bombs because of MIG'S, and we have been able to concentrate with greater authority on getting the bombs on the target. This, of course, is what we are after.

This Mr. Secretary, is a resume of what I think are fundamental changes in the air environment. I would now like to discuss what we have been able to do in disrupting the ability of the enemy to support his forces in South Vietnam.

My main objective since the onset of the good weather has been to increase the pressure to the maximum extent possible against the main lines of communication in North Vietnam. It is estimated that about 70% of the war materiel comes in over the Northeast Railroad. During the month of June we have flown 1,540 sorties in Route Package VIA. Last year at this time the best we could do was 195. Pilots refer to the area outlined in red as the "Iron Triangle". (Slide 12.) Our attacks

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have varied up and down the line in order to create as many bottle-necks as possible so as to destroy the rolling stock. Our sole objective has been to make it as difficult as possible for the enemy to handle and distribute the incoming supplies. I believe we have demonstrated this past month we can keep the transportation systems interdicted and disrupted at a rate that will cause him serious distribution problems.

I would like to show you a few slides on what we have been doing to these lines of communication. It represents some of the best fighter-bombing I have seen under very difficult operating conditions.

(Slide 13.) The downing of the Hanoi Railroad-Highway Bridge, struck by F-105 aircraft in April, backed up rail traffic all along the Northeast Rail Line.

(Slide 14.) This photo was taken during the strike on the largest railway car repair shops in NVN - - The yard is 1-1/2 nautical miles from Hanoi.

(Slide 15.) The Huong VI RR yard on the newly completed Kep-To-Thai Nguyen Bypass Rail Line - - before and after shots of our attack on the 26th of May. We caught the North Vietnamese in the process of off-loading large POL tanks from rail cars (they can be seen to the right of RR cars in the right-hand photo). Because of the operating conditions we now enjoy, I am able to slide strike fighters from one target to another when there is rolling stock in a marshalling yard. We now send the IRON HAND flight 5 minutes ahead of the strike forces. If he sees rolling stock, the flight leader is requested to shift targets. We may modify this tactic depending upon enemy changes in defense.

(Slide 16.) This photo shows the closure of the Kep-Thai Nguyen line - - the destruction of the Dong Mac Rail bridge. A repair train can be seen in the cut at the top of the picture.

(Slide 17.) This is the Ha Gia Railway Bridge. Two of its spans were downed on 12 June.

This slide portrays some of the tangible effects of our campaign in the north. (Slide 18.) The numbers down the left side of the chart are key targets on the Northeast Railroad and the Kep-Thai Nguyen Bypass. The green bars represent disruption in his rail system. You can see, from the eighteenth of May on, we have had his transportation system heavily interdicted. From the beginning of May we have had a continuous interdiction of key bridges, JCS 13 and 16, on the through lines. As an example, on the 27th of May the main line was cut at 7 major points and the Thai Nguyen bypass was also cut in 7

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areas. This chart illustrates the major pressure we have had working against the enemy during May.

DIA estimates the NVA attempts to ship approximately 1,000 short tons on this line daily, based on supplies required in 1966. At each impasse, where the rail line has been cut by interdiction of yard or bridge, the North Vietnamese can wait for repairs and thus tie up valuable rolling stock; they can off-load the materials so that the rolling stock can be released; or they can transship by trucks. This chart represents the transshipment costs for NVN on the Northeast Rail line, for this relatively short period of good weather. (Slide 19.) The estimate of the number of truck loads required for transshipment is based on three tons per truck.

So far during the month of June the weather has been good, bombs have been landing on target, and as you can see the Northeast Rail system has been interdicted for much of the time. (Slide 20.) This illustrates my earlier point of being able to sustain the effort without major interference. We have kept this effort going at a very acceptable loss rate.

Transshipment costs for NVN for the month have been heavy. (Slide 21.)

Another indicator of the disruption in the movement of supplies on the Northeast Railroad system is the number of times that the key bridges and Railroad yards have been successfully attacked. (Slide 22.) Bridges are coded blue and railroad yards in red. Rolling stock observed along the rails is shown in green. Between 15 May and 30 June the number of flights striking key interdiction targets are shown in the circles. Some variations occur because of weather, but our strikes are planned against his concentration of rolling stock. I have tried to set up a series of blocks that would seal in the rolling stock. I think we have been very successful this past month.

An overall summary of our strike results are shown on this slide. (Slide 23.) These enemy losses point out to us the importance of interdicting military supplies as far away from the battlefield as possible. The more difficult we make it for him to move his supplies, equipment and war goods at home the greater the delay those essential resources will encounter in getting to his fighting troops.

As a further result of our increased attacks against the transportation system, there has been a heavy demand for ammunition. It is estimated there are some 6,800 AAA guns of 37MM size or larger. These guns are deployed as indicated on this chart. (Slide 24.) We estimate that the recent monthly firing rate by the enemy has required about 25,000 tons of ammunition. To move this ammunition required 8,300 truck loads - - if trucks were used. These are resources that could be turned against our troops in the south if it were not for our pressure which forces him to react in the North.

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The majority of our aircraft losses occur in the immediate vicinity of the target area. AAA is our major threat. The degree of AAA reaction is shown on this slide. (Slide 25.) Percentages of reactions to attack for each week since July 1966 are indicated by the vertical bars.

Although the rate of reaction has been fairly constant, from mid-May the intensity and accuracy of enemy AAA has shown a downward trend. Since mid-May, on some days our strike forces experienced mixed reaction even in heavily defended target areas. The significance of this chart when related to level of effort is the number of reactions are down while the number of sorties is at the highest level of the war. In other words, the day to day pounding has had a wearing down effect on his whole defense system. I am sure if we give it a rest we will see a resurgence of its former self.

We estimate the SAM firing rate as shown on this chart. (Slide 26.) Even though his kill rate is about 1 to 54, he has fired without much restraint. From pilot observations, approximately 70% of the SAM'S miss by more than a mile. This represents a monthly requirement of about 900 tons to be moved. Since 14 June there has been a sharp reduction in the SAM firing rate. The fact that there has been a slow down in his firing indicates the logistical system is straining to meet the requirements in a timely manner, or there has been a delay in the shipment of weapons from the Soviet Union, or he may be trying to devise some better tactics. I am inclined to think it is the strain on his logistical system. Since 1 June we have lost one aircraft to a SAM. It was a recon aircraft in Route Package V and was shot down by a field deployed SAM. During June we have been flying at an unprecedented rate and the enemy has fired only 101 missiles at our strike aircraft. I think this reflects a logistical problem of some dimension. In any event, if he is having problems this close to the source of his supplies, they are certainly accentuated in supporting his forces deployed to the north of the DMZ and in South Vietnam.

One of the best indicators of "How the war is going" is the bomb jettison rate. (Slide 27.) The rate for MIG'S, SAM'S and AAA are shown by the vertical columns. In the month of April, I authorized combat crews to jettison bombs "SAFE" if a good opportunity for a MIG shoot-down occurred. This was one of many actions taken in our battle to destroy the MIG'S in the air.

As a field commander directing the day to day air effort against North Vietnam in Route Package V and VIA, there is no question in my mind about the very profound effect we are having on the enemy's fighting ability.

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As I have tried to show this judgment is predicated on a number of factors. These factors are: (Slide 28.)

(A) We are able to sustain a level of effort not previously possible.

(B) Loss rate has gone down while sortie rate has gone up.

(C) SAM firings have dropped off significantly. Some reports indicate a rationing of missiles.

(D) Anti Aircraft Fire has fluctuated from heavy to moderate indicating some difficulty of supply.

(E) Since ¹¹ June we have had no MIG engagements. The enemy Air Force continues to flee the battle area.

We have destroyed his Air Force even though it is now restored. He knows it will experience a similar fate if it comes out to fight again. This is a most demoralizing situation for an Air Force to be in.

(F) We have seriously disrupted the Northeast Railroad and kept it disrupted for the better part of a month.

(G) There is a major change in the speed with which he now repairs bridges, marshalling yards and removes rolling stock.

(H) We have destroyed or damaged nearly 1,000 box cars during June. These can be replaced, but it strains a system that is already laboring to keep up.

In view of these considerations, Mr. Secretary, now is the time to increase our pressure. The enemy for the first time is feeling and seeing the full effects of our air offensive. If we can broaden and increase our effort we have the most favorable time of the war to effect a change in the attitude of the enemy. These next few months of good weather could be decisive for us.

LT GEN MONYER
TSN 3101

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