

INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

109

5
Action
SS
Info

2074

~~TOP SECRET~~
RR RUEHCR
DE RUMJFS 105A 18/0725Z
R 180555Z ZEA
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO RUHQ/CINCPAC 1561
INFO RUMTBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 1455
RUMJIR/AMEMBASSY SAIGON 1018
RUEHCR/SECSTATE WASHDC 2039
STATE GRNC
BT

16578
JUNE 18, 1965
3:39 A.M.

SAM [unclear]
E.O. 12812 Sec. 3.0
NI 9/278

~~TOP SECRET~~ JUNE 18

FOR ADMIRAL SHARP FROM AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN

ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NEVER FORMALLY BEEN ASKED TO ASSUME ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAR OPERATIONS TO RECOVER ROLLING THUNDER PILOTS DOWNED IN NEARBY NORTH VIETNAM, WE HAVE IN FACT PROVIDED SUCH ASSISTANCE ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS. HOWEVER, WE ARE NOT REPEAT NOT STAFFED UP OR PRE-POSITIONED TO DO THIS AS A REGULAR FEATURE. JUNE 14 WE WERE UNABLE, THEREFORE, TO GET CHOPPERS OVER THE PILOT DOWNED AT VH 5003 BEFORE HE WAS CAPTURED. (I WOULD ADD THAT HE WAS PROBABLY CAPTURED TOO SOON FOR RESCUE, IN ANY EVENT.) SINCE IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE NEED WILL CONTINUE, I WOULD SUGGEST AT LEAST TWO ACTIONS WHICH WOULD EASE OUR PROBLEM:

1.3
(a)(5)

(1) [redacted] HAS ALREADY DISCUSSED WITH YOU MY FEELING THAT LONG RANGE SIKORSKY HELICOPTERS SHOULD BE ASSIGNED TO USAF UNITS AT NAKON PHANOM AND UDORN TO GIVE THEM GREATER CAPACITY TO FUNCTION IN DRV. I WOULD URGE EARLY DEPLOYMENT.

(2) MORE PERTINENT, PERHAPS, AND CERTAINLY MORE URGENT, IS OUR NEED FOR EXPANDED HELICOPTER MAINTENANCE SERVICE. WE NOW HAVE A FLEET OF 18 REPEAT 18 H-34 HELICOPTERS MAINTAINED BY AIR AMERICA AT UDORN. TWO ADDITIONAL H-34S LOANED TO RLAF ALL RECEIVED MAINTENANCE ASSISTANCE FROM UDORN. DESPITE TWO MONTH'S EFFORT TO AUGMENT THEIR STAFF, AIR AMERICA HAS NOT REPEAT NOT BEEN ABLE TO GIVE US BETTER THAN 8 OR 9 HELICOPTERS A DAY AVERAGE FOR OUR FLIGHT OPERATIONS, INCLUDING SAR. IF THE AIR FORCE, OR THE MARINE CORPS, COULD, ON A CRASH BASIS, ASSIGN TWO OR THREE H-34 MAINTENANCE TEAMS TDY TO UDORN UNTIL AIR AMERICA CAN HIRE CIVILIAN REPLACEMENTS, IT WOULD MAKE OUR BURDEN EASIER AND ENHANCE OUR CAPABILITIES. IF YOU CONCUR, SUGGEST YOUR HEADQUARTERS WORK THIS OUT DIRECTLY WITH AIR AMERICA AND TOUCH BASE WITH EMBASSY BANGKOK. SPEED IS, OF COURSE, THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT.

GP-3 SULLIVAN
BT

NOTE: HANDLED LINDIS PER SK-O.

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